

Womenia

TWEET PATROL



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Iso, remember to mask up, sanitise well, and maintain social distancing along with taking the vaccine. #Covid19India #vaccine #covidvaccine #staysafe #socialdistance #maskup



Common makeup mistakes to avoid

Are you making these common makeup mistakes? Here's why they might not be so great for your skin



Shahnaz Husain

Everybody makes mistakes, but make-up lovers definitely need a bit more practice as they seem to happen at the worst possible moment like when you're running late for a kitty party.

Women have good instincts when it comes to beauty routine, but their everyday routine is actually full of beauty blunders. Woman make whole lot of experimentation in makeup routine in their desire to create a perfect matte effect.

Women keeps hours of struggling in front of the mirror to get their makeup right. The only problem is, sometimes they don't know what that change should be. The makeup products aren't the most foolproof tools on the planet. Actually, they require lot of trial and error to avoid a beauty disaster.

We've got ways you might be doing your makeup blunders and why they may be throwing a wrench in your routine.

Washing the face with soap and water is a good cleansing method

No. Actually, soap does not remove make-up, dirt and pollutants so efficiently. Moreover, most soaps are alkaline. They not only disrupt the normal acid-alkaline balance, but also make the skin dry.

The skin should not be washed with soap and water more than



twice a day. Soaps make the skin too alkaline and this actually predisposes it to bacterial attack, leading to problems like acne.

Salon facial massages are good for all skin types

Salon facials include facial massage with creams. Oily skins should not be massaged with creams, as this stimulates the oil glands further. A facial for oily skins should comprise only of cleansing, exfoliation, toning, mask and protection.

Cream should be applied on the skin and left on all night

The skin can only absorb that much and no more. In fact, the pores should be free of cream when we sleep. However, if the skin is very dry, a light liquid moisturiser can be applied after wiping off excess cream with moist cotton wool.

Applying cream around the eyes at night and leaving it on helps to prevent wrinkles

This is a wrong practice. Actually, the area around the eyes is

very delicate and thinner than most other areas. Cream should never be left on all night around the eyes. A special under-eye cream should be applied and removed after ten minutes.

A normal skin does not need routine skincare

This is a common misconception. All skins need daily care, to remove the pollutants and dirt that settle on the skin, as well as to protect and maintain their health and beauty.

Blackheads are collections of dirt in the pores

This is not correct. Blackheads are caused by the collection of hardened sebum (the skin's natural oil). Since the pore is open, the tip is exposed to the air and gets oxidized, hence the black-colored tip and the name "black-head."

Adolescents do not need to worry about acne as they will soon grow out of it

This is absolutely wrong advice. Actually, adolescents need

protective and corrective care for acne, because it can spread and cause extensive scarring. Acne can be prevented and controlled with appropriate daily care.

Stretch marks only form after pregnancy

Not true. Stretch marks can form even before pregnancy, as they are caused due to loss of skin elasticity. This occurs when there is weight loss after weight gain.

Sunscreens need not be applied in winter

Sunscreens need to be applied in winter too, especially since we spend more time out in the sun. Sunscreens help to protect the skin from harmful UV rays.

If there is hair loss, massage of the head with oil will promote hair growth

This is also not true. If there is hair loss, the roots are weak and massage can cause more hair to fall out. While massaging, avoid rubbing. Actually, move the skin of the scalp with fingertips in

small circular movements.

One should apply heavy foundation on oily skin

Many think that foundation is a must during the hot and humid season, especially for oily skin. Actually, the foundation never seems to last and makes the face look streaky or blotchy. Foundation need not be applied, especially during the day. The compact powder may be used. Like foundation, it is available in different shades. It reduces the oily look and provides a smooth skin texture.

Plenty of powder should be applied to the skin to reduce oiliness

Powders do help to reduce oiliness in summer, but less should be applied. Dust off excess powder with cotton wool. Too much powder can make the face streaky or blotchy, due to perspiration. Powder also tends to settle where there are tiny lines, like around the eyes. So, it is necessary to dust off excess powder.

Frequent washing of the hair is harmful

This is one of the most common myths. Washing does not harm the hair. It is the product you use that can. It can even be washed every day provided one uses a mild shampoo and use very little of it.

The more shampoo you use, the cleaner the hair

This wrong notion needs clarification too. It is not the amount of shampoo, but how well you rinse the hair afterwards with water which helps to remove all residues.

Brushing the hair 100 times a day makes the hair healthy and shiny

Actually, this does the hair no good and can even damage the hair. If the hair is oily, it can make it more so, by stimulating the oil glands.

Military Spouse Appreciation Day

Wish to let your neighbouring military spouse know that you are there for them in case they might need anything? Military Spouse Appreciation Day is the perfect occasion to get in touch, show respect, and send a card or gift to these wonderful, courageous people.

Everyone recognizes what an honourable job military personnel do on a daily basis. On the news, we often hear about the ultimate sacrifice soldiers all the way across the world have made in order to protect their nation from those who threaten innocent civilians.

We are always moved by these stories, our minds struggling to comprehend the enormous courage, determination and heroism these individuals possessed that allowed them to give up their lives so we, the civilians, may continue to live safe lives, free of oppression and terror.

However, it seems that in we all too often forget about one of the most important things to these soldiers, and many times the only thing that keeps them going even in the most unbearable conditions—their spouses.

The spouses of those fighting foreign wars spend years supporting their husbands or wives, praying for them, constantly fearing for their safety, staying up late at night waiting for some sign of life.

It is also these spouses that are forced find a way to go on with their lives when their husband or wife is killed in one of these wars, left only with memories of them.



NEWS ROUNDUP

Sunny Leone asks fans what they like to eat!

Sunny Leone took to Instagram on Thursday to treat her fans to a dance video. In the video, the actress is seen dancing to the song "Temperature" by Sean Paul. The video starts with the text: "When mom makes paneer and not tinda."

Dressed in a yellow crop top and jeans, Sunny let her hair open in the clip. She also asked her fans what their favourite food was.

"When life gives you Paneer instead of Tinda!! What's your favorite food?" she wrote with the video that has 1.6 lakh likes in less than an hour. Sunny has also been encouraging her fans to follow Covid protocols and to get themselves vaccinated, through her posts on social media. She recently teamed up with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) to feed 10,000 migrant workers in Delhi.



QUICK TIP

Balance your fashion accessories



If you want to look like a clown, then overwhelm yourself with accessories!

Wear those loop earrings, that statement necklace, that floppy hat, that camel trench coat, those thigh high boots, those cute sunglasses, that scarf, those gloves...I mean, doesn't that already look too much?

When it comes to accessorising, less is more! Why not just wear a watch, those studs and bring along that bag?

Sounds effortlessly chic; and you can be sure that such a look would be as gorgeous!

Don't wear so many accessories and depending on how bulky your outfit is, go for accessories that will only add a slight touch of finish but not add unnecessary complexity to it!

At times, we just need those small studs while we need those loop earrings at other times. So be keen on finding a balance!

7 easy tips to treat dark spots on your body

ARTHI RAGURAM

If you are someone prone to pigmentation, then you might know the struggle of getting rid of dark spots. Recurring and stubborn dark spots can take a toll on self-confidence, and get worse with time without proper treatment.

While many over-the-counter creams claim to fade away dark spots within a matter of days, there is no such magical potion to clear your skin instantly unless you eliminate the cause behind it. Pigmentation occurs due to an excess amount of melanin production in the skin cells, triggered from sun exposure, hormonal changes, poor diet, medical conditions, use of certain products, post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation, or environmental conditions.

Here are seven tips to easily treat dark spots on your body for a bright and clear complexion.

Wear broad-spectrum sunscreen

UV radiation coming from the sun induces the production of melanin, which results in tanning. However, sun exposure can also exaggerate post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation, resulting in the darkening of the brown spots. Therefore, make sure to add sunscreen to your skincare routine 365 days a year to prevent intensifying pigmented marks. Also, physical protection is more effective than using the sunscreen, so make sure to wear hat, scarf, or even use an umbrella

when you are outdoors. Try to limit spending hours in the sun for long hours to prevent exacerbating the skin issue.

Include antioxidants in diet

Consume antioxidant-rich foods such as coloured fruit, vegetables, berries, dark chocolate, etc. to even out your skin complexion. Antioxidants promote collagen production, repair acne marks faster, increase cell turnover, and lead to a brighter complexion.

Drink adequate amount of water

Dark spots are sometimes caused by lack of hydration, so consuming an adequate amount of water can do wonders for your skin. Drinking water can provide a natural barrier for skin from pollutants and heal the skin faster, resulting in a flawless complexion.

Exfoliate

Make sure to gently exfoliate your skin at least twice a week to diminish the appearance of dark spots. Choose alpha-hydroxy acids based exfoliators that work to improve skin by removing top layers of the skin and remove dead cells to reveal healthy and glowing skin.

Use turmeric on your dark spots

Packed with anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial benefits, turmeric has been shown to inhibit the skin's melanin production. Topical application of turmeric on dark spots can help to lighten hyperpigmentation and prevent the occurrence of acne.

Apply night cream

The skin repairs and rejuvenates while you take your beauty sleep. So, make sure to apply a night cream with a high concentration of antioxidants, Vitamin E, Kojic acid, Azelaic acid, Glycolic. When your body has the right vitamins in the right quantities, the health of the skin

cells improves rapidly and it radiates from within. Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin B12, and Vitamin E are some of the best vitamins for lightening dark spots. Generally, vitamin skin treatment starts showing results but to know the right vitamins as per your skin type, take advice from a certified dermatologist.

Develop healthy skincare habits

Make sure to cleanse your skin twice a day to remove dirt and dead skin layer. Get at least 6-8 hours of sleep so that your skin has ample time to heal. Quit bad habits like excessive drinking and smoking for glowing skin.



Tour guides, travel operators in Agra stare at uncertain future

AGRA

WITH the tourism sector taking a hit due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the livelihoods of several people associated with this industry have been severely affected in Agra.

Tour leader Mahendra Soni, who was living a comfortable life before the pandemic struck, has been forced to take a loan to fulfil the financial needs of his family. "I am living on borrowings. I have been a tour leader for 34 years, but since the beginning of the pandemic, my profession was affected and I was forced to opt for tiffin delivery service, but that too did not work," he told PTI.

With the temporary closure of the Taj Mahal due to a rising number of COVID-19 cases, tour guides like Soni are struggling to make ends meet. Shamsuddin Khan, the president of the Approved Tourist Guides' Association, said there are about 2,500 tour guides in this Uttar Pradesh town, of which 400 are approved by the department of tourism, 700 are approved by other departments of the state government and the rest are working on stay permits. Besides, there are 5-10 lakh people in Agra who are dependent on the tourism sector either directly or indirectly. With the sector taking a hit, the livelihoods of the tour guides, tourist photographers,



travel operators, taxi drivers, emporium employees, hotel and restaurant owners and several others have been affected. "My earnings have

been hit since last year. I did not get any assignments since then and was forced to choose another job to feed my family," Narendra Lawania, who used to work as a French-language tour guide before the outbreak of the pandemic, told PTI.

"I opened a garments shop, but due to the lockdown, even that is now closed. I do not see any good job prospect in the future as I have no idea when the tourism sector would revive," he said. Another French-language tour guide, Subodh Kumar Saraswat, said for the last 13 months, he has been running a grocery shop. "Every day I struggle to arrange the basic necessities at home. If things do not improve in the tourism sector

in Agra, my future is bleak," he said.

Sharing his ordeal due to the lockdown, a foreign-language tour escort said, "I have taken a loan from the bank for a car, but now I am unable to pay the installments because I am not earning enough.... Most of the time (since the pandemic broke out), I have been unemployed."

"When the Taj Mahal was open, I used to earn about Rs 1,800 daily but within a year, everything is ruined," he lamented. Demanding financial help for the tour guides, Khan said, "Expenses are high these days and the income is low, so both the Centre and the state government should support the tour guides, who are facing a crisis.

TOP BUREAUCRATS TEST POSITIVE IN HIMACHAL

SHIMLA

AMID an unprecedented surge in Covid cases and a high fatality rate, several bureaucrats including the chief secretary, director-general have also tested positive for Coronavirus.

Himachal Pradesh Chief secretary Anil Khachi, a 1986-batch IAS officer, who has been at the forefront of enforcing Covid-19 guidelines, is under home isolation after he contracted Covid-19.

Last week, director-general of police Sanjay Kundu had tested positive and was temporarily substituted by additional DGP Anurag Garg, currently heading the state's Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau.

Kundu, who has been a part of all meetings with Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, has



been frequently travelling across the state for official work. Additional chief secretary (Revenue) R D Dhiman, additional chief secretary (Finance) Prabodh Saxena, additional chief secretary (Social Justice and Empowerment)

Sanjay Gupta, secretary (GAD) Divesh Kumar and secretary (Health) Amitabh Awasthi and joint secretary (Forest) Satpal Dhiman has also contracted Covid and have quarantined themselves at their homes.

State cabinet ministers in-

cluding Bikram Singh and Sraveen Chaudhary have also tested positive for Covid-19. Chaudhary's entire family was tested positive six days ago. State BJP president Suresh Kashyap, a sitting MP, is also Covid positive.

Director Elementary education is also down with Covid-19.

A senior official in the personnel department admits that Covid-19 has severely affected several bureaucrats from top to lower ranks.

Before this, Minister for Urban Development Suresh Bhardwaj, Education minister Govind Thakur and minister for Technical Education Dr Ram Lal Markanda had tested positive for Covid-19 but have now recovered.

Last year, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur had also contracted Covid-19.

353 more deaths, 26,780 new cases in Uttar Pradesh

LUCKNOW

THE COVID-19 death toll in Uttar Pradesh rose to 14,501 on Thursday with 353 more fatalities, while 26,780 new cases pushed the infection tally to 14,25,919, an official said.

"In the past 24 hours, 26,780 cases were reported while 28,902 people have recovered. There are currently 2,59,844 active cases in the state and the number of those who have recovered stands at 11,51,571," Additional Chief Secretary, Amit Mohan Prasad, told reporters here.

He said the state recorded 353 deaths in the past 24 hours. Prasad said since April 30, when there were 3,10,783 active cases, the number of such cases have come down by over 51,000 as recoveries have increased.

Over 2.25 lakh tests, including 1.12 lakh RTPCR tests, were conducted in Uttar Pradesh on

Wednesday he said. So far, over 4.22 crore samples have been tested in the state, Prasad said. The state government has started a campaign to conduct COVID-19 tests in 97,000 villages of the state..

"The campaign for testing and



screening has been started in 97,000 villages," Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said while addressing a review meeting. The work for COVID-19 vaccination is going on properly and over 1.32 crore doses have been administered, the CM said. Noting that the vaccine wastage was 0.39 per cent, the chief minister stressed that it should be brought down to zero per cent.

4 women allege rape by godman

JAIPUR

FOUR women, three from the same family, have accused a self-proclaimed godman of raping them in his ashram in Jaipur, police said on Thursday. The women filed a complaint against Shailendra Mehta, accusing him of raping them when they used to visit Tapasvi Ashram to attend satsang and other activities, Station House Officer, Bhankota police station, Mukesh Choudhary said. "The victims said they have been visiting the ashram along with their family members for years. The women used to stay at the ashram for a couple of days in the name of service and it was then when the accused used to rape them," he said. While the three women from the same family registered a case on Tuesday, the fourth woman lodged an FIR on Wednesday. The matter came to light when one of the victims refused her husband to take their daughter to the ashram. "When she narrated her ordeal, the other two women from her family showed the courage and opened up about what had happened with them, following which the family decided to register a case," the SHO said.



Sale, supply of Remdesivir to be monitored in U'khand

DEHRADUN

TERMING remdesivir an essential medicine in COVID-19 management, the Uttarakhand government has asked drug inspectors to constantly monitor sale and supply of the antiviral injection amid a surge in COVID-19 cases. In an order issued to the drug controller, Secretary Pankaj Kumar Pandey referred to an Uttarakhand High Court order by which the state government has been asked to monitor supply and sale of the remdesivir injections. The order asks all drug inspectors to ensure that the sale and supply of the essential drug is carried out strictly in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Centre and the state government. It also asked the drug inspectors to maintain a strict vigil on pharmacists and act against those found hoarding or overcharging for the remdesivir injections. The order also asks them to ensure that QR code is pasted on each remdesivir pack.

Curfew in three Uttarakhand districts extended till May 10

DEHRADUN

IN view of the fresh surge in COVID-19 cases, curfew has been extended in the three heavy caseload districts of Dehradun, Udham Singh Nagar and Haridwar in Uttarakhand till May 10.

The district magistrates of Dehradun, Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar are directed to enforce the curfew throughout the district from May 6 to May 10 (till 5 am), Chief Secretary, Om Prakash, said in an order. The curfew, which was imposed in the last week of April, was earlier scheduled to end this morning. The order asked the DMs of the remaining 10 districts to assess the situation



in their areas and impose curfew from May 6 to May 10 (till 5 am), if required.

However, there shall be no restriction on inter-state and intra-state movement of persons and goods during the period,

the order said.

All industries, goods, vehicles, construction work and other essential services will be allowed to operate during the curfew, it said. Ration shops will open on alternate days, while

milk booths and vegetable shops will be allowed to operate till only 12 pm daily. All district magistrates are authorised to issue district specific guidelines as per their assessment. All government offices shall be open during the period.

All concerned are directed to ensure compliance of the guidelines and direct all authorities concerned for its strict implementation, the order said. Uttarakhand recorded its highest caseload in a day with the detection of 7783 fresh infections on Wednesday with Dehradun reporting the highest number of 2,771 cases, Udham Singh Nagar 1043 and Haridwar 599. As many as 127 other infected people have died.

Gurugram: Fire breaks out in Super Mart building

dozens of fire tenders were rushed to the spot to douse the flames at the 10-storeyed building.

Fire tenders from Sector-29, Udyog Vihar, Bhim Nagar, Manesar and DLF were pressed into service after the incident

was reported.

A fire department official said that no employees were present inside the office when the fire broke out because of the ongoing lockdown in Gurugram.

Furnitures, computers and

other electronic equipment were gutted inside the offices of property dealers in the fire.

Due to the spread of the flames, some ACs installed in the building were also damaged. The exact cost of damage is yet to be ascertained, officials said. The cause of the fire is not known yet. "The reason for the fire is yet to be ascertained. Luckily, no one was injured in the incident."

Haryana Police to provide 440 cars for ambulance use



CHANDIGARH

THE Haryana Police will provide 440 vehicles, 20 each to the state's 22 districts, to be used as ambulances for needy COVID-19 patients, it said on Thursday.

The COVID-19 Hospital Transport Service (COV-HOTS) is being provided free of charge as instances of shortage of ambulances and over-charging have been noticed, the Haryana Police said in a statement. These vehicles are being given to the districts on a temporary basis to transport needy infected patients from their homes to hospitals and nursing homes and also drop them back once they have recovered, it said. Director General of Police (DGP), Haryana, Manoj Yadava said each of the 22 districts would get 20 Toyota Innova vehicles.

Out of the total, 126 COV-HOTS vehicles have already been

provided — 26 to the Hisar Range, 20 each to the Gurugram Police Commissionerate and the Rohtak Range, 10 each to Faridabad and the Panchkula Commissionerate, 12 each to the Ambala and the Karnal Range and 16 vehicles to the South Range Rewari. Seventy vehicles will reach the districts by Thursday evening, and the rest will be delivered by Sunday evening, Yadava said.

The DGP said the vehicles were being provided exclusively for the purpose of providing transportation services to COVID-19 patients. To avail the service, one needs to call '108' or the police control room of the district concerned, he said. Police personnel driving these vehicles will be wearing masks, gloves and PPE kits, the DGP said. "The police force is working shoulder-to-shoulder with the medical fraternity to help COVID-19 patients," he added.

AAP claims it won more seats than Congress

LUCKNOW

THE Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) claimed that it has surged ahead of the Congress in terms of seats won in the recently held panchayat elections in the state. The Congress, however, refuted the claim and said the party's performance has been satisfactory. In a statement, AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said the AAP has won 83 seats for the post of member of zila panchayat, 300 village pradhans, and 232 seats for the post of members of kshetra panchayats. "The AAP has moved ahead of the Congress," Singh claimed. He claimed that after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Samajwadi Party (SP), and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), the AAP has bagged the fourth spot in the election. Singh said people of the state do not need politics of 'shamshaan' (cremation grounds), but free elec-

tricity, water, and better healthcare and education like that in Delhi where the AAP is in power.

"People in hospitals of Uttar Pradesh have to wait for hours to get an ambulance, hence the AAP will start an ambulance service in different districts of the state," Singh said. Rebutting the claims made by the AAP leader, Ashok Singh, spokesperson of Uttar Pradesh Congress said, "In the recently-concluded panchayat polls in UP, the performance of the party has been satisfactory.

As many as 270 Congress-supported candidates emerged victorious on the post of zila panchayat members, while on 571 seats they came second, and third on 711 seats." He added that party-supported candidates have registered wins in member of kshetra panchayat, village pradhan and village panchayat members.

OXYGEN PLANT DONATED BY ITALY STARTS AT ITBP-RUN HOSPITAL

NEW DELHI

A medical oxygen generation plant, which has been sent by Italy to tackle the COVID-19 health emergency in India and can support 100 patients at one time, was operationalised at a CAPF hospital located in Greater Noida on Thursday.

The machinery for the plant was brought to the country onboard a special flight few days back and the Centre had deployed it at the CAPF referral hospital that is operated by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). "Italian Ambassador to India Vincenzo De Luca switched on the plant at a ceremony that was attended by senior ITBP officers.

The plant has been installed



and made operational at the hospital campus within 48 hours," a spokesperson for the border guarding force said. It

will supply medical oxygen to more than 100 COVID-19 beds available at this hospital, he added.

The Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) hospital primarily caters to the personnel of various police and paramilitary organisations, their families, veterans of these forces that function under the command of the Union Home Ministry. Luca spoke at the event and said the plant will be at this hospital "permanently" and it was a sign of friendship and solidarity between the two countries. He also recounted how some Italian tourists (about 17) in India were treated by the ITBP medical setup when they contracted the coronavirus infection last year. "We do not forget this (gesture by India)...this friendship and solidarity with India will continue..." the Am-

bassador said.

Senior ITBP officers present on the occasion said the government and people of India have "big gratitude" for the human gesture shown by Italy. The country is grappling with an acute shortage of oxygen beds in hospitals apart from medicines and other life-saving medical care as a ferocious COVID-19 second wave is continuing over the last few weeks. Coronavirus cases and deaths in the country hit a record daily high with over 4,12 lakh new infections and 3,980 fatalities, taking the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 2,10,77,410 and the death toll to 2,30,168, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Thursday.

Many unanswered questions over blackout at Iran’s N-facility

IRAN recently condemned a blackout at its underground Natanz nuclear facility as an act of “nuclear terrorism” and said Tehran reserved the right to respond, but did not specify who was responsible and how Iran may react. “The act against the Natanz nuclear enrichment centre shows the defeat of the opponents of the country’s industrial and political advancements in preventing the nuclear industry’s significant development,” Ali Akbar Salehi, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said following the incident. Salehi also directly linked the incident with the nuclear deal, saying it was perpetrated by those who oppose nuclear negotiations to lift US sanctions. This has set the ball rolling off yet another round of vicious campaign. While condemning what it termed as a desperate move, the Islamic Republic

of Iran emphasised the need for a confrontation by the international bodies and the (International Atomic Energy Agency) against this nuclear terrorism. Parts of the electrical grid at Iran’s main nuclear facilities at Natanz were compromised early on Sunday, in the latest incident to hit the site in Isfahan province, where locally developed centrifuges are reportedly assembled after it was hit by a large explosion last July. There was no loss of life or environmental pollution as a result of the incident. After the explosion last year, Iran said “sabotage is certain”, adding there were strong suspicions that “internal agents” played a role. But the government, citing security concerns, refrained from disclosing additional information. Malek Shariati Niasar, a Tehran-based lawmaker who serves as spokesman for the Iranian parliament’s energy com-

mittee, wrote on Twitter that the incident was “very suspicious”, raising concerns about possible “sabotage and infiltration”. He added lawmakers were pursuing details of the incident as well. As usual, the UN nuclear watchdog said: “We are aware of the media reports. We have no comment at this stage.” Israel’s Kan public radio cited intelligence sources as saying that Israel’s Mossad spy agency had carried out a cyber attack at the site. Israel made no official comment on the incident. Citing the intelligence sources, Kan Radio said the damage at Natanz was more extensive than had been reported in Iran. The development comes as Iran and world powers recently concluded the first week of “constructive” talks in Vienna to restore the country’s 2015 nuclear deal. Natanz suffered a mysterious explosion at its advanced centrifuge as-

sembly plant in July 2020 that authorities later described as sabotage. Iran now is rebuilding that facility deep inside a nearby mountain. Israel, Iran’s regional archenemy, has been suspected of carrying out that attack as well as launching other assaults, as world powers now negotiate with Tehran in Vienna over its nuclear deal. The allegations of Iran do not stop with attacks on its facilities. It has also blamed Israel for the killing of a scientist who began the country’s military nuclear programme decades earlier. The Stuxnet computer virus, discovered in 2010 and widely believed to be a joint US-Israeli creation, once disrupted and destroyed Iranian centrifuges at Natanz. So if it is Israel that is the suspect, obviously the US too becomes a suspect. If nothing, the US would at least have sanctioned the act.

Covid-19: Human perspective & response



Bandaru Dattatreya

WHEN COVID-19 started to spread worldwide in March last year, the central government and State governments took all necessary steps. The common people cooperated and followed the guidelines in letter and spirit. The country faced the first wave of pandemic bravely and successfully despite all challenges of health resources. By the end of the year we had set an example for others to follow in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic.

It is unfortunate that we became lax individually and collectively. As a result, the second wave of coronavirus has impacted the country very badly. Due to this, the situation in many States and cities is grim. However, we can tide over this difficulty with mutual cooperation, patience and with a sense of duty towards the society. We require solidarity, alertness, awareness, understanding and mutual cooperation.

At this time of crisis, it is important to have collaboration amongst the States and the Union Government. We have to save both life and livelihood which requires collective effort. We have to boost the morale of our Corona warriors by strengthening health and allied services. Besides encouraging vaccination drive, we have to provide adequate oxygen, increase the number of hospital beds, strengthen health network, and ensure availability of medicines and development of infrastructure.

Vaccination has ushered in a new era of hope in the fight against Covid-19. It is our good fortune we have developed the vaccine in our country. The credit goes to the hard work and honest efforts of our dedicated scientists and pharma personnel. We should feel proud of our dedicated team of scientists associated with Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech. These are ranked as premier institutions in the world for their achievements since long but now they have gained more respect by developing vaccine in a fast track mode.

The Hon’ble Prime Minister had also launched the world’s largest vaccination campaign in collaboration with the State Governments which has been appreciated all over the world. Today, this campaign is running efficiently and millions are getting the dose daily.

The country has a strong base of science and technology despite limited resources. The Indian pharma industry is known as ‘Pharmacy of the World’. A number of Indian made medicines are prescribed all over the world to save the lives of people. During this time of universal crisis, we have given corona vaccine to the countries which needed it. This is the humanitarian aspect of India’s policies.

In view of the seriousness of the situation and the huge demand, the Central Government has allowed import of Russian vaccine, Sputnik and has also stepped up the effort to import vaccines developed around the world. Dr. Reddy’s Laboratories has been authorized to distribute this vaccine in India. This will

further boost the ongoing vaccination drive. Dr. Reddy’s Labs has received 1,50,000 doses of this vaccine in the first phase.

The Central Government has also allowed to provide 50 percent of the vaccine to private hospitals and has authorized the State Governments to purchase it directly so that it can be made available to the people speedily. Realizing its responsibility, the Union Government has encouraged public sector undertakings, which produce vaccines, to set up infrastructure in collaboration with private pharmaceutical companies to complete the vaccination campaign early. They have also been provided payment in advance so that every eligible Indian can get the vaccine within six months. This will help in building confidence among people.

As per the data of Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, the Government of India has so far provided nearly 17.02 crore vaccine doses (17,02,42,410) to States/UTs free of cost. More than 94.47 lakh COVID vaccine doses (94,47,614) are still available with the States/UTs to be administered. Furthermore, more than 36 lakh (36,37,030) vaccine doses will be received in addition by the States/UTs in the coming days.

The first dose of vaccine has been administered to 4,06,339 people in the age group of 18 to 44 years in 12 states / UTs across the country. Along with this, 5,30,50,669 beneficiaries between 45 and 60 years of age have taken the first dose and 41,42,786 persons have the second dose. 5,28,16,238 beneficiaries above 60 years of age who have taken first dose and 1,19,98,443 persons who have taken second dose are also included in it.

Union Government advanced around Rs 1,700 crore to Serum Institute of India on April 28 for 11 crore doses of Covishield vaccine and paid Rs. 772.5 crore to Bharat Biotech the same day for 5 crore Covaxin doses for distribution during May, June and July. Extensive vaccination programmes will improve the situation by the month of July. For this to happen we must focus on vaccination drive and undertake it more expeditiously and efficiently.

It is no time to take advantage of the situation or to indulge in blame game rather it is the time to exhibit human values. People lose faith when they see that some of us take advantage of circumstances and indulge in black marketing. Everyone, whether a doctor or a businessman, must put the country first. Strict action should be taken against people who indulge in such illegal and immoral activities.

COVID-19 has grown very rapidly in about 12 States of the country. Extra efforts should be made to check the spread of virus in other States.

Prior to the pandemic, India’s daily capacity to produce medical oxygen was 6,500 metric tons, which has now increased to 7,200 metric tons per day. Earlier, India required 700 metric tons of medical oxygen every day, whereas today the daily requirement has increased to around 5,000 metric tons. Patience is important in such a situation. Government is making every effort to provide oxygen to everyone. All modes



At this time of crisis, it is important to have collaboration amongst the States and the Union Government. We have to save both life and livelihood which requires collective effort. We have to boost the morale of our Corona warriors by strengthening health and allied services. Besides encouraging vaccination drive, we have to provide adequate oxygen, increase the number of hospital beds, strengthen health network, and ensure availability of medicines and development of infrastructure

- train, air and road are being employed to transport it.

As the infection spreads, the demand for oxygen is also going to increase. About 500 factories in India work to extract oxygen from the air and purify it. It is then converted to liquid oxygen and sent to the hospitals. Most of the medical oxygen is supplied by tankers. We need to strengthen this.

Earlier, Remdesivir injection was commonly available in the market. However, with the second wave of COVID-19, in view of its increasing demand, black marketers started selling it at over Rs 30,000, which is a stigma on humanity. We must check this type of behavior.

Our young generation is most affected in the second wave and that too young people between the age of 15 and 30 years. For them, the risks of breakdown of the education system and unemployment are quite overwhelming. Even then in India alone, more than one million young volunteers have taken direct action to help during the menace of COVID-19, and are contributing to combat the impact of pandemic. This is our strength. It is a matter of pride that Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), Rashtriya Seva Yojana (NSS), young volunteers of Bharat Scouts and Guides and National Cadet Corp (NCC) are at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19 across the country. It is an army of warriors whose strength can prevent the spread of the virus. This youth brigade can also become an important part of the vaccination campaign. Several non government organizations, religious, social and cultural, have come forward to help the needy in this difficult time. All of us need to support their effort with whatever means possible.

Recently, the Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, in an interaction with the Governors of States to review the COVID-19 situation and ongoing vaccination drive in the country, stressed the need to use the collaborative power of all the community organizations, political parties, NGOs and social institutions. He also emphasized the importance of tracking, tracing and testing. He highlighted the importance of increasing number of RT-PCR tests. We have to understand that in the fight against Covid, along with vaccines, our values and sense of duty are our greatest strength. The spirit of public participation needs to be encouraged. Social institutions can collaborate seamlessly with the State Governments to achieve micro containment. It is time to move away from policy debates and embrace the spirit of ‘Team India’ and join hands.

Dealing with the pandemic is challenging, and we have to prepare to win this battle. To reduce the pressure on the big hospitals of the city we must strengthen our primary and secondary health institutions in rural areas. At this stage we can focus on infrastructure development. The hiring and deployment of technical staff and building capacity should be given top priority. Private hospitals, on the other hand, should be made competitive. Citizens should also understand and follow the basic protocols. In this pandemic, there is a greater need to follow ‘civic sense’ and discipline.

No doubt, last few months in the fight against coronavirus have been very difficult for the country. During this period, at times we were overshadowed by deep despair but at the same time we saw examples of humanitarian help. We have learnt from the other countries that this virus mutates and, comes back again and again. Right now, we are in the midst of the lethal wave of the pandemic and until the last person is cured, we can’t say that we have won. We must be sensitive and vigilant. We need to impose self-lockdown.

By adopting the rules of wearing a mask, social distancing and cleanliness we can protect ourselves and also others. The next two to four months require more caution. At the same time, we need to implement the vaccination campaign more quickly.

It is important that every individual contributes with positive thinking and we should avoid negative publicity. What is needed is courage, confidence and spiritual strength. With the help of these we can fight against the Corona pandemic and win this war.

(The author is Governor of Himachal Pradesh)



Mythological drama takes over small screen

LAST year during Covid lockdown, Doordarshan struck gold re-televasting “Ramayan”, Ramanand Sagar’s hit mythological series of the eighties. This year, as India has come to a standstill once again owing to the second wave of the deadly coronavirus, many soap makers seem to have picked up cue. Mythology seems to be flavour on the tube once again, as Indian television finds a ready homebound audience base.

A host of shows including “Vighnaharta Ganesh” and “RadhaKrishn” make for prime family viewing while the epics “Ramayan” and “Mahabharat” are being re-run on a private channel.

Shooting for mythological shows in the time of Covid is naturally tough, given the grandeur of set, costumes, heavy jewellery and the execution they demand. Also, no matter the precautions, actors would always have to take off their masks in front of the camera.

“Shooting in Covid times is tough because there are so many precautions. Actors are at high risk because while shooting we cannot wear a mask. If the team is good and precautions are being taken, actors are safe. You need to sanitise your hands and take precautions and see if people are wearing masks around you and sanitising their hands,” says Riney Aryaa, who plays Goddess Laxmi in “Vighnaharta Ganesh”.

She adds: “A lot of people touch actors for costume, hair and make-up. The costumes are so heavy and the temperatures are high and that makes it very difficult. We are in our jewellery and get-up for 16 hours.”

In times of despair as the lockdown, portraying a mythological character also entails a very different challenge. Shows in this genre are meant to spread hope during a crisis as the pandemic, as people look up to divine protagonists on the small screen with reverence. In turn, this means there is the need to be careful about portraying a character with authenticity more than ever, as these are characters people have immense faith in and are sensitive about.

This is something actress Madirakshi Mundle observes. She plays Devi Parvati in “Vighnaharta Ganesh”.

“I feel fortunate to have essayed Goddesses on the TV screen. Sita, Lakshmi and Parvati are all Goddesses in our epics whose stories of virtue, ennobling qualities, benevolence and deep intrinsic strength we have grown up with and have a deep reverence for. They are often very commonly invoked as role models. People are attached to them and they are deeply integral to our culture and mythology. So, the audience’s feelings towards them are of paramount importance when I essay such a role. People have a certain image they attach with such a character, in their minds,” says Madirakshi.

For Tarun Khanna, who plays Hanuman in “Radhakrishn”, the challenge about mythological portrayals is more universal. “Mythological shows are tough physically and a person has to be very good at Hindi,” he says.

Here are some of the mythological shows that are currently a rage on the tube:

RAMAYAN

The popularity of late Ramanand Sagar’s tele-epic continues to grow with time. While the show broke several records upon re-release on Doordarshan during last year’s lockdown, it has been brought back on Star Bharat this year. The show stars Arun Govil as Ram, Deepika Chikhalia as Sita, Sunil Lahri as Lakshman, Arvind Trivedi as Raavan and Dara Singh as Hanuman.

MAHABHARAT

This 2013 series stars Saurabh Jain as Lord Krishna, Pooja Sharma as Draupadi, Santantani Ghosh as Satyawati, and Shaheer Sheikh as Arjun. The show also stars Arpit Ranka as Duryodhana, Praneet Bhatt as Shakuni and Puneet Issar plays the role of Parshurama.

MERE SAI: SHRADDHA AUR SABURI

The story of the show revolves around the life story of Sai Baba of Shirdi and talks of how he helps multiple people who seek him. His path of Dharma is highlighted in the series. The show stars Tushtar Dalvi, Kishori Godbole and Vaibhav Mangle.

SANTOSHI MAA: SUNAYIN VRAT KATHAYEIN

The show is a sequel to the series “Santoshi Maa” and has been produced by Rashmi Sharma and Pawan Kumar Marut. Actress Gracy Singh plays the lead in the show. Actors Tanvi Dogra and Vijay Badlani are also part of the show.

RADHAKRISHN

The series revolves around the eternal bond of love shared by Radha and Lord Krishna. The show stars Sumedh Mudgalkar and Mallika Singh and has been directed by Rahul Kumar Tiwari.

Silver lining to Covid gloom

US private sector adds 742K jobs in April

Washington: Private companies in the US added 742,000 jobs in April, indicating continued labour market recovery, payroll data company Automatic Data Processing (ADP) reported.

“The labour market continues an upward trend of acceleration and growth, posting the strongest reading since September 2020,” Xinhua news agency quoted Nela Richardson, chief economist at ADP, as saying on Wednesday.

Richardson noted that service providers have the most to gain as the economy reopens, recovers and resumes normal activities and are leading job growth in April.

The service-providing sectors added 636,000 jobs in the month, according to the report, which was produced by the ADP Research Institute in collaboration with Moody’s Analytics.

Leisure and hospitality sectors added 237,000 jobs, trade, transportation and utilities sectors added 155,000, while professional and business services added 104,000.

Information sector, however, lost 3,000 jobs in the month. Large firms and medium-sized businesses hired 277,000 and 230,000 workers respectively, while small companies added 235,000 employees, the ADP report showed, indicating a balanced recovery across different company sizes.

“While payrolls are still more than 8 million jobs short of pre-Covid levels, job gains have totaled 1.3 million in the last two months after adding only about 1 million jobs over the course of the previous five months,” Richardson said.

Private companies slashed roughly 20 million jobs in March and April last year amid shutdowns.

Amid reopening efforts, the private sector saw a revised job gain of over 3 million in May, followed by a revised growth of over 4 million in June.

After that, however, job growth has been slowing down.

In December 2020, the trend was even reversed, with private companies shedding a revised 75,000 jobs amid Covid spikes.

The ADP report came two days before the crucial monthly employment report released by the Department of Labour’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, which will include employment data from both the private sector and the government.

Taxing non-residents for transactions with Indian parties

NON-RESIDENTS undertaking transactions with Indian parties will trigger taxability under the domestic law in India even if they do not have physical presence in the country and operate digitised businesses.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes has notified new rules for operation of business by non-residents under which any transaction over Rs 2 crore (apex \$271000) in respect of any goods, services or property carried out by them with any person in India including provision of download of data or software in India, will attract tax in India.

The provisions of Significant Economic Presence (SEP) that becomes the base for taxability of non-residents in India will also apply if the number of users with whom systematic and continuous business activities are solicited (or who are engaged in interactions) exceeds 3 lakhs.

The provisions of SEP were introduced in the legis-



lation in 2018 with an intent to tax non-residents operating digitised businesses which function without a physical presence. It meant that SEP of a non-resident in India shall constitute a ‘business connection’ in India.

These provisions were further amended vide Finance Act, 2020 which defined SEP as transaction in respect of any goods, services or property carried out by a non-resident with any person in India including provision of download of data or software in India, if the aggregate of payments arising from such transaction or transactions during the year exceeds a threshold or systematic and continuous soliciting of business activities or engaging in interaction with a defined number of users in India.

The new provisions are applicable with effect from Financial Year 2021-22. It had become fully functional now with CBDT notifying the thresholds for triggering SEP and consequently tax liability in India.

CS Somesh’s statements misleading people: BJP

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE State BJP on Thursday charged State Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar for misleading people of the State projecting that the situation of Covid in Telangana is under control and the trend Covid curve is showing a downward trend.

BJP SC Morcha national secretary S Kumar and party State secretary Dr S Prakash Reddy said the situation in Gandhi, King Koti, TIMS and Chest Hospitals was grave, as people could not get beds for admission. Shortage of oxygen, beds, medicines and ventilators was plaguing the hospitals across the State. But, the Chief Secretary was projecting as if everything is normal in Telangana to cover up

the shortcomings of the State government, they criticised.

The duo leaders said that the CS had sent a false message to the people claiming as if the Centre has allocated oxygen from Visakhapatnam, Rourkela, Bellary etc in the context of the shortage of oxygen in the State. Dr Prakash Reddy said that in fact the permissions of oxygen and its regulations is vested in the hands of the Telangana State Drug Controller. But the State government did nothing for the past two months, and no one objected to installing oxygen plants in the State, he stated.

“The Centre had in fact come forward after sensing the problems faced by the States in augmenting the oxygen and issued an order on April 27 asking all the public sector undertakings to sus-

pend production of industrial oxygen and convert the same into medical oxygen to save the lives of the people.’ In fact, it was at the request of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy that the Telangana was allocated oxygen from Bellary, he informed.

S Kumar and Dr S Prakash Reddy said that for the past one month, the State government has lost track of even how many tankers needed and the quantity of oxygen required for the State. The Centre had pressed into army aircraft to lift the oxygen tankers to cut short of the transport time from Rourkela to Hyderabad. Similarly, the Oxygen Express has been given Green Channel by the railways to bring the oxygen tankers in non-stop trains from

Rourkela to Hyderabad, they added.

Even when the tankers reached, the State was not in a position to provide the required number of cylinders to fill oxygen and to supply to the hospitals, Prakash Reddy added.

Negligence of not taking into confidence the Arogyasri hospitals, non-utilisation of the existing medical colleges’ services, wastage of vaccine supplied to the State and many others exposes the failure and non-preparedness of the TS in combating the Covid, he pointed out.

Blaming the centre for its own failures has become a fashion to the Telangana government and making such statements blaming the Centre by the CS was unbecoming on his party, said Kumar.

Capt Lakshmikantha entrusted to keep the flock intact

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

IN an attempt to ensure the cadre will not slip away from the party and join former Minister Eatala Rajender, the TRS leadership has initiated steps to maintain the flock and entrusted the responsibility of the constituency to Captain Lakshmikantha Rao.

According to party leaders, the leadership is not happy with the former Health Minister Rajender meeting with the party activists at his hometown and seeking their opinion. Suspecting that this would affect the party, the leadership swung into action and entrusted the responsibility to Rajya Sabha Member Captain V Lakshmikantha Rao to keep the flock together, informed a senior leader. Captain has been in-charge

for Huzurabad for a long time. Kamalapur has now become Huzurabad after delimitation. Captain was asked to vacate the Huzurabad seat to accommodate Eatala, who was Kamalapur MLA. Captain’s son Satish was shifted to Husnabad constituency. Though he was reluctant to leave Huzurabad, he had to do so following the directions of the leaders. Captain’s followers have now become the followers of Rajender.

Party leaders said that Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, instead of asking the Ministers to counter Rajender as it would get delayed, gave the responsibility to Captain Rao.

Meanwhile Captain Lakshmikantha Rao on Thursday said that there was no role of Eatala in the initial days of separate Telangana agitation.

When the agitation was steadily increasing, he became the MLA from Kamalapur and later the former Health Minister misused his power and purchased assigned lands. “Both the party and the CM gave due respect to Eatala by giving him the post of floor leader, Minister and other portfolios. It is not proper to hurl criticism on the Chief Minister,” he added. The Captain also alleged that Rajender encouraged outsiders in the party and ignored the local leaders.

The public representatives from undivided Karimnagar district have recommended suspension of Rajender from the party. It is not known whether the party would suspend and disqualify him as MLA as some leaders were planning to complain to the Assembly Speaker.



District Collector Amoy Kumar, RDO Rajeshwari and other officials inspecting the arrangements for Municipal chairperson and vice-chairperson elections in Kothur on Thursday

All set for Municipal chairperson election

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KOTHUR

ALL set for the formation of a new governing body for the newly formed Kothur Municipality in Shadnagar constituency. Elections will be held for the positions of Municipal chairperson and vice-chairperson for Kothur Municipality at 3 pm on Friday.

Elections for 12 wards of Kothur Municipality were held on April 30 and the results were

announced on May 2. The TRS won seven wards while Congress won five wards.

District Collector Amoy Kumar, RDO Rajeshwari and other local officials inspected the arrangements made for Municipal chairperson and vice-chairperson elections in Kothur on Thursday. The Collector instructed the officials to follow Covid-19 norms during the elections and make necessary arrangements for the same.

State records 21,954 new Covid cases, 72 fatalities

AMARAVATI

FOR the third day in a row, the state reported more than 20,000 cases of coronavirus in the 24 hours ending 9 am on Thursday, pushing the gross to 12,28,186.

As many as 1,10,147 tests turned out 21,954 fresh positives in 24 hours, the latest bulletin said. Also, 10,141 patients had recovered while 72 more succumbed in a day, it said. The total recoveries now stood at 10,37,411 and toll 8,446. The active caseload was 1,82,329.

After a total of 1.70 crore tests, the overall infection positivity rate in the state climbed to 7.15 per cent, slightly more than the national average of 7.05 per cent. The overall recovery rate slid to 85.16 per cent while the mortality rate remained stable at 0.69 per cent.

Perni tears into Naidu over new strain claims

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

Refuting TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu’s allegations that a dangerous N440K variant virus had been detected in Kurnool and was spreading fast, minister for information and public relations Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani) clarified that there was no clear diagnosis about the N440K mutant in state and described the Opposition leader “more dangerous than Covid-19”.

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, the minister said that the government has been relentlessly working to provide medical services beyond its means, but Chandrababu Naidu is trying to defame the state by making false accusations and scaring people with false rumours.

He said that no confirmation has been made on the spread of N440K virus and senior scientists have also confirmed that

there is no new mutant virus in the country except B.1.617. Naidu, who is supposed to act responsibly, has been acting irresponsibly, panicking the public by sitting in another state, he said.

Referring to criticism of the TDP chief on vaccine shortage, the minister said that Chandrababu Naidu should better know under whose control the vaccines are being supplied and administered.

So far 67,42,700 people have been vaccinated with all two doses across the state and till date only 73,49,960 doses of vaccine was supplied by the Centre, he said.

Nani said that the government was taking appropriate steps to contain Covid and rolled out best practices emerging as a role model to other states. The beds have been increased to 44,542, and supply of oxygen, vital medicines like Remdisivir are in place in all hospitals, he explained.

AICTE releases 2021-22 academic calendar

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) on Thursday proposed an academic calendar for the year 2021-22.

In a statement, the apex technical education regulator said that the process of the grant of approval for the institutions, other than the standalone PGDM and PGCM colleges, will be completed by June 30 and the affiliation process by the respective universities and boards have to be completed by July 15.

The last date for the completion of the first round of counselling and admission for allotment of seats is set as August 31, and the commencement of classes for the existing students of the technical courses should be September 1.

While the second round of counselling and allotment of seats have to be completed by

September 9 and the cancellation of seats for technical courses with full fee refund is September 10, 2021.

However, the students seeking admission into the first year can be admitted against the vacancies up to September 15, and the first-year technical course classes should be commenced on the same day. Similarly, the last date for the lateral entry admission into the second

year courses for the newly admitted students are September 20, 2021. Likewise, the commencement of classes for existing and new students in standalone PGDM and PGCM institutions is July 1, 2021, and the last date for cancellation of admissions with a full fee refund is July 5 and final date of admission is July 10.

In the case of the Open Distance Learning (ODL) and online programmes and courses, the last date for admission to courses under this category for

the first session is September 1 and for the second session is February 1, 2022.

The AICTE asked the institutions and universities approved to follow the AICTE and UGC guidelines on examinations issued from time to time given pandemic.

Further, the classes may be started in online or offline mode or blended mode combining the online and offline modes. However, it insisted on following the prescribed protocols, guidelines related to pandemic.

That apart, the AICTE clarified that the academic calendar may change subject to the conditions existing due to pandemic and guidelines issued by the minister of health and minister of home and ministry of education from time to time. It also warned that the institutions admitting students without prior approval will attract punitive action against the erring institutions.



‘Visit each house to identify people with Covid symptoms’

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIKARABAD

MUNICIPAL Chairperson Chigullapalli Manjula Ramesh organised an awareness programme on Thursday with the staff as part of the house survey in Vikarabad Municipal (Outreach) as per the directions of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and District Collector. As part of the house survey, a special meeting with bill collectors, RPs and Anganwadi workers was held at Vikarabad Municipal Office.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chairperson instructed the bill

collectors, RPs and Anganwadi workers in 34 wards under Vikarabad municipality to visit each house to identify people with corona symptoms and to identify the differences in oxygen levels with the help of Oximeter and report their health information to the District Medical Officers. She said the survey participants should take utmost care and informed that the government will provide masks, gloves and sanitisers.

Municipal Commissioner Buchaiah, Medical Officer Vinod Reddy, Mepma Venkatesh, RO Shiva, Manager Naresh and others were present.

Jagan opens RTC area hospital, bus depot

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy virtually inaugurated AP-SRTC bus depot at Punganur and RTC Area Hospital in Kadapa from his camp office here on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister commended the efforts of RTC officials for bringing a hospital in these tough times and serving the employees along with the health department. He said that the hospital will provide better medical services to the RTC employees and reiterated that he had kept his word by establishing a bus depot and a hospital.

Meanwhile, transport minister Perni Venkataramaiah said that the previous government had tried to privatise APSRTC by closing down the depots, however, the corporation got a new lease of life by merging RTC with the government. Despite having about Rs



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy inaugurating RTC area hospital in Kadapa and bus depot at Punganur in virtual mode on Thursday

3,600 crore burden every year with the merging of 50,000 workers, the government has not backed down. He said it is fortunate to have such a Chief Minister who thinks and takes care of every employee.

Panchayat raj minister Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy said that the Punganur town has been a municipality for 40 years without a bus depot. But the Chief Minister has made it a reality by completing and inaugurating the bus

depot. The Punganur bus depot was constructed in an area of seven acres at a total cost of Rs 7.5 crore. While the depot was set up with 65 buses, it was made a model depot and equipped with a model workshop. The bus depot was renamed after Dr Y S Rajasekhara Reddy.

Similarly, in Kadapa, the area hospital was constructed at a cost of Rs 3.8 crore, and equipped with medical infrastructure worth of Rs 2 crore. The hospital was built in an area of 1.6 acres and employs seven doctors, 25 paramedical staff and housekeeping staff. The hospital provides medical services to RTC employees and retired employees from Kadapa, Kurnool, Anantapur, Chittoor and Nellore districts.

Vigilance books six hospitals for violations

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE flying squad teams of the vigilance and enforcement conducted surprise checks in various hospitals throughout the state on Thursday and registered criminal cases against six hospitals, said K V R Rajendranath Reddy, director of the vigilance and enforcement.

He said in a statement here the teams conducted surprise inspections on Wednesday and Thursday on 30 hospitals throughout the state and found irregularities in six hospitals.

The director said that the hospitals indulged in various irregularities including overcharging the patients against the prescribed fee by the government, denying treatment for Arogyasri patients, misuse of Remdesivir vials among others.

The irregularities were also found in maintaining registers in the pharmacy, invoices and bills, he said.

The director said that criminal cases were registered against five hospitals and they had recommended to the government to cancel permission to treat Covid patients to one hospital.

He said that cases were registered against Palnadu Hospital and Anji Reddy Hospital both at Piduguralla, Subhashini Hospital at Puttur, Vedanta Hospital in Vijayawada, Suryamukhi Hospital in Srikulam. He said that permission would be cancelled to City Care Hospital in Kadapa for not issuing receipts to the patients.

He appealed to people to lodge complaints against the hospitals if they found any irregularities with the nodal officers S Ravisankar Narayan (9895972367), Sudhir Kumar Reddy (9740081357) and Dr T Geeta Prasadini (9849902208).

Stop ‘fake stories’ on vaccine purchase, TDP to govt

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MANGALAGIRI

TDP national official spokesperson K Pattabhi Ram on Thursday demanded the YSRCP government to buy the required vaccines immediately to save people and stop telling fake stories on the permission to be given by the Central government.

Pattabhi Ram asked how Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy’s Advisor Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy could mislead the public saying that there was no approval from the Centre to buy adequate vaccine. The fact was that the Central government has already told the vaccine makers to sell 50 per cent vaccines to

- Party spokesperson Pattabhi Ram dismisses Sajjala’s statement that Centre’s permission needed to procure vaccines

- Says that Centre has permitted States to buy vaccines directly from manufacturers
- Alleges that the govt is waiting to buy vaccines from Hetero for commissions



K Pattabhi Ram

itself (the Centre) and the remaining 50 per cent to the states and the private hospitals directly.

Addressing a press conference here, the TDP leader expressed concern that the Jagan Mohan Reddy government was apparently unwilling to spend enough money to buy and give vaccines to all the people in AP. The

Chief Minister’s greediness and inefficiency led to the unprecedented surge of Covid second wave in the state. Maharashtra already gave 1.7 crore doses to its citizens, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh 1.35 crore each, West Bengal 1.13 crore, Karnataka 1 crore and Kerala 76 lakh. AP could give just 65 lakh only till now, he pointed out.

Pattabhi said that just as in many other respects, AP came to stand in the lowest place in vaccination when compared to other states in the country. When the Covid threat was rising each day, the AP government ordered just 13 lakh doses at just Rs 45 crore. The Chief Minister was not buying vaccines directly from the Serum Institute and the

Bharat Biotech since they would not give any commissions, he alleged.

The TDP leader demanded Ramakrishna Reddy to provide proof of alleged restrictions imposed by the Centre on vaccines purchase or the Centre giving permission to AP to buy only 13 lakh doses. There were reports that the Chief Minister and his coterie had struck a secret deal and postponed the crucial vaccine purchase. The state would now buy vaccines only when the Hetero company would be able to supply the Sputnik vaccine which would take considerable time. Till then, the Chief Minister would not bother about the lives of the people and his sole interest was in the

commissions, he said.

Pattabhi recalled how the YSRCP regime committed huge irregularities and collected commissions in the Covid test kits procurement in the beginning. Ramakrishna Reddy had no moral right to criticise former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu who had the glowing track record of efficiently rescuing people during calamities like the Hudhud super cyclone and the Uttarakhand flash floods. It was a shame that videos were going viral showing YSRCP MPs Pili Subhashchandra Bose, Margani Bharat and others talking about how their own government threw up its hands in helplessness in the face of the deadly coronavirus attack.

As Covid deaths rise, so do obituary pages in Gujarat

Saurashtra Bhaskar’s Bhavnagar edition sets aside eight of its 16 pages for obituary notices

If any benchmark was needed for the growing menace of COVID-19 in Gujarat, one only has to open the obituary page of local newspapers.

With each passing day, the obituary columns are becoming longer and longer to the point that the daily Saurashtra Bhaskar’s Bhavnagar edition on Thursday set aside eight of its 16 pages for obituary notices.

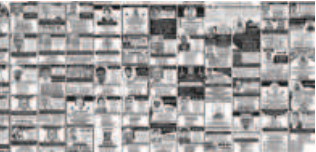
The burgeoning death notices come amid apprehensions that the number of cases and casualties are being underreported for a variety of reasons.

Saurashtra Bhaskar, a popular Gujarati newspaper, carried 238 obituar-

ies on Thursday, a quantum jump from just 28 two months back on March 6.

Sandesh, another leading Gujarati newspaper, says 12 coronavirus patients died on Wednesday in the Kheda district of Gujarat, while the state government data says only two COVID-19 patients died in Kheda on Wednesday, according to Rediffnews report.

Similarly, the Gujarat Samachar newspaper says 25 coronavirus patients died on Wednesday in Gandhinagar, a sharp contrast to the Gujarat government’s claim that no one died due to the virus in Gandhinagar on Wednesday. The Congress claims that



the Bharatiya Janata Party government in Gujarat is underreporting coronavirus cases to mask the real death count due to the pandemic.

“The Vijay Rupani-led government in the state is suppressing coronavirus death figures to hide the reality from the people,” state Congress spokesperson Manish Doshi said.

Countering the allegations, the state

government maintains that if a coronavirus patient with co-morbidities dies, his death may not be attributed to the viral infection and every death is categorised as per the Indian Council of Medical Research guidelines.

As per the state government’s data released on Wednesday, Gujarat recorded 133 deaths due to COVID-19 during the preceding 24 hours.

This data is in stark contrast with the 141 obituaries published in two major Gujarati language newspapers on Thursday, 85 in Gujarat Samachar and 56 in Sandesh.

“The BJP government is hiding the

actual death figures to cover up their failures in handling the pandemic. In many villages, the daily death toll is in double figures while the government data shows single figures for the entire district,” the state Congress spokesperson said.

Chief Minister Vijay Rupani recently denied reports that the state government was hiding coronavirus fatalities.

“As per ICMR guidelines, if a comorbid patient dies then a committee of experts decides the primary and secondary causes of the death. If the committee identifies the main cause of the death as a heart attack then even

though the patient was infected, such death is not counted as caused by coronavirus. This system is followed in the entire country,” the chief minister had said. The Gujarat high court on Wednesday said the steps taken by the state government to contain the spread of COVID-19 were not enough and further restrictions need to be imposed while keeping in mind people’s welfare. The observation came after the state government informed the court about measures undertaken to stem the spread of the deadly virus.

“Steps have indeed been taken by the state government... but the same is

not enough in the present situation and further steps to break the chain is also required to make the public at large aware about the pandemic and its grave effect on the society by imposing further restrictions as may be thought fit in the present situation,” the court said. Gujarat government on Wednesday reported 12,955 new coronavirus positive cases in the state even as 12,995 people recovered from the infection and 133 COVID-19 patients died. With the addition of the new cases and the fatalities, the overall COVID-19 tally in Gujarat rose to 6,33,427 and the toll to 7,912, the health department said.

WINDOWS

2 arrested with 7 kg uranium

MUMBAI: The Maharashtra ATS has seized over 7 kg of natural uranium worth about Rs 21.30 crore and arrested two persons in this connection, an official said. The substance is “highly radioactive and dangerous to human life”, the ATS official said, quoting a report of an analysis conducted by Bhabha Atomic Research Centre. Acting on a specific information, the Nagpada unit of the ATS had apprehended a 27-year-old Thane resident, Jigar Pandya, with some small pieces of the valuable substance on February 14.



Newly elected TMC MLA and Bangla film personality Lovely Maitra flashes victory sign during oath ceremony in Kolkata on Thursday

HC grants bail to Vikram Bhawe

Mumbai: The Bombay high court on Thursday granted bail to Vikram Bhawe, an accused in the case of killing of rationalist Narendra Dabholkar in 2013. Bhawe was accused of helping two other accused -- Sachin Andure and Sharad Kalaskar -- who allegedly shot Dabholkar on August 20, 2013 in Pune, with a reece of the spot and escape route after the crime. A division bench of Justices S S Shinde and Manish Pitale granted bail to Bhawe on a surety of Rs 1 lakh to Bhawe and directed him to appear before the police station concerned in Pune everyday for a period of one month, and then every second day for two months. The court also directed Bhawe to attend the trial in the case and not tamper with any evidence or witnesses.

Prepare buffer stock of O2: SC tells Centre

No need for tests after 10 days of home isolation in mild cases, says Health Ministry

NEW DELHI/MEERUT/Gurugram

THE Supreme Court on Thursday said the country needs to be prepared for the third wave of Covid-19 which experts say could be more harmful, especially for children, and emphasised upon the need to create buffer stock of oxygen.

It asked the Centre not to reduce oxygen supply to Delhi from 700MT till further orders and ensure that rationalisation exercise is completed while taking into account the pan-India perspective.

The top court said that people in Delhi are dying despite efforts being made to treat patients and there is also no denying that many have lost their lives due to shortage of oxygen supply. It made clear to the Centre and Delhi govt that it will not allow the top court of the country to be a ground of recrimination between the two as both indulged in a blame game on the issue of allocation and supply of oxygen.

The Union Health Ministry has issued revised guidelines for home isolation for patients with mild or asymptomatic symptoms.

The new revised guidelines said, “Patient under home isolation will stand discharged and end isolation after at least 10 days have passed from onset of symptoms (or from date of sampling for asymptomatic cases) and no fever for 3 days. There is no need for testing after the home isolation period is over.”

Cricketer and IPL star player Suresh Raina is one of the latest to get help from actor and philanthropist Sonu Sood.

Sonu Sood, who has been amplifying information about Covid-19 resources through his social media accounts, Thursday pledged to help former India all-rounder Suresh Raina get an oxygen cylinder for his ailing aunt in Meerut.

Raina, 34, took to Twitter seeking leads for an oxygen cylinder in Meerut for his Covid-19 positive aunt.

In a tragic incident, a Covid patient died on his way to the hospital after his family members pleaded for a hospital bed in front of Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa’s official residence Cauvery. Even though the CMO officials made arrangements for a bed and an ambulance, the patient was reportedly declared brought dead by the hospital authorities.

To streamline the O2 distribution and curb black marketing, the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) and the district administration have started the token system for Covid patients.



A man reacts as he speaks on the phone after a relative died of Covid-19, in Ajmer; (Right) a family member conducts last rites at Sarai Kale Khan Cremation Ground in New Delhi on Thursday



IPL star Suresh Raina seeks Sonu Sood’s help

Token system in Gurugram for O2 distribution

480 CSI priests booked in Kerala

Kochi: As many as 480 priests belonging to the Church of South India (CSI) in Kerala, a prominent denomination, have been booked for allegedly violating Covid-19 protocols by organising and participating in a retreat at Munnar in Idukki district last month. The police registered a case based on the statement of the tahsildar following media reports that the annual retreat had turned into a superspreading event as over 100 priests had been infected and two vicars had succumbed to it. A section of the priests and laymen under the church recently lodged a detailed complaint with the government also about the alleged pandemic protocol violations in the five-day event, held from April 13.

Tamil comedian Pandu dies

Chennai: Tamil comedian Pandu, noted for his unique facial expressions and body language, died here on Thursday due to Covid-19, his family said. “He tested positive for coronavirus and was admitted to hospital yesterday and his pulse dropped suddenly and he passed away early this morning,” Pandu’s son Pintu told PTI. Pandu is survived by his wife, who is also being treated for Covid-19 in a hospital, and three sons. In his career spanning about four decades, Pandu has performed comedy roles in 500-plus movies, mainly in Tamil and his late 1980s television serial on Doordarshan Panju, Pattu, Peethambaram was hugely popular.

Family of 5 die in 22 days

Gonda: In a tragic series of incidents, one family has lost five members within a span of 22 days, apparently to Covid. The family, however, refuses to believe that any of the deceased had Covid because the antigen tests had shown them negative. All of them, however, had visible symptoms of the deadly virus. The tragedy struck the family of Anjani Srivastava in Chakrauta village in Gonda. Anjani’s elder brother Hanuman Prasad died on April 2. He was 56. Family sources said that Hanuman Prasad developed breathing problem and died even before he could be given medical treatment. On April 14, Anjani’s 75-year-old mother, Madhuri Devi, passed away on April 14.

MP shocker: Patients in fields, IV bottles hang from trees

AGAR MALWA

In a shocking sight from Madhya Pradesh, patients in its Agar Malwa district were seen being treated in fields with IV fluid bottles dangling from tree branches.

The increasing number of Covid patients in the district has put a lot of pressure on health care system. Hospitals are overwhelmed with Covid patients and no beds are available. In such a situation, doctors are forced to treat patients wherever they get space.

While the corona epidemic wreaks havoc, a large number of patients in the rural areas are suffering from common cold, cough but are not getting tested for Covid. They are not even ready to go to the district headquarters for treatment. In such a situation, doctors and quacks working in rural areas have found novel ways to treat patients and earn whatever they could. In the rural areas of Agar Malwa district, patients are being treated in fields with glucose bottles hanging from tree branches, in complete disregard of medical rules. The agricultural fields look like hospital beds and trees have become glucose bottle stands.

Meanwhile, comedian Sugandha Mishra was booked for allegedly flouting coronavirus norms during her wedding with counterpart Sanket Bhosale at a resort in Punjab’s Phagwara last week, police said on Thursday.

The case was registered against her, the bridegroom’s side, the owner of resort and participants of the marriage after a video went viral showing a large gathering of people at the wedding in violation of COVID-19 norms, Deputy Superintendent of Police Paramjit Singh said. The marriage ceremony took place on April 26. The case was registered under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code pertaining to disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant and relevant sections of the Disaster Management Act, Singh said.

Union Min’s convoy attacked in Bengal

KOLKATA

IN a shocking incident, the convoy of Union Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan was attacked by a group of unidentified miscreants at Panchkhuri area in West Midnapore district on Thursday afternoon.

The BJP alleged that the attack was a handiwork of the TMC goons but it was strongly refuted by the TMC leadership alleging that the BJP leadership is provoking people to resort to violence.

The incident took place when Muraleedharan accompanied by

BJP state leader Rahul Sinha was going to Ghatal in East Midnapore to meet some of the BJP supporters who were injured in the attack allegedly by the TMC goons. When his convoy was at Panchkhuri that falls under West Midnapore, suddenly there was brick batting on his vehicle and people came with sticks and other things and stopped his vehicle. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced a compensation of 2 lakh for all those who have died in post-poll violence in the state since the May 2 election results.



Union Minister and BJP leader V Muraleedharan’s convoy being allegedly attacked by goons of Bengal’s ruling Trinamool Congress during his visit to the State, in West Midnapore district on Thursday

3 terrorists killed in Shopian encounter

SRINAGAR

THREE Terrorists were killed and another surrendered on Thursday morning after an encounter in South Kashmir’s Shopian district, officials said.

A group of four new recruits of Al-Badr terror outfit were trapped in Kulgam area amid a cordon and search operation. Acting on a specific input about the militant presence, police and army had started a joint operation on Wednesday night.

Police said turning down the sur-

render offer, the trapped terrorists fired and lobbed grenade on the joint search party.

“One newly recruited terrorist namely Tausif Ahmad surrendered,” police said. “Three terrorists were killed. Search is going on.”

Army said multiple appeals for surrender were made by the police and family members of the trapped terrorists. “Restraint was exercised to avoid any collateral damage,” army said.

Four pistols were recovered from the slain terrorists. The joint operation is over.

Surge in Covid cases likely to decline: Virologist Kang

Noted vaccinologist Gagan-deep Kang on Thursday said that the current surge in coronavirus cases may go down by the middle to the end of May.

Right now it’s doing a “world through” in areas it did not do last year, in the middle class population, in the rural areas and there is going to be “very little fuel” for the virus to continue to go through, she said.

She said there could be one or two more peaks of coronavirus cases but they may not be as bad as the current one. Allaying fears about vaccines, she said they are efficacious and emphasised the need

to ramp the inoculation drive.

She also expressed concern over the declining number of coronavirus tests. The proportion of cases is actually much larger than the tests reveal but in absolute numbers in “what we track and count”, Kang said. “Best case estimates from a number of models are somewhere between the middle and the end of the month. Some models have it going into early June but based on what we are seeing, right now middle to end of May is a reasonable estimate,” she said in response to a question in a webinar organised by the Indian Women

Press Corps.

On forecasting waves of virus, she said one can definitely use the characteristics of the strain, characteristics of a pandemic in a particular place to predict what is going to happen in that location if the data is available at that level for mathematical modelling.

She said there are few infectious disease modellers in the country. “And all the ones that exist will tell you that their models are as good as the data they have and the models are accurate up to two weeks. You cannot expect a prediction for three months or six months or two



years from now as yet. We don’t know enough about the virus. We don’t know enough about how it is

going to,” he said.

On being asked about the prospects of coronavirus, she said this will become like “a really bad flu virus”.

“This will become seasonal, like a really bad flu virus. It will be something like becoming more seasonal, that will settle down, that people will acquire a certain level of immunity because of repeated immunity and vaccinations,” she said. Kang added that people will acquire a certain level of immunity because of repeated infections and vaccinations.

“It may be imperfect in immu-

nity, so we may need boosters if we keep having enough virus replications to have new mutants that have immune escape, but I am pretty sure that we are not going to have in this situation that we are in today too many more times. At least, not with this virus,” she said.

Meanwhile, Australian officials reinstated social distancing measures across greater Sydney on Thursday, as they scrambled to find missing transmission links in a COVID-19 case connected to an Indian variant of the virus. With many people expected to gather over the weekend for annual Mother’s Day

celebrations, the New South Wales state government restricted household gatherings to 20 guests and limited aged care facility visitors to two people per resident.

Masks will be mandatory on public transport and at indoor venues. All the restrictions, which cover around 5.3 million people in the country’s biggest metropolitan area, take effect at 5 p.m. local time and are scheduled to last until Monday morning.

“We believe this is a proportionate response to the risk we have ahead of us,” NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian told reporters.



BIZ BRIEFS

Axis Mutual Fund has announced the launch of their new fund Axis global innovation fund of fund. The fund will provide investors with an opportunity to invest in Schroder International Selection Fund Global Disruption, an equity fund that aims to provide long term capital growth by investing in companies worldwide that benefit from disruption. The new fund offer (NFO) opens for subscription from May 10 to 21. Chandresh Kumar Nigam, MD, CEO, Axis AMC, said: "We are extremely excited to offer investors a product that captures one of the most significant themes of the current age disruptive innovation precipitated by technological advancements and changes to the business environment. Companies that are bringing about and benefiting from these changes have the potential to generate high growth."

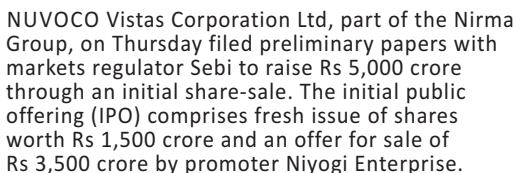
Vivo started the sale of vivo V21. This 44MP OIS front camera comes with features including 44MP OIS night selfiie, super stable selfiie video, eye autofocus, 4K video. The vivo V21 will be available in three unique color options sunset dazzle, dusk blue, and arctic white. The product is priced at Rs 29,990 (8GB+128GB) and Rs 32,990 (8GB+256GB). The unique spotlight selfiie with dual LEDs on the front screen are tailor-made to level up selfies taken in any light conditions. The device has begun sale on May 6, 2021 on Flipkart, vivo India E-store and all offline partner retail stores across India. The product has offers such as flat 10 per cent cashback with HDFC and Kotak Bank along with complete mobile protection against all damages with V-shield.

SuperBottoms has introduced comfort wear organic top and set for babies and toddlers. As babies spending most of their time indoors due to Covid, the all parents team at SuperBottoms has designed a unisex sleeveless top and shorts set in super fun prints. The product is available in four sizes for six months to one year, up to six years. Pallavi Utageri, SuperBottoms Founder & CEO, said, "When lockdown started, our active kids had to be confined at home all day. It was more difficult for them to cope up with the lifestyle change than it was for us. This is when we decided to put our thoughts together to make it a little easier for our tiny tots' life at home by designing a line of loungewear ideal for wearing at home."

Bajaj Auto remained the top of the motorcycle segment in India and clocked worldwide sales of 3,48,173 units of which 2,21,603 units were exported to emerge as the India's #1 motorcycle manufacturer in April 2021. The company leads Indian automobile exports, accounting for almost 60 per cent of the country's motorcycle and three-wheeler exports last year. In FY21, Bajaj Auto's export income stood at Rs 12,687 cr. Rakesh Sharma, Executive Director, Bajaj Auto, said: "We have commenced FY22 on a very positive note despite the challenging environment. The wide range of motorcycles made by us cover the entire spectrum from entry, middle and up to premium level segments."

IT'S estimated that more than \$700 billion in capex will be spent within the decade on edge infrastructure. While 10 per cent of data is processed outside of the data centre today, 75 per cent of data will be processed outside of a traditional data centre or cloud by 2025.

– **Michael Dell**, Founder & CEO, Dell Technologies

DELHI FRIDAY 7 MAY 2021

Says Covid crisis will weigh on Modi's popularity

THE spiralling crisis from resurgence of Covid-19 cases in India has dented support for the ruling BJP but voter support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his party will remain strong over the coming quarters and through this humanitarian crisis, Fitch Solutions said Thursday. The sudden and steep surge in the number of coronavirus cases – the highest-ever 4,12,262 new infections and a record 3,980 daily death toll in a day – swamped the health system, which seemed to have collapsed. While containment measures will weigh on India's ongoing economic recovery, the localised nature of restrictions means that the actual impact is likely to be much less severe relative to April-June 2020 when a strict nationwide lockdown was imposed, Fitch Solutions said.

It forecasted real GDP to grow 9.5 per cent in 2021-22 (April 2021 to March 2022). Risks to this forecast are to the downside, as the surge in new daily Covid-19 case loads will most likely see an extension and expansion of lockdowns, it said adding that the resurgence of Covid-19 cases exposed cracks in the Indian healthcare system.

“While there appear to be signs that the spiralling Covid-19 crisis in India has dented support for the ruling BJP, we maintain our view that voter support for Prime Minister Modi and the BJP will remain

- The sudden and steep surge in the number of coronavirus cases
- This second wave in India has been widely attributed to the B.1.1.7 variant – first identified in the UK



strong over the coming quarters and through this humanitarian crisis,” Fitch Solutions said. This second wave in India has been widely attributed to the B.1.1.7 variant – first identified in the UK which had ramped up cases in Punjab. Another possible culprit is a home-grown variant, B.1.617, with two worrying mutations that originated in Maharashtra, the worst affected State. “In addition to this, in India, a year of Covid-19 fatigue gave way to an ill-advised euphoria over herd immunity as cases began to dip in January 2021. “Inadequate government measures and people not adhering to public health guidelines,

such as wearing face masks and maintaining social distancing, are also the main reasons for India's upward tick in infections," it said.

It added that a number of political, social and religious events and elections for local bodies in multiple States and preparation for Assembly elections in others also created an opportunity for the virus to move fast. Fitch Solutions said that in March this year, a few weeks before the new surge, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, who is also a physician, asserted that India was in the "endgame" of the Covid-19 pandemic, justifying the government's decision to export medical resources

NUVOCO Vistas Corporation Ltd, part of the Nirma Group, on Thursday filed preliminary papers with markets regulator Sebi to raise Rs 5,000 crore through an initial share-sale.

The initial public offering (IPO) comprises fresh issue of shares worth Rs 1,500 crore and an offer for sale of Rs 3,500 crore by promoter Niyogi Enterprise, according to the draft red herring prospectus. Proceeds of the fresh issue will be utilised for repayment of certain loans availed by the company as well as for general corporate purpose. Nuvoco Vistas is a cement manufacturer with a consolidated capacity of 22.32 million metric tonne per annum (MMTPA). It has 11 cement plants comprising five integrated units, five grinding units and one blending unit. It operates cement manufacturing units in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Rajasthan and Haryana. Nuvoco Vistas, formerly Lafarge India Ltd, is



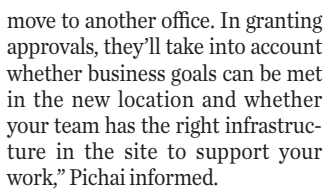
The equity shares of the company will be listed on the BSE and National Stock Exchange (NSE). Founded by Karsanbhai Patel, Nirma Ltd is one of India's diversified conglomerates with businesses across industrial and consumer products ranging from soaps and detergents, salt, soda ash, caustic soda and other chemicals.

AS the Covid-19 pandemic ravages countries like India and Brazil, Alphabet and Google CEO Sundar Pichai has announced that the company is adopting a hybrid workplace, where around 60 per cent of Googlers are coming together in the office a few days a week, another 20 per cent are working in new office locations and 20 per cent are working from home.

Pichai said that it heartbreaking to see Covid surging in places like India, Brazil, and many others around the world.

"We'll move to a hybrid work week where most Googlers spend approximately three days in the office and two days wherever they work best. Since in-office time will be focused on collaboration, your product areas and functions will help decide which days teams will come together in the office," he said in a blog post late on Wednesday.

"There will also be roles that may need to be on site more than three days a week due to the nature of the work". "By mid-June your PAs and functions will come back with a process by which you can apply to



The company will also offer opportunities for employees to apply for completely remote work (away from team or office) based on their roles and team needs.

“As with location transfers, your leads will evaluate whether remote work can support the goals of the team and business. Whether you choose to transfer to a different office or opt for completely remote work, your compensation will be ad-

justed according to your new location," Pichai noted.

Going forward, Googlers will be able to temporarily work from a location other than their main office for up to 4 weeks per year (with manager approval).

"Product areas and functions will also offer focus hours so we limit internal meetings during times when people need to be heads down on projects," the Google CEO said.

The company said it will offer extra “reset” days to help employees recharge during the pandemic in 2021. The next global day off will be on May 28.

“The future of work is flexibility,” Pichai said.

STATE-OWNED LIC will have five working days starting from May 10 since Saturdays have been declared as a holiday for the insurer. Pursuant to a notification on April 15, 2021, wherein the central government has declared every Saturday as a public holiday for Life Insurance Corporation of India, all policy holders and other stakeholders are informed that with effect from May 10, all offices of LIC will work from Monday to Friday, it said in a public notice. "Starting May 10, 2021, office hours from Monday to Friday would be 10 AM to 5:30 pm," it added.

INTERNATIONAL airlines have initiated tweaking of pricing mechanism on global routes as several countries banned travelling to and from India due to rising number of Covid-19 cases. Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Kuwait, New Zealand, Oman, Singapore and UAE have already banned travel from India. However, airlines are operating dedicated cargo flights, flights under the bilateral air bubble pacts to select countries. Travel agencies in the city attributed the reasons such as travel restrictions on India and low occupancy rate to steep rise in air fares.

“Domestic airlines have increased fares by five to 10 per cent in the last six months within government caps. For international airlines, it has been more than three months that fares touched Rs 80,000 for one-way journey to US, but after April 24 as countries



banned travel from India, the fares are moving above Rs 1,50,000 for one way travel.

People mostly travel to US via Dubai, but now as Dubai government has imposed restrictions on people travelling from India, they have to take direct flights. Also, there are no regular flights or air bubble flights. Only chartered flights are operating. Vistara, Spice Jet, Indigo, True jet, Air India are currently working as far I know. Business are travelers occupying 20 per cent, while students and residents are also getting back to India. People

ple coming to Hyderabad accounted for almost 70 per cent occupancy until second week of April. Indian residents flying from Middle East have 80-90 per cent occupancy in flights," Venkatesh, founder, T6 Travel agency, told *Bizz Buzz*.

"The flight fares have gone up. It depends upon the load and occupancy. If seats are filling fast, the airlines will keep the prices on higher side. Some airlines have canceled their operations. We are observing the fare rise from March 1 onwards. Mostly, business travelers

and individuals on other emergency work are travelling. Domestic flights have 60 per cent occupancy and international flights, as far I observed, have 80-90 per cent occupancy. Businessmen on tourist visas and individuals on work permits are travelling to other countries," observes Srinu, senior travel consultant at Travel World.

One of the customers who travelled to Hyderabad a month ago also express the same worries. Anil, a software employee, says he had to travel back home from Oman in the end of March as it was a sudden decision and I was travelling on work permit basis; it was difficult to search for flights. Some of the airlines kept re scheduling and I went through the complete process of getting certified as Covid negative, which is mandatory for international travel. I am waiting for my office to confirm for my return travel again, but I observe that charges are high for international travel as occupancy is less in flights.”

APPRECIATING the Andhra Pradesh government for imposing curfew to combat the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Federation of Small and Medium Enterprises of India (FSME India) underlined the need for supporting the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) which are reeling under the adverse impact of the Covid second wave. "The deadly Covid second wave has adversely impacted the MSME sector in Andhra Pradesh as the demand has come down. The government should make efforts to minimize the impact on the key sector," APK Reddy, national president, FSME India, said in a statement.

Reddy said that his industry body took part in the virtual meeting organised by Andhra Pradesh's Industries Department to discuss related to industries in the wake of the Covid curfew. "Under the new guidelines issued by the AP government, all essential and continuous process industries can operate 24X7. All other industries are allowed to operate in single shift or two shifts, but should close the operations by 2 pm," he explained. He urged the industries and industrialists to carry out operations by strictly following Covid protocols. "The State government should sanction additional funds for sanitization of industrial estates and industrial units," he said.



