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#### **WINDOWS**



#### **Canada extends** flight ban from India and Pak till June 21

OTTAWA: Canada has extended the ban on direct flights from India and Pakistan by one more month until June 21 in a bid to arrest the spread of new variants of the Covid-19, according to an official announcement. The han on flights from India and Pakistan was extended as the previous 30-day ban, first imposed on April 22, was set to expire on Saturday, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) News reported. Cargo flights, however, will be permitted in order to maintain shipments of essential supplies, such as vaccines and personal protective equipment. it said on Friday. "The Minister of Transport is of the opinion that it is necessary for aviation safety and the protection of the public," according to a notice to airmen. As the ban applies to direct flights from both countries, pas-

sengers can still fly to Canada from India or Pakistan by arriving via a third country. They will need to produce a negative result on a Covid-19 test taken at their last point of departure before being allowed to enter Canada, according to the report.



#### **MEIL imports 11 02** tanks from Bangkok

HYDERABAD: Citybased Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Limited (MEIL) is importing 11 cryogenic oxygen tanks from Bangkok (Thailand) amid the acute shortage of medical oxygen in hospitals across the country in the fight against Covid. These tanks that will help increase the supply of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) to hospitals, are being provided by MEIL

to Telangana State free of cost. The first batch of 3 tanks landed at the Begumpet Airforce Station here on Saturday, and the remaining 8 tanks will arrive in two more batches in the next few days. ▶ P7

## Delete 'Indian Covid variant' term, Govt tells social media platforms

**New Delhi** 

THE government has asked social media companies to immediately remove any content on their platform which mentions or refers to the term 'Indian variant' of coronavirus, in a bid to curb spread of misinformation around Covid-19.

Digital platforms said they have received the latest advisory. On Friday, the IT ministry wrote to all social media platforms emphasising that the World Health Organ-

Sonu Sood

plans oxygen plants in AP

MUMBAI: Actor Sonu Sood

took to social media on Satur-

day to announce that he would

be setting up a couple of oxy-

gen plants in Andhra Pradesh

"Very happy to announce

that the first set of my oxygen

Kurnool Government Hospi-

tal and one at District Hospi-

tal, Atmakur, Nellore, AP in

would be followed by setting

needy states! Time to support rural India," Sonu Sood

The actor has been arrang-

other necessary equipment for

Covid patients as India battles

the second wave of the pan-

municates with netizens

media to warn netizens

people.

demic. He also regularly com-

reaching out to him on Twitter

and other platforms seeking

oxygen and other necessities.

against fraudsters using his

Sonu recently took to social

ing oxygen concentrators and

plants will be set up at

the month of June! This

more plants in the other

in June.



isation (WHO) has not asso-

ciated the term "Indian Vari-

ant" with the B.1.617 variant

of the coronavirus in any of

its reports. A notice issued

in this regard by the IT min-

istry states that a "false statement" is being circulated online that implies that an 'Indian variant' of coronavirus is spreading across the countries. The IT ministry

said the matter has already been clarified by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on May 12, 2021 through a press statement. The social media platforms have been

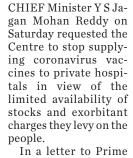
asked to "remove all the content that names, refers to, or implies 'Indian variant' of corona virus from your platform immediately".

Previously, the Ministry of **Electronics and Information** Technology had issued advisories regarding curbing of false news/ misinformation concerning coronavirus on social media platforms.

Earlier this year, the government had introduced guidelines to curb the misuse of social media platforms.

## AP CM'S MISSIVE TO PM Stop vaccine supply to pvt hospitals: Jagan

HANS NEWS SERVICE **A**MARAVATI



Minister Narendra Modi, Jagan pointed out that private hospitals were charging as high as Rs 2,000-25,000 for each vaccine dose from the people due to the flexibility offered to them to fix the price. "This makes these doses one of the costliest in the world and invites criticism from the general public.

public good and ideally



it needs to be given free of cost or at least at affordable rates," the Chief Minister said. "In a situation where there is not enough supply to cater to even the 45plus age group completely, and no possibility of taking up the free vaccination of the 18-44 age group for the next few months, it appears very unreasonable to allow some private hospitals to vaccinate people of all age groups at such exorbitant rates," he

The Chief Minister

observed that it was not only a disadvantage to the poorer sections of society who could not afford such high cost,

> but it also creates a situation of black marketing of the vaccines, which administratively would be a Herculean task to control. He said making various options available to the public to get vaccinated in both government and pri-

vate hospitals would be a good idea only if supply and availability

one could choose any mode according to their choice and financial affordability.

"In today's situation, where vaccine supply is very limited, providing this option to private hospitals where they charge an exorbitant price is socially unacceptable and administratively difficult to monitor," he said. "I request you to look

into the matter and dispense with the supply of vaccines to private hospitals so that the entire stock is available only to the state and Central governments," the Chief Minister said. Such a decision would be widely appreciated and generate immense goodwill to the government and arrest black cines, he added.



### Jabs for 18+ needs to be stopped: CM

DELHI Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said Covid-19 vaccination centres for those in the 18-44 age group have to be closed due to lack of doses, and wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for immediate supply of jabs and increasing the quota of the city.

As the country is facing a shortage of vaccine, Kejriwal gave four suggestions to Modi, including procurement of vaccines from foreign manufacturers and inviting firms for production in India.

In an online press conference, Kejriwal said that from Sunday, all vaccination centres for youths in Delhi will be closed as stocks have run out. Delhi requires 80 lakh doses a month to vaccinate people in three months. But it only received 16 lakh doses in May and the Centre has further decreased Delhi's quota in June to 8 lakh doses, Kejriwal said.

So far 50 lakh people have been vaccinated in Delhi. Further, 2.5 crore more doses are required to vaccinate all adults in Delhi, he said. "With this speed of 8 lakh doses per month, it will take 30 months to vaccinate all the adults alone. By then, no one knows how many waves will arrive and how many deaths will occur," Kejriwal said, urging the prime minister to raise the quota and supply to the city immediately.

The chief minister extended four suggestions to the central government to en-

hance vaccine availability in the country. The central government should within 24 hours direct all capable companies in the country to start manufacturing Covaxin as Bharat Biotech has agreed to share its formula, he said.

Vaccines manufactured abroad should be used in India and the Centre needs to procure vaccines on the behalf of states as it will be more effective in bulk procurement, Kejriwal said. Foreign companies should be allowed to manufacture vaccines in India and the Centre should try to get vaccines from such countries that have stocks of more doses than their need, he suggested.

Vaccination of maximum number of people in the shortest time is the only way to save Delhi and the country from the third wave of coronavirus, Kejriwal asserted. "We are arranging beds, oxygen and medicines, but vaccine is the most effective weapon of protection against the fatal

Shortage of vaccine is not just a matter of worry for the governments, common people are also scared due to this crisis, he claimed. Shortage of vaccine has caused a very difficult situation in the country, Kejriwal said and narrated a call he had received from an elderly mother who requested vaccine for his son foregoing the jab herself saying he needed it more than her because he had a job to take care

Continued on Page 4

### **Cyclone Yaas likely** to turn furious

New Delhi

CYCLONE Yaas is likely to intensify into a "very severe cyclonic storm" and cross the Odisha and the West Bengal coasts on May 26, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Saturday.

name to extract money from A low-pressure area formed over the east-central Sonu Sood reacted to a Bay of Bengal and the adjoinuser's tweet who shared how ing north Andaman Sea on she allegedly got calls from Saturday. While a low-pres-Sonu Sood Foundation asking sure area is the first stage of formation of a cyclone, it is her to pay Rs 10,000 for membership. Reacting to the post not necessary that all lowon Friday, Sonu tweeted: pressure areas will intensify "Anyone who asks for money into cyclonic storms. "The is a fake. Please don't fall in low-pressure area is very likely to concentrate into a any trap. My services are FREE. @SoodFoundation." depression over east central

Bay of Bengal by tomorrow, the 23rd May morning. It is very likely to move northnorthwestwards, intensify into a Cyclonic Storm by 24th May and further into a very severe cyclonic storm during the subsequent 24 hours," the IMD said. It would continue to move north-northwestwards, intensify further and reach north Bay of Bengal near West Bengal and the adjoining north Odisha and Bangladesh coasts by the morning of May 26, it said. "It is very likely to cross West Bengal and the adjoining

26th May," the IMD added. Continued on Page 4

north Odisha and Bangladesh

coasts around the evening of

### At least 100 +ve cases on Everest

BINAJ GURUBACHARYA KATHMANDU

AN expert climbing guide on Saturday said that a coronavirus outbreak on Mount Everest has infected at least 100 climbers and support staff, giving the first comprehensive estimate amid official Nepalese denials of a Covid-19 cluster on the world's highest peak.

Lukas Furtenbach of Austria, who last week became the only prominent outfitter to halt his Everest expedition due to virus fears, said one of his foreign guides and six Nepali Sherpa guides have tested positive. "I think with all the confirmed cases we know now — confirmed from (rescue) pilots, from insurance, from doctors, from expedition leaders - I have the positive tests so we can



prove this," Furtenbach told The Associated Press in Nepal's capital, Kathmandu.

"We have at least 100 people minimum positive for Covid in base camp, and then the numbers might be something like 150 or 200," he said. He said it was obvious there were many cases at the Everest base camp because he could visibly see people were sick, and could hear

people coughing in their tents. A total of 408 foreign climbers

were issued permits to climb Everest this season, aided by several hundred Sherpa guides and support staff who've been stationed at base camp since April. Nepalese mountaineering officials have denied there are anv active cases this season among climbers and support staff at all base camps for the country's Himalayan mountains.

Mountaineering was closed last year due to the pandemic. Nepalese officials could not immediately be reached for comment on Saturday. Other climbing teams have not announced any Covid-19 infections among their members or staff. Several climbers have reported testing positive after they were brought down from the Everest base camp.

## Supermoon! Red blood lunar eclipse! It's all happening at once

SHANNON SCHMOLL

he first lunar eclipse of 2021 is going to happen during the early hours of May 26. But this is going to be an especially super lunar event, as it will be a supermoon, a lunar eclipse and a red blood moon all

So, what does this all mean? What's a super moon? A supermoon occurs when a full or new moon coincides with the Moon's closest approach to the Earth. The Moon's orbit around Earth is not perfectly circular. This means the Moon's distance from Earth varies as it goes around the planet. The closest point in

roughly 28,000 miles closer to Earth than the farthest point of the orbit.

A full moon that happens near the perigee is called a supermoon. So why is it super? The relatively close proximity of the Moon makes it seem a little bit bigger and brighter than usual, though the difference between a supermoon and a normal moon is usually hard to notice unless you're looking at two pictures side by side. How does a lunar eclipse work? A lunar eclipse happens when the Earth's shadow covers all or part of the Moon.

This can only happen during a full moon, so first, it helps to understand what makes a full



When the Moon is completely covered by Earth's shadow it will darken, but doesn't go completely black. Instead, it takes on a red colour, which is why total lunar eclipses are sometimes called red or blood moons

moon. Like the Earth, half of the Moon is illuminated by the sun at any one time. A full moon happens when the Moon and the Sun are on opposite sides of the Earth. This allows you see the entire lit-up side, which looks

like a round disc in the night sky. If the Moon had a totally flat orbit, every full moon would be a lunar eclipse. But the Moon's orbit is tilted by about 5 degrees relative to Earth's orbit. So, most

of the time a full moon ends up a

little above or below the shadow cast by the Earth.

But twice in each lunar orbit, the Moon is on the same horizontal plane as both the Earth and Sun. If this corresponds to a full moon, the Sun, the Earth

straight line and the Moon will pass through the Earth's shadow. This results in a total lunar eclipse. To see a lunar eclipse, you need to be on the night side of the Earth while the Moon passes through the shadow.

Why does the moon look red? When the Moon is completely covered by Earth's shadow it will darken, but doesn't go completely black. Instead, it takes on a red colour, which is why total lunar eclipses are sometimes called red or blood moons. Sunlight contains all colours of visible light. The particles of gas that make up Earth's atmosphere are more likely to scatter blue wavelengths of light while

redder wavelengths pass through. This is called Rayleigh scattering, and it's why the sky is blue and sunrises and sunsets are often red. In the case of a lunar eclipse, red light can pass through the Earth's atmosphere and is refracted - or bent - toward the Moon, while blue light is filtered out. This leaves the moon with a pale reddish hue during an eclipse. Hopefully you will be able to go see this super lunar eclipse. When you do, now you will know exactly what makes for such a special sight.

Director, Abrams Planetarium, Department of Physics and Astronomy, Michigan State University (The Conversation)

## **Report on Covid highlights** future pandemic risks

HYDERABAD

THE Independent Commission on Development and Health in India (ICDHI) in its report "Covid-19 Global & National Response: Lessons for the Future" highlighted the pandemic through two major sections- Global and National Re-

The report highlighted the need for a strong global weather station to monitor emerging health emergencies well in advance. World Health Organisation is supposed to leverage its strong global presence to promptly respond to health emergencies. However, in recent years, the WHO is not so pro-actively responsive to the outbreak of Ebola, and the recent Covid-19 crisis has dented its credibility. Better preparedness is crucial to

JVR Prasada Rao, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for AIDS, Asia & the Pacific and Former Secretary, Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, said, "A number of drugs have been repurposed or in the process mainly due the efforts of countries to find a cure for Covid-19. The WHO should have taken the lead in quickly picking up candidate drugs which could be put through clinical trials for use as repurposed drugs. Its time consuming procedures have not helped to make life saving drugs available for moderate serious cases resulting in avoidable mortality." The second half of the report deals with the story of the pandemic in India. Referring to the current challenges faced by the healthcare system in the country during the pandemic,

Mukhopadhyay, Convener, Independent Commission on Development and Health in India, said, "Due to various factors, such as shortage of human and financial resources, patient overload, the health providers are so preoccupied with the clinical work that they hardly get any time for health promotion, disease prevention & management and risk communication. There is a missing vital link between the community and health system. Keeping this reality in mind, it is becoming obvious that we need to create a Public Health Cadre on the pattern of IAS with public health specialists at all levels of the healthcare system, which will take care of promotive

As telemedicine and virtual care have become important tools, the

and preventive aspects of health

report stressed implementing telemedicine equitably, and accessible to all sections of society.

The report remained what Prof Vikram Patel, Department of Global Health and Population, Harvard School of Public Health, said, "As we look ahead beyond the acute phase of the pandemic, the world will need to address an economic recession far greater than anything we have encountered before. A rise in the burden of clinically significant mental health problems is expected as an impact of this economic recession, the widening of inequalities in countries, the continuing uncertainties about future waves of the epidemic and the physical distancing policies. This would not be surprising, given the strong association be $tween\,poverty, inequality\,and\,poor$ mental health"

## People demand cap on HRCT test price

HYDERABAD

AS High Resolution CT (HRCT) scan is mandatory to confirm Covid-19, private testing labs in Hyderabad were taking this as advantage and charging high fees for the test. Labs were charging Rs 4,000 to Rs 5,000 and sometimes even more. People were forced to pay the amount demanded by the lab as the government did not fixed the rate for HRCT test like it has fixed cap for beds in hospitals.

It was observed that several Ministers like Harish Rao and Gangula Kamlakar conducted a high level meeting with district officials in their constituencies and visited the labs to review the prices at private labs. The Ministers instructed the labs to reduce the cost of

the test and not to charge more than Rs 2,000 or Rs 2,200 and it's said that the labs in districts have been following the orders.

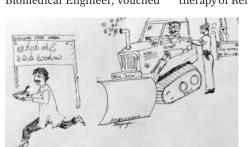
Though there are labs across the State that will conduct various tests but there is no facility to conduct HRCT at government pathology labs. People were forced to pay hefty amount for the scan. Most of the people have to take the test twice - one to confirm the infection and another one after recovery. People urging government to fix the prove for the test as it's unabarabe for the majority of the people. Faheem Uddin a resident from Chandangar said "after feeling symptoms I have undergo HRCT test at private lab twice in 15 days and charged 5,200 each". More he said that "not only I many people like me are

spending hefty amount on test, government government should come forward to fix the price for the test". One more suspect Srinivas said that "I have done HRCT for 4,200 and thankfully I have not tested positive I have saved 4,200 as I did not go for second test. If any body go for second rest he have to spend Rs 10,000 for HRCT only labs and hospitals are showing no mercy during pandemic and taking advantage of the situation this test should banned or price should reduce". Experts says that HRCT is mandatory to confirm Covid-19 it can not be cancelled. Official of state health department said that HRCT is not mandatory RAT is enough to confirm the covid test. Officials suggested people not to go for HRCT untill it's not emergency.

### **Chilkur head priest wants Nellore** herbal preparation globalised

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

CHILKUR Balaji Temple head priest CS Rangarajan, who is a Biomedical Engineer, vouched



for the efficacy of the herbal preparation after he interacted with many patients, who got cured by the drug. Rangarajan called up some of the Nellore residents, who were miraculously revived from breathlessness without oxygen support. Unlike the blind man's journey of global drug regimen and the supposed confusion on Plasma therapy or Remdesivir, Ananda-

iah has also released his ingredients. "We at Chilkur Balaji Temple support the movement to strengthen the hands of Anandaiah, who is giving these medicines free to patients.

We request the authorities not to invoke any Sections of Drugs and Magic Remedies Act, which is purely to smoke out Indian traditional medicine systems," said Rangarajan.

### TS appoints new V-Cs to State varsities



HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

THE Telangana government on Saturday announced the names of the newly appointed Vice-Chancellors of 10 State universities. A government statement said that the new V-Cs were appointed after Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan has approved their names. The newly ap-



**Prof Laxmikanth Rathode** 

pointed V-Cs were - Prof D Ravinder Yadav (Osmania University, Hyderabad); Prof T Ramesh (Kakatiya University, Warangal); Prof D Ravinder (Telangana University, Nizamabad); Prof Sitarama Rao (Dr BR Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad); Prof T Kishan Rao (Potti Sriramulu Telugu University, Hyderabad); Prof Lakshmikant Rathode (Palamuru Univer-



Prof. K.Seetharama Rao

sity, Mahbubnagar); Prof Ch Gopal Reddy (Mahatma Gandhi University, Nalgonda); Prof Katta Narasimha Reddy (Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad); Prof Mallesham (Satavahana University, Karimnagar); and Prof N Kavita Daryani Rao (Jawaharlal Nehru Architecture and Fine Arts University, Hyderabad).

### DGP monitors lockdown in Hyderabad

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

DIRECTOR General of Police (DGP) M Mahender Reddy announced that all entry and exit points in Hyderabad and all major towns will be closed after 10 am to implement lockdown effectively. On Saturday, the DGP paid a surprise visit to various check posts in all three Commissionerates and reviewed the situation during lockdown. He instructed police officials to take strict action against the viola-

DGP Mahender Reddy appealed to people to cooperate and follow the lockdown strictly and suggested them to wrap up their works between

come out if there is no emergency. He said that the government has implemented lockdown to curb spread of coronavirus and the results are positive and cases were declining rapidly. If people continue to cooperate, corona cases will come down and the State will become Covid-free soon, he observed. Corona will continue to spread if people come on to the roads unnecessary, he added.

The DGP instructed the officials to seize vehicles of lockdown violators and to return the seized vehicles only after lockdown was lifted. He clarified that e-commerce services will be allowed within the four hours of relaxation period.

### **Noted painter** Gopi passes away

HYDERABAD

CHIEF Minister K Chandrashekar Rao had condoled the death of noted painter Gopi. Gopi' Lusagni Goal Goud (69) died due the corona virus infection. He passed away while undergoing treatment at Gandhi Hospital in the State. He is survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter. Hailing from the previous Mahbubnagar district, Gopi practiced painting on his own and became famous. Noted film icon and painter Bapu had admired Gopi for his noteworthy paintings. Gopi contributed to the rich culture and traditions of Telangana State.

Government Advisor KV Ramanachary also consoled his family members. The final rites performed at Mahaprastĥanam in Banjara Hills as per Covid-19 norms.

## TRS look towards the trouble shooter Harish Rao in Huzurabad

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

NOW the TRS has entrusted the responsibility of Huzurabad to party's trouble-shooter senior leader and Finance Minister T Harish Rao, who was busy meeting the leaders from Eatala Rajender's hometown Kamalapur and making them come into huddle and pledge support to the ruling party.

The TRS party leadership has intensified its efforts to single out former minister Eatala Rajender. After making the party leaders like Captain Lakshmikantha Rao and BC Welfare Minister Gangula Kamalakar, the party has now entrusted the responsibility to its trouble shooter T Harish Rao, who in the past had taken several reParty leadership has intensified its efforts to single out former Minister Eatala Rajender

Gangula reaches out to the followers of Eatala and assure them of taking care and also helping them in development works

sponsibilities in different constituencies during by-polls.

Gangula Kamalakar was reaching out to the followers of Eatala assuring them of taking care and also helping them in development

works. He had targeted Rajender stating that he had won because of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao. He also criticised the former minister for illegally procuring the assigned lands.

However, the party seems not satisfied with the efforts of the BC Welfare minister as it wanted Harish Rao to take over the responsibility to strengthen in Eatala Rajender's hometown.

Along with the Telangana State Planning Board Vice-Chairman B Vinod Kumar, Harish Rao had a meeting with the party leaders from Kamalapur mandal of Karimnagar district in the Ministers' Quarters on Saturday.

While the former minister chaired a meeting with various party leaders, the TRS party leader-

ship is focusing on attracting the lower level cadre in the Huzurabad constituency. On Saturday, Kamalapur mandal Parishad (MPP) president T Rani Srikanth, Agriculture cooperative chairman P Sampath Rao, DCCB director P Krishna Prasad and others met Harish Rao and Vinod and discussed on how to go ahead in the constituency.

Talking to the media, the public representatives said that they all were with Chief Minister KCR. They said that if the development and welfare activities are to be continued in the constituency and if people want to get benefited, they should be under the shadow of the pink flag. They said that they were with the party from April 27, 2001 and would continue to be with the party under the leadership of KCR.

### TREDA to conduct blood donation camps

HYDERABAD

DUE to the present corona pandemic and lockdown, the availability of blood at blood banks reached alarming low levels. Blood is very much needed for patients undergoing surgeries and for children suffering with Thalassemia. Real Estate Developers Association (TREDA) in association with Cyberabad Police and SCSC TREDA is organising first blood donation camp in Green Grace, residential gated community project near Oakridge International School at 8 am on Sunday (May 23) TREDA will mobilise blood donors to these blood donation camps by involving the employees of it's member organisations and the residents welfare associations. The collected blood will be given to the needy societies or hospitals like Red Cross Society, Gandhi Hospital, Osmania Hospital, NTR Blood Society, Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Society. The donors can donate blood after 14 days of 1st or 2nd dose of Covid-19 vaccination and 14 days after testing negative in RT-PCR test.

### LET THE RULE OF LAW PREVAIL OVER THE RULE OF OUTLAWS!

#### LEGAL CIRCLES DR HC UPADHYAY

THE moot question being discussed among the knowledgeable people today here at home is whether there should be the supremacy of the Rule of Law or the Rule of Outlaws? The growing intolerance among people in power as well as out of power has been the root cause of the present sorry state of af-

Let us take stock of the recent happenings. Forgetting the spirit of federalism enshrined in the Constitution of India, almost all the opposition parties to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party-led NDA have been up in arms against the Union government. Each and every decision, including the laws enacted by the Parliament wherein their own elected MPs are also sitting, is targeted viciously. That is the reason why abrogation of Articles 370 and 45A of the Constitution, three Bills for the welfare of farmers and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act were senselessly opposed in the street by the opposition parties. Violence and lawlessness during the pre and post Assembly elections in West Bengal too, has been a part of this anti-Centre attitude of the opposition par-

Unfortunately, the ruling clan at the Centre has not risen to the occasion and giving a long rope to the divisive, extremist, terrorist and Jihadi elements masquerading as political workers. Consequently, the life and property of the people, in whose name and for whom the Constitution has been framed, are at stake

Ours is the largest functional democracy in the world with an elected President. Under Article 53 of the Constitution of India "the Executive power of the Union shall be vested in the President and shall be exercised by him either directly or through officers subordinate to him in accordance with the Constitution." In the same breath, the Constitution also declares the President as the Supreme Commander of the Defence Forces of the Union. Further, as per Article 74 (1), a provision has been made in the Constitution for the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister "to aid and advise" the President. The Constitution specifically binds over the incumbent President that he would discharge the functions of the President 'faithfully' and will to the best of his ability preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the law. The Council of Ministers, among others, has all the powers about the matters on which the Parliament is competent to make laws.

Thus, virtually the Council of Ministers has been vested with the Executive powers. The President is not only constitutionally bound to accept the advice tendered by the Council of Ministers, but also his position as the President is just titular in reality. Therefore, the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister is an all powerful organ of the governance. The role of judiciary is limited to the judicial review of the



actions taken by the Council of Ministers and answering any point of law upon reference by the President.

The task of preserving, protecting and defending the Constitution virtually falls in the realm of the Council of Ministers though the President has committed to do so while stepping into the office. In this background, open defiance of the authority of the Central Bureau of Investigation and the august office of the Governor by a person no less than an elected Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee deserves serious consideration by the Council of Ministers. With her active planning and execution of sinister plans through blatant misuse of state machinery and her party cadre, she has thrown an open challenge to the Constitution and the law enforcing agencies. People in West Bengal including the Governor, are living under the shadow of fear and violence and are forced to migrate to other States for safety and security. In short, there has been complete breakdown of the con-

stitutional machinery in West Bengal. Therefore, the President acting through the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister, is duty bound to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution which grants fundamental rights to all citizens at any cost urgently. Let the Council of Ministers rush to the 'aid' of the President and tender suitable 'advice' without losing any time so that the President is not let down in his faithful and sincere attempt to enforce the Rule of Law while crushing ruthlessly the attempts by the out-

laws to undermine the President's authority.

### SC on guarantor's liability

In a remarkable judgment on the liability of guarantors for corporate loans from banks, the Apex court on May 21, held that approval of a resolution plan does not ipso facto discharge a personal guarantor of a corporate debtor of his liability under the contract of guaran-

Earlier, on November 15, 2019 the government had issued a notification fastening liability of bad debts on corporate guarantors for loans obtained by their companies, which subsequently failed to pay up and went into resolution proceedings under the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

After this judgment, big sharks, who offered personal guarantees and availed huge amounts as loans from the banks and after their companies became defaulters, went ahead with resolution proceedings under the IBC and duped the banks of huge public money, will be liable to clear off the defaulting company's balance amount due from their private wealth.

### **Custodial torture of MP!**

Imagine the plight of a sitting Member of Parliament (MP) being taken into custody and tortured by the police throwing all norms of decency and legality to winds!

One wonders if this can happen to a privileged elected representative, then what safety and security could

The MP, KR Krishnam Raju, who is facing the serious charges of sedition, was granted conditional bail by the Supreme Court after perusing the medical report submitted by the doctors of the Army Hospital at Secunderabad. Notably, the medical report showed undisplaced fracture of sec-

be expected for a common man!

ond toe of left foot of Raju and contusions and edema on the soles. Therefore, the bench comprising Vacation judges, Justice Vineet Saran and Justice BR Gavai observed that the possibility of custodial torture of Raju cannot be ruled out. In the result, the court granted conditional bail to Raju.

### Blow to Me Too

After seven-and-a-half years of prolonged court proceedings, the Court of Additional Sessions Judge, Kshama Joshi acquitted Tehelka founder-editor, Tarun Tejpal on May 21, of the charges of raping a colleague in a luxury hotel in Panaji (Goa) in 2013. Immediately after the pronouncement of judgment, Goa's Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said that the government will prefer an appeal in the High Court.

The judgment has served a severe blow to the activists which supported the global movement called, Me Too, wherein the women victims of sexual harassment were encouraged to come out in open to name and shame the alleged perpetrators of crimes against

### **ARABIAN SEA TRAGEDY**

## **Book ONGC, Afcons for** culpable homicide, says NCP

THE Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Akhil Bharativa Navik Sangh (ABNS) demanded on Saturday that the Mumbai Police should lodge criminal proceedings against the Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd (ONGC), Afcons Infrastructure Ltd (AIL) and others for the massive tragedy involving the Barge Papaa-305 in the Arabian Sea that has killed 60 persons till now.

NCP's Minister for Minority Affairs, Nawab Malik, demanded that offences of culpable homicide not amounting to murder should be lodged against ONGC, its contractors and the barge owners, naming them as co-accused in the case.

"The barge owners, AIL, and the principal employer, ONGC, did not take the warnings of the IMD and the Maharashtra government on the cyclone (Tauktae) seriously, leading to the tragedy. Even shocking is the complete silence of Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who has just appointed a probe committee," Malik said.

In a memorandum, the ABNS led by BJP MLA Ashish Shelar urged the Mumbai Police Commissioner to conduct a thorough probe and launch criminal proceedings against the AIL, its directors and management, the barge owners and all the others



involved in the incident, which led to the huge loss of human lives and assets.

Shelar claimed that the AIL had operated the vessel - which sank late on Monday - without the approval of ONGC, Offshore Defence Advisory Group in the Arabian Sea beyond May 15, violating norms.

He further alleged that the AIL had not got any extension of the mandatory Naval Security Certificate to operate in the ONGC's Bombay High Fields, around 175 km off Mumbai in the Arabian Sea. "Unfortunately, despite welldefined and described warnings about the gravity of the cyclone. Afcons continued with its commercial operation, disregarding the eventuality of vulnerability of human life and assets. Afcons could have easily made arrangements to move the barge to a safer place to secure precious human lives and assets of the contractors/sub-contractors," the ABNS said. The ABNS contended

that one of the technical marine

partners was not available in the project and so AIL could not handle the prevailing situation and its "irresponsible behaviour" resulted in the barge sinking with

many lives lost. Meanwhile, the Union Petroleum Ministry has set up a threemember committee to probe the sequence of events leading to the stranding of ONGC's and other vessels in the wake of Cyclone Tautkae, which ravaged the states on the west coast of India earlier this week. (IANS)

#### Two Pakistani intruders arrested in Punjab CHANDIGARH

TWO Pakistani intruders were arrested by the Border Security Force (BSF) along the International Border (IB) in Punjab on Saturday, officials said. "On Saturday, forward deployed troops of 14 Bn BSF, detected suspicious movement of 2 Pakistani intruders, who crossed IB and started moving towards border fencing. They were challenged, stopped and apprehended by BSF," the BSF informed in a tweet. Officials told IANS that both were being questioned to ascertain the motive behind crossing the border and entering Indian territory.

YC Modi, Asthana, Behura in

race for top CBI post

is also in the race for the top job. Besides Asthana, M.A. Ganapathy, a 1986 batch IPS officer of Uttarakhand cadre and currently serving as the Director General of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), is also said to be in the race for the CBI chief's job. Even the name of Kerala Police DGP Loknath Behura, a 1985

batch IPS officer of Kerala cadre,

is doing the rounds for the top

post in the CBI. Behura had been in the CBI earlier and had probed several Asthana, who is currently holding sensitive cases such as the Purulia arms drop case and the Mumbai serial blasts case. He was also one of the founding members of the NIA in 2009.

After the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) chooses the names of at least three or four officers for the CBI Director's post, they would be sent to the Select Committee comprising the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of India and the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, who will decide the final pick for a fixed term of two years.

Currently the Congress is the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha. According to the guidelines set by the Supreme Court in 2004, officers from the four oldest serving batches of IPS will be in contention for the top

As per the guidelines, officials having experience in anti-corruption investigations or CBI, from the senior most four batches of IPS cadre, will be empanelled, following which a screening of three officers would be sent to the Appointments' Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. (IANS)

## Resume talks with farm leaders, AAP urges PM

CHANDIGARH (IANS) Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Punjab President Bhagwant Mann and Delhi legislator Raghav Chadha on Saturday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting him to resume talks with the farmers' leaders who are opposing the three farm laws for the last six months.

**NEW DELHI** 

A high-powered committee will

meet on Monday evening to select

the new Director of the Central

Bureau of Investigation (CBI), sources said on Saturday, A top

source related to the develop-

ment told IANS, "A meeting is

scheduled at the residence of the

Prime Minister to discuss the new

in the form of Praveen Sinha after

the term of R.K. Shukla ended on

February 3. According to sources,

several officers of the 1985 and

1986 batch are in the race for the

top post, including Y.C. Modi, who

is currently the chief of the Na-

tional Investigation Agency

(NIA), and 1985 batch IPS officer

A source said that Rakesh

several key posts such as DG Bor-

der Security Force and also the

additional charge of DG in the

Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB),

Hitesh Chandra Awasthi.

The CBI got an acting Director

CBI chief on Monday evening."

In a letter to Modi, Lok Sabha member Bhagwant Mann and Chadha said the farmers of Punjab along with various other states had been protesting on Delhi borders for the last six months to demand withdrawal of three agricultural laws made by the Union government.

They said the farmers had so far lost 470 of their fellows during this struggle that was unfortunate and painful. The AAP leaders said that although 11 rounds of talks had been held between the farmers' representatives and the government to find a solution to the problem, no conclusion had been reached so far.

"The government has not made any attempt to negotiate with the



and the nation," they added. The leaders said the farmers are the backbone of the country and without agriculture this country could not be imagined. They said that even during the

current Covid pandemic, there had been a sharp decline in all sectors except agriculture. "With the strengthening of the agricultural sector, the rural infrastructure of Punjab and the rest of the country has survived." they said.

They further said the farmers of the country, who were rendering their services by replenishing the

foodgrains of the country and in every field, had to protest for their demands at the cost of their lives during the Covid pandemic.

"Concerned about their future, the country's farmers, including the elderly, children and women, have left their homes and settled on the borders of Delhi, which is also against human rights," they added.

In their letter, the AAP leaders wrote to the Prime Minister that, now the farmers' leaders have once again called for talks, the Prime Minister should also accept the invitation with humility and generosity and resume talks on the issue, resolving it permanently.

### Released by ULFA-I after 31 days, 3rd ONGC official reaches home

**G**UWAHATI

AFTER a month, ULFA-I on Saturday released ONGCs third technical staff Ritul Saikia in Nagaland and he has reached his home in eastern Assam's Jorhat. top police officials said.

Director General of Assam Police Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta said that due to the personal initiative of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Saikia was released from the captivity of the ULFA-I (United Liberation Front of Asom-Independent).

Sarma in a tweet said: "Heartily welcome release of Ritul Saikia, ONGC employee abducted by ULFA, early today! Grateful to Hon'ble UHM Amit Shah for constant guidance. Hope an era of peace & development is firmly established in state with cooperation of one and all. Pray to Almighty for His Blessings.

Assam Governor Jagdish Mukhi, while addressing the first session of the new state assembly on its second day on Saturday, said that Saikia's release and ULFA-I's recent announcement of a unilateral ceasefire for three months are very positive gestures for enduring peace in As-

An Assam police official earlier said in Guwahati that Saikia reached Longwa in Nagaland's Mon district near the India-Myanmar border early on Saturday morning.

"Saikia was handed over to the Assam police officials by the Assam Rifles. He then tested negative for Covid-19. Immediately after his release, Saikia talked to



his aged mother over phone.

"Before the evening Saikia reached home at Borhalla in Jorhat district," the official said. After the abduction of Saikia, who has a four-month-old child, his aged parents and wife spent sleepless nights worrying about his safety.

Following the abduction of three ONGC technical staff, the Assam police have arrested 14 collaborators and a police constable for their suspected role in the kidnappings. The ULFA-I led by self-styled 'commander-inchief' Paresh Baruah had, on April 21, kidnapped the three ONGC staffers from a drilling site at Lakwa in eastern Assam's Sibsagar district.

The Army, along with Assam Rifles troopers, rescued two hostages -- Mohini Mohan Gogoi, 35, and Alakesh Saikia, 28, -from the militants' custody fol-

lowing a fierce gun battle on April 23 night, but Ritul Saikia, 33, remained in the captivity of the banned outfit.

Gogoi and Ritul Saikia are junior technicians, production, while Alakesh Saikia is a junior engineering assistant, production. Gogoi is a resident of Dibrugarh district and the other two employees are inhabitants of Jorhat district.

ULFA-I on May 15 announced a unilateral ceasefire for three months with immediate effect.

The outfit, in a statement, said that in view of the Covid-19 pandemic it has "unilaterally suspended all kinds of military operations in Assam for three months from May 15". The statement, in Assamese language, also alleged that the security forces had hatched a clandestine plan to malign the ULFA-I.

After 2006, this is the second time the banned outfit has announced a unilateral ceasefire in the state. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, after taking oath as the 15th Chief Minister of Assam on May 10, had urged ULFA-I supremo Paresh Baruah and other militant groups to shun the path of violence and ioin the mainstream. ULFA-I had recently released radio operator Ram Kumar, a resident of Bihar, and drilling superintendent Pranab Kumar Gogoi of Sivasagar district, after more than 100 days after the two employees of Delhi-based private oil and gas exploration company Quippo Oil and Gas Infrastructure Ltd were abducted from Arunachal Pradesh on December 21 last year. (IANS)

## 'Can't live without Didi', turncoat Trinamool leader writes to Mamata

SONALI Guha, the turncoat Trinamool Congress leader, who switched to the saffron camp just before the Assembly polls in West Bengal, has written to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressing her willingness to return to her old party. Guha left Trinamool Congress and joined the BJP after she was denied a ticket to contest the polls. Guha said that she had left the party out of extreme emotion and in a fit of temper, but now she has realised that she has made a huge mistake.

In an emotional tweet in Bengali addressed to the Chief Minister, the former Trinamool MLA wrote, "'Sekhane nijeke maniye nite parini. Mach jemon jol chara thakte pare na, temoni ami apnake chara banchte parbo na. Didi ami

khomaprathri, daya kore amake khoma kore din. Apni na khoma kore ami bancho na' (I could not fit myself there (BJP). The way a fish cannot stay out of water, I will not be able to live without you. Didi, I seek your forgiveness. If you don't pardon me, I won't be able to live)."

Expressing her willingness to return to the Trinamool fold again, the former Deputy Speaker of the Assembly wrote, "Apnar aanchaler tolae amake tene niye baki jibonta amake apnar snehatole thakar sujog kore din' (Take me under your fold and allow me to live the rest of my life under your guidance and blessings)."

Though there was no official reaction from the Trinamool Congress on Guha's tweet, senior party leaders are not in favour of taking her back into the party.



"Mamata Banerjee gave her everything, but what did she do? She deserted her (Banerjee) and the Trinamool just before the elections when the party needed her the most. If she comes back to the party, it will send out a wrong signal to our workers and all the people who had left the party and joined the BJP before the polls," a senior Trinamool leader said.

Guha, a four-time MLA and once considered to be the 'shadow' of Chief Minister Banerjee, was among the slew of Trinamool leaders who jumped ship to the BJP ahead of the Assembly elections. Guha had won from Bishnupur in South 24 Parganas district in 2016 and became the Deputy Speaker, but she was denied ticket this time.

Guha did not fight the elections this time, but had said that she would work to strengthen the BJP. When contacted, Guha said that she felt "unwanted" in the saffron

"My decision to join the BJP was a wrong one and I can feel that today. I did not bother to tell the BJP about leaving that party. I always felt unwanted there. They tried to use me and asked me to badmouth Mamata-di, I could not do that," she said. Guha also expressed her willingness to meet the Chief Minister next week and try to resolve the issue. (TANS)

## Globally, Covid deaths at least double of official records

**New Delhi** 

MULTIPLE estimates now suggest a significant undercounting of Covid deaths globally. As per estimates of the World Health Organisation (WHO) the actual number of deaths could be even 2 or 3 times

"WHO estimates show that #COVID19 was responsible for at least 3 million excess deaths in 2020. That's 1.2 million more deaths than officially reported. The actual number could even be 2 or 3 times high", Samira Asma, Assistant Director General @WHO for Data, Analytics and

Delivery for Impact said in a tweet. WHO in a report "The true death toll of Covid-Estimating global excess mortality", says that preliminary estimates suggest the total number of global deaths attributable to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 is at least 3 million. representing 1.2 million more deaths than officially reported.

With the latest Covid-19 deaths reported to WHO now exceeding 3.3 million, based on the excess mortality estimates produced for 2020, we are likely facing a significant undercount of total deaths directly and indirectly attributed to

WHO said Covid-19 deaths are a key indicator to track the evolution of the pandemic. However, many countries still lack functioning civil registration and vital statistics systems with the capacity to provide accurate, complete and timely data on births, deaths and causes of death. A recent assess $ment\,found\,that\,the\,percentage\,of$ registered deaths ranged from 98 per cent in the European region to only 10 per cent in the African region.

Countries also use different processes to test and report Covid-19 deaths, making comparisons difficult. To overcome these challenges, many countries have turned to excess mortality as a more accurate measure of the true impact of the pandemic, WHO said. Excess mortality is defined as the difference in the total number of deaths in a crisis compared to those expected under normal conditions. Covid-19 excess mortality accounts for both the total number of deaths directly attributed to the virus as well as the indirect impact, such as disruption to essential health services or travel disrup-

For 2020, excess mortality attributable to Covid-19 is defined as the difference between the total



observed deaths for the year and those expected in the absence of Covid-19. The measure cannot be determined for all countries due to data gaps within some countries. WHO said at the regional level, Covid-19 excess mortality estimates range from 1.34-1.46 million in the Region of the Americas to 1.11-1.21 million in the European Region in 2020. This represents about 60 per cent and 50 per cent more than reported Covid-19 deaths, respectively.

Other reports say that based on a comparison of Coronavirus

deaths in 204 countries relative to their population, Hungary had the most losses to Covid-19 up until May 21, 2021. The Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington School of Medicine is projecting about 9.2 million deaths globally by September 1. "Cases globally are declining but mortality is stagnant. Still, the detection rate of Covid-19 infections is very low, about 7 per cent globally. Based on the seroprevalence surveys that we track at IHME, we estimate about 24 per cent of the public have been infected, so it means that many people are still susceptible out there. Effective R is above 1 in 63 countries, indicating that cases will increase in the coming weeks in these locations."

Globally, Covid-19 has caused approximately 6.9 million deaths, more than double what official numbers show, IHME said. The updated analysis shows that the United States has had more COVID-19 deaths to-date than any other country, a total of more than 905,000. By region, Latin America and the Caribbean and Central Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia were the hardest hit in terms of total deaths.

Many deaths from Covid-19 go unreported because countries only report deaths that occur in hospitals or in patients with a confirmed infection. In many places, weak health reporting systems and low access to health care magnify this challenge. IHME's analysis found that the largest number of unreported deaths occurred in countries that have had the largest epidemics to-date. However, some countries with relatively smaller

epidemics saw a large increase in the death rate when accounting for unreported deaths. This analysis shows that they may be at greater risk for a wider epidemic than previously thought. (IANS)



## Raghurama episode highlighted Jagan 'autocratic' rule: Naidu

AMARAVAT

TDP national president and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday slammed the Jagan Mohan Reddy government for 'ill treating' its own Lok Sabha member K Raghurama Krishna Raju by filing a 'false sedition case' as part of its autocratic tactics to silence all dissenting voices in the state.

Chandrababu. Naidu recalled how the whole country had watched as the Supreme Court made its landmark observations on the AP government before giving bail to the YSRCP rebel MP. It was a disgrace to the Jagan Reddy rule. The SC had said it was believing prima facie that Raju was ill treated while in the custody of the AP CID. At one time during his arrest, Raju's family members were afraid that he might be killed overnight in the Guntur jail, he said.

Addressing a press conference at party state office in Mangalagiri, the TDP chief appealed to all

**A**MARAVATI

TDP national general secretary

and MLC Nara Lokesh on Satur-

day advised the Jagan Mohan

Reddy government to stop mis-

leading the people with its 'fake

resolutions and start making sin-

cere efforts to prevent the privati-

sation of the Vizag steel plant

In a statement here, Lokesh

accused the Chief Minister of be-

ing hell bent on buying Visakha

steel plant at the scrap rate,

thereby causing untold injustice

to the employees and the people

the YSRCP leaders stop passing

fake resolutions as well as their

prostrations before the Delhi

The TDP MLC suggested that

of the state as a whole.

(VSP).



freedom-loving people all over to see and think how recklessly the AP Chief Minister had sabotaged all systems and institutions in the state. A sedition case and 'custodial ill treatment' were the birthday gifts that Jagan Reddy had given to his own party MP. Like this, the Chief Minister was perpetrating a maniacal regime only to derive sadistic pleasure at the cost of the suffering of common people, political oppo-

Lokesh dismisses YSRCP 'fake

resolution' on Visakha steel

commitment to the struggle

of Vizag people and stand

To visit Vizag today to call

on family members of Dalit

doctor Sudhakar who died

leaders. They should show some

commitment in strengthening

the Vizag people's struggle to pre-

vent the privatisation of the steel

plant. On its behalf, the TDP

would continue its agitation till

the privatisation plan was an-

Lokesh expressed shock and

grief over the death of Dalit doc-

nounced as withdrawn.

Urges the Jagan govt to

show some real

up to Delhi leaders

of cardiac arrest

Says the whole country watched apex court's landmark observations against the AP govt in the matter

 Questions the suitability of Nilam Sawhney to continue in SEC post after the way she violated the SC order on polls

Describe Dr Sudhakar's death 'government murder'

The TDP chief asked whether Jagan Reddy had any right to rule the people considering how the top courts were passing serious strictures against his government's decisions. Nilam Sawhney worked as chief secretary and also as advisor for Jagan before becoming AP State Election Commissioner. The High Court straightaway questioned the suitability of Sawhney for the SEC post since she had brazenly misinterpreted and violated the

tor Dr Sudhakar and conveyed his

condolences to the bereaved fam-

ily members. The circumstances

that led to the death of Dr Sud-

hakar would only expose the op-

pressive and vindictive policies

Lokesh will visit Vizag on Sun-

day to call on the family members

of Dr Sudhakar and pay tributes

The TDP leaders said Dr Sud-

hakar's life would have been

saved if the CBI probe had been

completed within a reasonable

time frame. The Chief Minister's

fanatical mindset was responsi-

ble for the doctor's death. For

over a year, the Dalit doctor faced

threats and harassment. The Dal-

its had no safety under this YS-

RCP regime, he said.

of the ruling party, he said.

to the departed doctor.

Supreme Court's order (437/2020), he pointed out.

The TDP chief said that the death of SC doctor Dr Sudhakar was a 'government murder' considering how he was victimised, targetted, arrested, beaten up, branded as 'insane' and not given salary till his last breath. Even the CBI probe could not bring him justice. Just for asking for a mask, Dr. Sudhakar faced witch hunt. How could his two children live now without his salary?, he said

Naidu also flayed the Jagan regime for mishandling the Andandaiah avurvedic cure at Krishnapatnam in Nellore district. The government would have swiftly responded and ordered a study by the scientists of the Ayush and ICMR into the Anandaiah treatment. It was hasty on the part of the government to file a case against Anandaiah without going into the details. Eventually, it led to gathering of over 30,000 people there causing a stampede and inconvenience to everyone, he said.



Suspended Dalit doctor Sudhakar dies of cardiac arrest

The anaesthetist in area hospital of Narsipatnam was suspended last year after he protested alleged shortage of protective gear for medical personnel

HANS NEWS SERVICE VISAKHAPATNAM

THE suspended area hospital anaesthetist of Narsipatnam K Sudhakar passed away due to cardiac arrest late on Thursday night. The incident came to light much later. The doctor's last rites were performed on Friday. It may be recalled that Dr Sudhakar was suspended last year reportedly for bringing the inadequate stock of safety gear for the medical staff in the hospital to the fore.

A couple of months later, Dr. Sudhakar created a flutter on the national highway by screaming on the road, hurling abusive language against Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy. The video of the incident between the doctor and the police manhandling him went viral. Following this, he was shifted to the Government Hospital for Mental Care for treatment as he was considered mentally ill. A case was registered against the doctor and the CBI was investigating it follow-

ing AP High Court direction.

The doctor is survived by wife and two sons.

Meanwhile, the TDP leaders alleged that the Dalit doctor's death is nothing but a 'political murder'.

# MP case: HC serious over failure to follow its orders

HANS NEWS SERVICE AMARAVATI

THE Andhra Pradesh High Court recently took strong exception to the 'brazen manner' in which an additional advocate general (AAG) defended the failure by state authorities to comply with the court's orders concerning the medical examination of Kanumuri Raghurama Krishna Raju issued in the wake of allegations that the MP was tortured while in police custody.

It could certainly be said that the court proceedings over the same escalated the 'confrontation' between the two organs of democracy, executive and the judiciary, in Andhra Pradesh.

In initiating the contempt proceedings against the police officials involved in the matter, the bench of the High Court consisting Justice Lalitha Kanneganti and Justice C Praveen Kumar, however spared the additional advocate general Ponnavolu Sudhakar Reddy from the proceedings.

The order castigated the conduct of the AAG in stating that "this court is surprised with the brazenness and arrogance that the additional advocate general advanced arguments, representing the state ... Brazenness is not outspokenness and arrogances is not fearlessness. Use of temperate language is not assertion of right nor is a threat in an argument," said Justice Kanneganti, who authored the lead opinion.

Justice Lalitha went on to emphasise that while a lawyer need not be subservient to the court while putting forward his case, he is not expected to be discourteous either.

"No one expects a lawyer to be subservient to the courts while presenting his case and not to put forward his arguments merely because court is against him, but he

 HC Bench comprising Justices Lalitha Kanneganti and C Praveen Kumar initiates contempt proceedings against the officials involved for failing to comply with HC

orders in YSRCP

MP's case



 The Bench takes strong exception to the 'brazen manner' in which AAG Sudhakar Reddy defended the failure of the authorities, but spared him from the contempt the proceedings

is not expected to be discourteous to the court or to fling hot words or epithets or use disrespectful, derogatory or threatening language or exhibiting temper, which has the effect of overbearing the court." she said.

Further, the court also made pertinent observations on the higher responsibilities cast on lawyers representing the state.

"A counsel who represents the state is required to state the facts in a correct and honest manner. He has to discharge his duty with immense responsibility and each of his action has to be sensible. He is expected to have a higher standard of conduct. He has a special duty towards the court in rendering assistance. It is because he has access to the public records and is obliged to protect the public interest. That apart, he has a moral responsibility to the court. When these values corrode, one can say 'things fall apart," Justice Kanneganti commented.

In his concurring opinion, Justice Kumar also echoed similar sentiments stating the AAG should have shown restraint while making arguments.

ing arguments.
"I feel that learned Additional Advocate General Sri P Sudhakar Reddy should have shown some

restraint during the course of ar-

guments. Restraint is the hallmark of a court room debate and choice of words should also be measured in a contested matter. The Additional Advocate General could have been sober and used better words during the court proceedings."

"No advocate has any right to talk in an intimidating manner. Advocate should not employ such tactics to wrench an order in favour and should never identify himself with the client. The arguments advanced by the additional advocate general are prima facie appear to be contemptuous in nature and this is a fit case for initiating contempt proceedings and referring him to the Bar Council for taking appropriate action. But this court showing its magnanimity is not proposing to take any action as of now. However, if this behaviour is repeated the court will not hesitate to take required action," the order stated.

The court, however, initiated contempt proceedings against the additional director general of police (CID), station house officer, CID police station, Mangalagiri and the superintendent, government general hospital, Guntur for failing to implement the High Court's orders dated May 15 and May 16.

# Arthi Home to set up 2 oxygen plants in RIMS

HANS NEWS SERVICE KADAPA

DISTRICT Collector CH Harikiran disclosed that 'Arthi Home,' a Kadapa-based voluntary organisation has promised to establish two oxygen plants at Rajiv Gandhi Institute Medical Sciences(RIMS). Speaking after the representatives of Arthi Home met the Collector at his camp office and donated 107 oxygen concentrators costing Rs 58.85 lakh and 300 pulse oxymeters here on Saturday, the collector said that oxygen production plants each costing Rs 1 crore having 40Nm3 capacity works with pressure swing adsorption procedure. He said that it will be possible to supply oxygen for 250 beds through two plants.

Arthi Home founder P Sandhyarani said that they have ac-



Arthi Home representatives donating oxygen concentrators to Collector CH Harikirar in Kadapa on Saturday.

cepted donation for proposed oxygen plants from organisations like Synopsys, IIFL, students of IIT Madras. On the occasion, the collector thanked the organisers for donating oxygen concentrators. Arthi Foundation secretary Dr P Bali Reddy, Durgakumari, Headmaster Obulesu and others were present.

# AYUSH team collects details of Nellore concoction

HANS NEWS SERVICE NELLORE

AYUSH department team from Vijayawada led by its commissioner V Ramulu collected samples of herbal concoction prepared by Ayurvedic practitioner B Anandaiah as a cure for Covid-19, on Saturday. They reached Krishnapatnam village on Friday night and interacted with the local population and observed the

distribution point.

The members of the team spoke to Anandaiah at a Polytechnic in the city on Saturday and collected details of ingredients used in the preparation and enquired about the procedures he normally follows and other technical issues.

Further, a team of experts from Indian Council of Medical Research, Delhi, will be visiting the district on May 24 for checking the effectivelikely to visit Nellore on May 24 to probe the efficacy of the preparation

A team from ICMR is

ness of the medication prepared by Anandaiah.

The Ayush team is focusing on the ingredients of the eye drops and its impact on vision in the long-run. They also found anomalies in purifying the ingredients and preparing it as a harmless eye solution that works on Covid patients. A senior official from the medical and health department said the team would submit a report to the government on the findings.

Organisers who distributed the medication are pinning their hopes on the Ayush department for its while they have doubts on chances of ICMR giving its nod.

### Death toll crosses 10,000 mark in State

19,981 new infections, 108 fatalities reported in 24 hours

AMARAVATI

THE cumulative Covid-19 toll crossed the 10,000 mark in Andhra Pradesh as the state reported a new record high of 118 fatalities in 24 hours ending 9 am on Saturday. With an overall mortality rate of 0.65 per cent, the state is ranked 19th in the country in Covid-19 deaths. The state also registered 19,981 fresh coronavirus cases and 18.336 recoveries in a day, a health department bulletin said. The gross positives has touched 15,62,060, recoveries 13,41,355 and deaths 10,022. The number of active Covid-19 cases in the state is now 2,10,683, the bulletin said. East Godavari district continued to report a large number of fresh cases as it logged 3,227 more in 24 hours. Chittoor reported 2,581 and Visakhapatnam 2,308 new cases.

Three districts reported less than 1,000 each while seven others added between 1,000 and 1,800 new cases each. West Godavari district reported 15 fresh fatalities in a day, Chittoor 14, East Godavari and Visakhapatnam 11 each, Guntur 10, Anantapur and Krishna nine each, Srikakulam and Vizianagaram eight each, Kurnool, SPS Nellore and Prakasam seven each. Kadapa saw two more deaths.

## Jabs for 18+ need to be stopped: CM

Continued from P1

"I was deeply pained hearing this. There could be nothing more painful than this 'dharmsankat' (dilemma) before a father, mother, brother or sister -whether to have the vaccine or give it up for a younger member in the family," he said. Kejriwal said it was a matter of relief that that the speed of coronavirus spread has significantly slowed down in Delhi but cautioned that it did not mean the threat was averted and emphasised on maintaining all the precautions. In the past 24 hours, around 2,200 cases were reported and the positivity rate is 3.5 per cent, he said.

## **Cyclone Yaas likely to become furious**

Continued from P1

Last week, extremely severe cyclone Tauktae hit the Gujarat coast and left a trail of destruction all over the western coast.

As it weakened further, its impact was felt across the north Indian plains and even in the hill states of Uttarakhand and Hi-

machal Pradesh.

The April-May and the October-December periods are also known to witness cyclones. Last May saw the formation of two cyclones – one in the Bay of Bengal (super cyclonic storm Amphan) and the other in the Arabian Sea (severe cyclonic storm Nisarga) – that hit the Indian coasts.

# EO bats for village-level action plan to curb Covid in rural areas

 Jawahar Reddy asks officials to enforce home quarantine and community isolation of Covid positive patients at village level strictly to arrest spread of Covid to other areas

 Directs village officials to undertake dandoras (announcements) in the mornings and evenings in villages and spread awareness of Covid among villagers with handbills, wall posters and loudspeakers

HANS NEWS SERVICE

TIRUPATI

TTD EO and Chairman of State
Covid Command Control Centre Dr K S Jawahar Reddy has
directed Chittoor Collector
Harinarayanan to launch a village-level action plan to effectively contain the spike of



TTD EO and Chairman of State Covid Command Control Centre Dr K S Jawahar Reddy conducting a review meeting on Covid situation with Chittoor Collector Harinarayanan, in Tirupati on Saturday

Covid-19 cases in the rural areas. Reviewing the Covid situation with district collector and health officials at the Padmavati Rest House here on Saturday, the EO asked officials to enforce home quarantine and community isolation of Covid positive patients at village level to check spread of Covid to other areas. EO said village officials should undertake Dandoras (announcements) in the

mornings and evenings in villages and spread awareness of Covid among villagers with handbills, wall posters and loudspeakers.

The sarpanches should strive to transform their villages as Covid-free and Collectors should encourage them with cash awards. The village secretariats, Asha workers and NGOs should be involved in the Rapid response teams to contain

Covid effectively. Special drive on awareness of masks and social distancing be taken up with volunteers at village level. He said to ston the spread of

He said to stop the spread of black fungus in the hospitals, all medical equipment etc. should be sterilised after the discharge of Covid patients. The Covid Command Centre Chairman also advised officials to always keep 20 tonnes of oxygen tanks at the SVIMS hospital full and also ensure complete oxygen availability at the Ayurvedic hospital as well. He also advised officials to keep vigilance on hotels, tea stalls etc. at crowded locations in Tirupati and ensure that these joints serve only parcels and avoid gathering of people ignoring physical distance, National Health Mission Programme officer Dr Srinivasulu, District Surveillance Officer Dr Sudarshan and others were present.

## Arthi Home to set up 2 oxygen plants in RIMS HANS NEWS SERVICE

KADAPA

DISTRICT Collector CH Harikiran disclosed that 'Arthi Home,' a Kadapabased voluntary organisation has promised to establish two oxygen plants at Rajiv Gandhi Institute Medical Sciences(RIMS). Speaking after the representatives of Arthi Home met the Collector at his camp office and donated 107 oxygen concentrators costing Rs 58.85 lakh and 300 pulse oxymeters here on Saturday, the collector said that oxygen production plants each costing Rs 1 crore having 40Nm3 capacity works with pressure swing adsorption procedure. He said that it will be possible to supply oxygen for 250 beds through two plants. Arthi Home founder P Sandhyarani said that they have accepted donation for proposed oxygen plants from organisations like Synopsys, IIFL, students of IIT Madras. On the occasion, the collector thanked the organisers for donating oxygen concentrators. Arthi Foundation secretary Dr P Bali Reddy, Durgakumari, Headmaster Obulesu and others were present.

**INBOX** thehansreader@gmail.com

# UNWARRANTED TIRADE ON INDIA'S COVID FIGHTBACK

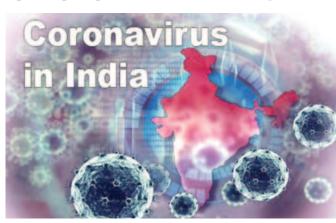
his is with reference to the Lancet editorial on India's fight against Covid published on May 8 and the resentment exposed by Pankaj Chaturvedi in the edit page of THI, dated May 20.

The popular medical journal of Lancet has made avoidable / ludicrous comments in its editorial against India with regard to the latter's way of tackling the widespread Covid-19 disease. At the outset, it seems to be out of the way in categorically asserting that there would be 1 million deaths in India due to Covid-19 by August 1.

Through the editorial, the Lancet was unwarranted to have painted India in a poor light, even as the ground realities as elucidated / analysed in the edit page article by Pankaj Chaturvedi are different / favourable in claiming a good picture of India in the aspect of containin the pandemic during and subsequent phases of its outbreak.

The Lancet has also falsely implicated the role and responsibility of the Prime Minister, Modi for national catastrophe by quoting the death toll mounting to 1 million by August 1, 2021. The pro-British weekly of Lancet had made comments against India reminiscing the days of British colonial rule when the latter denied yielding to India's Independence.

British have always been treacherous and inimical in its stand towards India. It appears inapt and unworthy to publish a politically biased / oriented article in a medical journal which is basically devoted to health.



thereby showing that India's

progress in tackling Covid-19

cannot be undervalued. Despite

9 per cent of the total popula-

tion has so far been vaccinated

till now, India has shown ex-

tremely well in achieving a

lower case fatality ratio which

is an encouraging trend in a

time frame of 4 months since

vaccine drive has been initiated

ciable role in the export of HCQ

and Paracetamol during the peak

time of the pandemic and it also

shares the magnanimity to dis-

patch 66 million doses of vaccine

to foreign nations despite it be-

made in the editorial with regard

to the role of States and the fed-

eral government were uncalled

for. There has been a false belief

that the pandemic was getting

over during the winter and hence

the necessary alert with regard

to tsunami like second wave was

lacking among the States that

were supposed to take enough

health care of their subjects as

underscored in the Constitution.

The contradictory remarks

ing reeling under shortage.

Further, India has an appre-

The current situation which is laden with Covid-19 blues demands for an end game and not the blame game.

A glance at the actual statistics reveals that the USA with a population of 0.3 billion has lost 6 lakh citizens, Brazil with its 0.2 billion population has lost 15 lakh lives, UK with its population of 0.06 billion lost 1.27 lakh citizens and India with its 1.3 billion population, has lost 2.62 lakh Indians till now.

These statistics are any indication for under-reporting in the case of India. But it is anybody's guess that mortality in India is by any means hardly to reach the 1 million mark by August 1, 2021 given a larger percentage of the population expected to get vaccinated by such time that was mentioned in the Lancet journal.

It is to be mentioned in this context, that case fatality ratio (CFR) of 1.1 per cent in India is less when compared to that of US, France, Italy and Germany, besides recovery rate appearing to be remarkably the highest,

As mentioned in the Lancet editorial, there have been monumental lapses in controlling the spread of virus in the wake of people going unruly during political rallies in India notwithstanding the failure of the Election Commission of India in deferring the polls until the intensity of the pandemic subsided.

These lapses have led to

These lapses have led to heavy blame / criticism of the Indian government by the Editor of the Lancet who was oblivious of the extent of economic loss / damage likely in case of deferring the crucial elections so as to maintain safety by reducing the number of positive cases not otherwise feasible.

As questioned by the Lancet editor, holding up of Kumbh Mela festival which comes once in every 12 years was unavoidable in a country where religious sentiments are considered paramount even at the cost of risk to life.

A similar situation like Kumbh where people get densely populated cannot be ruled out in case of slum areas of Mumbai and Delhi, this being a regular feature in such largest and top cities of the nation.

Thus, all in all, the Lancet editorial was aimed at maligning India globally with a prejudice by projecting biased and misguided information. Thus the British medical journal has indulged in the dubious distinction of taking on India to criticise the latter for its failure in arresting the explosive situation during the second wave of corona.

BH. Indu Sekhar, Hyderabad

# Pleasure-seeking during Covid times

M Somasekhar Prasad

THE Corona virus has touched almost everything and changed and changed utterly. It has transcended all geographical, political, and racial boundaries and limitations and has caused enormous loss of human life, money and time. The deadly pandemic has not spared both the developed and the developing countries, the rich and the poor, the young and the aged, man, woman, and child. Show me one person one sphere of our activity, one city and one country which are not untouched and unaffected by the pandemic. People have lost their businesses, jobs and wherewithal. According to one report in India Today, around 12.2 crores of people have been rendered jobless. Beggars, orphans, and street urchins are being hit hard, forsaken and ignored by most governments! And "women of the street" are the worst victims of these Covid times. But, alas who cares for them?

It is true that our Sonagachi is the largest red-light area in the Asia and prostitution is famously called the world's oldest job! Yet, the 'women of the street' are looked down, humiliated, exploited and their profession is not officially recognized as a profession here. Interestingly, when the virus has hit their 'market', when help is not forthcoming from anywhere, these women have helped themselves by starting to "sell themselves" online. You may call it 'Virtual Prostitution' or 'Virtual Pleasure, or have guts to coin a new term like "Virtutituion", but it is a reality. Most dating apps have "virtually" opened a worldwide market for these "working girls" online.



But there also these women have encountered stiff competition from a different kind of players.

To glean facts for this write-up I willingly and unwillingly took a membership in a couple of dating apps,using my real name, facts and 'figures'. At one dating app,to my surprise, I was flooded from day one with juicy messages and pings from young, attractive girls, women, and sirens. Initially all this gave me some euphoria and filled me with narcissism! Soon truth dawned. While chatting, many girls used choicest terms to lure me into their 'lap of trap' to extract money from me.

I found out that most of the 'invitations' that flattered and fattened this 65 plus man were from boys and men who make lots of money daily on these dating apps, using fake profiles and playing out porn videos to gullible people.Of course,a couple of girls switched off their phones after taking 'small gifts' from me! One thing is clear that in these Covid times, many young educated boys and girls have taken to these dating

apps to make easy and quick money. Young housewives were also found there 'helping themselves' to make a fast buck using social media platforms.

Again I noticed many Indian young girls and women 'helping themselves' at websites like Superchat and Stripchat. At the very out set I must say that these websites are porn websites where one can watch with voyeuristic pleasure some live strip shows. The fact is that many Indian women strippers are in great demand on these sites.I don't know whether I should say this with pride or pain. At any given time one can see hundreds of watchers in the rooms where our girls and women behave like sporting ladies and make thousands of rupees in the form of "tokens" from the watchers!

It is a known fact that during these Covid times, most Indians have started watching porn. For many it has become a great source of income too. Don't think about the evil effects of these apps and sites on individuals, families, and on our society as long as our governments look the other way. But what our girls and boys must know is that whatever they show and share as their "private" pictures and videos to their partners and lovers at social media platforms is in fact out in market for sale.

The bottom line here is that when nobody helps you, help yourselves. Don't choose bad means and ways to help yourselves. And it is time our governments helped these hapless people and took action against such apps and sites which turn our youngsters into voyeurs and philanderers.

### **Directionless Congress**

Today Congress is a party without cadre and saddled with a listless leadership. Unless the Gandhis vacate their positions at the top, fresh blood and ideas won't flow to the party and it won't be seen as a serious player in the national politics. Can its soul searching begin now,at least? For the Congress and its leader Rahul Gandhi the election results is a grim reminder that they have no viable politics at the moment.and Mr Gandhi has to rethink his freelancing, footloose politics and the verdicts are no indication that a national-level alternative is in the making and it is still some distance away in time and effort.

It is expected that Congress should lead in the formation of such kind of opposition parties front. Congress should also take care of rumbling in party in Panjab and The Party can revive the practice of annual sessions inviting mass leaders from across the country to preside over those meetings and very



positive affect will go at grassroot level. It is evident that Sonia will not have anyone other than Rahul as Congress president and Rahul does not want to become the party president and nor has he publically nominated the party president and this conundrum merits a solution.It is a well known fact that in politics as in life the easiest solution often does not exist. The party should enlarge its footprint by bringing in new ideas, new talent and most importantly greater national participation of bigger crown-pullers .as crowds and compaigners change the mood of the public.

Yash Pal Ralhan, Jalandhar

## Human behaviour and Covid spread

The write-up by V Ramu **▲** Sarma outlining that local administration in coordination with village heads in the two Telugu states and in adjoining Maharashtra joining together and taking a lead to ensure that none is affected by the virus is a classic example that with a bottom-up approach striving to bring awareness to all the inhabitants of the villages so that they could be able to meet the challenges and achieve creditable success in preventing the virus entering the villages is an eye-opener to all villages across the country to adopt the model in order to be free from the dreaded virus which turned brutal during the second wave

However during testing times, as the thinking of people of inhabitants in all villages across the country may not be uniform with many of them of the firm belief that Covid is mainly restricted to the urban areas and that they are immune due to healthy life style coupled with



good eating habits, they care less to listen and adopt the best methods. As a result most of the villagers are still suffering due to lack of medicare and treatment.

The lethargic and indifferent local administration only added to their woes by implicitly accepting the villagers' version by not bothering to put in any efforts to educate and bring awareness in them to follow covid appropriate behaviour strictly. This has resulted that many were caught unawares.

Even then resistance among villagers still continues. To remove this wrong perception, there is urgent need for a fact based communication drive to inform illiterate and semi-literate population in rural India by adopting altogether a different approach to make them understand and see reason that vaccination is the only long-term sustainable solution to

combat the pandemic. Thus the fact remains that human behaviour is a crucial for its dia in particular been complex with unique behaviour norms needs an innovative approach by the local administration to deal with the Covid pandemic. As things stand, the only way to overcome the obstacles is not to sit and watch but to remove the misconception among inhabitants of the hinterland with evidence based data by the administration by framing an effective strategy for both urban and rural by taking into account their needs in order to overcome the shortcomings and pitfalls so that they come out of the present grim situation sooner and also be able to avert crisis in future by taking timely action.

In short, the government and political class must end all bickerings and continue to work tirelessly with a resolve to prevent panic among people by lessening their sufferings at a time when Covid crisis rages on leaving none.

aving none. KR Srinivasan, Secunderabad

### Calm before the storm?

It is undoubtedly relieving to see that the ongoing conflict between Hamas and Israel in Gaza has came to an end, after eleven days of raining missiles from both sides that took the toll of countless human lives on either side. There can be no victor in a human tragedy, in the event of an aggression. Nonetheless, mindless and irrational moves by a terror group must be meaningfully answered and tackled, and Israel proved the winner in this regard despite taking up on the constant barrage of missiles and rockets that were rained on it by the Palestines.

But for the effective missile shield at the disposal of Israel that could see the majority of rockets being rendered ineffective by an efficient antimissile system, the country would have suffered a mammoth destruction and loss of lives of its citizens. Yet the country had witnessed the loss of lives, including an Indian, who was working there for the past seven or more years, hailing from Kerala – Soumiya Santosh.

Israel took the decision of destroying the houses of the Hamas leaders and the headquarters that included the building of a popular Arab channel – Aljazeera for the malicious and one sided propaganda against Israel.

The Israeli action had two dynamics; in rooting out the Hamas tendency for rocket attacks on the human habitations in the country, and to mop up the Islamist leadership of Hamas, responsible for planning such deadly and diabolic attacks.

As the editorial prudently acknowledges there is guarantee in future that there will be no similar war between Israel and Hamas as both parties have been through such wars in the past. But, the recent missile attack was a brutal and coldblooded one by Hamas.

KR Parvathy, Mysuru

## Ayurveda needs to be promoted aggressively

With the huge demand for the Ayurvedic medicine invented by Anandayya at Krishnapattanam, it's time now, for both State and Central governments to give equal status and importance to the Ayurvedic sector as is being given to the Pharmaceutical sector. India is the birth place of Ayurveda and great saints and rishis researched in depth and provided several medicines to cure many diseases. Unfortunately, with the evolution of drug and chemical oriented pharmaceutical medicines from western countries, the encouragement to the Ayurvedic sector been sliced. Government is encouraging pharma sector by gifting



huge areas of lands, recognising them as SEZs, reducing export duties, establishing research centres, labs etc. When comes to Ayurvedic sector, there's no such encouragement and interest.

Indian climatic conditions suit well for the

growth of several plants and trees which produce

key ingredients to various Ayurvedic medicines. People believe in Ayurveda and as such we are witnessing huge crowds of Asthma patients for fish medicine at Hyderabad since long and for corona medicine at Krishnapattanam now.

The government, in public interest, should consider Ayurveda as a key sector and encourage it by establishing more research centres, and by allocating lands to grow the trees required for manufacturing Ayurvedic medicines. Also, it should see to it that basics of Ayurveda be included in the syllabus from school level.

m school level. T Sri Kumar, Hyderabad

### Despicable promos

Self-promotion by politicians has reached ridiculous levels, as the vaccination certificate issued by GOI carries a photograph of PM Modi. Now Congress-ruled states Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh have replaced the PM's photo with their CMs as the cost of vaccination is being borne by the states and not by the central government.

Politicians of the country have earned disgrace of Indian masses due to governments' indifference and neglect to health care infrastructure which have put the masses lives in quandary .In reality, the cost of vaccine is borne by taxpayers only .So, vaccination certificates should mention boldly, 'Vaccination cost borne by Indian Taxpayers'.

Brij B Goyal, Ludhiana

## Sunderlal Bahuguna will always remain one of his kind

My mind was distressed after hearing the sad news about the sudden death of S Bahuguna. The distinguished conservationist and Chipko movement organizer Sunderlal Bahuguna had capitulated to the pandemic's iron sway on 21st May. His sudden death caused void in the field of conservation. In India, the Chipko Movement ushered in modern environmentalism that began in 1973. Yet the political parties and politicians of the day had neither the required perspective nor much sensitivity when it came to the mountains.

Over the decades after Independence, the resources of Uttarakhand were continuously pillaged by influential external interests is a known irony. As for the region's natural wealth, it seemed under an uninterrupted nuisance to be plundered and overexploited. Its trees were taken away, its resin sold, its herbs and minerals exported; its wild animals exterminated

discreetly. Even the rivers of Uttarakhand, which through landslides constantly scarred and cut the mountains, seemed created only to take water and fecundity down to the plains. It was neither human nor a gift of nature – such as metal, stone, and wooden statues in the region's historic and neglected temples were too seemed predestined to be smuggled.

The process of creating a people's movement could not have emerged out of the interests and motivations of politicians for a long time. More compassionate were Sarvodaya activists who had been largely trained in the Bhoodan-Gramdan school of Vinoba Bhave. Even if Uttarakhand is famous for landlords, the idea of 'bhoodan' was of limited consequence. However, Sarvodaya workers had over their extensive conversations acquired a deeper indulgent of the local society and its challenges. They had seen that the main



problems of the people pertained to land, forests, and natural resources.

The villagers of Uttarakhand had put forth their forest-related problems in great detail to the Fact Finding Committee of 1959. Yet this had had absolutely no impact on policy. Instead, after 1960, the expansion of the road network had made it easier to cut and carry away trees previously out-of-the-way. The extraction of timber, resin, and other commercial forest produce had expanded in haste.

The idea of Chipko was along with several byways loomed internally. A year later, on 22 October 1971, an even bigger demonstration was held in Gopeshwar, where it was clearly stated that "we have first right over raw material from the forest for our livelihood" and "we will no longer tolerate willful ransack". Ending the contractor system, giving rights to forest dwellers, and stopping the bias against small resin units were the other demands.

The two notable features of this demonstration were the participation of women and the turning out together on the streets of artisans, trades-people, and upper castes. The protests had no effect on the government and the Forest Department. The rates of resin and the quota for co-operative organizations remained unchanged.

In order to make the forest development programmes successful, the first re-

quirement is to make fundamental changes in the existing forest policy. The existing policy stresses things such as earning as much money as possible from the forests. Due to this, the contractors have gained importance rather than the people living in the forests. The largest employment opportunities exist in forest-based industries. En route, they halted for the night at Rudraprayag, where Sailani wrote a poem exhorting his brethren to rise up and protect the forests from destruction.

The forests were looted to make capitalists rich, while the young boys and men of the mountains were forced to seek employment as dish-washing menials in the plains. Everybody was chase for felling forests but no one was planting trees to replace them. If forest-based industries were initiated locally, they might bring socialism to the mountains.

Raju Kolluru, Kakinada

## **How is Israel-Hamas ceasefire** different this time?

MAJOR GENERAL S B

**ASTHANA** 

THE ceasefire between Israel and Hamas after 11 days of deadly hostilities is a welcome step for the innocent people suffering casualties in the crossfire, provided all sides observe this ceasefire judiciously.

The Israel- Palestine struggle is one of the oldest struggles in the world with Israeli occupation of West Bank and Gaza Strip 53 years back, interspersed with wars and conflicts at varying scale intermittently, with no signs of permanent peaceful solution so far.

This truce after the latest round of fighting, like previous wars, has ended inconclusively, with Israel claiming heavy damage to Hamas, but unable to stop their rockets (killing 12 Israelis and over 200 injured). Hamas also claims victory, despite heavy casualties (230 Palestinians killed, over 1900 injured), facing challenges of rebuilding Gaza, poor confidence with troubled population (58000 Palestinians fled their homes) already suffering poverty due to coronavirus pandemic.

Gaza is controlled by Hamas (post Israeli disengagement in 2005), which also operates militant wing and West bank with 167 enclaves of Palestinians are governed by Fatah (claiming to represent erstwhile Palestinians Liberation Organisation) amidst 230 Israeli settlements governed by Israel. Both factions (Hamas and Fatah) have different ideologies and differences, but form a Palestinian Unity Government under President Mahmoud Abbas since 2014, negotiating peace through Quartlet (US, Russia, EU and UN).

The competing claims to Jerusalem, which is crucial to Christians, Jews and Palestiniansis the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and have repeatedly triggered incidences of violence in the past, like the present one.

### **Trigger for Current Crisis**

The renewed violence started on 6 May, when Palestinian protests began over an anticipated decision of the Supreme Court of Israel (Yet to be announced), on the eviction of six Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah, a neighborhood of occupied East Jerusalem, resulting increasing skirmishes between Israelis and Palestinians in the Old City of Jerusalem.

On May 8, Palestinian Muslims streamed to the Haram al-Sharif for Ramadan prayers, in large numbers to mark the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad, consid-



ered not only the most sacred night of Ramadan, but of the whole Islamic calendar. Simultaneously, some Israeli Jews were gathering ahead of Jerusalem Day (May 10) marking Jewish control over the Old City of Jerusalem secured during the 1967 war.

The focal point of those celebrations is the Western Wall of the Temple Mount (the holiest site in Judaism), the same elevated platform that Muslims call the Haram al-Sharif.Israeli police stormed the compound of the al-Aqsa Mosque, the third-holiest site in Islam and the confrontations occurred resulting more than 300 people injured, mostly Palestinians.

Closure of Damascus gate was another irritant. This resulted in a barrage of rockets fired by Hamas on Israel, responded by repeated air attacks by Israel on Gaza, along with other arsenal, causing heavy destruction and casualties, which continued for last 11 days.

#### **Internal Dynamics**

This confrontation has happened at a time when there is political crises in Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA). Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel recently failed to put together a ruling coalition even after the fourth round of elections in just two years; hence lacksa popular mandate.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, whose term expired 12 years ago, also lacks popular mandate. He recently cancelled legislative elections, after his party was trailing badly in the polls. With leaders on both sides lacking legitimacy any peace talks regarding such complex situation may have little chances of success, with a risk of reckless action by either. Moreover the Arab population in Israel was also on streets and incidences of lynching may have potential to ignite if pending Supreme Court decision is one sided. The Hezbollah also came out in support of Hamas further adding complexity to the problem. The truce therefore is quite

#### **International Reaction**

During UNSC resolutions USA found itself isolated in backing Israel. It was therefore in tight spot to broker peace amidst growing pressure against Israel seen to be using excessive force. It also needs to be noted that after erstwhile President Trump recognised Jerusalem as capital of Israel, he shifted US embassy there and offered an unviable peace solution, which was rejected by PA, but Prime Minister Netanyahu seems to have assumed that entire Jerusalem belongs to Israel and others need to slowly vacate it. This is disastrous because from historic and religious point of view Jerusalem is non-negotiable to Christians, Jews and Palestinians, who coexist there since ages.

International community although recognises Israel's right to defend itself, but not at the cost of pulverising civil areas of Gaza, causing heavy civil casualties, even if it accuses Hamas of basing itself amidst population (a tactics adopted by most terrorist groups in the world). As per UN, the truce seemed to be brokered by Egypt and Qatar (normally accused of supporting Shia based Hamas, along with Iran). What is grossly different this time was over-reaction by Erdogan, trying to pose himself as new leader of Islamic world and Pakistan with loud voices

This confrontation happened when Israel was improving relations with some countries of Arab world, which may suffer a temporary setback due to their objection to Israeli actions on the Haram al-Sharif, Most Arab states otherwise are hostile to Hamas, and differentiate well be-

against Israel.

tween the Palestinian people and the Hamas fighters.

#### **Future Peace Prospects**

Fed up of insecurities, In 2007, according to a number of polls, the majority of Israelis and Palestinians, prefer the two-state solution over any other solution, as a means of resolving the conflict, which was initiated in Oslo Accords in 1993-95.

With complexities of entanglement of 167 Palestinian enclaves embedded in 203 Israeli settlements and related governance issues, it's not really practical that it may be possible for Israel to agree to vacate West Bank. I don't visualise any Israeli leadership ever agreeing to such a proposal.

Same is the case with Jerusalem. Any attempt to push out any one religious community from its religious site is bound to have serious backlash. Peaceful coexistence may not be preferred option but seems to be the only practical option.

There is also a possibility of outside peace spoilers like Erdogan igniting religious disharmony, which must be curbed by both the parties and Quartlet.

There have been some voices from Palestinians expecting Indian mediation as India has good relations with Israel as well as Palestine, but the issue is so complex and sensitive that current Indian policy of maintaining independent relations with both with no interference in internal affairs of either, may be the best policy for India. Considering all the factors, the current truce is a welcome step, but its longevity is questionable in light of political uncertainties both sides and mistrust between communities.

(Major General S.B. Asthana is a strategic and security analyst, a veteran Infantry General.

He is the Chief Instructor, United Service Institution of India. The views expressed are per-

### Has farmers' Delhi protest impacted BJP's performance in recent polls? FATIMA HASAN observer. "They just play the

SOON after the results of any elections, the hot topic to be discussed over the tea table with friends and family is the performance of each party. And it is so much so when the question is about the party which is ruling at the Centre. But when you turn to the other events in the country, you see the farmers are protesting in the national capital for a long time. Although there may be no cov-

erage of it in the media but the vigour of the uprising suggests that the farmers are firm on their demands and may soon step up their protests if their demands are not met. The farmers are protesting and are protesting in heaps for the last six months and we can't let go of this without measuring the impact it may have created on the BJP's performance in the recent assembly elections in West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The protests began on November 25 last year, when farmers, mainly from Punjab and Harvana, marched towards the national capital demanding a complete repeal of the legislations, as part of a "Dilli Chalo" campaign. The three farm laws are Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion & Facilitation) Act, 2020, Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020 and Farmers (Empowerment & Protection) Agreement on Price As-

surance and Farm Services Act, 2020. The farmers have brought the Centre to its knees. May be, the farmers have not realised their demands but their stir in a wav impacted the BJP performance in the elections. However, the question remains and it is going to be a long debated one whether the farmers' protest indirectly influences other categories of voters and weakens the BJP's support base. "I cannot really assess the impact. Though it seems BJP has lost elections in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, it has gained ground in these States, including West Bengal. The key factor here is to consider the impact the BJP is creating on the basic social fabric of India. BJP has turned out to be an uglier party than the Congress and they are not leaving any stone unturned to grab power. On the top of everything, the way they are handling the Covid pandemic is very bad," said Sriram Surapaneni, a Hyderabad based cement businessman.

"And it is now pretty much evident and visible that their 'once upon a time biggest fans' are turning into their bitter critics. UPA 2's policy paralysis and internal politics had made the way for Modi becoming the PM when he spoke about Development ....but, the real intention and their actual potential could not be hidden for long"- said Mansoor Azher, Dubai-based Indian politics keen blame game--blaming minorities and blaming, the Congress. When one individual or institution is blaming others, then it is just that they are running away from their current responsibility and that is not a good thing to do. When you cannot act in good faith, you blame and confuse and divert the attention away from the need of the hour," said Mohd Imran Ahmed Khan, Management Trainee, Genpact. "Even in UP, there is talk that the BJP's poor performance in the panchayat elections is because it is grass level elections and directly pertains to the farmers' plight. But you see, in the States, the regional issues work. So, I don't clearly think that it in any way impacted but still nothing can be ruled out," said a TRS leader on condition of anonymity. Although the impact seems less but there are still traces of solidarity for their cause throughout the country. This, in the long run, may cause damage to the party performance if the farmers' demands are ignored for long. Now that the Supreme Court had, in March this year, appointed a three-member committee to look into providing legal guarantee to the MSP and other issues, the Central government should go with the recommendations of the committee, which seemingly is working independ-

## Prioritising with 80/20 rule

success component on those who im-

bibed the core principles. It applies to

all walks of life - professional & per-

ity or other areas of importance.

■ List things that take most time

■ Prioritise tasks based on returns

■ Set goals based on the 80/20 Rule

The Pareto principle focuses on

working smarter and prioritising bet-

Evaluate think tank approach

■ Consistent Brainstorming

Making 80/20 work

Focus on end results

Identify priorities

Create a plan

sonal life, skills, hobbies, responsibil-

JYOTHI GOSALA

THE corollary of truth about the imbalance of inputs and outputs is what is known as the Pareto principle, or the 80/20 rule. While it's not always an exact 80/20 ratio, the imbalance is often seen in various business scenarios: 20 per cent of customers account for 80 per cent of total profits: 20 per cent of patients account for 80 per cent of healthcare spending.

While most people know the basics of the 80/20 rule, 80 per cent of an outcome comes from 20 per cent of causes. Within the initial 20 per cent lies another 80/20 breakdown, and another within that, and on and on, By applying the 80/20 rule exponentially, one can prioritise time more effectively by identifying the most impactful tasks. In the realm of procrastination tendencies one can explore the most demanding priorities in achieving the most measurable results. By practicing the principle of 80/20, one achieves heightened results in work and life and are simply awesome on

### **Principle of Rules**

Apply the principle exponentially Identify factors that create high end value proposition

The 80/20 rule has been a major

- Use procrastination as a compass
- Zero in on areas of resistance Develop core talents

ter for measurable results and value proposition. A pattern with the ratio 80/20 can be represented in different ratios as 90/20, 60/40, and so on was encapsulated by Pareto. The most interesting thing about the 80/20 rule is the ability to analyse goals. Based on the key derivative results, happiness will be the key impetus. With innate focus, making a difference, multitasking with a result oriented approach

will be a high end priority.

will be a value add. Strategic planning is an essential tool by which the 80/20 rule can help one thrive during constant challenges. Adopting a right mindset to spend more quality time focusing on the right things will go a long way. By identifying tasks which give us happiness and those that don't, we shun away those that no longer matter. Once the chosen pathway is crystal clear, adopting the principle of 80/20 in formulating goals both short term and long term with most measurable results, achieving targets will pave the way for better avenues of growth trajectory.

This principle which has been a runaway success is adopted by business leaders, most competent authorities across different walks of life to achieve results encompassing their professional and personal growth cvcles. With consistent and a diligent approach, one can fine tune their life which leads to contentment on all fronts. Thus the Pareto Principle holds good value add-ons which will be a major boost for those aspiring to be better at a competent level. Whether it's the young or the old, the thumb rule lies in adopting techniques enhancing one's potential. The ingredients for success and happiness lies in our attitude to get better in every walk of life; by adhering to a code of principle which eases out the path towards a heightened awareness leading to better outcomes.

## Anthropocene extinction and its impact on biodiversity

TEJ SINGH KARDAM

ON the Earth life began about 3.5 billion years ago. The first life forms were single-celled organisms. The first multicellular organisms appeared about 610 million years ago (mya) which led to evolve many different types of organisms during the next ten million years in an event called Cambrian Explosion. This sudden burst of evolution may have been caused due to some environmental changes which made planet Earth's environ more suitable for a wider variety of life forms

Evolutionary history of life represents the current scientific theory outlining the major events during the development of life on planet Earth. Biologically, evolution is important because it drives biodiversity: some traits will become predominant while others will become rare over the course of time.

On the Earth life began about 3.5 billion years ago. The first life forms were single-celled organisms. The first multicellular organisms appeared about 610 million years ago (mya) which led to evolve many different types of organisms during the next ten million years in an event called Cambrian Explosion. This sudden burst of evolution may have been caused due to some environmental changes which made planet Earth's environ more suitable for a wider variety of life forms.

Plants and fungi appeared about 500 mya, followed by arthropods, next came amphibians - 300 mya followed by mammals 200 mya and birds around 150 mya. Though large life forms have been very successful on Earth but most of life forms on Earth today are prokaryotes - small, relatively simple single-celled organisms. More than 99 percent of all species, amounting to over five billion species

be extinct. Estimates on the number of Earth's current species range from 10 to 14 million, of which 1.2 million have been documented and rest are yet to be de-

Species go extinct constantly as environments change, as organisms compete for environmental niches and as genetic mutation leads to the rise of new species from older ones. Occasionally biodiversity on Earth takes a hit in the form of mass extinction -- refers to a substantial increase in the degree of extinction or when the Earth loses more than threequarters of its species in a geologically shorter period of time. A large extinctionevent often represents an accumulation of smaller extinction-events that take place in a relatively brief period of time. Extinction of a species where it ceases to exist in a particular area but continue to exist elsewhere is called extirpation.

First it was proposed by anatomist, George Cuvier in 1796 in Paris that life on Earth was not static and that species could disappear due to comet or asteroid impact. But the scientific community could tend to accept his hypothesis in early 1990's, with the further study of geological and fossil records that the Cretaceous-Paleogene (K-Pg) extinction was due to an extra-terrestrial impact. The Researchers now are of the opinion that K-Pg was just latest of five major extinction events and we're currently in the middle of a sixth event. Each event had a different impetus, some took place over the span of millions of years while others were extremely sudden, having in common though they reshaped the face of life on Earth by wiping out a significant portion of it. Ordovician Extinction: About 440 million years ago, the earliest known mass extinction, when most of the life on



Earth lived in its seas. Its major casualties were marine invertebrates including brachiopods - a group of shelled species, trilobites - marine arthropods, bivalves large molluscs and corals, many species from each of them went extinct during this time. The main cause is thought to be due to movement of Supercontinent Gondwana into Earth's southern hemisphere, causing sea levels to rise and fall repeatedly over a period of millions of years eliminating habitat and species.

Late Devonian Extinction: About 370 mva, there was abrupt cooling with the development of glaciers and substantial lowering of sea levels, caused an enormous loss to biodiversity, taken place in a span of five lakhs to 25 mys in which corals, trilobites and brachiopods have

Permian-Triassic Extinction: About 250 mya, trilobites were killed off entirely, almost no form of life was spared by this event and caused the disappearance of more than 95 percent of marine life and 70 percent of land dwelling vertebrates, a huge loss to global biodiversity, naming the event as Great Dying. The main cause of this extinction is thought to be gradual change in climate, sudden catastrophe including volcanic eruptions, asteroid impacts and sudden release of greenhouse gases from the seafloor. Triassic-Jurassic Extinction: About 200 mya, occurred before breakup of Supercontinent of Pangaea - assemblage of earlier continental units, possibly due to an asteroid impact and enormous volcanic eruptions, vanishing a third of marine species, large amphibians and crocodiles.

Cretaceous-Paleogene Extinction: About 65 mya, the most recent event wiping out non-avian Dinosaurs and extinguished many species of early mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds and insects. The scientists estimated 75 percent of species living at the time of the K-Pg extinction were wiped out.

The ongoing extinction is termed as Holocene Extinction, started about 12000 years ago at the end of last glaciation. The present event may not have been the product of natural forces, as previous five events were, but it is increasingly a human all-round interference in nature, researchers have described it as Sixth Mass Extinction or the Anthropocene extinction, as the 'most serious environmental problem'/threat to the persistence of civilization, since the loss of species here will be permanent, according to the new research published in the journal proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America.

To cite few examples, the chemical analysis of entire layer of soil in many parts of Australia is charred and blackened, having been burned by fire on large scale by ancient aborigines caused die-off of plants and animals. The species affected included three - ton wombat, diprotodon, the marsupial lion and a crocodile-sized goanna. Mammoths maintained an entire ecosystem and survived as long as they did - the mammoth steppe, then the formerly liveable, vibrant areas in the northern hemisphere became cold deserts. Neanderthal bones have been found all over Europe, they lived there about one lakh years and about thirty thousand years before they disappeared. Their disappearance coincided with arrival of Homo sapiens in Europe. Archaeological evidence suggests that in whichever regions human arrived inhabited by Neanderthals the latter disappeared. But for humans Neanderthals would not have gone extinct.

reported to have been known for Rhino field. But now there are no rhinos, so as the Zebra-like quagga. Indian Aurochs disappeared around 2000 BCE; Indian cheetah has gone extinct from India 60 years back; Gigantopethecus is extinct, was the largest known ape ever lived in the world; Sivatherium was giraffe like animal, gone extinct. Silphium plant, extinct, was used as a medicine for diseases and also as contraceptive by ancient Greeks and Romans.

The Centre for Biological Diversity warns that the effect of Anthropocene extinction will worsen in the coming decades as the resulting genetic and cultural variability will change entire ecosystems. When the number of individuals in a population or species drops too low, its contribution to ecosystem functions and services become unimportant, its genetic variability and resilience is reduced and its contribution to human welfare may be lost.

According to a recent analysis, the sixth mass extinction of wildlife on Earth is accelerating. More than 500 species of land animals are on the brink of extinction and are likely to be lost within 20 years; the same number were lost over whole of the last century. The scientists say that without human destruction of nature, this rate would have taken thousands of years and they warned that this may be a tipping point for the collapse of civilisation.

The Holocene Extinction is being caused not by natural catastrophe but by the activity of one, "One Weedy Species", that is us - humans. Can 'this species' check extinction by taking well known measures for protection of biodiversity and most importantly for its own survival??

# MEIL imports 11 O<sub>2</sub> tanks from Bangkok



HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

CITY-based Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Limited (MEIL) is importing 11 cryogenic oxygen tanks from Bangkok (Thailand) amid the acute shortage of medical oxygen in hospitals across the country in the fight against Covid. These tanks that will help increase the supply of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) to hospitals, are being provided by MEIL to Telangana State free of cost.

The first batch of 3 tanks landed at What's cryogenic tank? the Begumpet Air-Cryogenic liquids, such as force Station here oxygen and nitrogen are on Saturday, and stored in the tank with the remaining 8 temperature up to (tanks will arrive in 196°C) with an option for two more batches low and high pressure. in the next few days. Each cryo-The cryogenic air genic tank could separation achieves high supply 1.40 crore purity oxygen of more litres of medical than 99.5%. The resulting oxygen and 15.40 high purity product can be crore litres from all stored as a liquid or filled the 11 tanks. In adinto cylinders dition to the top

management of MEIL, Telangana Finance Minister T Harish Rao, a team of senior officers belonging to the advisory committee formed under the Telangana government's Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, have supervised the whole operation.

The Union Defence and External Affairs Ministry, which has been supervising the whole operation, has granted permission for these tankers' smooth transport from Bangkok, A Defence special flight from Chandigarh has picked up the tanks from Bangkok before reaching Hyderabad.

"Transporting liquid Oxygen for medical purposes from the manufacturing plants to the hospitals is riddled with bottlenecks. Now, these 11 cryogenic tanks will help the State government to cater to the needs of the hospitals that are in dire need of oxygen," said P Rajesh Reddy, Vice-President, MEIL.

While the cryogenic tanks will cut short the time by facilitating the bulk movement of medical oxygen to health care units, the MEIL's initiative to import has also truncated the time of manufacture of cryogenic tanks, which would have taken three months to fabricate one tanker. The MEIL manage-

> ment, which has kept all its other operations on hold and is concentrating on augmenting oxygen supply to both the Telugu States, has taken up the procurement of cryogenic tanks on priority.

MEIL's Bollarum unit supplied 30,000 MT of LMO From MEIL's Bollarum facility, an average 400 cylinders, are being

supplied so far. Between May 9 and 21, MEIL has delivered 29,694 MT of LMO, which translates to 2.97 crore litres of oxygen. To augment the transportation of the medical oxygen, MEIL is producing oxygen from its manufacturing unit in Bollarum round the clock and supplying it to hospitals in Telangana and AP States besides Odisha. MEIL has set up a team to supply oxygen to the hospitals, round the clock. Each cylinder with 7,000 litres capacity of liquid oxygen, were filled and provided free of cost to at least to 10 hospitals every day. So far, 4,242 cylinders have been supplied to

## **ARAKU COFFEE HAS HUGE GLOBAL GROWTH POTENTIAL**

### However, the reality is middlemen make profits whereas the farmers never get their share

SANTOSH PATNAIK

How organic coffee grown by tribals in Araku Valley and its neighbourhood is gaining popularity?

I want to say first about Araku coffee. India is a land of natural beauty known for its lush green forests, breathtaking mountains, magnificent valleys and some major rivers. The Araku Valley is one of such locations that is treasured by nature lovers and trekkers. It is surrounded by stunning waterfalls, verdant green fields and gushing streams. The unparalleled beauty of the hill station rising to a height of 4,000 feet is further enhanced by the thematic lighting, intoxicating the sensibilities of tourists. The heartening landscapes of Araku exude a sense of scenic charm that attracts tourists from India and the rest of the world.

In the Eastern Ghats, Araku Valley is famous for its rich coffee plantations. The aroma of fresh coffee beans is in the air of Araku throughout. The Arabica coffee grown in this region is recognised as unique. Coffee is grown though organic methods in the shades of mango, jackfruit and silver oak trees. It also helps in environmental conservation and ecological balances

Around 1.5 lakh tribal families living in this region are getting financially stabilised through coffee cultivation. The coffee plantations have been responsible to a large extent for the rehabilitation of the many tribes that stay in and around Araku Valley.

It was in 2007 that the first organic coffee brand by tribal growers was launched in India. This organic brand was named Araku Emerald and it enjoys domestic as well as international popularity. Year on year while demand for coffee is growing, coffee plantations are also growing at the same phase to meet the demand for premium coffee. Araku coffee is



Ram Kumar Varma P. founder, CEO. Native Araku Coffee Pvt Ltd

fee is also most sought-after in some airlines and five-star hotels. Varma through his startup has plans to have a chain of retail outlets across the State to serve various types of coffee by popularising the coffee grown in the hills of Araku Valley in Visakhapatnam district, on the foothills of Eastern Ghats, by the tribals to help them get a remunerative price for the product savoured by many for its unique aroma and flavour. "I founded Native Araku Coffee with a passion to add value to rural areas and tribal farmers," Varma told *Bizz Buzz* in and exclusive interview. He has over two decades of experience and with a stint in IBM as Deputy General Manager choosing to become an entrepreneur

isakhapatnam-based startup Native Araku Coffee has plans

to open a chain of retail outlets across the State to serve

various types of coffee says Ram Kumar Varma P, founder

and CEO of Native Araku Coffee Pvt Ltd, Visakhapatnam-based

mous Araku Valley Organic Coffee, which has already made an

startup with a promising future predicts a bright scope for the fa-

impact in Paris, London and other overseas destinations. The cof-

producing approximately 9,800 MT per annum and similarly we see neighbouring Odisha also gaining their coffee production at 350-500 MT (approximately).

What is the uniqueness of Araku Coffee and how do you see its

The coffee cultivated in this region at an altitude of 900 to 4000 feet above mean sea level has unique qualities due to medium acidity in soil. The taste of this coffee leaves an intense citrus flavour and aroma with medium acidity on the tongue due to rich soil properties and texture and size of the beans. With these qualities, Araku coffee has won global recognition as a unique specialty coffee.

In the coming days Araku coffee undoubtedly would stand for the rich culture and heritage of the tribals of the State. It is sure that this coffee would become another gift article like Lepakshi handicrafts, Etikoppaka Bommalu for Andhra people.

What you think is lacking in the present ecosystem to take Araku coffee to the next level?

Araku coffee needs an international standard coffee pre-post processing center in the Araku region which is accessible to tribal farmers directly. We see a lot of businessmen come in and purchase coffee at very low prices where the value for Araku coffee in the market is very high. If the pre-post processing centers are established locally and the tribal farmers are educated about the value of the coffee grown, things will change.

Also, private players, government, farmer producers and organisations (FPOs) and NGOs have to take a step forward to work with tribal farmers on the latest techniques and technology implementation on how to improve coffee production. Araku coffee plantation has a scope of producing approximately 22,000 MT per year whereas currently we are producing only 9,800 MT per annum.

How is your experience as an entrepreneur/ startup involved in promoting Native Araku Coffee?

Native Araku Coffee Pvt Ltd originated in 2017 to cater to tribal farmers-need. We have

been seeing challenges like, tribal farmers don't trust outsiders for a long-term partnership and everyone needs money instantly. It took 3.5 years to gain the trust of tribal farmers. We work with more than 5,000 farmers across 100km of coffee plantation area. The journey as an entrepreneur has been successful where we have taken time to educate farmers about how Araku coffee is different from other coffee varieties in India and internationally.

We have partnered with FPOs in all major regions of coffee plantations. Every achievement in the region is shared and celebrated with them. We have partnered with international renewed certification company - Rainforest alliance for certifying Araku coffee, along with another international company- Blue number for traceability of coffee. We also partnered with Bellwether roasting company from the United States in promoting Araku coffee as one of their coffee menus glob-

As part of our vision, we are establishing one of the best pre-post coffee processing and cup sampling centre as per international

standards in and around Araku coffee produced region. Our goal is every tribal farmer should have direct access to sell their coffee without a middleman and get a better market price for their produce. The pre-post processing centre will be ready by November 2021 for all tribal farmers to access. We have already established Native Araku Coffee brand in domestic and international markets. To promote Araku coffee domestically, we have tie-ups to establish coffee in all metropolitan cities. We shall start executing the plan effective from July 2021 piloting in districts of Andhra

Besides the AP Forest Development Corporation and Girijan Cooperative Corporation, who are the other major players in growing coffee through tribals?

Major players apart from GCC are AP Forest Development Corporation, Coffee Board. Both Araku Coffee and Native Araku Coffee have emerged as popular brands for the connoisseur of coffee. FPOs are creating their own brand to sell in the market. Small companies who do retailing locally are also involved in selling coffee grown in Araku Valley.

 $There\ are\ reports\ that\ many\ tribal$ farmers are still in the grip of middlemen who deny them a remunerative price. What do you say?

We agree that the majority of the tribal farmers are still in the grip of middlemen. Out of 9,800 MT of coffee produced per annum, almost 50 per cent is managed by middlemen. Majority of these are local guys who work with small and large whole sellers in Karnataka and ship raw coffee directly. With this the tribal farmers feel that the market price is too low whereas the reality is the middleman earns higher whereas the farmers never get their share.

## ARE WE PLAYING OUR PART WELL TO CONTROL COVID-19?

### It is a must to not disregard our collective social obligations

In a Covid-afflicted world, this ranges from the bare minimums such as wearing a mask,

avoiding contact with people, sanitising and verifying information to helping

with relief measures and collaborating with authorities for a safer public sphere



 $T^{\rm he\ current\ scenario\ bristles\ with\ unpredictabil-}$ ity and chaos. As the world takes on an intimidating second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the blame game keeps finding new people to criticise for our collective plight—the government, the opposition, the doctors have all been critiqued by people in a shape-shifting public narrative. While authorities and responsible agents have to be held accountable, this heedless pattern keeps externalising responsibility when it comes to us. As we sit in the comfort of our homes and vocalise opinions about who is doing a terrible job, we need to urgently ask ourselves if we are making a difference. In the co-Covid world, where precarity and uncertainty haunt our everyday, none of us can be outside the ambit of responsible action to keep ourselves and the world safe.

It is impossible to ignore the violations of authority restrictions around Covid-19 by people. Even if there has been administrative incompetence in some situations, it is wellknown that advisories and rules have been flouted. whether out of carelessness, greed or a resistance to hard reality. The outcome has been severe with a deadly viral spread and as much as we can try passing the blame to administrators, we too share a fair bit of it. In fact, when



we can admit that we make

little difference by not taking

away from this cycle?

such as wearing a mask, avoiding contact with people, sanitising and verifying information to helping with relief measures and collaborating with authorities for a safer public sphere.

guidelines seriously and end-It is a must to not disrelessly criticising others. Where do we look to move gard our collective social obligations. For instance, even Professor Thomas Maak, if I have the resources and in an article for a publication the space to organise a gathbased at the University of ering for recreation, I must Melbourne, speaks of "selfbe cognisant of the fact that leadership", or the responsi-I would be worsening the sitbility we take over our own uation and endangering actions. He notes, "Just as lives. It begins with imaginaleaders of organisations and tions as simple as this. The governments have to manmoment we start revising our comforts and freedoms age other people, self-leadership is about managing from such lenses of responourselves." This is a crucial sibility, the world automatiidea in reimagining responcally becomes a safer and sibility in the co-Covid better place. In this example, world, as we no longer deby foregoing luxuries of colpend on what is larger than lective recreation, we are us to determine our immedimaking a difference by limate circumstances but take iting any potential immedithe onus of doing our best to ate spread of the virus. Such a scenario is infinitely better help the gigantic whole that we are part of. In a Covid afthan partying irresponsibly flicted world, this ranges and subsequently blaming from the bare minimums the government for not having enacted sufficient rules

or provided relief in time. To this effect, Harpreet Kaur Baweja pointedly notes in an article for a leading daily, "fear of law can't become the governing principle of regulating human behaviour in a society. Ultimately, all civilised societies depend upon the awareness of the individual citizens and also on their ability to conduct themselves in a free, fair and yet responsible manner." This is indeed true in a scenario where a lot of transmissions could have been limited if people simply followed the issued advisories sincerely.

The other way to consequentially respond to the co-Covid world is to participate in the change you want to see. For example, most recently, a lot of individuals and members of the civil society helped people in need by ensuring the procurement of resources such as medical oxygen, essential medicines and beds as well

as collating information for relief and necessities, an endeavour which was appreciated as "crucial" by a threejudge bench at the Supreme Court of India. We should endeavour to be part of such relief efforts, if we can, to help in collecting verified information, offer our space for packaging of ration kits, supporting fundraisers to help particular groups, disseminating necessary facts and combating fake news. Through such efforts, we certainly step closer to a kind of responsible citizenry that elevates the world. Summing up, to quote Patrick Ness. "To say you have no choice is to relieve yourself of responsibility." We certainly have the choice to make a difference, to realise the changes we want to see- all we need is to self-lead and act in accordance with transforma-

tory potentials we hold. (The author is Founder, Upsurge Global, and Senior Advisor, Telangana State Innovation Council)

## Govt stimulus needed for recovery: PHDCCI

There is a need to lower interest rates for consumers and businesses

**New Delhi** 

A substantial stimulus would be required to create effective strides for futuristic economic growth trajectory amid the pandemic, said Sanjay Aggarwal, President, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI).

Though economic activity recovered to pre-Covid levels in March 2021, the rapid re-spread of corona cases in second wave of Covid and resultant strict restrictions in many parts of the country have posed severe challenges to double digit economic growth in FY 2021-22, Aggarwal said.

"A substantial stimulus to create effective strides for futuristic economic growth trajectory would be crucial in this extremely difficult time," he said.

There is a need to lower interest rates for consumers and businesses, lesser compliances for MSMEs vis-avis ease of doing business at the ground level and a lower tax regime to increase the personal dis-

posable income of the people, Aggarwal added. PHDCCI Economic and Business Momentum (EBM) Index of 25 lead economic and business indicators has regis-

tered an increase in March 2021 to the level of 99.9 as compared to 99.5 in February 2021 and 99.7 in January 2020.

Lead economic and business indicators such as cement, steel, consumer durables, GST collections, external commercial borrowings and FDI equity inflows have shown a marvellous improvement in March 2021, said Aggarwal.

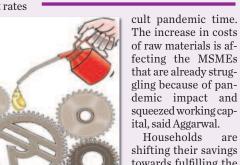
"However, the second wave of Covid has swamped the country at a rapid rate with more severe impact than the previous wave in 2020," Aggarwal said.

The partial or complete lockdowns in many States and strict restrictions in various regions across the country have created an uncertain economic environment, with depressed demand and investment scenario, said Aggarwal.

The supply chain disruptions are causing skyrocketing commodity prices, which have severely impacted the pricecost margins of the businesses in the diffi-



The supply chain disruptions are causing skyrocketing commodity prices, which have severely impacted the price- cost margins of the businesses in the difficult pandemic time. The increase in costs of raw materials is affecting the MSMEs that are already struggling because of pandemic impact and squeezed working capital



demic impact and squeezed working capital, said Aggarwal. Households are shifting their savings towards fulfilling the

medical needs of family members along with deferment of their expenditure on non-essential items, he added.

According to him, at this juncture, the government has to step up with proactive and calibrated measures to mitigate the daunting impact of Covid 2.0 on people, industry, trade and economy, as it did dur-

ing the last year in 2020. On the basis of recent movement of PHDCCI EBM Index, PHD Chamber projects more than 1 per cent growth rate of GDP in Q4 FY 2020-21 and overall GDP

growth of FY 2020-21 at (-) 7.9 per cent. Going ahead, to attain a higher growth trajectory, effective policy measures are needed once again to support demand creation and to have a multiplier effect on enhanced production possibilities, expansion of employment in factories, expansion of capital investments and overall virtuous circle of growth and development of Indian economy, said Aggarwal.

### India vs Australia women's series should have perpetual trophy: Former player Jones

MELBOURNE

THE series between Indian and Australian women should have a perpetual trophy named after legends of the women's game, like the Border-Gavaskar Trophy for the men's teams, suggested former Australia player Mel

The comments by Jones, also a member of ICC's women's committee, came ahead of the Indian women team's scheduled tour of Australia in September-October, which will feature one Test (day-night match), three ODIs and as many T20Is.

"It's great to have something like

Border-Gavaskar, but that's the men's lens of what's happened in the past. So we should do it our way for the women's game, and maybe can come up with something a little bit different," Jones was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au.

"Both the men's and women's games have got these magnificent storylines behind their Ashes trophies, and maybe we can create one just as special that is being talked about in 100 years' time with the same sort of reverence as the Ashes."

The 48-year-old Jones, who played 5 Tests and 61 ODIs between 1998 and

2003, said it would be magnificent to tell the history of the women's game between the two countries and those involved through such a trophy.

She said the name(s) to adorn any such trophy might best be decided by public input via social media. She took the names of stalwarts Sanath Ragaswamy and Margaret Jennings from a historical context. "To talk about Sanath Ragaswamy and Marg Jennings and all those players from that first Test in Perth, to get those to the forefront again would be wonderful," she

The first women's international be-

tween India and Australia was a oneoff Test at the WACA in January 1977 (which Australia won by 147 runs) and their inaugural limited-overs meeting came at a women's World Cup match in Patna in 1978 (Australia won by 71

Australia was captained in both those historic matches by openerkeeper Jennings, while India's skippers were Shantha in their maiden Test and Diana Edulji at the 1978 World Cup (which Australia ultimately

Jones said endorsement of a suitable trophy design could be the first step to such a perpetual trophy and then use the upcoming India tour of Australia as well as any reciprocal visit by Meg Lanning's team to the subcontinent as vehicles to drive public awareness and gauge feedback.

Cricket Australia's interim chief executive officer Nick Hockley told cricket.com.au earlier this week the creation of a new trophy was "something we probably need to think about" and added that the multi-format concept was integral to the ongoing evolution of the women's international game. (PTI)



## WTC final against NZ will be India's first at neutral venue

INDIA'S World Test Championship (WTC) final against New Zealand in Southampton will be their first Test at a neutral venue in their 89-year history of Test cricket.

Among nations with Test status, India and Bangladesh are the only sides who haven't played Test cricket at a neutral venue.

Over the last decade, most international cricket teams have played series against Pakistan at a neutral venue since there was no cricket in Pakistan. The series were mostly in the United Arab Emirates, with almost no crowd for either side as Test matches found few takers in the Emirates. No country has visited Pakistan for 10 years since early 2009 when the Sri Lankan cricket team was attacked by gunmen. Since India have not played a Test match against Pakistan after the 2007-08 home series, they have not got to play any match at a neutral venue.

India had an opportunity to play at a neutral venue, back in 1998-99 during the Asian Test Championships. The final was played in Dhaka but India failed to reach it and Pakistan and Sri Lanka were involved in a title clash in Dhaka.

The WTC final at Southampton though will most likely be played in front of a crowd of 4,000 and there could be plenty of Indian fans though not as many as India are used to at home or even overseas nowadays. Rod Bransgrove, the chairman of the Hampshire Country Cricket Club has been quoted as saying by section of the media that out of the 4,000 tickets, 50% will go to ICC for its sponsors and stakeholders while they will be selling the remaining 2,000 tickets.

"We have already received more than double applications from the fans. It is a high interest game and there is a good demand for it," he had told Cricbuzz. GANS

### **Pacer Krishna recovers, to join India team today**

New Delhi

FAST bowler M Prasidh Krishna, who is part of India's extended squad for Test matches in England, has recovered from Covid-19 and will depart for Mumbai from Bengaluru on May 23.

"He has recovered from Covid-19, is in Bengaluru at the moment at his home and will be leaving for Mumbai on May 23," a source aware of the development told IANS. Krishna, who represents

**Kolkata Knight Riders** (KKR) in the Indian Premier League (IPL), was one of four KKR players to test positive during the IPL that was postponed following breach of biobubble that saw four teams get

affected by the virus. The pace bowler is supposed to travel to England as one of the four standby cricketers along with fellow pacers Avesh Khan and Arzan Nagwaswalla, and batsman Abhimanyu Easwaran. Apart from Krishna, Varun Chakravarthy, Sandeep Warrier and New Zealander Tim Seifert were the other KKR players to test positive. All these three players have also recovered with Seifert returning home to New Zealand.

A right-arm pace bowler, Krishna made his international debut during the ODI series against England in March and picked six wickets in 3 matches. The India men and women's teams are expected to leave for England from Mumbai on June 2 in a

Both India and New Zealand have very good fast bowlers. But if you look at our bowlers, Bumrah and Shami, they can bowl well even on flatter decks. Not just Bumrah and Shami, even Ishant is there. And looking at what he has achieved having played 100 Test matches, his presence is another strong point for India

> —Ashish Nehra Former India fast bowler

### Indian boxer Tanwar tests Covid +ve; withdrawn from Asian C'ship



New Delhi

SOUTH Asian Games gold-medallist Vinod Tanwar (49kg) has been withdrawn from the Indian men's boxing team for the Asian Championships in Dubai after he tested positive for COVID-19.

Tanwar, who had travelled for a tournament in Russia's St. Petersburg last month, had gone home for a break after he came back to the coun-

The 23-year-old returned positive for the virus when he was tested in isolation on his return to Patiala earlier this week, ruling him out from what would have been his maiden appearance at the continental showpiece.

"Vinod Tanwar's (49kg) name was withdrawn from the squad as he was tested positive for COVID-19," the Boxing Federation of India said in a response to a PTI query on the development.

"Tanwar was at his home and was not in contact with the rest of the team which was in a biobubble. Team management decided on not taking any replacement and will not be contesting in the 49kg category of 2021 ASBC Asian Championships," the BFI said.

Tanwar had won the South Asian Gamed gold in the 2019 edition of the event. Apart from that, he is also a National Championships bronze-

### Boxing team reaches Dubai after delayed landing of flight

Most of India's nine Olympic-bound boxers, including Amit Panghal (52kg) and M C Mary Kom (51kg), will compete in the event, which begins on Monday.

The Indian boxing team, featuring the likes of M C Mary Kom (51kg) and Amit Panghal (52kg), reached Dubai to compete in the Asian Boxing Championships aboard an "air-bubble" flight, which had to stay mid-air longer than scheduled as administrative paperwork delayed its landing.

The tournament starts on Monday with the draws lined up for Sunday. It is the only major competition that the boxers will get before the July-August Olympics given the COVID-19 restrictions in place around the globe.

The team reached Dubai on Saturday after being held up for over two hours in the flight, of which close to one hour was mid air, because of a delay in the clearance of paperwork which approved the team's arrival in Dubai.

"There was some confusion regarding the approval letter for the trip which was eventually sorted thanks to the intervention of the Indian Embassy in the UAE. The flight took a while to land but the boxers have now reached their hotel," a source close to the team told PTI.

The approval was required as the UAE has imposed a ban on flights from India in view of the heavy COVID-19 caseload here. The Boxing Federation of India issued a statement, thanking the Indian ambassador to the UAE for his assistance but did not get into details of what caused the delay in the flight's landing. (PTI)

### Tokyo Olympics on schedule, says IOC chief despite Japanese opposition

Committee chief Thomas Bach on Saturday asserted that the Tokyo Olympics will go on as scheduled despite opposition from the majority of Japanese population amid the raging COVID-19 pandemic.

The IOC president said hosting the Olympics, already postponed by a year in 2020 due to the unprecedented health crisis, will send a strong message that there is still "light at the end of the tunnel." Bach made the statement during his address at the 47th International Hockey Federation (FIH) Congress held virtually.

"With Tokyo (Olympics) finally on the horizon, the final countdown has begun. During this difficult times, we need to send a strong message of resilience, unity and our diversity. Tokyo will show light at the end of the tunnel," he said.

Bach's remarks came close on the heels of IOC vice president John Coates' views that the Tokyo Games will go ahead even

**Hazard out of Real's** 

LaLiga finale

MADRID: Injured again, Eden Hazard will miss Real Madrid's

Spanish league finale on Satur-

day. Hazard was not included in the team's squad for the home

match against Villarreal, which

Madrid needs to win to have a

league title. It enters the final

round two points behind

chance of defending its Spanish

Atlético Madrid, which visits rel-

egation-threatened Valladolid.

will be back in the squad after

recovering from an injury that

has kept him out since March.

Hazard missed a big part of the

season because of injuries but

had been playing regularly re-

However, captain Sergio Ramos

if the city is under a state of emergency due to the pandemic. the challenges to host the Games in a COVID-hit world. While most Japanese are not in favour of hosting the Games due to the strain it is expected to put on the country's medical infrastructure in the wake of the pandemic, the IOC remained adamant.

Bach exuded confidence that together with the local organisers, the IOC would be able to deliver a safe Games, which was postponed last year because of the pandemic. "The safety and security of our everyone is utmost priority. But together with our Japanese colleagues we will have to ensure that our athletes came come together and compete in a safe environment.

"Over 70 per cent athletes and officials have already been vaccinated and this number will grow with time. We have also received offers from three vaccine producers for vaccination," he said.

The IOC chief said everyone has to make some sacrifices to fulfil their Olympic dreams. (PTI)

## **Batra re-elected as FIH**



INDIA'S Narinder Batra was reelected as president of International Hockey Federation (FIH) in an election held virtually on Saturday. Batra secured 63 votes out of 124 to edge past Belgium's Marc Coudron, who got 61.

In his opening address to FIH Congress, also held virtually, Batra said his priority would be to ensure hockey becomes more visible globally.

to do that we need to constantly evolve with new formats and events. To create a holistic ecosystem which is sustainable to increase visibility and reach," said Batra, who is also president of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

Batra, who is a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), became chief of FIH in 2016. Since his first term was extended by a year after FIH delayed the Congress to 2021 due to the pandemic, his second term will be shortened from four years to three. He will serve till 2024.

"We need to enhance our financial stability. A development initiatives," he added. (IANS)

## President for a 2<sup>nd</sup> term



New Delhi

"My priority is to grow the sport globally, and

well-developed revenue model is the key to achieve sustainable financial growth. I have seen keen interest in further engagement from Indian commercial partners who I will continue to work with closely to channelise into global events and

## Shuttler Palak qualifies for Tokyo Paralympics Games

New Delhi

TEENAGE para-badminton player Palak Kohli has qualified for Tokyo Paralympic Games which start on August 24.

"We got the official communication on Saturday. I'm ecstatic to hear the news. In the last few months, we have been training hard to achieve our goal to win a ticket to Japan," said the 18-vear-old.

Palak will pair with veteran Parul Parmar in the women's doubles event SL3-SU5 category at the Paralympics.

The Indian team was on track to qualifying but the official announcement came only after the conclusion of the

Spanish Para-Badminton tournament, which was one of the qualifying events for Tokyo Paralympics. "The Indian contingent was unable to participate [in

> added Palak. Currently ranked world No 6, Palak and Parul are confident of a good show in Japan. "Our main goal now is a podium finish in the Tokyo Para-

Spain] due to the pandemic,"

lympics," added Palak. After making it to SL3-SU5 women's doubles event, Palak is hopeful of qualifying for the SU5 singles category as she is ranked 11th in the world. (IANS



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