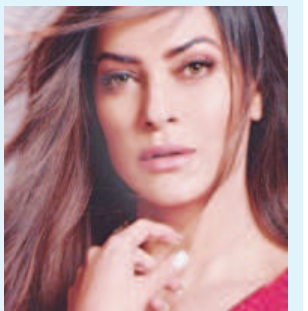


Womenia

TWEET PATROL



SUSHMITA SEN
@THESUSHMITASEN
 “And even when you are but a mere silhouette, you’ll know light’s got your back.” #landlockedsailor #positivity #knowing I love you guys!!!



Sustainable food life, for a better lifestyle

Sustainable Eating is gaining steam worldwide but we Indians have it all figured out. Sustainable living means reducing one's use of the earth's natural resources. I make it a point to eat fresh Indian, local produce and you ladies should too. Follow sustainable eating not only to benefit the environment but to improve your mental and physical health in the long run. Here are ways you can adopt a more sustainable food life:

Vocal for local (and seasonal): I believe this is the most basic step in your quest. Don't follow fads by choosing exotic varieties, but choose the nutritionally better counterpart growing right in your backyard. Our very own millets are a great swap for the foreign quinoa. This helps local farms flourish, preserve wildlife and minimal conserve energy used in food production.

Plant power: I cannot stress on how important plant power is. The more we eat from a plant and less food made in a plant, eat less from the animal kingdom, we would be saving our Mother Earth. Food industries have high environmental costs, known to degrade land and severely deplete land resources; especially water. Choosing a vegetarian lifestyle reduces demand for meat, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions thus reducing any harmful environmental impact.

Organic always: I cannot stress on the fact that you must include as much organic food in your diet as you can. From spices to the actual produce, organic is the way to go. Organic farming does not have any pesticides or chemicals in it, focuses solely on restoring the soil and ecosystem and is known to improve the nutritional content of foods. While it is important to eat local foods, chose the ones grown organically.

Pause on processed: The word 'processed' immediately means unsustainable. Processed foods tend to be more resource intensive. There is a very high usage of packing and packaging to produce and store these goods. They also contain high levels of white flour, white sugar, fat, salt and other questionable ingredients. Aerated drinks also use more water to be made so it is wiser just switch to having simple delicious water. We have all heard the saying 'you are what you eat' so a plant-based diet from local and seasonal sources can be good for your health and for the planet's well-being. Understand the efforts that go into growing, harvesting, packing and cooking food. Promise to treat it well. Eat well, don't waste well. Eat thoughtfully and watch your life transform into a healthier one.



Naini Setalvad



Uma Chigurupati takes over as new Chairperson of FICCI FLO

The city's well-known businesswoman, marathoner, vintner is the new Chairperson of the FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) Hyderabad Chapter. She assumed charge in a Virtual Mode from Delhi recently at a brief change of guard function.

She will be in the office for one year 2021-2022. She takes the reins of the biggest and the most vibrant Chapter under FICCI FLO across India.

The multi-faceted Uma is the 21st Chairperson of the Chapter of 800 plus members. Her mission for the year is, 'Together We Can with Courage, Capability and Compassion'

Uma brings with her a very rich experience of over 35 years. She along with her husband co-founded Granules India –which has a presence in over 70 countries and employs over 6000 people.

Uma along with her husband Krishna Prasad holds a record of being the only couple to have participated in marathons in both the

North Pole and the South Pole, in the same year. The couple have another unique distinction. They are the world's first couple to cover seven half-marathons across seven continents in seven days. They were the only couple out of 11 people from 10 countries who set that record.

Unlike many, they always did marathons only in rough terrains. Besides running, the two appreciate the art of winemaking. Uma is also an Ikebana master and landscaping enthusiast. She was a Chairperson of Hyderabad 10k run foundation and also was President, Ikebana International Hyderabad Chapter. She is very actively involved in the Skill development and the other philanthropic works Granules involved in. Uma handles KRSMA Estates, which has a vineyard and winery in



Uma Chigurupati

Hampi.

Uma, who is an Executive Director of Granules India, a pharmaceuticals manufacturing company says, "alone we are powerless, but a better chance of being heard, promoting change, fighting for our beliefs and we can make things happen. Courage, Capability and Compassion are the words we should remember and implement. That's why my mission statement is "Together we can, with Courage, Capability and Compassion."

The Vision for the year will be Creating Sustainable livelihood through Vocational training and skill development, she says.

Uma adds, "I choose the main initiative for this year 'health and wellness. Especially due to the present scenario, I felt that there should be more focus on this cause."

There are a lot of expectations from Uma Chigurupati, who manages a pharma company and a vineyard with equal ease.

I will focus on four verticals---Speaker Sessions, learning modules, initiatives, Events and Conclaves during the year she informed.

We will choose People with inspirational and motivational stories as speakers. We would like to learn from their difficult times and the journey they had gone through and how they motivated themselves and created opportunities out of difficulties etc, informs Uma

The learning modules will have learning programs and workshops, which will help in personal growth both in the business and in personality development, she adds.

She would like to work towards reviving local arts, handlooms and handicrafts such as Bidri, Cherial Art, Narayanpetand, and Khadi Handlooms.

NEWS ROUNDUP

Deepika Padukone is hubby Ranveer Singh's 'elegance ki moorat'

Bollywood couple Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone sure love to engage in PDA on social media once in a while. Gushing over a new picture post of Deepika, Ranveer calls his wife an "elegance ki moorat" (effigy of elegance).

Deepika posted a picture on Instagram posing in an ivory coloured off-shoulder dress. "To live a life that is fuelled by authenticity, purpose and empathy makes me happy," she wrote as caption with the picture she shared on Tuesday night.

Ranveer could not stop himself from commenting on his lady love's picture.

"Kya baat hai, baby..." he first wrote. He added, "Elegance ki moorat."

Ranveer and Deepika started dating while shooting for their 2013 release "Goliyon Ki Raasleela". The two got married in 2018 in a private ceremony in Lake Como, Italy.

The couple will be seen sharing screen space in the upcoming Kabir Khan directorial "83", based on India's cricket World Cup win in 1983.



Labour Analgesia; Pain relief methods during labour



Normal labour and vaginal delivery is one of the most uniquely painful and at the same time a beautiful experience in a woman's life. Delivery of a newborn baby into the arms of a conscious and pain-free mother is one of the most rewarding moments of modern medicine.

Dr Sunil Eshwar, Lead Consultant, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Aster RV Hospital said, "Pain relief during labour is surrounded with many myths and controversies. There are various methods available to provide a pain free and memorable experience during childbirth. These can be broadly classified into medical, non medical and regional techniques. Good labour analgesia aims not only to relieve pain and suffering of the mother but also to make the process of delivery safer for the mother and baby."

Inhalational analgesia technique

This method involves inhaling Entonox at the on-

set of contractions, that is, when the patient starts feeling the pain. Entonox is a mix of 50% nitrous oxide in oxygen.

It has been in use since a long time. It is not widely available in all the maternity units.

This method is very easy to use by self-administration, but around 30-40% of patients have found pain relief to be inadequate with Entonox alone. It is the most effective for short term pain relief (1 - 2 hrs). Onset of action is quick (within 1-2 mins) and the effect is short lasting (2-8 mins). This method requires monitoring by health care personnel.

Epidural analgesia

This is an extremely effective and popular method of pain relief during labour. It is also considered to be the gold standard technique. This method involves injecting local anaesthetic agent through the spine, close to the nerves that transmit pain. Following the injection, it takes between 5 and 30 mins for the pain to be relieved. The advantage of this method is that the patient is able to move around with the epidural catheter in place. It is a very effective

method providing 80-90% pain relief. This method is available at all hospitals with anaesthesiologists available round the clock.

The analgesic effect is maintained by continuous infusion of the anaesthetic agent and hence effect lasts till the infusion is discontinued. The side effect of this method includes the increased incidence of instrumental delivery using either vacuum or forceps. Some patients may need catheterisation to pass urine following an epidural.

Transcutaneous electric nerve stimulation

It is a non medical form of pain relief. In this technique, two electrodes are stuck to the skin on your back and the machine delivers small pulses of electric current to the body. These pulses feel like a tingling sensation on the skin. By stimulating different nerves on the spinal cord, it blocks the pain signals. This method is not available at all hospitals. It does not provide pain relief for all patients and most often requires additional methods of pain relief to be used along with it.

Relaxation or Breathing techniques

Using breathing techniques and focusing attention on your breath activates mental processes in the brain that makes labour sensation seem less unpleasant. This method involves practising these techniques in your third trimester. These are taught in all childbirth classes at most hospitals. The goal of relaxation techniques is to learn to relax your entire body when one group of muscles contract. This method is particularly helpful in early labour. Involving your birthing partner or spouse during the pregnancy classes is very important as they could help with various paced breathing techniques during labour.

Acupuncture

Acupuncture techniques for labour pain relief involves puncturing skin with thin sterile needles at certain defined acupuncture points. This technique also requires training in the third trimester at least 4 weeks prior to the expected date of delivery. It also requires trained personnel to be present during labour. It is not widely used or widely available method.



Teach your child to save day



Money can be complicated to deal with for those people won't don't really know how to handle it. Teaching children how to value the money they have can be an essential life skill that is taught at a very early age! By learning about money, people will be better able to handle their finances from childhood and into adulthood.

If children learn the important skill of valuing, using and saving money, they will be ready to face the world.

Teach Your Children to Save Day helps aid this educational prospect by allowing kids to learn new ways of handling and understanding money. And it serves as a great reminder to parents that it's never too early to get involved with helping children learn about saving.

Teach Your Children to Save Day provides bankers an opportunity to show the value of teaching children why saving money is essential. Sponsored by the American Banker Association Education Foundation, this day is meant to be a community effort to help families and schools. The idea is for bankers to help advocate for financial literacy.

Teach Children to Save Day encourages parents to teach their children about money. This includes the value of what money can do for people, and also how (and, especially why!) to start a savings account. Throughout the day, bankers, financial planners, and other banking professionals travel to their local schools and teach students, from kindergarten through high school, about money.

The day is not only about saving, but it also includes important information about spending, donating, and investing money. By bringing this vital habit to children while they are young, it is more likely that they will be able to handle their money better in the future.

Parents can find access to these resources through various local banks on this day. They can use them to give their children activities and learning materials to help them bond with their children.

Saving money can be the start to better education about money, especially once those children grow up and need to handle their finances. Giving kids the information, they need now can help them with difficult situations later, such as unexpected emergencies, loan payments, and other circumstances. Talking about savings, banking and finances doesn't have to be boring! This can be a great day to have fun and enjoy the process of learning together. And although the celebration is on one day, many people have activities related to savings and financial education all throughout the entire month.

Try these ideas for celebrating Teach Your Children to Save Day:

Play a Game About Money

For those families or teachers who want an activity that teaches kids about money, then consider playing the popular game Monopoly, by Hasbro. Although not necessarily about saving (sometimes this game can even cause a person to go bankrupt!) Monopoly teaches about the value of money while also making it fun and entertaining. Another board game that can run along those lines is The Game of Life, by Milton Bradley.

For those who prefer to be in the online world, it's possible to download game apps on a phone and encourage children to play those games. It's all about making saving money fun and educational.

FREE VAX FOR THOSE ABOVE 18 YEARS IN UP

LUCKNOW

THE Uttar Pradesh government has decided to administer Covid-19 vaccine free of cost to all those above 18 years of age from May 1.

"The PM's decision will help in better management of Covid and massive vaccination will help in defeating coronavirus. We have decided to vaccinate all above 18 years free of cost. The state government will take forward the vaccination programme with its own resources," the CM said, according to a statement issued.

The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

The Cabinet also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for allowing administering of coronavirus vaccine to those above 18 years of age.



During the deliberations, the chief minister asked the state Health Department to work out an action plan to conduct the vaccination campaign on a large scale. "We have to increase vaccination centres and create a database of people in the target age group," the CM said.

In the Cabinet meeting, a detailed discussion was held over the current Covid situation. Adityanath said his government was working to save "life and livelihood".

"The war against Covid is being fought vigorously under the guidance of the prime minister,"

he said, asking all the ministers to monitor the status of coronavirus treatment in districts.

The CM also directed to take care of migrants returning from other states and keep them at quarantine centres.

The CM said like the previous year, the success in the fight against the virus can be achieved by keeping the public aware and preventing rumours.

On Tuesday, the death toll from Covid in Uttar Pradesh crossed the 10,000-mark with 162 more fatalities, while the infection tally exceeded nine lakh after detection of 29,754 fresh cases.

So far, the virus has claimed 10,159 lives in the state, which has reported 9,09,405 infections since the outbreak of the pandemic last year. PTI

U'khand tightens restrictions in view of Covid surge

DEHRADUN: The Uttarakhand government has ordered closure of markets in urban areas barring shops dealing in essential commodities from 2 pm onwards and changing of the night curfew timing across the state from 9 pm to 7 pm. The order aimed at checking the spread of COVID-19 comes into effect from Wednesday, Chief Secretary Om Prakash said. The night curfew timing for all 13 districts has been revised from 9 pm-5 am to 7 pm-5 am, it said. The order of closing shops and business establishments also applies to shopping malls, he said. Considering the likelihood of people from Uttarakhand working in Delhi returning home in the wake of a six-day lockdown in the national capital, online registration and a negative RT-PCR test report not older than 72 hours has been made mandatory for the returnees.



All schools, degree colleges, institutes and coaching centres have been closed. The revised standard operating procedures (SOPs) also makes it mandatory for all modes of public transport, including buses and auto rickshaws, besides facilities like cinema halls, restaurants, bars and gyms to run at half their seating capacity.

According to the new SOPs, not more than 100 people can gather for religious, political and social functions barring the ongoing Kumbh Mela where the restrictions announced earlier will remain effective. It orders complete closure of swimming pools and spas in all districts. Organising religious, political and social functions will be completely prohibited in containment and micro containment zones. Uttarakhand reported its highest number of COVID-19 cases in a day on Tuesday with 3,012 people testing positive for the infection.

Another alarm as Delhi's positivity rate zooms to 32.82 per cent

NEW DELHI

AMID acute shortage of oxygen in Delhi hospitals, the Covid positivity rate in the national capital has shot up to 32.82 per cent (till April 20, night), making health management more challenging in the city.

As per the Delhi government's report on April 20, a total of 86,526 samples were tested (56,724 RT-PCR and 29,802 Rapid Antigen) in the last 24 hours, of which 28,395 tests were found Covid positive.

A total of 19,430 people were reported recovered from Covid infection till Tuesday night, while a total of 8,07,328 people were recovered so far in Delhi.

Tally of active cases in Delhi rose to 85,575 and with 277 deaths on Tuesday, the capital's death toll reached 12,638.

Dr. B.L. Sherwal, Medical Director of Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital (RGSS), said, "It means, every third person tested was Covid-19 positive. This is an alarming situation. This is the reason several hospitals in Delhi are overburdened



with patients and short of oxygen."

"Being a doctor, I would appeal to people of Delhi to avoid meeting physically in groups and use maximum digital resources to remain in contact with family members and others. This can be expected from the people of Delhi. Maximum people of Delhi are capable to use digital resources. If a hospital has only 40 ICU beds, it cannot help 41st patient who needs a bed in the hospital. The consumption of oxy-

gen has undergone a quantum increase with the admission of a large number of serious patients who require oxygen support," Dr. Sherwal added.

As per the last update from Delhi government on availability of oxygen, (till late night on April 20) 241 MT of oxygen was supplied to Delhi on Monday and 355.33 MT on Tuesday (upto 3 p.m.) and the total stock of oxygen in the city's hospitals up to 3 p.m. on Tuesday was 508 MT.

Haryana provides police protection to oxygen tankers

CHANDIGARH

HARYANA Health Minister Anil Vij on Wednesday said the state has decided to provide police protection to all tankers carrying medical-grade oxygen.

The state government's action comes in the wake of one oxygen tanker that was heading to Faridabad hospital via the national capital was 'looted' by the Delhi government a day earlier.

"We have sufficient stock of oxygen. We are producing 270 metric tonnes. We were getting the (oxygen) stock from Baddi, but the Himachal Pradesh government had

stopped that supply. It was coming from Bhiwadi in Rajasthan and that was too stopped," Vij told the media. "I have stationed police officials on all oxygen plants in the state. First of all we will meet the requirement of Haryana.

We are being pressurized to give (the oxygen) to Delhi. If there is any left-over oxygen then we will give. We have no problem," he said.

Describing the Tuesday's incident of 'looting' the tanker as unfortunate, Vij, who also holds a Home portfolio, said "now the police escort will accompany all tankers carrying oxygen".

VIKAS DUBEY ENCOUNTER CASE

Inquiry commission gives clean chit to UP Police

LUCKNOW

THE three-member inquiry commission probing the encounter killings of gangster Vikas Dubey and five of his alleged associates has given a clean chit to Uttar Pradesh Police because of lack of evidence, sources said on Wednesday.

The commission is headed by former Supreme Court judge B S Chauhan. The other two members are former Allahabad High Court judge Sashi Kant Agrawal and former UP Director General of Police K L Gupta. The panel submitted its report to the state government on Monday, eight months after it was set up.

"Yes the commission has submitted its report to the state government on Monday. A copy of the report will be submitted in the Supreme court also," Gupta told PTI. He, however, did not elaborate



on the contents of the report. Asked about it, Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Awanish Kumar Awasthi said, "I would not like to comment on it."

According to the sources, the inquiry commission has found no evidence of wrongdoing by the state police. Speaking to PTI, a senior police official said, "No witnesses came forward to challenge the police claims even after advertisements in newspapers and media. Also, no one from the media came forward to get their versions recorded."

There were, however, witnesses supporting the police version, he added. On July 3 last year, eight policemen were killed in an ambush in Bikru village in Chaubeypur area of Kanpur when they were going to arrest Vikas Dubey. Police later killed Prem Prakash Pandey (55) and Atul Dubey (35) in an encounter in Kanpur on July 3. On July 8, Amar Dubey (30), who carried a reward of Rs 50,000 on him, was killed in an encounter in Mau-daha village in Hamirpur district.

On July 9, Praveen Dubey, alias Bauwa (48), and Prabhat, alias Kartikeya (28), were killed in separate encounters in Etawah and Kanpur districts. Six PILs were filed in the Supreme Court after this to seek a court-monitored probe into the encounter killings. The apex court had then on July 22, 2020 approved the Uttar Pradesh government's decision to institute the inquiry commission.

DRDO to set up 2 Covid-19 hospitals in Panipat, Hissar

HISAT

THE Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) will set up two dedicated COVID-19 hospitals of 500 beds each in Panipat and Hissar, Haryana's Home and Health Minister Anil Vij said on Wednesday.

The Army's Western Command has been asked to provide doctors and other medical staff for the facilities, he said. "DRDO will set up two Dedicated Covid Hospitals in Haryana of 500 beds each at Panipat and Hissar," Vij tweeted.

"Work to start (on setting up of these hospitals) immediately," he added. Haryana has registered a sharp increase in coronavirus cases in the last three weeks. On April 20, the state recorded 7,811 new cases of COVID-19, its biggest single-day spike so far, while 35 people succumbed to the viral disease on Tuesday.



3 Covid centres for cops, families

Oxygen cylinders to be provided by Seva Bharati

NEW DELHI

IN view of the rising incidents of covid infection among Delhi Police personnel who are frontline warriors in the corona battle, Delhi Police has set up a fully functional covid care centre in the newly built quarters at PS Shahdra complex with 78 beds of which 20 are oxygen beds. Two more care centres have also been set up at Rohini and PTS Dwarka. Rohini facility has 20 beds of which 10 are oxygen beds. PTS Dwarka facility will be the next to go operational.

The Doctors are being provided by GTB hospital where as Nurses

and paramedic staff are being provided by Hamdard Foundation while the Oxygen cylinders are being provided by Seva Bharati. The facility and medicines will be provided from Delhi Police resources that also includes a dedicated Ambulance to be stationed there to attend to emergencies. A police team under an Inspector will look after the facility and coordination in each place. These facilities to work as Covid Care Centres for Delhi police personnel and their family members have been made for immediate relief of the patients till the time they get admission in regular covid hospitals.

RSS schools turn into isolation centres, 'sevaks' help Covid patients

LUCKNOW

SCHOOLS run by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Saraswati Shishu Mandirs and Saraswati Vidya Mandirs, will be converted into isolation centres in Uttar Pradesh if the need arises.

"Though the situation is under control in UP, we have our plan ready. The various 'prants' have been asked to allow utilisation of resources as per the requirement of the concerned areas," said Uttar Pradesh Kshetra Sewa Pramukh Naval Kishore.

The RSS central unit, has sought two names from every

'prant' that would work to provide full help to the needy if the Covid situation in the country worsens further.

Besides, each 'prant' has appointed key persons, who are RSS workers, in every district who can be contacted for help or who would facilitate things for people in need of medical aid or food while in isolation.

'Prant' is an administrative unit of the RSS. There are 45 'prants' in the country and Uttar Pradesh has six. 'Kshetra', on the other hand, is a bigger unit of administration. The RSS has divided the country into 11 'kshetra' and UP has two 'kshetra' -- 'Purvi UP' and

'Paschim UP'.

The RSS has also set up 'samitis', especially in cities where the situation is critical. The RSS volunteers, known as Swayamsevak, are helping people in getting medical aid and food during the pandemic.

Maximum emphasis is to develop a link of 'Swayamsevak' from the top most administrative unit till the grassroots level so that the machinery can immediately be put into action whenever the need arises.

To keep the chain of workers active, there is a constant interaction through phone and online medium.

"So far, we have formed groups of allopathic, ayurvedic and homeopathic doctors who can be contacted for consultation by people. Their numbers have been publicized on social media. We had also held their camps in the past. To get the right treatment is the biggest requirement of people," said Kishore.

The RSS workers are helping people find beds, reach hospitals and vaccination centres, especially those who are old and have no one to look after them. In Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, these schools have already been turned into isolation centres to accommodate Covid-19 patients.

Modi’s message could have been more hard-hitting

Greetings to fellow citizens, for over four months the global community has been in the fight against Corona virus. During this period more than 42 lakh people across the world have been infected with Corona. More than 2.75 lakh people have died tragically. In India too, people have lost their near and dear ones. I express my heartfelt condolences to all. Friends, a virus has destroyed the world. Crores of people around the world are facing a crisis. World all over is engaged in a battle to save precious lives. We have never seen or heard of such a crisis. This crisis is unthinkable as well as unprecedented for mankind. We have to remain vigilant, closely monitor it, follow the rules of engagement in such a war, save

ourselves and move ahead. Today, when the world is in crisis, we must strengthen our resolve. Our great resolve will help overcome this crisis’ was what the Prime Minister Narendra Modi said during his address to the nation on Tuesday. He praised the people for fighting the pandemic last year to date. Normally PM’s address is heard with rapt attention because he is known to be a person who speaks out his heart and does not mince words. But this time it appeared more like a news story in a newspaper where the past is recalled as padding material to make the news story interesting and informative. Well it is a fact that once the Corona virus struck the nation, there was near panic situation

and people became hyper responsive and took extreme measures to prevent themselves from getting affected by the virus. But from December 2020 they started behaving as if Corona had disappeared. They had given up all health protocols including using of masks and social distancing. They became bolder with rolling out of vaccine though they were apprehensive about getting the jab in the initial stages and were busier turning into self-proclaimed experts giving opinion on the efficacy of Covaxin and Covishield. PM’s reference to how open defecation programme had an impact on the image of the world, be it TB, malnutrition, polio or how India’s campaigns influenced the world or the initiative of Interna-

tional Yoga Day is India’s gift to relieve stress and how Indian medicines have given a fresh lease of life to the people in different parts of the world seemed to be little out of place. It would have been more pertinent if the Modi ji had referred to the mistake of lowering of guard by the people and told them that “look second wave is your making.” But then he perhaps felt that the politicians also need to take the blame as they have been holding public meetings and mobilising people in large numbers ignoring the WHO directions on COVID-19. Still, if the PM had called a spade a spade instead of trying to say that you people fought valiantly and continue to fight, a clear message would have gone

across the country as to how irresponsible we the citizens are. He should have admitted that the political executive too had shown laxity in recognising that second wave had set in and had failed to take early measures to contain the rapid spread of the virus. If States had learnt lessons from 2020 experience, they would not have faced the problems of beds and oxygen now. Claims by respective governments on state of preparedness is far from ground realities but politicians being what they are will never accept it. Another misfortune is that while pointing out the omissions and commissions of the government, the opposition parties do not show even a semblance of responsibility. They never come up with alternative proposals. Let’s hope some wisdom will dawn on the political parties and leaders.



Management studies in Covid scenario

Universities must shift to a more sustainable future

P C CHHABRA

THE Covid-19’s impact on higher education, particularly B schools is evident and can be seen encompassing all academic processes coming to almost a halt midway. The effect of the corona crisis on the future of management education can be found in two viewpoints, one - how B schools are going to cope up with the evolving circumstances, and two - how students need to get ready and choose the correct B school for a successful profession in the ‘new normal’.

Prior to the invasion of Covid-19, the business college community was experiencing continued gaps in their basic financial model. This condition was being driven, to some ex-

it was looked at as a mere substitute for a full-time course. Presently, B schools and applicants are viewing online learning as an integral part of each course and learning measure. Universities understand the power of innovation in terms of welcoming a variety of guest faculties to address the undergrads from any place

A benefit of online learning is that it tends to be utilised to incorporate simulations that empower critical thinking, and with online chat rooms, students can work together and help peer students. This is a chance for B schools to analyse which courses require the simultaneous presence of staff and members to address questions, mentor and react to logical issues that should be done in a face-to-face setting. The emergency is a chance for business colleges to unload various components of learning and to endeavour to change some of it into online meetings that empower modification and paced out learning.

Mergers and acquisitions (M&A)

Mergers and acquisitions (M&A), which were experiencing an uptick in higher education, acted as a catalyst to creating strategic partnerships. Historically, M&A was seen by most educators with absolute hatred. However, given the new dynamics, M&A give a vehicle to maintaining economic viability for establishments facing financial challenges via economies of scale, degree, and fit. For example, the merger of an undergraduate business college with a primary graduate business college could give a steady stream of candidates for various graduate programs as well as enhanced internships and employment openings for undergraduate students.

The invasion of Covid-19 has made already marginal schools much weaker to the M&A interaction. One of the vital pieces in the M&A cycle, is to recognize business colleges or elements that are in a state of financial misery or facing different challenges. Strangely, Online Program Managers (OPMs) could fill in as an outsider intermediary for various B-schools under their umbrella and could offer integrated type of assistance during the M&A transitional cycle. OPMs can also assist in times of unexpected disasters, for example, school terminations prompted by Covid-19. In this job, OPMs could fill in as an important transitional vehicle for assisting schools with managing both the present moment and long haul. It is hard to imagine that after COVID-19 passes; B-schools will at any point get back to the same old thing.

Alas, these actions may not be a complete answer to the problem. To remain competitive in an always crowded field, some business colleges are offering online programs at costs 50 per cent of their comparable traditional programmes. Moreover, to help facilitate the transition to distance learning many B-schools have reached out to the prospering online program managers (OPMs) community. The best will emerge out of this crisis. This is every body’s hope. (The author is Executive Director, Sanskriti University)

PART-II

Tapping the potential of our marine wealth



TALKING OF MANY THINGS
Dr Mohan Kanda

Let me now mention a few interesting issues about my tenure as Managing Director, APFDC. Unacceptable levels of exploitation were taking place with the marketing of the catch of traditional fishermen along the Andhra Pradesh coast line. For want of proper landing facilities, the economies of scale, aggregation (into bodies such as cooperatives and Farmer Producer Organisations or FPOs), and insulated transport facilities were forced to sell their catch to merchants who, fleeced them - fish being perishable. The poor fishermen needed immediate payment, discharge their liabilities, and to meet daily needs. Over time, although APFDC was making no purchase, the fishermen were, getting a rupee per kilogram, more than before our intervention. A pity that, as the increase in the incomes of fishermen would, in the long run, have resulted in better availability, and access to, basic minimum facilities. The government would have saved the investments required to provide precisely those, for the same people. Unfortunately, by that time, the concept of social cost-benefit had yet to catch on. It is well known that tribal folk love dried fish. Therefore, rather than throw away the trash fish (as is the habit in when trawlers return from a voyage to fish for prawns), we began to allow them to land, had them dried, and arranged for supplying them to the inmates of Scheduled Tribes

hostels situated in villages along the coast.

The fishery and tobacco worlds have an ambience of their own, almost everywhere in the world. Dealings lie largely in the grey area between the proper and the unacceptable. Fisherfolk are known for their gay, carefree and rather bohemian attitude. Intrigue and unwritten codes of business abound. I came face-to-face with the atmosphere in the fishing harbours during my days in the APFDC, when K.V. Rao and I visited them incognito, lest people be alerted to our identity, a truly eye-opening experience.

I encountered hard reality also in export of frozen prawn primarily to Japan. The official of the Export Inspection Agency (EIA), would come literally when the ship was about to sail, and ask for a box at the very end of the container to be removed and shown for inspection! As that could not be done the question of appeasement arose. Being a public sector executive, I could not deal with it directly and had to bend my morals and wink at my officials giving the occasional ‘goodwill’ gift to the officers!

I had similarly, to acquiesce in such practices being adopted by, my colleagues in the Secretariat being kept, the saving grace being that it was an occasional safari suit or a brief case! I took the opportunity to visit all the national institutes, in the fishery sector, in dealing with marine and inland fisheries, fisheries education and oceanography.

I found the scientists in all the institutions dedicated to the task of expanding the frontiers of knowledge. The heads of the institutions, were courteous and forthcoming. All in all, an extremely educative experience.

Pisciculture, both of the fresh and brackish water types, was catching on very rapidly at that time. Santhanam, a former Collector of Krishna district, was, a pioneer of that activity. In his, steamrollering fashion, he had a large number of tanks dug in the area abutting the Kolleru lake and converted them into freshwater

fishery tanks. Farmers not cooperating were made to comply even by the use of force! Subsequently, of course, his approach stood vindicated in the manner in which the technology spread. Freshwater fish harvested from the tanks, even today, transported, primarily to West Bengal and Assam, the largest markets in the country.

Later as Collector of Krishna district, I began a venture to dig brackish water tanks off the coast near Machilipatnam, the headquarters of the district. While the project had some moderate success the sad part was that, I had ignorantly caused destruction of a vast extent of mangrove forest, unaware of the damage it had caused to the environment. What was more, the protection the forest afforded to the low-lying parts of the districts from tidal waves was also nullified by my uninformed adventure.

It was only years later that harm the pisciculture activity was causing to the environment, including the ecological integrity of the Kolleru lake, came to the fore. Finally a large number of steps had to be taken, partly following the intervention of the Supreme Court of India to undo the damage. Luv Agarwal the then Collector of West Godavari (now, incidentally, at the forefront of the government of India team fighting the war against the Covid -19 virus as Joint Secretary dealing with the subject in the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare), did an outstanding job in that situation.

Another interesting experience was the effort I made to procure two extra trolleys for the taller operating unit of the Corporation. The idea was to improve economies of scale for the unit as the two existing trawlers which, while functioning profitably, lacked enough capacity to keep the freezing plants of the corporation fully occupied. When local efforts failed, I eyed the trawlers the West Bengal counterpart of APFDC was having. However, despite our reaching the very top of the political lead-



ership in that state, and even after meeting the Minister concerned personally, we not only failed but had the disappointment of seeing, of all parties, the Union Carbide company succeeding.

During that visit I happened to go to the place where the daily fish auctions were taking place. Just as in the case of the marine fish transactions in the landing centres in Andhra Pradesh, a great degree of exploitation marked the activity. The merchants, to begin with, would take away a portion of the catch from the fishermen in the form of ‘Daan’, a sort of donation to the market yard. And, after that, price and quality were handled in an entirely subjective manner, and, thanks to the perishable nature of the commodity, as the fishermen were always at a disadvantage.

Another novel experiment we tried out at that time was the introduction of outboard motors imported from Japan to add power and speed to traditional craft. It was a sort of halfway house between a mechanised vessel and a catamaran. It caught on very rapidly and was runaway success. A large part of the programme was also funded by Chetana (a voluntary organisation started by Governor Sharda Mukherjee when I was Secretary to the Governor, sometime earlier), as part of the post-1977 cyclone-relief activities.

The stint of one year in the APFDC left me convinced that the fishermen community of the

country lives in set of circumstances entirely peculiar to it, and not comparable to any other community. Farmers, weavers, artisans such as potters cobblers, or people belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes all show different characteristics, both personally and professionally, as one travels the length and width of the country. Not so, however, the fishing folk.

Geographically isolated, socially and politically distanced from the majority of the population which lives away from the coast of the country, they show remarkable consistency in their physical, cultural and economic conditions all along the 10,000 km coastline. Their occupation is seasonal, dangerous, risky and extremely unpredictable in terms of returns. Therefore they possess a strong streak of superstition. Coverage by social and economic infrastructure is also scant, and they continue to lag behind in the matter of accessing the benefits of development and growth.

While, in no way, taking away from the interventions of the central and State governments as also non-governmental and community-based organisations, one would like to see more determined and focused effort to enhance the quality of their lives, and mainstreaming them into the rest of the Society, showing a significant improvement.

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

Modi and Covid scare

THIS refers to “Scale-up Production” (THI 21 April). One hopes that PM’s appeal would have the desired effect and enough vaccine stock would be made available to all the states matching with the size of the age group of the population who are now eligible for vaccination. The PM’s appeal to people of every home, apartment and all others to promote covid appropriate behaviour within and outside should be taken seriously by all and do our best to spread this culture. While PM did share his sorrow for the loss of life, I was expecting PM would apologise on behalf of his party for not realising the gravity of the situation and going ahead with the election campaign in front of a huge crowd when he was himself asking people to stay away from large gathering.

It is a different matter, our leaders have not cultivated the habit of accepting the mistake leave alone apology and no wonder PM Modi has now sought the assistance of children (Bal Mitras) to motivate the elders to avoid going out and follow covid appropriate behaviour.

If PM Modi had sought the help of children before getting in campaign mode, probably his party and others would have been forced to opt for a virtual campaign instead of assembling people in large where there was no scope for any covid appropriate behaviour. What shame, we have come to a stage that instead of elders and leaders setting an example to follow discipline to children, we are depending on them.

S Natarajan, New Delhi

LETTERS

Earth Day

EARTH Day is a truly wonderful movement and the Canopy Project is well-conceived and truly innovative. They work by training local people in creating tree nurseries and planting out and maintaining the emerging tree.

As UNICEF says: “To achieve the Global Goals all children everywhere need to learn about the climate crisis and how to tackle it. That’s why we’re supporting The World’s Lesson in asking children to write a short message on why learning about climate change matters to them.

Finally it’s everyone’s responsibility in the world as a citizen of the world to protect our environment and we need to give our future generation’s clean environment. The world is facing serious life and death issues due to the spread of the present second wave of Pandemic is due to basically the result of unhygienic conditions and man made mistakes only. We need to give importance to health and a healthy environment. It is being the need of the hour. Let’s protect our earth by all means.

Kanagiri SN Prasad, Hyderabad

Keep religion out of pandemic

THE Tablighi Jamaat congregation held at Nizamuddin in April 2020, will continue to remain in the people’s psyche as the main contributor in spread-

ing Covid-19, in several parts of the country as the participants hailed from almost all states of the country. The rapid and sudden spurt in the spread of the pandemic at that time was particularly palpable after the participants in the congregation had returned to their homes – and the Centre was quite right in attributing the spread to this cause, although the AAP and other political parties played politics in this regard, tried to underplay it, in order to give vent to their anti-Centre and anti-establishment agenda, even at that time.

All religious congregations in the country have similar connotations and potential in spreading the pandemic in the country, without doubt - be it Puram celebrations at Trichur or the Kumbh Mela Shahi snan in the holy river Ganges in Haridwar or Prayagraj. Political parties and religious groups in the country must understand the seriousness of the situation, not to play politics in this regard, ignoring and forgetting the main enemy to be Corona pandemic that the country and the rest of the world is facing with a great trepidation, and is at the wits end to find ways and means in coping the situation. This is applicable to political rallies, road shows and mass gatherings by political parties in poll bound states where the elections are in final phases.

Every citizen in the country is expected to play his/her role abiding by the norms initiated by health experts in controlling and tackling the spread of the virus. Justifications to escape from the dictated

norms will not serve any purpose. Even the developed countries of Europe and the US are paying the price for being in different to this reality when the pandemic was in the early and incipient stage, last year that had taken a heavy toll on human life. Interestingly the ignorant and indifferent general public were clamouring against the closure of pubs and night entertainment spots. And the US had remained for a long time to be the fool’s paradise of treating Covid-19 as any other cold and flu – curable by taking a paracetamol. And, interestingly in Pakistan and other Muslim dominated countries, the attitude against Covid-19 was even lukewarm; they had even attributed Covid to the ‘Quran’ justifying that people had no fear from it. It is important that all such silly and foolish notions must be abolished from peoples mind for the pandemic to be meaningfully controlled and eradicated.

K V Raghuram, Wayanad

Important milestone

AMID the gloom of second wave of Covid pandemic, an important milestone in space exploration and aviation went largely unnoticed (Apr 20: NASA chopper makes historic flight on Mars). The success of Ingenuity helicopter’s short historic flight on Mars has to be one of the greatest achievement of space exploration by NASA ever since Voyager 1 and 2 launched 44 years back entered interstellar space. With more scheduled flights in coming weeks, we can get a good aerial glimpse of the Red Planet.

Sajid Farooq, Kurnool

thehansreader@gmail.com

Vontimitta Brahmotsavam begins with Dwajaroohanam

- In view of Covid, the 9-day festivities will be conducted in Ekantham i.e. without the participation of pilgrims
- Dwajaroohanam is observed as per Agama traditions with Nava kalasha Panchamruta abhisekam

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VONTIMITTA (KADAPA DISTRICT)

THE annual Sri Rama Navami Brahmotsavams of Sri Kodandaramaswamy temple at Vontimitta in the district began on a colourful note on Wednesday morning with Dwajaroohanam, hoisting of the celestial flag in the anointed auspicious Mithuna lagnam.

In view of Covid guidelines, the TTD management resolved to conduct the nine-day religious fete which will be observed till April 29 in Ekantham (with no pilgrim participation).

The darshan for devotees has already been cancelled with the Archeological Survey of India (ASI), under which the temple is being maintained, has decided to close the shrine for public following the Centre's latest Covid guidelines. .

The holy Dwajaroohanam was observed as per Agama traditions with Nava kalasha Panchamruta abhisekam. Sri Ramana and Sri Pothana Jayanti were also performed as per the age-old temple tradition. The chief Kankana bhat-rakesh Kumar supervised the ritual held amidst religious fervour.

Temple deputy executive officer Ramesh Babu, assistant executive officer Muralidhar, superintendents Venkatachala-pathi, Venkatesaiah, temple in-spector Dhananjeyulu and others were present.

As part of the temple tradi-



Priests perform Dwajaroohanam at the start of Brahmotsavam at Sri Kodandarama temple at Vontimitta in Kadapa district on Wednesday

tion on the first day of Brahmotsavam, the TTD board member and Rajampeta MLA Meda Mallikarjun Reddy presented Pattu Vastrams to Sri Kodandarama Swamy.

Later in the evening, the ut-sava idols of Sri Sita Lakshmana Sameta Sri Rama blessed devotees on Sesa vahana conducted in Ekantham, on the first day of the annual Brahmotsavam.

Amid concerns, State receives 2 lakh doses of Covid vaccine

AMARAVATI

THE state received two lakh doses of Covishield vaccine from Serum Institute of India, Pune, on Wednesday. The vaccine arrived at Vijayawada airport.

The officials shifted the vaccines from airport to state Vaccine preservative centre at Gannavaram. They will be shifted to various districts as per the direction of State Covid Command Control Centre basing on the requirements.

It may be noted that the state received two lakh doses of Covid vaccine on April 13 during Tika Utsav and five lakh doses earlier. Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking 25 lakh doses of vaccine to take up massive vaccination programme in the state.

With the steep increase in Covid cases, demand for vaccination has also increased and more number of people are seen waiting for their turn at different vaccine centres. Those who are waiting for second dose of vaccine are also eager to get vaccination immediately amidst the present Covid pandemic.

However, some people who got Covaxin first dose are complaining that they are facing difficulty in getting the second dose as the private and public vaccination centres are turning them away citing no stock of vaccine. The beneficiaries, particularly those who received Covaxin, are concerned over the situation as prescribed gap between the two doses of the indigenous vaccine is only four weeks as against 6 to 12 weeks being recommended for Covishield.

Spike in cases leads to jostle for the jab while supply of both Covishield and Covaxin dries up

The Covishield stock received will be sent to various districts as per the directions of Covid Command and Control Centre



- Those who received first dose of Covaxin, for which gap between two doses is 4 weeks only, are running to pillar from post as govt and private vaccination centre turn them away saying they have no stocks

9,716 new cases, 38 deaths reported

AMARAVATI

THE coronavirus spread is peaking once again, to last September levels, as the state reported close to 10,000 fresh Covid-19 cases on Wednesday and also recorded the highest number of 38 fatalities after six-and-a-half months. The number of active cases crossed the 60,000 mark to 60,208, the highest after September 28. From 39,619 tests, 9,716 fresh positives turned out in the state in the 24 hours ending 9 am on Wednesday, the highest in a day after September 12.

This pushed the gross positives up to 9,86,703. Also, 3,359 patients recovered from the infection, taking the total to 9,18,985, according to the latest bulletin. The toll rose to 7,510 after 38 more Covid-19 infected people succumbed in 24 hours, it said.

Srikakulam, which on February 15 seemed poised to become a coron-

- The daily toll is highest in six-and-a-half months
- Srikakulam, which recorded just five active cases on Feb 15, has seen 1,444 new cases, the highest in a single day

avirus-free district with just five active cases, now reported 1,444 new cases, the highest in a day in the state after more than seven months. Srikakulam now has a staggering 7,420 active cases, out of 55,469 total Covid-19 infections, after 47,689 recoveries and 360 deaths. "We are doing more tests and declaring results in 24 hours. Naturally, there is a surge in cases," Srikakulam district Collector J Nivas said.

Though it is a district bordering

Odisha, there is not much movement of people across the border. Moreover, Odisha is relatively reporting lesser cases and, as such, cases in Srikakulam are predominantly local. Guntur district reported the second highest of 1,236 new cases and inched closer to the 90,000 gross. Chittoor added 1,180, Kurnool 958, Nellore 934, Anantapur 849, East Godavari 830, Visakhapatnam 810 and Vizianagaram 565 new cases in a day. Krishna and Prakasam districts registered 294 new cases each, Kadapa 216 while West Godavari also crossed the century mark to add 106. Nellore crossed the 70,000 total cases mark, the sixth in the state with such a large count. In 24 hours, Krishna district reported 10 fresh Covid-19 fatalities, Nellore seven, East Godavari and Srikakulam four each, Chittoor and Prakasam three each, Guntur, Kurnool and Visakhapatnam two each while Anantapur had one.

HOME CARE COSTS A BOMB

- ICU home setup might cost Rs 1 lakh; it includes nurse, doctor, medication and oxygen cylinder
- Referral charges for home care services further inflate the bill

VASAVI KALERU
HYDERABAD

INCREASING cases are coupled with less availability of beds in the hospitals resulting in the need of home services which ensures a hole in one's pocket.

ICU set up at home is not affordable in range for many. The set up includes a nurse, doctor and oxygen bed the average cost of the entire services. On average, per day set up of a basic ICU with a mini oxygen cylinder at home costs Rs 60,000 to Rs 70,000, apart from the additional charges, including 30 per cent of referral charges by the hospital for their agents. As the services are rare and the hospitals are occupied, patients are helplessly accepting the bills given by the hospitals.

Explaining how the referral charges are impacting the bill of a patient, Dr P S Vijay Yender, public health specialist,

Telangana Doctors' Federation said, "The original cost of a basic oxygen bed per day is Rs 25,000 to Rs 30,000 and when the services are done at home, the cost is more than doubled. Another Rs 20,000 is to be given to the referral agent by the hospitals when a general physician refers the case to the Covid hospital or the Covid concerned doctors. To fill both the pockets, the doctors and hospitals are charging above Rs 1 lakh per day."

For another instance, a 58-year-old patient named Vijay from Ramanthapur felt uneasy and went for a general check-up to a nearby hospital and after the doctor suggested a Covid checkup, the patient tested positive and she is referred to a Covid special doctor. For treatment and check-ups cost her thousands of rupees. Expressing her disappointment, Vijaya said, "Even though the doctor was our family friend, we couldn't get any concession."

"There are many online medical consulting services available 24x7. Practo, mFine, Apollo 24/7, CallHealth, Tata-Health etc., are the leading portals. Home ICU means home monitoring with nursing support. However, when pa-



tients need ventilation and other critical supports, home ICU care is not sufficient. The home ICU concept may be useful for end of life care, where families want only basic ICU support. There's no sufficient trained manpower to be deputed to homecare. Major lim-

iting factor even in hospitals is the shortage of manpower and lack of beds and infrastructure, resulting in a high impact on the bills along with referral charges," said Dr Krishna Reddy Nallamalla, President, InOrder, Country Director, ACCESS Health International.

BJP asks govt to cancel SSC, Inter examinations

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

BJP state president Somu Veer- raju appealed to the Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy to postpone the SSC and Intermediate public examinations in view of the increasing number of Covid cases. He also suggested that the state government formulate rules and regulations for the private hospitals to treat the Covid patients.

In a letter written to the Chief Minister on Wednesday, the BJP state president said the state government has cancelled the classes to from Class I to IX and promoted them to next classes. He felt it will be very difficult to conduct the SSC and Inter examinations in June in view of the deteriorating Covid situation in the state. The students have to go to the examination centres in the public transport facilities which may expose them to coronavirus, he said adding that the govern-

ment should postpone SSC and Inter examinations keeping view of the safety of the children.

Veerraju asked the government to focus on the private hospitals for the treatment of Covid patients and fees collected by them. He said there were several allegations against the private hospitals on fleecing of Covid patients. "The private hospitals are creating panic among the Covid patients stating that the beds were not available in the hospitals. Patients are landing in debts and many people are dying in spite of spending lakhs of rupees due to Covid," he said.

The BJP leader said the government has the responsibility of saving the lives of patients and provide treatment with less cost. He suggested to the state government to formulate rules and regulations and regularly supervise the private hospitals on collection of charges and rendering medical services to the patients.



Somu Veerraju

- In a letter to CM, party State president Veerraju says the children have to use public transport to attend exam which will expose them to coronavirus
- Urges the govt to keep a check on private and corporate hospitals as there are allegations that they are fleecing Covid patients

Jawahar Reddy stresses on tests for primary contacts

AMARAVATI

AP Covid command control centre chairperson K S Jawahar Reddy directed the district collectors and special officers to intensify testing of Covid primary contacts.

In a video conference with officials, the chairperson said testing should be speeded up to control the spread of virus and stressed the need for round the clock monitoring.

Jawahar Reddy said that district collectors should monitor the situation at field level as Covid was spreading fast. He said measures should be taken on a war footing to control the virus. When the officials informed that 19,000 beds are available state wide, the chairperson said 19,000 more should be readied keeping in view the increasing demand.

He said the 104 services should be publicised and all the requests received through the number should be forwarded to officials.

Many sign up to support Ukku stir

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

WITH a target of collecting 10 lakh signatures in support of the Ukku stir and stop the Centre from privatising Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) initiated a signature collection campaign in Visakhapatnam.

As a part of it, a programme was conducted here on Wednesday at Maddilapalem bus stop by the Maddilapalem zone CITU committee.

Speaking on the occasion, CITU and AITUC district leaders RKV Kumar and P Ramana said the VSP along with other PSUs will be protected from the 100 per cent strategic disinvestment.

Kumar added the stir will continue until Prime Minister Narendra Modi withdraws the decision on the steel plant. He recalled that the farmers had already organised protests as a mark of their support to the agitation.

Further, Ramana said the steel plant was playing a leading role in providing oxygen supply to the Covid patients across the country. He said the signature collection programme was launched in the city to stop steel plant from getting privatised. He informed that the party activists will visit every house to collect signatures.

Four held for black marketing of Covid drugs

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

- According to police, the accused were selling Remdesivir injections at an exorbitant price

VISAKHAPATNAM city police arrested four persons for black marketing Remdesivir injections, the antiviral drug used to treat coronavirus. Sharing details with the media here on Wednesday, Assistant Commissioner of Police (East) Harshitha Chandra said a house-keeping manager N Sarveswara Rao, a housekeeping supervisor I Venkata Rao, staff nurses S Sindhuja and G Divya Krupa from a private hospital were arrested on charge of black marketing of Remdesivir injections at exorbi-



Assistant Commissioner of Police (East) Harshitha Chandra sharing details at a press conference in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday

tant prices. The accused stole six injections from the hospital and

sold them at a cost of Rs 7000 each. Based on a complaint, the III town police arrested the accused and recovered an injection and mobile phones from them.

The nurses and housekeeping staff were taken into custody. The ACP appreciated SI J Dharmendra, III Town police station CI K Eswara Rao and other staff for their tremendous effort in cracking the case in less than 24 hours.

It may be recalled that the Vigilance and Enforcement teams conducted a series of raids at various chemist shops and hospitals. The authorities concerned warned that appropriate legal action will be taken against the black marketing of the drugs as some indulge in the offence, taking advantage of the scarcity of the Covid drugs.

Don't hoard oxygen, taking it casually harmful: AIIMS chief

Those having oxygen saturation of 93-94, there is no need to take high flow oxygen at 98 or 99

NEW DELHI

EMPHASISING on judicious use of oxygen, AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria said if a person's oxygen saturation is 93 per cent to 99 per cent, then that person does not need oxygen, and taking it will instead be harmful.

At a talk organised by the Centre's citizen engagement platform, MyGovIndia, Guleria said one of the treatments for Covid-19 is oxygen, but it has to be used judiciously. He added that when a person has pneumonia or chronic lung disease when saturation falls, then oxygen is a treatment, given sometimes for a short duration, but sometimes people are on

long-term oxygen therapy.

"Important issue here is that taking oxygen intermittently, your saturation is alright, but you say let me take it for half an hour after my meals or if I take oxygen for few hours in the day, my saturation goes up. I am feeling better, and I should continue oxygen, is actually a waste of it. There is no data to show this will be of any help to you," said Guleria.

"Many patients have started keeping oxygen cylinders at home and taking it 30 min for 2 hour or 3 hours, this is more harmful and again denying people who need it."

Guleria clarified that those individuals who are having an oxygen saturation of 93-94,



there is no need to take high flow oxygen to maintain their saturation at 98 or 99, as it is not going to be of any benefit. He stressed as a country, collectively, if we work together and say we use remdesivir judiciously and use oxygen judiciously, there will no shortage of oxygen in Maharashtra, Delhi, Chhattisgarh or in any other state.

He reiterated that remdesivir is no magic bullet, and more than 85 per cent recover from Covid without taking this drug. "In a small set of people, remdesivir is required. Does not show any decreases in mortality; it only shows reduced hospital stay... and not a magic bullet," said Guleria.

Elaborating on the utility of getting vacci-

nated, Guleria said some people raised questions that what is the point in getting vaccinated, if after two weeks persons turn out to be Covid-19 positive.

"Vaccine prevents from getting the disease and not infection. It prevents from infection turning into severe illness and going to ICU..." he clarified.

Guleria added the antibodies produced by vaccine will not allow the infection to become a severe disease, and emphasised that even after getting vaccinated, it is important to wear a mask. He stressed that people should follow Covid appropriate behaviour, as it is important to bring down the number of cases by breaking the chain of transmission.

WINDOWS

3 ONGC staff abducted

SIVASAGAR: Three ONGC employees, two Junior Engineer Assistants (Production) & a Junior Technician (Production) -- have been abducted by unknown armed miscreants in the early hours on Wednesday.

The abduction took place on a rig site of ONGC in Lakwa field of Sivasagar District.

The abducted employees were taken by the miscreants in an operational vehicle belonging to ONGC. Later, the vehicle was found abandoned near the Nimonagarh jungles close to the Assam-Nagaland border.



Relatives of a Covid-19 victim react outside the mortuary at Government Civil Hospital, as coronavirus cases surge in Ahmedabad on Wednesday

5 prisoners escape

JAIPUR: A fortnight after the Phalodi jail break incident in Rajasthan in which 16 prisoners escaped, five inmates have run away from the Nokha jail in Bikaner district.

The jail break happened on Tuesday midnight. The roads to the surrounding districts have been blocked from Bikaner in search of the absconding prisoners. The police were clueless about their whereabouts till the filing of the report. As per the information, the jail break incident was reported around 2.30 a.m. when prisoners crossed the walls of jail using blankets after breaking the window ceiling.

Of these, four prisoners are from Hanumangarh and one is from Haryana.

REMDESIVIR NOT A **RAMBAN**: DR TREHAN

Priyanka flays Centre for not taking Oppn into confidence even when nation facing crisis

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI/LUCKNOW

MEDANTA Chairman Dr Naresh Trehan on Wednesday said less percentage of people require hospitalisation. The hospital beds should be utilised judiciously and with responsibility. This responsibility rests on all of us.

"We have now made a protocol that Remdesivir to be given not to everyone who tests Covid-19 positive. Only after doctors look at test results, symptoms, comorbidities of a patient, then, it is to be given. Remdesivir isn't a 'Ramban', it only decreases viral load in people who need it."

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' tested positive on Wednesday. The 61-year-old minister said he is following medical advice after his report came positive.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has called off a planned visit to India and the Philippines, government sources said Wednesday, apparently due to a resurgence of coronavirus infections in Japan. He follows in UK PM Boris Johnson's lead.

Around 39 women inmates of the Byculla Women's Jail, including murder-accused Indrani Mukerjea have tested Covid-19 positive and have been shifted to an isolation centre, official sources said here on Wednesday.

The development came after around 80 prisoners and jail officials tested positive during the last weekend, including a woman from the Byculla Women's Jail.

Later, tests were carried out on the approximately 350 women there from which around 39 tested positive, but mostly with mild Covid symptoms.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi castigated the Centre for not taking the opposition parties into confidence even when the nation was facing an unprecedented health crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. Emphasising that this was a moment for the entire nation to stand together, she hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government for allegedly ridiculing even his predecessor Dr Manmohan Singh's earnest recommendations.

Targeting PM Modi himself in an interview with ANI, she said he must now stop his "public relations exercise" and talk to the people and opposition parties over the crisis. The Congress General Secretary in charge of Uttar Pradesh claimed the Centre was willing to talk to even Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, but not Opposition leaders.



Social worker Ashok Kurmi, dressed as superhero spiderman, sanitises the area around Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus in Mumbai on Wednesday

Pregnant cop regulates traffic

A picture of a pregnant Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) regulating traffic and ensuring that people adhere to COVID-19 guidelines in Chhattisgarh is being widely shared on social media for a couple of days. The pic shows DSP Shilpa Sahu wearing a mask and standing under the scorching sun in Bastar's Dantewada, urging people to follow pandemic guidelines. With a lathi in hand, and surrounded by a few other police officers, the DSP asked people to stay indoors as coronavirus infections surge in the state and across the nation.

Union Minister for Edn Pokhriyal hit by virus

Japan PM cancels India visit amid pandemic

Dhoni's mother and father test positive

Ranchi: MS Dhoni's mother, Devaki Devi, and father, Pan Singh have tested positive for Covid-19. They have been admitted to a private hospital in Ranchi, as per reports. They are being treated at the Pulse Superspecialty Hospital.

Dhoni is currently in Mumbai leading Chennai Super Kings in IPL 2021. CSK are slated to play Kolkata Knight Riders today. The four-time IPL champions are currently third in the points tally winning two out of their three games so far.

"Parents of cricketer MS Dhoni have been admitted here at the hospital after testing positive for #COVID19. Their oxygen level is stable: Pulse Superspecialty Hospital, Ranchi, Jharkhand," ANI tweeted via their official handle.

Oxygen crisis leaves Lko gasping for breath

Lucknow: The oxygen crisis in Lucknow is now leaving Covid patients gasping for breath, literally.

Despite assurances from the state government, there is an acute shortage of oxygen cylinders in the state capital.

People have been queuing up at the oxygen refilling plant in Nadarganj industrial area since more than 24 hours now but supply has dried up.

Mahadev Kumar said, "I have been waiting since last night for a refill. My wife is admitted to a private hospital and they have told me to get oxygen myself."

Almost every private medical facility in Lucknow is asking patients' relatives to arrange for oxygen or take their patient home.

'Art of Living' extends help to fight Covid

Bhopal: The non-government organisation (NGO) 'Art of Living' will contribute to the ongoing fight against coronavirus infections in Madhya Pradesh, said the Art of Living' founder Sri Sri Ravi Shankar during a telephonic conversation with Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

Chouhan said the support of Yoga and Ayurveda would be taken to boost the immunity against Covid-19 infection and improve the health of the people affected by the virus.

The team of the 'Art of Living' would provide support through Yoga, Ayurveda and necessary guidance to protect patients from mood swings and boost their morale.

BSF demands FIR against 'Pak pigeon'

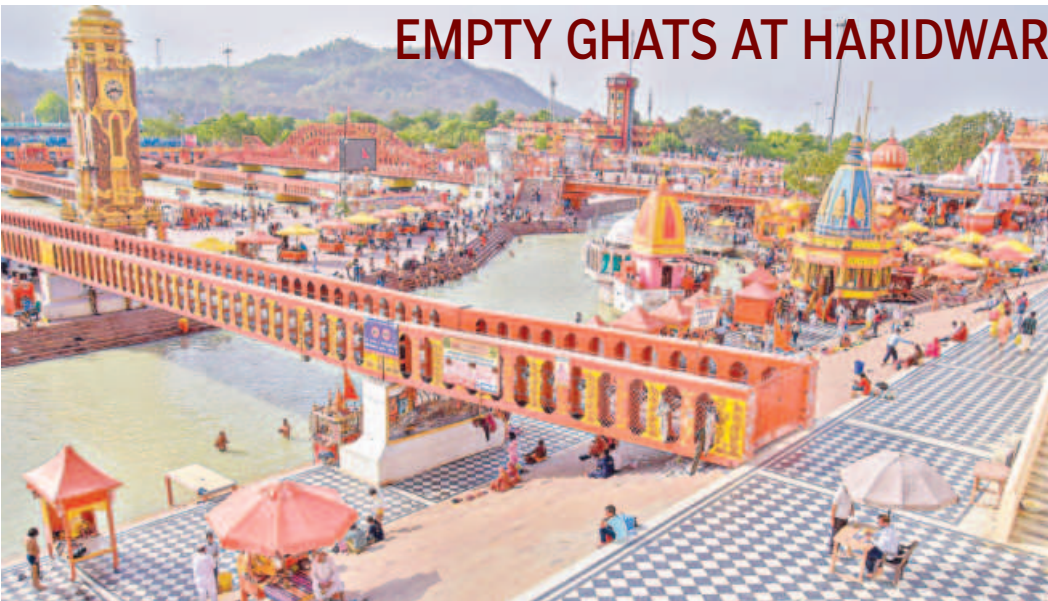
SRINAGAR

IN a one-of-a-kind case, the Border Security Force (BSF) on Wednesday sought registration of an FIR against an avian intruder from Pakistan— a pigeon. At the moment, the bird is in police custody, officials said.

BSF personnel deployed at the Rorawala post in Amritsar found the pigeon with a small piece of paper tied to its leg last Sunday. The BSF has claimed that the bird flew from across the border. Considering the unique circumstances of the case, Punjab Police

have sought legal opinion on whether an FIR can be filed. Police are also analysing the number written on the piece of paper tied to the bird's leg. The BSF personnel handed over the bird to the police and demanded legal action, officials said.

Senior Superintendent of Police Dhruv Dahiya said the BSF demanded registration of an FIR against the pigeon. "As the pigeon is a bird, I don't think an FIR can be registered against it. But we have referred the matter to our legal experts for their opinion," he said on Wednesday.



Deserted view of ghats at har ki pauri on Ram Navami of kumbh 2021 in Haridwar on Wednesday

US ex-cop convicted of George Floyd's murder

MINNEAPOLIS

A federal grand jury has found Derek Chauvin, a former Minneapolis police officer, guilty on all three counts of murder of African American George Floyd last year.

Floyd, 46, was killed in a brutal abuse of police force on May 25 last year during an arrest after a store clerk alleged, he had passed a counterfeit \$20 bill in Minneapolis.

Chauvin, 45, pinned down Floyd with his knee on the pavement of a south Minneapolis intersection for more than nine minutes. "I can't breathe. I can't breathe," were his last words. The hor-

rific death of Floyd resulted in a nationwide violent protest. A 12-member federal jury in Minneapolis found Chauvin guilty on all three counts: second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter.

US President Joe Biden on Tuesday narrated a conversation he had with George's Floyd's seven-year-old daughter in which he affirmed that her father's murder had sparked global change.

I knelt down and held her hand, I said 'Daddy is looking down at you so proud,'" said Biden. "She said to me then... 'Daddy changed the world.'"

Triple mutation more transmissible variant: Prof Pai

NEW DELHI

AS India reports nearly three lakh cases and over 2,000 deaths in 24 hours, the biggest jump since the pandemic erupted, a new mutation in the Covidvirus has emerged as the new challenge.

After the double mutation, its now the triple mutation, meaning three different Covid strains combining to form a new variant, has been detected in parts of the country.

States like Maharashtra, Delhi and West Bengal are believed to have cases driven by the triple mutant.

Scientists believe the new surges globally are driven by new variants, according to NDTV re-

port. "This is a more transmissible variant. It is making lots of people sick very quickly," said Madhukar Pai, professor of epidemiology at McGill University.

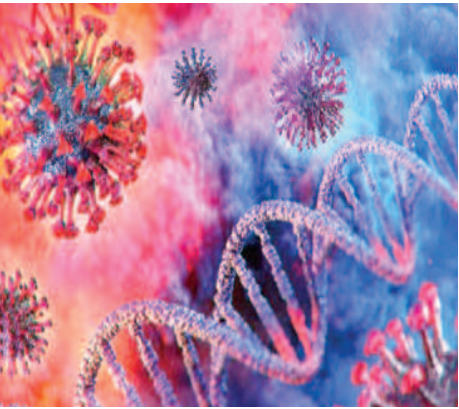
"We have to keep tweaking vaccines. For that we need to understand the disease. But we need sequencing on war footing," Dr Pai said.

That sets up a huge challenge for India, where genome sequencing is being done for less than one per cent of all cases, currently.

According to Dr Pai, the delay in detecting the double mutation may have contributed to the current virus spurt.

Why so many mutations?

The more a virus spreads, the more it replicates and the more it mutates.



What is the triple mutation?

A double mutation, which surfaced in India, was when two strains combined. Now three Covid variants have combined to form the triple mutation.

Where has the triple mutation been found? Maharashtra, West Bengal, Delhi

Is the triple mutation infectious?

Experts believe mutations are driving the fresh infection spikes, not just in India but across the world.

How infectious the triple mutation is, or how deadly, will be known only from more studies. For now, only 10 labs across India are involved in virus genome studies.

The double mutant shows increased trans-

mission rate and is seen to affect children too. It has more severe pathogenicity, say scientists.

For now, the triple mutation has been classified in India as a "variant of interest" rather than "variant of concern".

Will existing vaccines work against the triple mutation?

Two of the three variants in the triple mutation have been seen to have immune escape responses, meaning they are more resistant to antibodies. Not much more is known yet on the effectiveness of vaccines. Scientists believe the new variant has some ability to escape the body's naturally acquired immunity to Covid.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Central govt waives customs duty of Remdesivir

“THE government’s decision to waive off customs duty on antiviral drug Remdesivir injections and the drug’s active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) in order to boost supplies of the medicine in the wake of soaring Covid-19 cases in the country. There is already a ban on the export of the Remdesivir injection from the country

- **Sadanand Gowda**, Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister



ENERGY TRANSITION INDEX

WEF ranks India at 87th position

INDIA has been ranked at the 87th position among 115 countries in the Energy Transition Index (ETI) that tracks nations on the current performance of their energy systems across various aspects, according to the report released by World Economic Forum (WEF) and prepared in collaboration with Accenture

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	75.62	South	
Euro	90.85	African Rand	6.03
UAE Dirham	20.99	Hong Kong Dollar	11.09
Thai Baht	2.63	Japanese Yen	0.8
British Pound	105.37	New Zealand Dollar	54.27
Australian Dollar	58.39	Saudi Riyal	21.95
Canadian Dollar	60.06	Swedish Krona	10.18
Swiss Franc	82.45	Singapore Dollar	57.41

DELHI THURSDAY 22 APRIL 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Vedanta to support MSMEs

VEDANTA has launched initiative for the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME), the ‘Vedanta Saathi’ programme. Nitin Gadkari, Minister for MSMEs, Road Transport and Highways, Government of India has launched the programme. The programme offers channel financing at attractive rates and fast disbursement, in partnership with a host of leading banks, NBFCs and fintech firms. It will soon launch e-commerce solutions for an agile, easy and transparent way of buying from Vedanta’s entire bouquet of high-quality value-added products etc. Nitin Gadkari, Minister, MSMEs, Road Transport and Highways, said: “The pandemic has triggered a significant restructuring in the global supply chain. This offers our MSMEs a huge opportunity to tap into the new markets that are opening up and get integrated into these global supply chains.”

FanCode’s IPL offers

FANCODE has offered official merchandise of all eight IPL teams through its online sports fan merchandising store Fan-Code Shop. All sports fans can avail the discount of 25 per cent on authentic and official merchandise of their favourite team using the code: FC25. The products include official match jerseys, t-shirts, polo t-shirts, joggers, caps; accessories - bags, mobile covers, wireless chargers, cups, coasters, key-chains, wristbands. This year, the store has introduced merchandise for IPL fans as they will continue to watch the matches from home this summer. Addressing the needs of these evolved preferences, it now offers a work-from-home apparel category launched with vests and shorts.

Kalyan Jewellers to open 3 stores

KALYAN Jewellers has announced the launch of three new showrooms in Khammam, Karimnagar and Hyderabad. Amid Covid protocol requirements, the showrooms will be launched virtually by the company’s Chairman and Managing Director TS Kalyanaraman on April 24. The new showroom in Khammam at Wyra road will be a brand’s first in that region. T S Kalyanaraman, Chairman and Managing Director, Kalyan Jewellers said: “Our brand has been operational in the State of Telangana since 2010 when we entered the market with a showroom at Punjagutta in Hyderabad. Since then, we have consistently increased our presence across the State”.

Wadhvani’s new initiative

WADHWANI has launched an advantage programme to empower businesses in the healthcare sector. The programme includes 1-12 months of engagement and offers up to three years of hand-holding support enabled through a personalized artificial intelligence led business acceleration process. This programme aims to ignite the growth of businesses in the healthcare sector, accelerate revenues and free cash flows to fund growth for maximizing their growth potential through ‘Do-It-Yourself (DIY)’ discovery and business solution tool kits.

IT COs LIKELY TO GO FOR BIG HIRING

As demand picking up, attrition nos showing upward trend

DEBASIS MOHAPATRA
BENGALURU

BIG talent war is on the offing as the big IT services companies are readying for aggressive hiring in the coming months.

With demand picking up, most IT firms are short of talent with employee utilisation running at unsustainable levels. This has led to attrition numbers showing upward trend in the fourth quarter of current financial year. Even sources in the know said many large IT services firms are not able to get required talent for manning new projects bagged by them in recent quarters. Therefore, the management commentary on hiring big numbers in FY22 is intended at meeting the operational needs at the current demand environment, they added.

We believe there could be potential war for talents going ahead as companies are aggressively looking for digital talent to grow. Recently, many companies (including TCS, Accenture, Infosys, etc) have announced one-time bonus, additional rounds of promotions and the next round of wage revision for its employees as the supply of skilled talent is short. It has been reflected in



Experts are also of the opinion that as offshoring rises amid the pandemic, India hiring numbers will get the benefit of more project works being executed out of the country

the attrition picking up (except TCS) in the fourth quarter,” said Sanjeev Hota, head of research, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

IT majors such as Infosys and Wipro reported rise in their attrition numbers, though market leader Tata Consultancy Services witnessed a dip during the January-March period. Country’s second largest IT firm Infosys witnessed employee attrition going up by 5.2 per cent at 15.2 per cent in Q4 of FY21 as compared to 10 per cent reported in the previous quarter. Similarly, Wipro has also seen attrition level going up by 110 basis points to 12.1 per cent

during fourth quarter.

However, market leader TCS was the only exception. Its attrition level fell to 7.2 per cent in the IT services space from 7.6 per cent reported in the previous quarter. Meanwhile, management commentary of these three firms indicated that hiring plans for FY22 would remain robust.

Market leader TCS said that it is looking to bring 40,000 freshers on board in FY22, which will push up its total employee count above 5 lakh. Similarly, Infosys said that it would hire 26,000 engineering graduates from campuses in the current financial year. Though Wipro didn’t provide any specific number, it said it would be hiring more fresh graduates this fiscal over last fiscal year. In FY21, it had hired 9,000 college graduates.

Earlier, HCL Technologies had

said that the Noida-headquartered firm would hire 12,000 freshers in the current financial year. On aggregate basis, the top four IT services firm are expected to hire around 90,000 fresh graduates this fiscal year.

Experts said hiring numbers are likely to be more than one lakh for FY22 as mid-tier companies announce their hiring plans in coming days. Apart from demand pick up in the marketplace, higher utilisation levels are another reason for aggressive hiring plans. In the fourth quarter ended March 2021, Infosys’ employee utilisation excluding trainees touched 140 basis points at 87.7 per cent.

“On the utilisation side, we are recruiting aggressively. We are also making hires from the campuses and so on. So, as we start getting in such freshers into the mix, the utilisation will come down. The current utilisation of 87.7 per cent is very high and not what we are comfortable with. But over the quarters, it will trend down. That’s our plan,” said Pravin Rao, Chief Operating Officer at Infosys during the post-results conference call. Similarly, Wipro’s employee utilisation stood at 86 per cent during the fourth quarter of last fiscal year.

Experts are also of the opinion that as offshoring rises amid the pandemic, India hiring numbers will get the benefit of more project works being executed out of the country.

Care Ratings lowers GDP growth forecast to 10.2%

Earlier, it projected India’s GDP growth rate at 10.7-10.9% for FY22

MUMBAI

WITH economic activities getting affected across the country due to curbs imposed by states amid surge in Covid-19 cases, Care Ratings has revised down its forecast for GDP growth to 10.2 per cent in 2021-22 from earlier projection of 10.7-10.9 per cent. This is the third revision by the rating agency in the last one month. “We have revised our forecast for GDP growth for FY22 as the underlying conditions have changed rapidly in the last 30 days or so. It stands now at 10.2 per cent,” Care Ratings said in a report.

On March 24, 2021, the agency had projected GDP growth between 11-11.2 per cent based on GVA (gross value added) growth of 10.2 per cent. The spread of the virus in Maharashtra had led to the announcement of a lockdown by the state government which began in a less stringent man-



ner from the first week of April, it said. Factoring the potential loss of economic output due to the restrictions in the state, the agency, on April 5, lowered its GDP forecast for the current fiscal year to 10.7-10.9 per cent. But the lockdown was made more obtrusive to business activity by April 20, with more stringency expected for the forthcoming fortnight, it added.

Further, the spread of the virus to other states has caused similar actions by governments which have ranged from night curfews and weekend lockdowns to full lockdowns. The report said two events in the country - state elec-

tions and Kumbh Mela - have seen millions of people coming together with social distancing norms not being followed. This has potential to spread the virus at an exponential rate throughout the country and several states have announced measures to test people returning from the pilgrimage, it said.

The agency said the post-election lockdowns in five states/UT - Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Puducherry, can be expected once polling is completed and more people are tested for Covid-19.

The rating agency had projected GVA (gross value added) to increase from Rs 124.11 lakh crore (FY21) to Rs 136.82 lakh crore (FY22) which was an increase of 10.2 per cent. With a potential fall in output of Rs 1.13 lakh crore, GVA will be Rs 135.69 lakh crore and growth will be 9.3 per cent.

ANDHRA PRADESH

IT cos, others gear up to face Covid 2nd wave

SANTOSH PATNAIK
VISAKHAPATNAM

IT, pharma and other companies across Andhra Pradesh have prepared contingency plans to tackle the threat posed by the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic.

The State, which was credited with smoothly shifting to work from home (WFH) mode a few days after the pandemic broke out in the country in March, 2020, is now faced with the daunting task of safeguarding the health of thousands of employees working in various IT, pharma and other industries.

“We are ascertaining the views of member-companies to find out the number of employees required for various processes and core jobs. If night curfew is imposed or in the event of a lockdown, we will be needing police passes to allow them to reach their workstations

and back home after finishing their duties. Otherwise, most of the employees of IT and IT enabled services are being allowed WFH,” Sreedhar Kosaraju, president of IT Association of AP (ITAAP) told Bizz Buzz on Wednesday.

Major manufacturers like Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, Hindustan Shipyard Ltd and BHEL have not yet revived WFH. “For us the situation during first and second waves are different as a nationwide lockdown was imposed last year in March following which the employees could not reach the workplaces for want of public transport,” a PSU executive pointed out.

Meanwhile, the pharma companies are reviewing the preparedness with the no end in sight to the second wave. There is already buzz that the State might clamp Corona Curfew at night and minimise public movement during the day.

SBI temporary helpline number for queries

HANS BUSINESS
HYDERABAD

OM Prakash Mishra, CGM, Hyderabad Circle, State Bank of India has said that the bank has introduced temporary helpline number for the convenience of the customers in view of the prevailing pandemic situation. Giving details, he said the customer could dial the helpline number 040-23466233, which is operational during business hours for customers to check the status of branch functioning and to enquire about any alternate branch arrangements, if available. He urged the customers to use the digital platforms such as YONO and Internet Banking and mobile banking instead of visiting bank branches in person in view of the rising number of cases among the bank staff and general increase in Covid positive cases because of the prevailing second wave.



Covid shaves off one-fifth Capex of ONGC in FY21

NEW DELHI

OIL and gas producer ONGC spent about one-fifth less than its budget Capex in 2020-21 fiscal after Covid-19 related restrictions delayed projects but fuel marketers such as IOC exceeded targeted capital spending, a government report showed.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) had budgeted Rs 32,502 crore of capital spending in the fiscal from April 2020 to March 2021 but ended up spending only Rs 26,441 crore, according to the report of the oil ministry’s Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC). A company official said the lower than targeted Capex was be-

cause of project implementations getting delayed following the disruption caused to the supply chain and labour movement by Covid restrictions. Oil and gas exploration and production projects typically involve the supply of equipment from overseas suppliers. Also, some facilities like rigs are operated by foreign crews. Lockdowns in several parts of the world, including India, restricted the movement of labour as well as disrupted supply chains. ONGC’s overseas arm OVL too had a lower capital spending of Rs 5,351 crore in 2020-21 fiscal as compared to the targeted Rs 7,235 crore. But, other downstream companies exceeded their capital spending targets by a wide margin.



INDIA SEES 22 IPOs WORTH OVER \$2.5 BN

NEW DELHI

INDIA witnessed 22 initial public offerings worth over \$ 2.5 billion in the first three months of 2021 amid ‘high momentum’ in the country’s capital markets and the trend is likely to stay bullish in the current quarter also, according to a report.

Leading consultancy EY India’s IPO (Initial Public Offer) report released on Wednesday showed that consumer products and retail, diversified industrial products, automotive and transportation were the most active sectors in terms of the number of IPOs in the 2021 first quarter. The IPOs include both in the main as well as SME (Small and Medium Enterprise) markets.

“With a robust Q1, IPO market likely to stay bullish in Q2 2021,” it said, adding that India ranks ninth globally in terms of the

Amid high momentum in the markets, trend is likely to be bullish in current quarter

number of IPOs Year-To-Date (YTD) 2021. There were 22 IPOs that mopped up \$ 2,570.44 million in the first quarter of this year, including five in the SME space. During the first quarter, Indian Railway Finance Corp’s IPO - with an issue size of \$ 634 million - was the largest.

“In the main markets (BSE and NSE), there were 17 IPOs in Q1 2021 versus 1 IPO in Q1 2020 and 10 IPOs in Q4 2020, representing an increase of 1,600 per cent compared to Q1 2020 and an increase of 70 per cent compared to Q4 2020,” the report said.

In the SME segment, there were 5 IPOs in the first quarter of this year versus 11 and 9 IPOs in the first quarter of 2020 and fourth quarter of last year, respectively. This represents a decrease of 55 per cent compared



to Q1 2020 and a decline of 44 per cent compared to Q4 2020.

“We are witnessing high momentum in the Indian capital markets. Significant amount of activity is driven by huge dry powder awaiting investment and companies exploring a listing in India or overseas. “The markets continue to reward companies with robust, scalable and technology-led business models,” Sandip Khetan, Partner and National Leader of Financial Ac-

counting Advisory Services (FAAS) at EY India said.

As per the report, the IPO pipeline has over 20 companies that have filed their Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHPs) and more than 30 PE-backed companies are planning exits. In-vTs worth almost \$ 5 billion are in the pipeline.

However, the report also noted that there are reasons for caution in the near-term, given the slow start to vaccinations in India relative to the size of the population, renewed spike in Covid infections with the second wave and threats from new variants of the virus. Globally, the report said that attractive market conditions in 2021 so far have resulted in the best-performing first quarter by deal numbers and proceeds in the last 20 years.

RR FACE UPHILL TASK AGAINST RCB

MUMBAI

GLENN Maxwell and AB de Villiers will be the cynosure of all eyes again when Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) take on Rajasthan Royals (RR) in the Indian Premier League (IPL) on Thursday at the Wankhede Stadium.

Both hard-hitting batsmen have been the driving force behind RCB moving to the top of the IPL points table and, against a weak RR bowling attack missing Jofra Archer and Ben Stokes, they would be raring to go big again.

However, RCB captain Virat Kohli will be looking to bat long and get a big score, something that has eluded him in the first three matches.

He scored 33 runs in the first two matches before being dismissed for just five in the third. This will be a good opportunity for him to bat out and return to big runs. For RR, the challenge will

SQUADS

Rajasthan Royals

Sanju Samson (captain), Jos Buttler (wicketkeeper), Riyan Parag, Shreyas Gopal, Rahul Tewatia, Mahipal Lomror, Kartik Tyagi, Andrew Tye, Jaydev Unadkat, Mayank Markande, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Anuj Rawat, David Miller, Manan Vohra, Robin Uthappa, Shivam Dube, Chris Morris, Mustafizur Rahman, Chetan Sakariya, KC Cariappa, Kuldeep Yadav, Akash Singh.

Royal Challengers Bangalore

Virat Kohli (captain), Devdutt Padikkal, Finn Allen (wicketkeeper), AB de Villiers (wicketkeeper), Pavan Deshpande, Washington Sundar, Daniel Sams, Yuzvendra Chahal, Adam Zampa, Shahbaz Ahmed, Mohammed Siraj, Navdeep Saini, Kane Richardson, Harshal Patel, Glenn Maxwell, Sachin Baby, Rajat Patidar, Mohammed Azharuddeen, Kyle Jamieson, Daniel Christian, Suyash Prabhudessai, K.S. Bharat.

be big against a power-packed RCB batting that starts with the Kohli-Dev-

dutt Padikkal duo and goes on till late.

RR's batting has also flopped. Skipper Sanju Samson got off to a good start to the tournament with a century against Punjab Kings but he has since been guilty of throwing his wicket away with reckless shots in the subsequent matches. Add to that, their England all-rounder Liam Livingstone has already left the camp citing bubble fatigue making their overseas options further limited.

"Liam Livingstone has left the squad and has returned to England due to bubble fatigue," a statement from RR said.

Chris Morris and Mustafizur Rahman will have to bowl really well to keep RCB batting in check. It is an uphill task but one they will have to do if they are to allow their strong batting comprising Jos Buttler, Samson, Morris and David Miller to make a match of it.

SRH thump Punjab Kings by nine wickets

CHENNAI

SUNRISERS Hyderabad (SRH) bowlers put up an inspired performance to lead their team to a comprehensive nine-wicket win over Punjab Kings (PBKS) in the Indian Premier League here at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Wednesday.

Left-arm pacer Khaleel Ahmed (3/21 in four overs) and left-arm spinner Abhishek Sharma (2/24 in four overs) were the wreckers-in-chief as SRH first bowled out PBKS for 120 and then chased the target with eight balls to spare. Jonny Bairstow made an unbeaten 63 off 56 deliveries to lead the SRH chase.

Khaleel got the wickets of Mayank Agarwal, Shahrukh Khan and Fabian Allen while Sharma (2/24 in four overs) removed Moises Henriques and Deepak Hooda to leave the Punjab franchise reeling.

PBKS lost their skipper KL Rahul early, the opener falling to his India



teammate Bhuvneshwar Kumar. Chris Gayle and Mayank Agarwal tried to resurrect the innings but two successive wickets - of Agarwal, who was caught at mid-wicket, and Nicholas Pooran, who was run out -- set them back. Soon danger-man Gayle was out leg-before to Rashid Khan (1/17 in

four overs) as PBKS were reduced to 47 for four in the ninth over.

The hopes of a recovery rested on the shoulders of Deepak Hooda (13 off 11) and Moises Henriques (14 off 17) but both couldn't build on the start and fell to the left-arm spin of Sharma with the Aussie getting out stumped.

Shahrukh Khan (22 off 17) tried to take PBKS to a respectable total but he was caught at deep mid-wicket on the first ball of the penultimate over bowled by Khaleel. With his departure, the hopes of PBKS reaching close to 140 were

dashed. The target was a cakewalk as Bairstow and Warner (37 off 37 balls) added 73 for the first wicket in 10 overs.

Warner's dismissal brought in Kane Williamson (16 not out off 19 balls), who played in his first match of this season's IPL.

Brief scores: Punjab Kings 120 all out in 19.4 overs (M Agarwal 22, S Khan 22, K Ahmed 3/21, A Sharma 2/24) vs SunRisers Hyderabad lost to SunRisers Hyderabad 121/1 in 18.4 overs (J Bairstow 63 not out, D Warner 37) by nine wickets.

Runner Johnson contracts Covid-19



NEW DELHI

JAKARTA Asian Games champion in men's 1500 metres Jinson Johnson says his chances of making cut for the Tokyo Olympics are almost over as he is still recovering from Covid-19 at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) training centre in Bengaluru.

"I was one of the several athletes who had tested positive for Covid-19 over the last fortnight in Bengaluru. It was a big setback to my training. I'm feeling better now but am still in quarantine. I can't go out without the advice of a medical expert," he told IANS from Bengaluru. In 2019, the Army's 30-year-old middle distance runner had clocked 3 minutes 35.24 seconds, a personal best in Berlin but narrowly missed the Tokyo Olympic qualification time of 3 minutes 35 seconds. The 2020 season was disrupted by injury and pandemic.

The international runner from Kerala had skipped last month's Federation Cup athletics meet at Patiala as he wasn't fit to clock a fast time. "My aim was to give my best during the June Inter State Athletics meet in Bengaluru. I was satisfied with my training, but then fell victim to Covid-19 earlier this month," he said. Johnson said he had taken all precautions.

Hard work during lockdown paying rewards: Nilakanta

BENGALURU

INDIA men's hockey team midfielder Nilakanta Sharma said on Wednesday that his side had reaped the rewards of tremendous hard work during lockdown in the recently concluded series against Olympic champions Argentina.

India defeated Argentina in both FIH Pro League games, besides winning two practice games in Buenos Aires.

Sharma said that the tour of Argentina was an enriching experience, and the team is hoping to carry this current run of form into the Tokyo Olympics.

"We made it a point to keep training and work on our game even while being indoors. Our preparations for the Olympics started last year in the FIH Pro League, where we fared well against world champions Belgium, the Netherlands and Australia. We also had a solid tour of Europe earlier this year. That gave us the confidence that we could face the best teams and come out on top," said Sharma.

He felt that a good start in 2021 had given India the momentum for the Olympics.

"The Argentina tour was an important experience for all of us. We were yearning for proper match practice while building up towards the Olympics. We had spent a lot of time in na-



tional camps over the past year trying to work on our game. I am glad that it paid off. We showed a lot of character despite a lot of players taking the field after a long time," he added.

Reflecting on the year gone by where many international events were cancelled, Sharma said, "There's no doubt that it's been a difficult time for all of us due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sharma scored India's first goal of the Argentina tour, and followed the effort with an assist in the second practice match. The Indian attacking midfielder earned praise for creating loads of chances.

"I have learned to stay calm and composed in pressure situations. I feel we combine

well...captain Manpreet, Dilpreet and Hardik. We have a very good understanding about each other's game. What we saw in Argentina was a result of a lot of hard during training sessions.

As I said, the more we played with each other, our game improved. Conversations with chief coach Graham Reid have been open. He has been approachable from day one and has given me a very clear idea about my role in the team," the 25-year-old said.

The Manipur player has come a long way from being a junior world champion on home soil in 2016, a team that also included current stars Harmanpreet Singh, Varun Kumar and Krishan Pathak among others. (IANS)

ECB abolishes selector's role, head coach to pick teams

LONDON

THE England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) on Wednesday decided to do away with the post of national selector -- currently held by Ed Smith -- and give complete authority to the men's team head coach who will have overall responsibility for future squad selections.

The ECB said in a statement that, "As part of the restructure, the role of National Selector, currently held by Ed Smith, who was appointed in spring 2018, will no longer exist, and Smith will leave the ECB at the end of the month. In those three years England have enjoyed success across all formats, including becoming ICC 50-over Men's World Champions in 2019 and are currently ranked 1st, 1st and 4th across the three formats.

"This new structure, developed by Managing Director, England Men's Cricket, Ashley Giles, will give clear accountability to the England Men's Head Coach, Chris Silverwood, who will have overall responsibility for future squad selections from this point. The Head Coach and the respective red-ball and white-ball Captains, Joe Root and Eoin Morgan, will continue to work together on selecting the final playing eleven," the ECB said.

The ECB said that a support system is in place to provide the head coach with necessary inputs to facilitate selections.

Japan organisers may postpone Olympic fan limit decision

TOKYO

TOKYO Olympic organisers are considering delaying the decision on how many spectators will be allowed to enter venues as the country struggles with another wave of coronavirus infections.

The organising committee may make the decision in June instead of drawing up a basic policy on capacity by the end of April, DPA reported.

The organisers need to deal with the issue 'flexibly', its president Seiko Hashimoto had previously told a news conference.

Overseas spectators are banned from attending this summer's Games due to the coronavirus pandemic, the organisers had decided in March.

Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike told reporters on Tuesday that the Olympic host city was considering asking the central government to issue another coronavirus state of emergency amid a resurgence

of infections. Tokyo confirmed 843 new infections on Wednesday, the largest daily cases in nearly three months.

The central government may declare a third state of emergency in Tokyo, Osaka and Hyogo prefectures, local media reported.

A survey conducted by Kyodo



showed last week that 72 per cent of those polled in Japan want the Olympics cancelled or rescheduled due to the pandemic.

Only 24 per cent supported the Olympics and Paralympics going ahead this year.

But marking 100 days until the start a week ago, Tokyo 2020 coordination commission chair John Coates said in a video message that the Olympics "certainly will happen", from July 23.

Rizwan, Qadir guide Pakistan to victory against Zimbabwe

HARARE

MOHAMMAD Rizwan struck an unbeaten 82 and Usman Qadir took three wickets as Pakistan defeated Zimbabwe by 11 runs in the first of three-match T20I series at the Harare Sports Club on Wednesday.

After being set a 150-run winning target, Zimbabwe could only score 138 for 7 in the allotted 20 overs.

The hosts lost two wickets in the third over to right-arm fast bowler Mohammad Hasnain with 21 runs on the board.

Tinashe Kamunhukamwe (29 off 35, three fours) and Craig Ervine (34 off 23, three fours, one six) knitted 56 runs for the third-wicket to help Zimbabwe stage a comeback.

That Zimbabwe came close to Pakistan's target was due mainly to the late onslaught from Luke Jongwe, who struck three fours and a six

and returned unbeaten on 30 off 23 balls.

For Pakistan, leg-spinner Usman accounted for Ervine, Sean Williams (9) and Regis Chakabva (3) and ended up with the match figures of three for 29 in four overs. Hasnain took two for 27.

Earlier, after being put in to bat, Pakistan scored 149 for seven.

Despite losing wickets at regular intervals, wicketkeeper-batsman Rizwan kept the scoreboard ticking as he struck his fifth T20 half century. Rizwan struck 10 fours and a six in his 61-ball knock.

He contributed 34 runs for the second wicket with Fakhar Zaman (13 off 14, two fours). Another 34 runs were added for the fourth wicket between debutant Danish Aziz (15) and Rizwan.

The two sides will play the second T20I at the same venue on Friday. (IANS)

A global martial arts champion living in penury

MOHAMMED SHAFEEQ

THE glittering collection of over 70 medals karate champion Pathan Jameel Khan has won in championships around the world over the last two decades stands in total contrast to the life of penury this martial arts exponent is living today.

The 45-year-old, who brought many laurels to the country with his sheer hard work, is now struggling to make ends meet.

In the fasting month of Ramzan, a few good Samaritans have come forward to help him with food, which highlights the pitiable condition the grandmaster is living in.

Jameel Khan is the sole breadwinner of the family of five including his ailing mother, a sister and her two daughters.

He has been running from pillar to post knocking at the doors of the Telangana government for the last several years for a job. He told IANS that he has been meeting ministers and officials but no help came from anywhere.

Living in a two-room rented house in Humayun Nagar, he has seen how the successive governments showered cash prizes on other sportspersons and allotted



them house sites in posh localities in Hyderabad.

"When the government can give them 500 square yard plots worth several crores of rupees, why can't it allot a 100 square yard plot to someone like me who has achieved so much but has no house," asked Jameel in a voice choking with emotion.

While sportspersons coming from other parts of the country and settling down in Hyderabad

received all the rewards from the Telangana government, this son of the soil has not got any help from the powers that be.

Hailing from Mandamarrri in Mancherial district, Jameel comes from a family of fruit vendors. Himself a pushcart vegetable vendor, he developed a keen interest in the martial arts when he was around 15 and a demonstration of martial arts happened at a school in his vil-

lage. He started taking coaching in Warangal and shifted to Hyderabad some two decades ago. He proved himself in national championships and in 2001 he went to Bangkok for his first international tournament.

Since then he has won 73 medals including 45 gold, 12 silver and 16 bronze at various events in different countries including the United States, Thailand, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Malaysia. He takes part in karate, in which he is a First Dan black belt, Taekwondo (2 Dan) and Kung Fu (7 Dan).

He participated in world championships in the US for 12 years and won 48 medals including 18 gold and 12 silver. "I am the only Indian to win 48 medals in these championships," he says proudly.

In 2019, he won a gold and two bronze medals at the Taekwondo Championship in the US.

Despite not receiving any help from the government, Jameel Khan was making a living by coaching students in schools. He was coaching in Safdaria Girls' High School near his house. However, the closure of the school due to the Covid-19 pandemic since last year pushed him into finan-

cial problems. He also could not travel to the United States last year to take part in a Karate championship due to travel restrictions because of the Covid situation.

With no source of income, Jameel is struggling to pay even his house rent. He is also finding it difficult to bear the medical expenses of his mother who met with an accident a couple of years ago.

Jameel recalled that his father, who was mentally unstable, went missing in 1999 and since then he has been shouldering the responsibility of running the house.

Undeterred by the lack of financial help from the government, Jameel wants to continue participating in international events and bring more laurels to the country. However, the pandemic has put a halt to his winning streak.

Jameel is still waiting to achieve his ultimate dream of representing India in the Olympics.

He also wants to set up an academy to train youngsters in martial arts. He, however, is unsure how he is going to achieve this in the absence of any support from the authorities. (IANS)