Forecast: Showers late. Mostly cloudy. Temp: Max.34°C. Min.21°C. Humidity: 23% Sunrise: 05:49 Sunset: 06:50 HANSINDI

🔸 Simultaneously published from Hyderabad | Warangal | Tirupati | Amaravati | Visakhapatnam | Khammam | Kurnool | Delhi: RNI No: DELENG/2017/74095 🌑

● Follow @ ● /thehansindia | ● /thehansindia | ● /thehansindia | ● /thehansindia | ● /thehansindia ●



WINDOWS

Visit Us: www.kapilchits.com KAPIL CHITS

SMALL SAVINGS GROW BIG WITH

Trust, Reliability & Service

Synonymous with



IFTAR (WED) SAHER (THU)

04:41 AM



A halo around the sun caused by ice crystals is seen above quiet streets in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on Tuesday

Single-shot vaccine

J&J seeks nod to conduct **Phase-3 trials**

NEW DELHI: Multinational pharma giant Johnson & Johnson (J&J) has sought permission to conduct phase 3 clinical trials of its single-shot Covid-19 vaccine in India. Sources said the company has sought an early meeting of the subject expert committee on Covid-19 of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) to take a decision on its application. The development comes close to the heels of the central government deciding to fast-track emergency approvals for all foreign-produced coronavirus jabs that have been given a similar nod by the World Health Organization (WHO) or regulators in the United States, Europe, Britain or Japan on the backdrop of rising Covid-19 cases in the country and shortage of vaccines. Such vaccines will be given emergency use approval mandating the requirement of a post-approval parallel bridging clinical trial in place of conduct of local clinical trial under the provisions of the New Drugs and Clinical

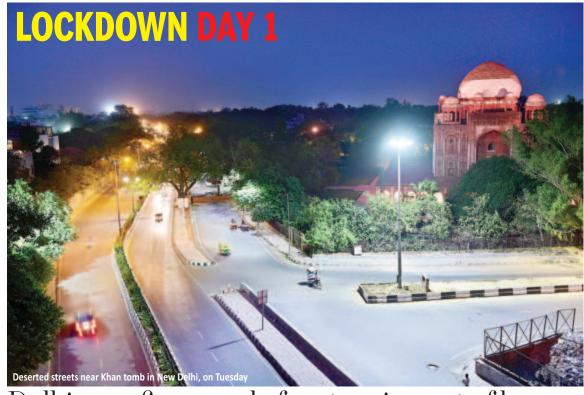
Press Freedom index India retains 142 of 180 spot

Trials Rules 2019, the Health

ministry had said.

NEW DELHI: While India has not slipped further on the World Press Freedom Index 2021 published by the international journalism notfor profit body, Reporters Without Borders (RSF), however, it continues to be counted among the countries classified "bad" for journalism and is termed as one of the most dangerous countries for journalists trying to do their jobs properly. The latest index released on Tuesday ranks 180 countries, topped, yet again, by Norway followed by Finland and Denmark, while Eritrea is at the bottom. China is ranked 177 and is only above North Korea at 179 and Turkmenistan at 178.





Delhi cops fine people for stepping out of homes

New Delhi

THE Delhi Police on Tuesday said people in the national capital largely remained indoors on the first day of the week-long lockdown, but some were penalised for stepping out of

their homes unnecessarily. In several areas of the city, the police made announcements through loudspeakers to inform

people about the lockdown and ask them to follow the Covid-19 guidelines issued by the government, they said. A senior police officer said while people facing an emergency were facilitated, those who were roaming without a valid reason were issued challans. They were also sensitised by police personnel regarding the Covid-19 guidelines.

Delhi HC warns of bigger disaster

Court slams Centre over oxygen supply

New Delhi

THE Delhi High Court came down heavily on the Union government over Covid-19 crisis in the country saying "people will have blood on their hands", if medicines and resources are diverted without application of mind.

"We will be doomed," a bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli said with regard to nonapplication of mind in allocation and diversion of resources and medicines.

The High Court raised questions over Centre's decision to ban the use of oxygen for industrial purposes with effect from April 22 and said why wait till April 22 to ban use of oxygen by industries? Why not immediately? People need oxygen now." "If nothing done to

augment oxygen supply, country will head for bigger disaster; first priority has to be to save lives," the court said.

The Centre informed the Delhi High Court that in order to ensure a continuous supply of oxygen for medical purposes the use of oxygen for industrial purposes has been banned except for certain critical industries with effect from April 22.

The court also expressed displeasure over "huge wastage" of vaccines and asked the Centre to vaccinate whomsoever it can to ensure

there is no wastage. "This is a huge

wastage. Give it to those

who want it. Whomsoever you can vaccinate, please vaccinate.

Whether 16-year-old or 60-year-old, all need vaccination. The pandemic does not discriminate," the court said. "We hope the Centre is applying its mind based

on need of each state when deciding where to send medicines and resources," it added. The court asked the Centre to act against

medicines and come out with some norms. The Centre also as-

serted that the government is taking all the possible steps and is further committed to take any steps and will provide feasible assistance to state government as and when required.

WAR ON CORONA

Next 3 weeks crucial: Vardhan

NEW DELHI: The next three weeks are crucial with respect to the Covid-19 pandemic situation in the country, said Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan

"Centre working closely with States and UTs on public health measures to contain Covid-19. Next three weeks crucial! At a meeting held on Tuesday, UTs advised augmenting hospital infrastructure, ramping up testing, creating containment zones and strictly enforcing Covid appropriate behaviour," Vardhan wrote on Twitter.

Earlier on Tuesday, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan along with Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla chaired a high-level meeting to review and discuss the Covid-19 status, management and response strategy.

The meeting was held via video conferencing and attended by Dr V K Paul, member (health) of NITI Aavog, Dr Balram Bhargava, secretary of DHR and DG ICMR, the chief secretaries and DGPs of all the union territories of India.

Continued on Page 5

SCALE UP PRODUCTION

PM tells vaccine manufacturers

New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday interacted with vaccine manufacturers from across the country via video conferencing and urged them to continuously scale up the production capacity so that everyone in India can be vaccinated as soon as possible.

Commending the scientists for their efforts, Modi credited them for developing and manufacturing vaccines in record time. Noting the fact that vaccines manufactured in the country are the cheapest, the PM said that world's largest vaccine programme is underway in



addresses the nation on the second wave of coronavirus pandemic across the country, via video conferencing,

India. Modi remarked that throughout this process of developing and manufacturing vaccines, "the

country has constantly worked with the spirit of public-private partnership under the 'Mission Covid Suraksha' and created an end-to-end vaccine development ecosystem".

"The government ensured that all the vaccine manufacturers not only get all possible help and logistic support, but also the process of vaccine approval is speedy and scientific," the PM said. He also assured all possible support and smooth approval process for the vaccine candidates which are currently under trial phase.

3RD MUTANT

FLAGGED IN

NEW DELHI: With Covid

cases skyrocketing with

every passing day, a third

been identified. Sources

said the Health Ministry was last week briefed

about the possibility of a

veloping another signifi-

double mutant variant de-

cant mutation and becom-

ing a "triple-mutant." And

mutation in the B.1.167 has

4 STATES

Continued on Page 5

A death every minute since Sunday

India reports 10,000 fresh Covid cases per hour

New Delhi

WITH the onslaught of the second wave of coronavirus, India is reporting over 10,000 fresh cases and 60 deaths per hour on an average since Sunday, suggests data from the Union

deaths were recorded.

This jumped to 10,895 1.501 deaths.

On Monday, India reported a record single-day rise of infections (2,73,810) and deaths (1,619). With this, India's active cases surpassed the 19-lakh mark. Per hour on average, India reported 11,408 cases and 67 deaths on Monday. Tuesday was no better as India reported 2,59,170 fresh Coronavirus infec-

Health Ministry.

On April 1, India reported 3,013 cases and 19 deaths per hour on average, the Union Health Ministry data said. The total number of cases reported on April 1 was 72,330, while 459

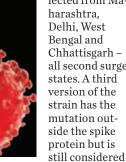
cases and over 62 deaths per hour on an average on Sunday when India reported 2,61,500 cases and

PER HOUR DATA

Sunday: 10,895 cases, 62 deaths Monday: 11,408 cases,

67 deaths

10,798 cases, new mutation in the spike 73 deaths protein and have been found in samples col-



tions and 1,761 fatalities, making it 10.798 cases and 73 deaths per hour on average. Maharashtra has been reporting the highest number of cases and deaths since the last few weeks. On April 1, the State reported 39,544 cases and 227 deaths - 1,647 cases and 9

deaths per hour. Continued on Page 5

three different varieties have been detected. Two of the triple-mutant varieties have the lected from Ma-

harashtra, Delhi, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh all second surge states. A third version of the strain has the mutation outside the spike protein but is

significant and has been observed in 17 samples again from Maharashtra, Delhi and West Bengal. Sources said that West Bengal seems to be becoming the hotspot for such mutations. The new triple mutant could make the virus even more capable of evading human immune response.

Continued on Page 5

POLITICKLE by MANJUL COME NEXT MONTH, ANYBODY ABOVE 18 ...



♂○**©©②** @MANJULtoons ...AND WELL CONNECTED ...



Bharat Biotech to boost Covaxin production to 70 cr doses per yr

HYDERABAD

THE Bharat Biotech International Ltd on Tuesday said it will ramp up production of its Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin to about 70 crore doses on an annual basis. The expansion in production comes after the Centre provided Rs 150 crore grant. "Inactivated vaccines. while highly safe, are extremely complex and expensive to manufacture, resulting in lower yields when compared to live virus vaccines,"

the Hyderabad-based company said in a statement on Tuesday. "The company is able to expand Covaxin manufacturing capacity in a short timeline, mainly due to the availability of new specially designed BSL-3 facilities, first of its kind for manufacturing in India that have been repurposed and pre-existing expertise and know how to manufacture, test and release highly purified inactivated viral vaccines," the company said.

Avoid India travel, US advises its citizens

AMID the surge of Covid-19 cases in India, the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has advised its citizens to avoid travelling to India, even if they are fully vaccinated. In its advisory, the CDC stated that there is "very high level of Covid-19" in India.

In a statement, the CDC $\,$ said: "Because of the current situation in India even fully vaccinated travellers may be at risk for getting and spreading Covid-19 variants and should avoid all travel to



India. If you must travel to India, get fully vaccinated before travel. All travellers should wear a mask, stay 6 feet from others, avoid

crowds, and wash their hands." The CDC also issued travel recommendations for fully vaccinated travellers which stated: "If you are

have to get tested before leaving the United States, unless your destination requires it and you do not

have to self-quarantine after you arrive in the United States."

Earlier on Monday, Britain announced that India was being added to its "red list" – banning all arrivals from this country except for UK or Irish nationals, who must pay to stay in a government-approved quarantine hotel for 10 days on their return. On Sunday, Hong Kong had barred flights from India on fears of the mutated coronavirus strain. Previously, New Zealand had also restricted travellers from India.

New dates 15 days ahead of exam

NEW DELHI

AS Covid-19 cases spike **National Testing Agency** (NTA) has decided to postpone the UGC-National Eligibility Test (NET) scheduled to be held from May 2 to May

"Looking at the present situation of the pandemic and also taking into account the safety and well-being of the candidates and examination functionaries, it has been decided to postpone the UGC-NET December 2020 cycle (May 2021) examination," the The revised dates for the exam will be announced later, at least 15 days before the examina-

tion. Union Edu Minister Rame Pokhriyal 'Nish ment and requ ple to stay saf

safety and wel candidates and functionaries (Covid-19 outbr advised @DG_N postpone the L Dec 2020 cycle (May 2021) exams," Nishai tweeted.

Until June 2018, the NET was condu the Central Bo ondary Educat in 84 subjects across the cou commission. B December 2018, the UGC by the NTA.



Health hacks for the work-from-home life

SIDDHI JAIN

he work-from-home routine in 2020 brought many families closer as they found themselves under the same roof for an extended period of time. As curfews restrict movement and people have to home shelter, setting health goals can help you achieve wellness as a family while you stay safe.

Madhuri Ruia, nutritionist and Pilates expert shares how you can become each other's cheerleaders by encouraging a healthier, happier

Invest in indoor fitness tools The lockdown has turned up the

heat on indoor fitness, pushing everyone to strive for a healthier way of living. Investing together in online fitness classes or even props like resistance bands and dumbbells is the perfect way for you and your siblings to stay on top of your fitness routine. Motivate each other daily and take consistency to another level by following the habitforming 21/90 rule. This will not

ulldogs are known for the stocky

physique, wrinkly faces, and short

dogs, bulldogs are beloved by many. Many

people find bulldogs to be cute and lovable.

Bulldogs are Beautiful Day aims to show

adorable breed.

with the day that the bulldog

Bulldogs are associated with

was officially recognized by

dog breeders back in 1886.

the Asiatic Mastiff, which

lived around 4,000 BC in

Since then, breeders

helped form the different

kinds of bulldogs that exist

today. These include the Eng-

lish bulldog, French bulldog,

of the most popular breeds,

able. They provide overall

general happiness to every

Some of the most famous bulldogs to have

existed were Tillman, an English Bulldog with

skateboarding skills that made him a celebrity.

mascot of the University of Georgia Bulldogs.

Chesty was a bulldog take on the role of the

next official mascot of the US Marine Corps.

Each year, people celebrate Bulldogs are

Beautiful Day by showing appreciation for

Owners post funny videos of their bull-

Another bulldog, Uga, was the official live

bulldogs are known to be lov-

and American bulldog. As one

traveling nomads.

Mesopotamia. The mastiff

was introduced to Europe by

this appreciation through celebrating this

Bulldogs are Beautiful Day corresponds

snouts. While not the most elegant of

Encourage fellow family members to maintain a good diet and exercise, as the lockdown life returns for many

only boost self-confidence, but will also leave you feeling rejuvenated and relaxed after a long day's work.

Take mini breaks

Bulldogs are beautiful day

dogs and treat their

them goodies like

People also take

the time to learn

bulldogs and how

they earned their cute, wrinkled faces that

them well and show how much you appreci-

ate them in your lives. Give them treats, let

them up in cute outfits. You can also share

them sleep in your bed for the day, and dress

this love for your bulldog by posting pictures

of you and your dog on your favourite social

If you believe your bulldog is beautiful,

then enter your dog into a beauty contest.

Maybe you can win first place as the most

beautiful dog of them all, even though we all

know that all dogs are beautiful in the end.

If you own a bulldog, take this time to treat

everyone knows and loves

media websites.

the history of

THIS DAY IN

HISTORY

dogs by giving

treats and

stuffed tovs.

The solution for WFH stress is to take work-free breaks during the day. The lockdown made us realise that there is more to life than deadlines and virtual calls. These uncertain times have encouraged us to take a pause, be grateful and enjoy each moment as it comes. Small things like taking a 15-minute break with your family members every three hours for a cup of coffee, a game of catch or a quick comedy show will instantly liven up the mood, making the day feel lighter and less mundane. The little moments help clear the headspace, which improves productivity, helping you, work better.

Embrace a nutty start to the day While we focus on staying fit and

toning our bodies, one thing that we often forget is to provide it with the right nutrition. Starting your day with nuts like almonds will give your body the energy boost it needs during the day. Almonds are rich in Vitamin B2, Vitamin E, magnesium, and phosphorus; nutrients that are known to provide energy that help keep you active. A handful of almonds may have satiating properties that promote a feeling of fullness, which helps limit unhealthy snacking by keeping hunger at bay. Almonds contain immunity supporting nutrients like zinc, copper, and folate. Starting your day the nutty way will help you and your siblings reap nutritious benefits that not only add a natural glow but also help manage diabetes and improve heart health.



Our fear of pandemic gets instilled in our children: Lakshmi Manchu

elugu actress Lakshmi Manchu, whose YouTube series "Chitti Chilakamma" on parenting has been getting good response, says amid the latest Covid surge, parents need to be aware that their fear of the pandemic six-year-old daughter Nirwana, Lakshmi feels it is important to have a healthy dialogue with children around for content like this because we are clueless. Right now we are so scared is being instilled in our children," says Lakshmi. She says the effort on her we can do activities and how to really address our children's problems gives us more tools and power to handle our children," she says. The actress often cially if there is a fitness episode. "I be lieve that at times like this when kids age physical activities with our kids and let it be very simple. That is why I tain workouts that she finds difficult or maybe she likes to show off how well she can stretch. All of this is encouragement for them to move and not be



NEWS ROUNDUP

YASHIKA MATHUR

can affect their children, too. Mother of what is happening. "There is more need because of the pandemic, and that fear show is to source content that helps, in this context. "Looking at content where brings her daughter on the show, espeare so glued to their phones, iPads and the television, it is important to encourlike brining Nirvana at my workout sessions, not that she does the entire session, but sometimes she likes to do cer stuck in one place," says Lakshmi.



MEHREEN PIRZADA @MEHREENPIRZADA

My goes out to my people's covid sufferings #VaccineForAll #StayIndoor #StaySafe

#BeSociallyResponsibleAware #WearFaceshieldsMasks #HelpEachOther #BeEachOthersStrength #HumanLifePrecious



Beauty, grooming and self-pampering during lockdown

The eye category has seen maximum acceleration followed by lips category. The premium beauty business is recovering at a faster pace and continues to accelerate online

eople are looking to stay engaged at home through self-pampering, spending time on grooming and experimenting with make-up

After a tough 2020, most businesses saw a revival, some movement and an upswing in the first quarter of 2021. Mrunmay Mehta, Head, Beauty and Luxury Beauty at Amazon India gives an insight into the how the beauty business has fared over the past six months.

As most cities begin curfews and lockdowns once again, will there be a slump or rise in demand of beauty products? What are the beauty trends we can try at home and which grooming tools are a must have?

Mrunmay shares, "We have observed that customers are looking for ways to stay engaged at home through self-pampering, spending time on grooming and experimenting with makeup. The eye category has seen maximum acceleration followed by lips category. The premium beauty business is recovering at a faster pace and continues to accelerate online. The perfume category is also witnessing an increase in demand amongst customers. These categories will continue to accelerate online, given increased customer adoption of online as a buving channel in the new normal we live in. In the last 6 months, we have witnessed a surge in demand for beauty products such as eyemake up, matte and transfer proof lipsticks, skincare, and beauty tools & accessories on our platform."

Customers today are inspired by not just Bollywood but in fact a lot more by so many digital platforms, influencers, and social



media. Fashion and Beauty trends have been influenced by films for the longest time. Even today, this is largely evident in customers across markets including tier II & III cities.

In early 2020, we collaborated with Filmfare as the title sponsor of the 65th edition of Filmfare Awards to bring alive the connection between entertainment, fashion, and beauty. Besides, we also created a storefront to leverage the make-up looks of the characters from the 'Bandish Bandits' web series on Prime

Mehta shares, "At Amazon, we also have a large affiliates program, where influencers can host their page on Amazon and direct traffic to it through their channels. Lastly, Amazon overall has multiple channels of customer engagement & acquisition across customer touchpoints such as FoundIt and Fashion Influencer Program, from which we continue to see a rapid increase in our customer base for Beauty as well. As the world lives with the pandemic, customers are looking to stay engaged at home through self-pampering, spending time on grooming and experimenting with make-up. The make-up and premium beauty business had taken a momentary pause in March 2020 but has slowly recovered to its pre-Covid performance with the advent of video conference calls.

Highlighting some broad trends on Amazon Beauty over the past six months:

Revival of makeup

With eyes becoming the new lips, within make-up, the eye category has seen maximum acceleration. Brands have quickly aligned themselves to innovate in the lips category by moving from gloss and shine lipsticks to promoting matte (transfer-proof and smudge-proof) lipsticks, tinted lip balms and tint this season, only to stay in line with the new norms- they can be worn with face masks.

See the rainbow

There is an emergence of joyful colours, be it on the lips, eyes, or the cheek. While minimalism as a trend continues, products will be used to add a dash of colour on the eyes (yellow, blue, pink etc.)

Natural effortless glam

A naturally glamorous and glowing face has made a comeback. Customers are now doubling down on highlighters and bronzers that offer a glowing face coupled with dramatic lashes and blushed cheeks.

Clean beauty

Today, customers are mindful about product ingredients and formulations. With people spending more time and research on their beauty routines, there has been a distinct rise in the adoption of natural, organic. and plant-based skincare and haircare as well as natural makeup products.

Salon at home

With customers facing limitations in visiting salons, the focus on professional skincare and haircare products has multiplied. We are seeing a surge in demand for professional brands on Amazon Beauty which were only popular with salons earlier.

Ongole poet receives International recognition

 $\mathbf{D}^{\mathrm{r}\,\mathrm{K}\,\mathrm{Saroja}\,\mathrm{Devi}}$, a professor of English at Rise Krishna Sai Prakasam Group of Institutions, Ongole, got a distinct Honour by Cultural wing, government of South America Uruguay, (APUCNI) on the occasion of the Liberation day of Uruguay on

Dr Saroja Devi is a professor, writer, poet and soft skills trainer to the youth in Ongole. She has a prolonged career of 21 years in teaching of English and 15 year's of experience as a writer and poet. Saroja Devi's poem titled 'Freedom for Universal Tolerance", has been translated into Spanish by Maria Vila, President of the Uruguay's Academia Popular Uruguay Cultural National International locally known as (APUCNI). The award presentation online was aired on Radio and Television in Uruguay on April 19.

Uruguay was liberated from Spain on April 19, 1825 and the country celebrated independence in a grand manner. The Uruguay cultural department has chosen another poet from Andhra Pradesh for the presentation of certificate of appreciation on behalf of APUCNI.

The Uruguay authorities have chosen poets from 33 countries of four continents worldwide for the presentation of the Certificate of Appreciation. The people of Ongole particularly those associated with Literature and teaching profession felt proud on the achievement of poet, Dr K. Saroja devi.

Dr K Saroja received distinct Honour from **Uruguay on Liberation** Day. The award was



She is well known among the teaching profession and poets in Ongole. She was awarded Ph.D. in English from Sri Padmavati Mahila University, Tirupati for her research work on Ethical Intimations in the select Inter War American Fiction. During her prolonged career of 21 years in teaching, she helped many students develop the linguistic skills particularly the communication skills and soft skills. She is well known as a columnist in English papers and other magazines too. Dr Saroja Devi loves to convey her voice on Ethics, moral perspectives, communication aspects and personality traits. She is a life member of Indian Society of Authors and an editorial board member of IJMRAP journal.

She was also awarded Sahitya Sri by Kafla International and Best teacher award by Jyothi Rao Bai



Poole Society. Her outstanding achievement was she was one of the four Indians invited for presenting research paper at 42 IATEFL International Conference, Exeter University, United Kingdom in 2008 and was invited for presenting Poetry at SAARC Festival of Literature in 2009 at Grand Hotel, Agra. She is a resource person for Andhra Pradesh Human Resource Development Institute, Bapatla, A.P.

Responding on receiving the letter of appreciation from Uruguay, she said that she was delighted to receive the award and felt it was a memorable event in her life. Due to Corona pandemic. the Uruguay government presented the awards to the poets worldwide online. Dr Saroja Devi too received online and made Ongole poets proud with her achievement. She can be reached at sarojasudheer@gmail.com.

these lovable, fuzzy creatures. At Drake University, an annual contest for the most beautiful bulldog is held. Owners showcase their bulldogs and walk the pageant runway, showing off their clever tricks and beauty.

PM BUSY WITH RALLIES WHEN NATION UNDER SECOND WAVE OF COVID

How can he laugh?: Priyanka Gandhi

NEW DELHI

CONGRESS General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has said that she is totally devastated by the pandemic and the news of people dying without any medical support.

Speaking to IANS she said that this is not the time for the Prime Minister to campaign but to wipe the tears of the people's eyes and protect the citizens from the deadly virus. She said her party is working with compassion and is trying to help out the needy but she questions the Prime Minister -- Is it time to laugh in political rallies?

Q. How do you see the government's response after the second wave of Covid-19 hit the country?

A. The government's response has been extremely disappointing. The Prime Minister is still continuing with his election campaign while people are battling against the worst wave of Covid.

At a time when the government should be focussing on fighting the catastrophic situation unfolding all around us, it appears to be practically absent. Even constructive suggestions from opposition parties are being dismissed as politicisation rather than being accepted in the spirit that the nation is in a grave crisis and every single life matters, therefore, all of us must stand together and do whatever we can to save lives.

The lack of planning and preparation between the first and the second wave is the worst act of negligence and incompetent governance I have ever witnessed.

Q. Do you think export of vaccines could have been avoided?

A. I would like to say that thanks to 70 years of forwardthinking governance, today India is the largest manufacturer of vaccines in the world. Yet, between January 2021 and March 2021, Modi ji's government enabled the export of six crore doses of vaccines to countries across the world.

One lakh doses were gifted to the Nepalese Army, Mauritius received 2 lakh doses as did numerous other nations. During the same period, only 3 to 4 crore doses of vaccines were administered to Indian citizens. Why did the Modi government prioritise overseas PR and selfpromotion over Indian lives?

Q. Do you think the government was not prepared and was

caught off guard?

A. As the second wave peaked in other countries, in the last six months, India exported 1.1 million injections of Remdesivir. The export was stopped five days back. It is now clear that there is a shortage of Remdesivir, which is being reported from across the country. Why did the Modi government not ensure that production of Remdesivir was ramped up and made available to every Indian before allowing it to be exported to other countries?

Again, courtesy years of forward-thinking governance, today India is one of the largest producers of oxygen in the world. However, doctors, patients and their family members

are crying for oxygen in hospitals across India as the disease surges once more. In fact, it's not the production of oxygen that is a problem. India produces 7,500 MT of oxygen per

At the peak of the first wave of Covid, the collective requirement of our hospitals was less than half this quantity per day.

It's the transport of oxygen that is causing the shortage because less than 2,000 specialised trucks are available for the same.

What did the Modi government do to ensure the production and availability of adequate logistics to supply oxygen across India in the year between the first wave of the pandemic in March 2020 and the one we are

now facing? What did the Modi government do to increase India's capacity for hospital beds and ventilators in the last one year since Covid first hit us?

Q. In Uttar Pradesh, the second wave has been devastating. Look at the disturbing pictures coming from the state capital...

A. I have held several meetings with Congress leaders and workers across the state and discussed what we can do to be of support to the people during these tragic times. I have asked all our workers and leaders to be in constant communication with the public and do whatever is in their power to assist people with hospital beds, access to oxygen, medicines, etc. All our leaders and workers are doing as much as they can to this end.

Instead of providing the support and sensitivity needed at a time when almost every single family is battling the scourge, the UP government is acting as an aggressor towards the public. We are constantly raising issues that the government needs to address urgently in order to press them into action and direct their attention to areas in which immediate steps need to be taken. I have written to the Chief Minister about certain issues and will continue to attempt to impress upon him the need for the government to be transparent, provide access to facilities and help those af-

It is our firm commitment towards the people of UP to remain constructive and supportive during this crisis. We will not politicise this unprecedented human tragedy under any circumstances. We fully understand our responsibility towards the people of UP. I have also offered our co-operation to the UP government.

Q. People are feeling helpless across the country, don't you think the government has failed to respond with necessary alacrity?

A. The Prime Minister has completely failed to provide a sense of safety, direction or leadership during this massive human crisis we are facing. It is shocking that just day before yesterday, he was on a public stage addressing thousands of people with no covid protocol and laughing while doing so. What is there to laugh about? The entire country is in tears.

There are no hospital beds available, medicines are running short, crematoriums are full,

frontline workers are exhausted...Where is the leadership? Where is the planning? Why are we short of facilities? Where is the money from the PM fund being used? Why has he done nothing to address the five major shortages of vaccines, beds, ventilators, oxygen and Remdesivir? Will he take responsibility for the bad planning and incompetence of his govern-

And what about the millions of poor and the millions of honest workers in small businesses across the nation? What will they do now that we are faced with impending lockdowns and further suffering? What is the Modi government doing to support them?

UP government's own Sero Survey results showed 5 cr people might have got the virus, several other Sero Surveys showed signs of a second wave coming. why did the Modi government block some of this research and ignore its findings.Doctors, medical staff and frontline workers across the nation are risking their lives fighting the war against Covid and the Prime Minister has punished them by cancelling their insurance pro-

Direct payments of over ₹2,600 cr made to farmers: Punjab Minister

CHANDIGARH

PUNJAB Food and Civil Supplies Minister Bharat Bhushan Ashu said under the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme, direct payments of more than Rs 2,600 crore have been made to accounts of farmers till Tuesday.

He said the payments of Rs 4,200 crore would be cleared by Wednesday.

He assured the farmers that every single grain produced by them would be procured by the state government. In a statement here, the minister said that 54 lakh metric tonnes of wheat has arrived in markets, out of which 50 lakh metric tonnes has already been procured and more than 20 lakh metric tonnes by various government agencies. He assured that both procurement as well as lifting would be speed up in coming days.

On the issue of 'bardana' (storage bags), Ashu said due to Covid-

19 and elections in West Bengal, many of the jute mills are shut, leading to shortage of jute bags across the country. He said they had even taken up this issue with the Jute Commissioner, but it also failed to help the state. He said that there was some shortage of 'bardana' initially, but now the matter has been resolved.

He said that on April 12, the Centre has allowed the state for the use of used 'bardana' by 'arhtiyas', for which Rs 41.90 per bag has been fixed.

On the issue of DBT. Ashu said the state government has already been making direct payments to the farmers since last 18 months and assured that payments to each and every farmer would be made within set stipulated time.

He said that in Punjab, both the farmers and the arhtiyas (commission agents), are happy from the ongoing wheat procure-

Remdesivir arranged by BJP was for govt, confirms Maha Minister

 \mathbf{M} UMBAI

IN what turned out to be a storm in a tea-cup, the 60,000 vials of Remdesivir injections procured by the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was intended for the Maharashtra government, Foods & Drugs Administration Minister Dr. Rajendra Shingane admitted here on

"I was aware of it. The BJP leaders had met me at my house along with the manufacturers' representatives. They offered to help us procure the Remdesivir stocks for the state government and I agreed to it," Dr. Shingane told a local private TV channel.

He added that the injection stock could not be for any other purpose and even the BJP leaders assured him accordingly, embarrassing the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi allies Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Con-

Reacting to the minister's assertion, Leader of Opposition in Legislative Council Pravin Darekar confirmed that he had also assured the injection doses



taken a delegation of manufacturers to meet him.

"Minister Shingane thanked us for our efforts and we would be given to the state government." Darekar said.

It may be recalled that on Saturday-Sunday night, the Mumbai Police had 'seized' the stock

of injections that was being surreptitiously brought into the state from Union Territory of Daman and had even detained a company official.

Leader of Opposition (Assembly) Devendra Fadnavis and Darekar had spent hours at the police station to sort out the matter saying the Maharashtra Food & Drugs Administration (FDA) had permitted the consignment.

After almost a night-long drama, the police allowed the company executive to go but on Sunday morning a huge row erupted between the BJP and MVA with both sides hurling allegations at each other.

Darekar said it is now up to people like NCP's Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil, Minority Affairs Minister Nawab Malik, Sena MP Sanjay Raut, State Congress chief Nana Patole and even senior Congress leader Privanka Gandhi Vadra to reply in the

"I had been in touch with Minister Shingane right from the beginning, met him at his home and he agreed. Now, all the allegations by the ruling party leaders and the police station drama stands exposed," Darekar said



3rd UP Minister succumbs to Covid. govt announces weekend lockdown

LUCKNOW

UTTAR Pradesh Minister of State Hanuman Mishra succumbed to Covid on Tuesday at the Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences in Luc-

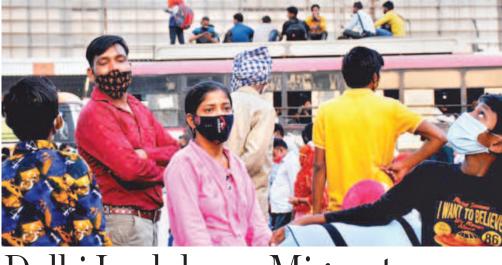
Hanuman Mishra was admitted to the hospital after he tested positive for the virus.

He is the third minister in the state to succumb to Covid. Earlier, last year, state ministers Kamal Rani Varun and Chetan Chauhan had died due to Covid.

Uttar Pradesh has been reporting the highest number of Covid-19 cases in the country after Maharashtra.

Meanwhile, the state government on Tuesday announced its decision to impose a 'Corona Curfew' in the state with the rising

number of Covid-19 cases. The state has announced a statewide weekend lockdown that will come into force from April 24. As per the new directive, districts with more than 500 active Covid-19 cases will also remain under night curfew, effective between 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. every day, until further orders. (IANS)



Delhi Lockdown: Migrants queue up at bus stands to rush home

GURUGRAM

AFTER the Delhi government imposed a week long lockdown from Monday night to curb the spike in Covid cases, in a replay of last year's migrants crisis, a large number of people gathered at bus stations here on Tuesday to flee from the city, fearing the shutdown of the public transport may force them to walk hundreds of kilometers.

Last year, hundreds of migrant labourers had left the city on foot in the absence of public transport during the lockdown.

Hundreds of people including children, women and elderly queued up at Rajiv Chowk, Sector-12, Sector-34, Khandsa and Sector-37 bus stations on Tuesday with their belongings to head home leaving their jobs and employment back in the city.

Ram Lal, a migrant labourer waiting for a bus at the bus stand, told IANS, "I am going to the village in Bihar due to the lockdown, how

can the poor man give rent and survive without earning. Due to lockdown in Delhi maximum employees of our company are working from home but we are helpers, we have no such facilities. Our company has been closed. I have to take care of my family. I will not come back here now.

Tulsi Kumar, another migrant labourer told IANS, "I am going to my village in Uttar Pradesh. After the lockdown, work will be stopped, then how will I take care of myself and my family. I will come back after the situation becomes normal." The labourers could be seen at several bus stops across the city. At Sector-12 bus stop where only one bus heads towards Madhya Pradesh before the lockdown in Delhi, now after the lockdown four buses are heading for Madhya Pradesh. "We are paying Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000 for our destination which is a huge amount, but we have no other option but to pay this amount as I just want to reach my

native place at any cost rather than stay here without any work," Rawal Singh told IANS.

Like them, many others from various parts of the city are heading to the bus stands from where they will catch a bus to their villages.

However, majority of them said, this time corona fear is not in their mind, the only thing in their mind is how to reach home without walking on foot.

It is estimated that nearly 20 per cent of labourers from Gurugram

have left the district. "The spike in Covid-19 cases is a worrisome concern for us but the lockdown in Delhi has panicked workers despite our request they are not ready to stay here. This will affect the industries a lot. Hundreds of workers have already left the city and more are going back. The industries are now facing labour crunch which will cause delays in productions," Aman Khanna, an owner of an automobile unit told IANS.

Rahul Gandhi tests Covid positive

New Delhi

CONGRESS leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday tested positive for Covid-19.

He shared this information on social media and asked people to follow Covid guide-He tweeted, "After experi-

just tested positive for COVID. All those who've been in contact with me recently, please follow all safety protocols and stay safe". Congress leader P. Chidambaram wished him

encing mild symptoms. I've

speedy recovery: "Learned that Mr Rahul Gandhi has tested positive and has isolated himself. Deeply concerned. I wish him a full and speedy recovery."

Earlier in the day, Rahul Gandhi demanded that the government should transfer money into the accounts of the migrants who are compelled to go back home due to the lockdown and pandemic. He tweeted in Hindi, "Migrants are again moving back, so this is the responsibility of the Union government to transfer money to their accounts. Will the government, which is blaming the public for the spread of the Covid, take such a public supportive

The Congress has questioned the government over the handling of the Covid pandemic. "Where has the money of Covid tax and the PM-CARES fund gone?" asked Congress spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjew-



Oxygen vehicles in UP to have GPS tracking

Lucknow

IN view of the reported black marketing of medical-grade oxygen, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has now asked the au-

thorities to monitor all oxygen vehicles with GPS tracking devices. "Provide police protection to all oxygen plants. Monitor oxygen vehicles through GPS devices. Take every possible step to prevent black marketing and profiteering of oxygen and other life-saving

drugs," the Chief Minister said on Tuesday. He directed authorities to ensure that each hospital has at least 36 hours of backup oxygen. According to the government spokesman, "Given the special circumstances, the chief minister has asked officials to ensure that oxygen produced at all small and large industrial units, including MSMEs, is used only for medical purposes. These oxygen plants should be connected to their nearest hospital. A comprehensive action plan in this regard should be prepared today itself."

The Chief Minister also informed that the process of setting up five new oxygen plants has started in the state. "For further preparedness, the setting up of oxygen plants in all hospitals with a capacity of more than 100 beds should be made compulsory. Modern technology like air separation units should be encouraged. Its capacity should be increased in the state," he said. (IANS)

Indian SaaS cos going global

T NDIAN SaaS (software as a service) companies are **▲** scaling new heights with each passing quarter. The latest fundraising by cloud data protection and management solutions provider 'Druva' is a case in point. The company which provides services to the likes of NASA, Pfizer, and GameStop among others has raised \$147 million in its latest round of funding, which takes the valuation to over \$2 billion. Not only 'Druva', many other Indian SaaS startups including Zenoti, Freshworks, Zoho, Icertis are becoming significant players in the global SaaS market. Though many of them started operations in India, these companies are serving companies across the globe, especially in the all-important US market.

According to global consultancy firm Bain & Co. India has around 7,000 to 8,000 players in this space, which is almost double what it was five years ago. The consultancy firm suggests that Indian-heritage SaaS companies may clock \$18 billion to \$20 billion in revenue and capture up to 9 per cent share of the global SaaS market by 2022. Similarly, IT industry body Nasscom is of the opinion that the Indian SaaS market is estimated to hit \$3.3 billion-\$3.4 billion by 2022, which will grow 6-fold by 2030.

Such an optimistic outlook also hinges on the fact that the SaaS adoption has increased manifold during the Covid pandemic period. As enterprises try to reach out to their targeted customers, they are increasingly taking the help of SaaS players to go digital. This has one distinct advantage. SaaS adoption doesn't demand any upfront cost and enterprises can pay on their usage basis. At a time when cash flow becomes all critical during the pandemic period, there is no better option to get customised solutions on a subscription basis.

Many analysts are of the opinion that though the pandemic will eventually fade away, the process of digitisation seems irreversible. This augurs well for the Indian SaaS providers. Also, the business model of SaaS players is slightly different than other startups. For instance, SaaS companies offer a solution on a subscription basis. So, the cash flow starts from the beginning of operations. Unlike many other startups which burn a lot of cash before becoming profitable, SaaS companies can be breakeven in a short period with healthy cash flow statements.

After Indian IT services companies that continue to dominate the global market, Indian SaaS providers are the next generation companies with a prospect to play a significant role in the global market. This not only helps the Indian engineers in terms of hiring prospects but even the country also gets benefitted from productised software services offerings. As the technology world gets more productised amid the pandemic, Indian SaaS players are well-placed to cash in the emerging opportunities. In this context, the market regulator Sebi should come up with attractive public offering norms which will allow the Indian SaaS players to list in Indian bourses than going public in foreign bourses. This will enable investors to own shares in these companies with attractive growth prospects.

The dark side of colourful textiles

These bright, colourful clothes have a dark side as their colours cause severe negative impacts on the surrounding environment

SUGHOSH MADHAV

■ EXTILES are not only the basic needs of a human being but have also become a fashion statement. But these bright, colourful clothes have a dark side as their colours cause severe negative impacts on the surrounding environ-

The textile industry occupies an exclusive place in India. One of the first industries to come into existence in the country, it accounts for 14 per cent of the total industrial manufacturing output.

The textile industry is extremely water-intensive. It requires a huge amount of water in different steps of processing, especially in wet processing. About 50-100 litres of water is necessary for the handling of a kilogram of textiles.

Thus, a huge amount of effluent is produced during textile processing, that can cause a severe ecological crisis as it is released onto bare land and water bodies after treatment or without treatment. Textile effluents are also used in irrigation in different parts of the country due to their high nutrient values.

Handling textiles is enormously challenging, chemically. It uses abundant, ecologically distant. non-biodegradable chemicals. In the handling of materials, textile industries utilise various colours, synthetic compounds, helper synthetics and estimating materials.

According to evaluation the World Bank, around 17-20 per cent of all modern water contamination is exclusively caused by colouring and finishing measures. Approxi $mately\,72\,distinctive\,poisonous$ synthetics are said to be available in water solely from colouring measures.

In a similar report, the World Bank likewise enumerated 30 distinct mixes, that are difficult to remove and are generally refractory in nature.

Besides, these profluents become profoundly poisonous due to the presence of:

- Sulphur
- Naphthol • Tank colours
- Nitrates
- Acidic corrosive Cleansers
- Chromium compounds
- Weighty metals like copper, arsenic, lead, cadmium, mercury, nickel and cobalt
- Certain assistant synthetic compounds

Other destructive synthetics present are formaldehyde-based colour fixing specialists, hydrocarbon-based conditioners and non-biodegradable colouring synthetic substances. Textile effluents also have usually high temperature and pH, both of which are tremendously de-

The occurrence of colour in wastewater is one of the key problems in textile manufacturing. Colours are easily visible to human eyes, even at very low concentration. Hence, the colour from textile effluents holds considerable aesthetic sig-

Total dissolved solids (TDS) present in the industry effluents are also a crucial parameter. The application of common salt and sulphur salt in various processes amplifies TDS intensity in the textile effluents.

Deadly poison

When the textile effluent is discharged into water bodies, it reduces the visibility of water as it contains colour. The low visibility of water is harmful to the flora and fauna of water bodies.

Sunlight does not penetrate coloured water. This reduces photosynthesis and the overall productivity of the aquatic ecosystem. Slats present in effluents increase TDS value of the water in freshwater bodies and make them unsuitable for domestic and irrigation purposes.

The high temperature and pH of the wastewater severely impact the water bodies. High temperature reduces the dissolved oxygen of the water bodies, which is essential for fishes and



The textile industry is extremely water-intensive. It requires a huge amount of water in different steps of processing, especially in wet processing. About 50–100 litres of water is necessary for the handling of a kilogram of textiles. Thus, a huge amount of effluent is

produced during textile processing, that can cause a severe ecological crisis as it is released onto bare land and water bodies after treatment or without treatment. Textile effluents are also used in irrigation in different parts of the country due to their high nutrient values.

Handling textiles is enormously challenging, chemically. It uses abundant, ecologically distant, non-biodegradable chemicals. In the handling of materials, textile industries utilise various colours, synthetic compounds, helper synthetics and estimating materials.

other creatures. Slight alteration

of pH is extremely destructive for aquatic life. Colourful textiles are harmful to the environment not only

during manufacturing but also after use. When they are dumped onto open soil or into water bodies, they release toxic heavy metals into the environment. So proper disposal is also necessary to avoid water and soil contamination.

Inorganic salts present in wastewater are acidic or alkaline in nature and diminish water quality. The organic compounds present in textile effluents are generally biodegradable. This reduces water quality as the degradation of these compounds lower the dissolved oxygen of the water bodies.

Heavy metals present in textile effluents are non-biodegradable in nature. These heavy metals go into the food chain by bioaccumulation and biomagnifications. Heavy metals can cause severe human health hazards after entering human bodies through bathing and domestic use of water contaminated by textile effluents.

Textile effluents also contaminate groundwater in the vicinity of textile industries. Dyes cause skin and lung irritation, headaches, congenital malformations and nausea. The presence of mutagenic agents is also reported in dyes.

Incomplete degradation of chemicals may lead to the formation of aromatics. Aromatic amines are responsible for inducing cancer and tumours in humans.

In many parts of the country, textile effluents are used in irrigation with and without treatment. When farmers use treated or untreated wastewater in irrigation, textile effluents pollute the soil by various

The high salt content in textile effluents makes the soil less permeable and tough to plough. Heavy metals in textile effluents

bind with soil particles and enter the food chain. Textile effluents also hamper seed germination and change the root shoot

Proper management and handing of textile effluents is necessary to achieve the United Nations-mandated sustainable development goals. The application of recent and advance water-efficient techniques in textile processing reduces efflu-

ent generation. The application of alternative non-toxic / less toxic chemicals and green dyes reduces the hazardous efficiency of textile effluents. Zero discharge technology in textile processing is also helpful in reducing the pollution hazard of textile industries. Awareness among people to utilise less number of multicolour clothes is also helpful in reducing the demand for colourful cloth.Our life should be colourful but not always through colourful clothes.

(Courtesy: Down To Earth)

Monuments dwarfed by encroachments

BRIJ KHANDELWAL

LHOUGH Agra could not celebrate World Heritage Day on April A18 due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, conservationists and green activists have once again highlighted the failure of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to free the string of monuments in the city of encroachments that were seen as a major threat to the health and safety of these precious properties. "The increasing visual pollution was another cause of concern," warned environmentalist Devashish Bhattacharya, adding that high-rise buildings coming up in all parts have gravely distorted the original ambience around several structures.

With three world heritage monuments and half a dozen other historical structures, Agra continues to remain India's number one tourist centre, drawing more than seven million visitors annually (before the pandemic). The local bodies however failed to restrict illegal constructions around these buildings, thus compromising the architectural integrity of the city, Bhattacharya added.

Almost all Mughal monuments here have now been dwarfed by encroachments. While restricting space and cluttering up and thus destroying the beauty of the historical buildings, these encroachments now have reached such levels of proliferation that the very survival of some monuments is at stake, said Shravan Kumar Singh of the Braj Mandal Heritage Conservation Society.

The Taj Mahal, surrounded by mohallas of the Taj Ganj locality, has been able to breathe easily because of the Supreme Court judgments seeking its conservation; international concern for its safety has also aided the cause of the preservation of the heritage monument. Lesser monuments, however, have not experienced such luck.

The Delhi Gate, close to the Raja Mandi station, finds itself threatened by new constructions, mostly private nursing homes and garages that were not there before. Mughal emperor Akbar's deserted capital, the Fatehpur Sikri complex, continues to be threatened by the illegal activities of the mining mafia, which has been carrying on operations without fear, even though the Supreme Court has given a categorical directive to district authorities to stop mining in the area.

The pre-historic caves with paintings in the vicinity are under threat. If the Union Culture Ministry did not act fast, these could be lost to posterity, said Bhattacharya, who is leading a one-man crusade to protect these valuable assets. The ASI has been regularly writing the district authorities to draw attention to the flagrant violation of the 1958 Ancient Monuments Act, but there has never been any positive response.

The ASI has circulated a list of about 50 monuments in Agra that come under the purview of the Monuments Protection Act. The Agra Development Authority (ADA) is responsible for ensuring there were no new constructions around these buildings.

ADA authorities, however, privately confess that demolition of all illegal structures was beyond their capacity. Political pressures would prevent any major offensive against encroachers.

The city of the Taj has numerous monuments which come under the protected list. Over the years, because of governmental indifference and corrupt practices, no action has been taken against people who built houses and places of worship around these monuments.

The Roman Catholic cemetery near the Civil Court is now surrounded by a movie hall, a petrol pump and a shopping complex.

Other historical buildings or remnants like Jodhabai's Chatri, Jaswant Singh kiChatri, Chini ka Roza, Humayun's mosque, Mariam's tomb. Babar's Ram Bagh, Barahkhambha, and scores of other valuable architectural pieces are under threat, as encroachments creep up on every inch of space. Some of the dilapidated landmarks are being used as cowsheds, or as havens for anti-social elements. The Yamuna floodplains that nourished and provided the natural ambience had been encroached upon all over. "It's been almost a decade that the National Green Tribunal, hearing a petition on this, had come out with a clear cut verdict. The situation is the same in Mathura and Vrindavan, where the river banks are under threat from encroachers," said Jagan Nath Poddar, convener of the Friends of Vrindavan. One wonders what happened to the newly constituted National Monuments Authority (NMA) which was mandated to come down heavily on illegal structures near protected monuments, said Surendra Sharma, president of the Heritage Conservation Society and a senior hotelier of Agra.

LETTERS

Serve the needy, stop politicking

THE writer Madabhushi Sridhar ▲ Acharyulu has rightly said that as the conduct and behaviour of politicians has deteriorated to such an extent that even calamity does not move their heart. The failure of the political class to stand up and come to the rescue of lakes of people affected by the pandemic but away busy in electioneering dreaming of electoral victory at the cost of social catastrophe exposes the fact that for them life revolves around greed and avarice and not peoples' life.

It is shameful that everytime court had to intervene and remind them about their duties and responsibilities towards people and the society. When Right to health for every citizen is a fundamental right as enshrined in the constitution, it is surprising that on account of sense of lethargy and indifference, politicians failed to prioritise so far. As a result, there is no real strategy to deal with public health emergencies and still no preparedness plan for outbreaks or disaster management plan

Knowing private hospitals fleece the people causing much pain than real cure to the patients, Government's failure to come to the aid of suffering public who

thehansreader@gmail.com

were endlessly and systematically exploited when it is the right of every citizen to get equitable justice and treatment at affordable costs. It is time, politicians keep aside politics during times of health emergency by going extra mile to exert pressure on government to fulfilthe basic needs of people by providing critical care facilities, medicines on priority because providing quality health care for all and access to basic determinant of health is a basic right of every citizen. KRSrinivasan, Secunderabad

Amartya Sen is not being factual

T is audacious for Dr Amartya Sen, **⊥**anon-resident Indian Nobel Laureate to make false comments that the BJP is trying to ignore Bengal's Muslims' interests and welfare with the help of non-Bengali Hindus. He further said that as opined by Gandhiji, Bengal always cherished unity and not division. How false and history-negationist his statements can be realised if one recalls that the Muslim League government of Premier , HS Suhrawardy launched "Direct Action" of loot, murder, burning, and arson in Calcutta on August 16, 1946 to force Hindus, the opponents of partition of India to create the Islamic state of Pakistan , into submission to Muslim's demand. This Direct Action of Muslims of Bengal plunged whole of north India from Bengal to NWFP and Sindh into history's worse communal carnage.

Further, it was the 34-year-long Communist parties' rule and the 10-year Trinamul Congress rule in West Bengal and decades-long Congress rule in Assam that facilitated the infiltration of millions of Bangladesh Muslims (and of late, Rohingyas) into Bengal and Assam. This is obviously to the detriment of Hindus. These infiltrated Muslims for use as votebanks by the Congress, Communist parties and the Trinamul Congress.

Amartya Sen tries to cover up his very well- known Marxist-Communist exercise to falsify history to support their belief and faith by flaunting this Nobel Laureate appellation. He gratuitously advises West Bengal's voters to reject BJP. He also commended the welfare policies of Mamata's TMC. Earlier for more than three decades he supported the Communist rule in West Bengal. The 44 years of anti-Bengal's Hindu governments has the approval of this Marxist academician. His record as the Chancellor of Nalanda University was one of infamy.

Dr T Hanuman Chowdary, Secunderabad

Ensure vaccination, avoid crowding

THE government's move to allow 18 L years and above to get vaccinated through late should be welcomed. However, both Centre and States have to seriously take steps to end the shortage of vaccines across India as there is a large number of people already waiting for the

second shot and with the easing of the age limit there is bound to be a rush in vaccination centreswhich can lead to chaos. If the steps are not urgently taken to include more centres, with more youngsters joining the group can even lead to a stampede. Also, we can longer allow the people to stand in queue and send them back which can multiply the spread of the virus. So, everyone who gets registered and comes for vaccination should be vaccinated without fail.

N Nagarajan, Hyderabad

П

 $F^{\rm IRST\,the\,CM\,of\,the\,Punjab\,was\,tested}_{\rm Covid\,positive,\,then\,it\,was\,the\,turn}$ of the CM of Uttar Pradesh and now the CM of Telangana. Apart from these VIPs. many central and State Ministers, IAS and IPS officers have tested positive and alas, some of them lost their lives, all in the service the people and in the service of the country. All these VIP Covid patients don't face problems like finding beds in hospitals, getting a steady support of ventilators and supply of oxygen and high end medical attention round the clock. These are the problems of the general public. The irony is while these "servants of people" find VIP treatment, their 'Masters', the people themselves are deprived of it. Like death, corona is the 'leveller'.that treats both the haves and the have nots the same way.But our leaders have made the pandemic look biased and a lover of the powerful and the rich.

MSomasekhar Prasad, Hyderabad

MACHINE LEARNING

Identifying Covid-related conspiracy theories on social media

team of researchers has identified that a new Machine Learning A(ML) programme accurately identifies Covid-19-related conspiracy theories on social media and models how they evolved.

The study showed that misinformation tweets contain more negative sentiment when compared to factual tweets and that conspiracy theory evolve, incorporating details from unrelated conspiracy theories as well as real-world events.

"A lot of ML studies related to misinformation on social media focus on identifying different kinds of conspiracy theories," said researcher Courtney Shelley from Los Alamos National Laboratory in the US.

For the study, published in the journal JMIR Public Health and Surveillance, the team used publicly available, anonymized Twitter data to characterize four Covid-19 conspiracy theory themes and provide context for each through the first five months of the pandemic.

The four themes the study examined were that 5G cell towers spread the virus; that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation engineered or has otherwise malicious intent related to Covid-19; that the virus was bioengineered or was developed in a laboratory; and that the Covid-19 vaccines, which were then all still in development, would be dangerous. "We began with a dataset of approximately 1.8 million tweets that contained Covid-19 keywords or were from health-related Twitter accounts," the researchers said.

"From this body of data, we identified subsets that matched the four conspiracy theories using pattern filtering, and hand-labelled several hundred tweets in each conspiracy theory category to construct training sets." they added.

Using the data collected for each of the four theories, the team built random forest ML, or Artificial Intelligence (AI), models that categorized tweets as Covid-19 misinformation or not.

Furthermore, the study found that a supervised learning technique could be used to automatically identify conspiracy theories and that an unsupervised learning approach (dynamic topic modelling) could be used to explore changes in word importance among topics within each theory. (IANS)

YSR ZERO-INTEREST ON CROP LOAN

Farmers get ₹128.47 cr subsidy

HANS NEWS SERVICE **A**MARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday credited Rs 128.47 crore directly into the accounts of 6.27.906 farmers under 'YSR Zero-Interest Crop Loan Scheme' for 2019-20 rabi season benefiting those who availed loans up to Rs 1 lakh and repaid them in the stipulated time.

Addressing the beneficiaries and officials through video conference, the Chief Minister said that 60 per cent of the world's population is dependent on agriculture and promoting agriculture would create employment for 62 per cent of the population in the state. He said the state government's objective is to prioritise the welfare of farmers and farm labour and thus even cleared the pending arrears left by the previous government. Since the government came to power in June 2019, a total of Rs 1,132 crore was paid to 61,22,585 farmers under the zero-interest subsidy scheme. He urged the farmers to get enrolled under the e-crop database for availing interest subvention from June 2021.

The Chief Minister said that the government has been providing nine-hour free electricity to the farmers during day time



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy releases a cheque towards interest subsidy for farmers under YSR Zero-Interest Crop Loans Scheme at his camp office on Tuesday

6,27,906 farmers who availed loans up to Rs 1 lakh and repaid them for 2019-20 have been benefited

benefiting over 18.78 lakh farmers by spending Rs 8,800 crore annually. Through this scheme, each farmer will be saving a minimum of Rs 46,000 every year. The state government has completed the capacity building of feeders to provide free power to farmers with a cost of Rs 1.700 crore.

Reiterating that farmer welfare is the top priority of the state government, Jagan Mohan Reddy stated that almost all the

Says a total of Rs 1,132 cr has been paid to 61,22,585 farmers under the scheme since the YSRCP govt has come to power

promises made to the farmers have been fulfilled in the 22month rule starting from YSR Rythu Bharosa, the first promise of Navaratnalu, benefiting 51.59 lakh farmers at an expenditure of Rs 13101 crore. The government has set up over 10,641 Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) to benefit the farmers in numerous ways, standing by the farmers from seeds to marketing.

Besides these, the government is providing input subsidy to the farmers to cover the losses in the same crop season and credited Rs 1055 crore. In regard to crop insurance, the government has taken the responsibility of paying the insurance premium, providing insurance to the farmers on a timely basis. Also, the state government had set up a market intervention fund with Rs 3000 crore and providing a minimum support price for the crops to aid farmers.

Minister K Kannababu, principal secretary for agriculture Poonam Malakondaiah, AP Agri Mission Vice-Chairman M V S Nagi Reddy, officials of agriculture, marketing, were among those present at the event.

Daily Covid tally inches toward 9,000 in State

35 new deaths push the toll to 7,472

AMARAVATI

THE state reported 8,987 fresh coronavirus cases on Tuesday, the highest in a day after September 13, while 35 deaths were recorded, another high after October 15. The number of active cases also hit a high of 53,889 after October 4, even as 3,116 patients recovered in 24 hours ending 9 am on Tuesday.

According to the latest health bulletin, the total Covid-19 positives climbed to 9,76,987, recoveries to 9,15,626 and toll 7,472. Nellore district added a staggering 1,347 cases and Srikakulam 1,344 in 24 hours while Guntur reported 1,202 and Chittoor 1,063. East Godavari registered 851, Kurnool 758, Visakhapatnam 675, Krishna 441, Vizianagaram 330, Prakasam 305, Kadapa 297 and Anantapur 275 new cases, while West Godavari stopped just one short of a century. Nellore also reported the highest daily Covid-19 toll of eight, Chittoor and Kadapa five each, Anantapur, Krishna and Srikakulam three each.

Kurnool and Prakasam had



two fresh fatalities each while East Godavari, Guntur, Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram accounted for one each. In Vijayawada city, tragedy struck a lawyer's family as four members fell prey to coronavirus in a span of three days. Lawyer T Dinesh (37) died of Covid-19 on Tuesday afternoon, hours after his father succumbed. Three days earlier, Dinesh's mother and uncle too died of the infection.

Meanwhile, according to data released by the medical and health department, 892 Covid-infected people were undergoing treatment in ICU on ventilators in hospitals across the state. Another 3,924 were on oxygen support and 1,947 were in general wards. More than 36,000 patients were kept in home isolation and being provided essential medical supplies, according to the State Covid Nodal Officer Arja Srikanth.

Ministers'

panel to monitor Covid

situation

HANS NEWS SERVICE

AMARAVATI

THE state government ap-

pointed a committee with five

ministers to monitor the Covid

vaccination drive and opera-

tions of state Covid Command

The committee will be

headed by health minister Alla

Kali Krishna Srinivas. Buggana

Mekathoti Sucharitha, Botcha

Kannababu will be members of

It will meet at APIIC build-

ing at Mangalagiri on April 22

to discuss the current Covid sit-

uation, medical facilities avail-

able to patients and function-

ing of Covid Command Control

Centre. Officials of medical and

health to participate in the

and

Control Room.

Rajendranath

Satyanarayana

the committee.

meeting.

Jagan, Guv greet Naidu on his b'day

AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy and Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan on Tues $day\, extended\, birth day\, greetings$ to TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu.

"Birthday greetings to Chandrababu Naidu. I wish good health and a happy life to you by God's blessings," said the Chief Minister.

Similarly, Harichandan extended his birthday wishes to the former Chief Minister. "Heartiest felicitations and

retary spoke about the steep

growth in coronavirus infections

across the country. He advised the

UTs to increase RT-PCR testing

along with the use of RAT (Rapid

Antigen Test) for screening in

clusters. The UTs shared the ef-

forts they are undertaking for con-

tainment and management of the

warm birthday greetings to Naidu," he said.

The Governor said that he prayed to Lord Jagannadh and Lord Balaji to bless Naidu with a healthy and long life in the service of people.

Responding to the greetings of Jagan mohan Reddy, Naidu thanked him.

Meanwhile, Chandrababu Naidu's 72nd birthday celebrations were held in a grand manner at TDP central office at

TDP leaders, including TD Janardhan, MLC P Ashok Babu,

Next 3 weeks

crucial: Vardhan

cases Ladakh Jammu and Kash-

In the meeting, the Home Sec- mir and Lakshadweep stated that beds and the efforts to augment

The Chandigarh administra-

tion informed about the door-to-

door counselling for increasing

vaccination. It said that 905 of the

patients in the UT are in home iso-

lation and being monitored by

mobile teams. The Delhi admin-

the rise in cases was due to a large

number of inbound travellers.

former minister Alapati Rajendra Prasad, K Pattabhiram, M Srinivasa Reddy, N Brahmam, Buchiramprasad and D Narendra participated in the celebrations by cutting a cake and raising slogans praising him.

Speaking on the occasion, TD Janardhan said Chandrababu Naidu is credited with development of the state. He said Naidu developed the state in all sectors despite financial crisis after state bifurcation. He stressed the need for leadership of Chandrababu Naidu again for the brighter prospects of the state.

istration discussed shortage of

infrastructure and support from

DRDO's newly operationalised

Dr V K Paul pointed out the

criticality of the next three weeks

for Covid response measures. The

UT administrators were advised

to plan in advance for three weeks.

Covid Hospital.

Top Naxal with ₹20 lakh bounty surrenders to cops

 Jalandar Reddy hails from Bhoompally village in Siddipet district of Telangana

 The State govt will give him a reward of Rs 20 lakh, a house site, support for self-employment

AMARAVATI

MUTTANAGARI Jalandar Reddy, a Naxalite with Rs 20 lakh bounty on his head, surrendered on Tuesday in the presence of director general of police (DGP) D Gautam Sawang.

According to the state police department, Jalandar Reddy surrendered because of lack of local public support, drying up of new recruits from tribals, disillusionment with the Maoist ideology, extensive police outreach programmes and others.

Reddy hails from Bhoompally village of Mirudoddi mandal in Telangana's Siddipet district.

He studied up to Intermediate at government junior college in



DGP Gautam Sawang and other offcials addressing a press conference along with surrendered Naxalite M Jalandar Reddy at DGP office in Mangalagiri on Tuesday

Siddipet district and got attracted to Maoist ideology, leading to his joining of the Naxalite ranks as a member of the radical students union in 1998.

Over the past several years, Reddy worked under various capacities within the different wings of Naxalism, including playing a leading role in the abduction of Vineel Krishna, Malkangiri district collector in 2011.

Appreciating his decision to give up Naxalism, the state government will give him a reward of Rs 20 lakh, along with a house plot

and if required agricultural land and support for self-employment. Meanwhile, AP top cop appealed to the Maoists to shun armed struggle and join the mainstream, calling the Maoist

party ideology as obsolete. "Cadre who voluntarily render and join the mainstream will be facilitated according to the surrender and rehabilitation policy of the AP government. Reward amount on their names along with rehabilitation and employment opportunities will be provided," added Sawang.

Pawan faults decision to conduct SSC exams

Points out that even Centre's CBSE and neighbouring Telangana have cancelled board and Inter first year exams

HANS NEWS SERVICE **A**MARAVATI

JANA Sena president Pawan Kalyan criticised the state government's decision to conduct Class X examinations amidst present Covid pandemic.

In a statement here on Tuesday, Pawan Kalyan said that AP government was going ahead in holding exams when large number of students studying in various schools, residential schools and hostels and teachers were afflicted with the virus and undergoing treatment. There are as many as 6.4 lakh Class X and 10.5 lakh Intermediate students are in the state who, along with their families, would be facing the coronavirus risk because of this decision, he said.

Dismissing the government's excuse of students losing job offers in military if the exams are not conducted in time, Pawan Kalyan said the Central government had already cancelled the CBSE Class X examinations and the Telangana government too followed the example.

The Jana Sena chief also pointed out that the Centre had cancelled the Class XI exams while the Telangana put off Intermediate first year examinations and promoting students to next class. Demanding that the AP government too follow their example, he said SSC and Intermediate first year examinations must be cancelled immediately and students be promoted to higher classes.

Kamalapuram MLA P Ravindranath Reddy distributing cheque to the farmers unde

37k famers receive **ZPIR** instalment

HANS NEWS SERVICE KADAPA

AS many as 37,173 farmers got benefitted under Zero Per cent Interest Rate (ZPIR) scheme for 2019-20 rabi season in the dis-

An amount of Rs 6.52 crores was credited to the accounts of farmers. During video conference with the Chief Minister on Tuesday, district collector Ch Harikiran told that ZPIR scheme is more beneficial to the farmers who borrowed crop loan up to Rs 1 lakh from the banks. He said that Rs 25.21 crores was credited in the accounts of 1,12,234 farmers in two instalments for last kharif season in the district. The collector lauded the move initiated by the government giving boost and confidence among the farmers in the district.

Kamalapuram MLA P Ravindranath Reddy praised Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy for his courageous decisions in implementing welfare schemes to all sections in the state despite

serious financial hurdles. He urged the farmers to utilise scheme in proper manner by paying outstandings in prompt man-

Farmers who participated in the video conference thanked the Chief Minister for extending financial support during crop sea-

One of the farmers L Srinivasulu Reddy of Peddaputhedu village of Valluru mandal narrated his experience that he had received Rs 24,000 under ZPIR scheme for the last kharif season and borrowed Rs 80,000 from the banks and paid them in time. He used the amount as investment for growing Buddasenaga crop without any financial problems.

He said that if farmers who borrowed from the banks would have benefited under this scheme if they pay outstandings in time.

Joint collector M Gouthami, agriculture advisory committee chairman N Prasad Reddy, animal husbandry joint director Dr N Satya Prakash and others were present.

Police arrest 'fun bucket' Bhargav for sexual assault on minor

HANS NEWS SERVICE VISAKHAPATNAM

TIK Tok artiste Bhargav, who shot into fame through 'fun bucket', was taken into custody by Vizag police for sexually assaulting a minor, making her pregnant.

from him Sharing details at a press conference here on Tuesday, ACP of Disha women police station G Prem Kajal said the victim used to make Tik Tok videos and post them on social media platforms. After viewing some of her videos, Chippada Bhargav (25) approached her and re-

A mobile phone and

four-wheeler seized

portedly proposed to her, the ACP mentioned. When the victim avoided him, Bhargav began to threaten and blackmail her. Later, the police said the accused took the minor to his house and to Hyderabad under the pretext of providing opportunity to her in reality shows. The police mentioned that the accused assaulted the victim sexually and made her pregnant. Led by the Assistant Commissioner of Police, teams were formed and Bhargav was taken into custody at Kompally, Rangareddy district, Hyderabad on April 18. A mobile phone and a four-wheeler were seized from the



ACP of Disha Women Police Station G Prem Kajal speaking to the media in

Scale up production

Continued from P1

The Prime Minister said the health infrastructure of India's private sector has played a big role in the country's fight against Covid-19 and in the coming days, the private sector will play an even more active role in the vaccination drive. "This will require better coordination between hospitals and industry," he said.

During the virtual conference, the vaccine manufacturers thanked the Prime Minister for the government's decision to allow vaccination for everyone above the age of 18 and various steps taken to give more incentives and flexibility.

They also discussed their plans to ramp up production, upcoming vaccine candidates and research on the new variants.

A death every minute since Sunday

Continued from P1

This has increased to 2,859 cases per hour and 20 deaths per hour as the State reported 68,631 cases and 503 deaths on Sunday.

As per the Union Health Ministry, 10 States account for 82.74 per cent of the new deaths. Maharashtra saw the maximum casualties (351). Delhi follows with 240 daily deaths.

Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Rajasthan reported 77.67 per cent of the new cases on Tuesday.

3rd mutant flagged in 4 States

Continued from P1

Data also shows that in West Bengal, the B.1.617 strain was found in 133 out of 1373 samples; it was followed by three other surge states Maharashtra (122/1931), Karnataka (20/539), and Gujarat

Genome sequencing, the study of genetic structures of an organism and the changes happening therein, produces a wealth of information that can throw light on the origins of the virus, the routes it has taken to reach a particular geography and the changes, or mutations, that are making the virus stronger or weaker.

Fadnavis faces flak as 22-year-old kin gets vaccinated

Mumbai

MAHARASHTRA'S Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis came under severe fire on Tuesday after it emerged that his 22year-old nephew managed to get a Covid vaccine jab, allegedly violating the Centre's norms.

The issue came to light when Tanmay Fadnavis posted a smiling image of his on social media while getting vaccinated, though he is stated to be far below the permitted eligible age by the Centre.

While admitting that Tanmay is his relative, Fadnavis claimed that he was not aware how he (Tanmay) managed to get the vaccine jab at the National Cancer Institute in Nagpur.

"My wife and daughter have also not received the vaccine yet because they don't qualify for it. I am of the firm opinion that everybody must follow the rules," Fadnavis said ina a brief statement.

His wife, Amruta, a banker and activist, also frowned at the development and tweeted: "Priority for any service should be on the basis of decorum or prevalent policy. No one is above rules and law. The law can take its course and we stand for justice always! We are with you on this issue, pls take action which will stop future queue breaking occurrences!"

Tanmay is the grandson of senior BJP MLC and ex-minister, Shobha Fadnavis, and son of Abhijit Fadnavis -- the cousin of Devendra Fadnavis, a former Chief Minister of



the state. The ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) partners slammed the BJP and Fadnavis over the development since the Centre has permitted only people above 45 years of age to get the jab, while those above 18 shall be allowed from May 1.

Nationalist Congress Party spokesperson Clyde Crasto reminded Fadnavis of the proverb -- "People living in glass houses shouldn't throw stones".

"The Central government has put the condition that only people over 45 years can be vaccinated currently. Then how can Fadnavis' nephew (who is only 22) can get the vaccine? The lives of BJP leaders' and families are important. Are the common people insects? Isn't their lives worth anything," the Maharashtra Congress said in a tweet.

"Tanmay Fadnavis did break the queue and get both his jabs. His grandmother Shobhatai (Fadnavis), also a BJP leader (dynasty), asks if it is a sin to get the vaccine. What a family of rule breakers," tweeted Shiv Sena MP Priyanka Chaturvedi.

Though Tanmay removed his social media video soon after an uproar erupted, his uncle Devendra Fadnavis is being slammed with many demanding to know how the youngster got the jab, who cleared it when even the eligible people are deprived of the vaccine.

Since the past couple of weeks, the Maharashtra government had repeatedly urged the Centre to increase its share of vaccine quota considering the huge number of Covid cases and fatalities in the state, which are the highest in the country. (IANS)

No lockdown, trains will continue to run: Railway Minister

New Delhi

RAILWAY Minister Piyush Goyal has said that there is no lockdown in the country and people do not need to panic about how they will reach home. Trains will continue to run as before and people will be able to go anywhere by booking tickets

Goyal said this after a huge number of people turned up at various railway stations and bus stands in the last few days to rush home after night curfew and localised lockdowns were announced in some parts of the country.

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal was addressing a virtual press conference after the cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

He dismissed the possibility of a lockdown in response to a question and said, "There is no such thing that the migrant labourers have come in large numbers at any railway station and they are suffering. I am personally monitoring the situation. All the officers of the railway department are also closely monitoring the situation. Special trains are also running."

Goyal said there is no need to panic. Trains are available. There is no lockdown of any kind and train services will continue to operate. (IANS)

COVID-1

Rajnath asks armed forces to extend help to civil administrations

New Dei hi

AS India reels under a massive spike in coronavirus cases, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has asked the Army to extend assistance to state administrations to deal with the pandemic, including by offering help in creation of additional capacities to treat COVID-19 patients.

Sources in the security establishment said following Singh's communication to Army Chief Gen MM Naravane, it was decided that the Army would consider offering treatment to civilians in its medical facilities, wherever possible, besides extending other assistance to civil administrations. Singh has conveyed to Gen MM Naravane that the Army units in various states can get in touch with state administrations to understand their requirement like creation of additional capacities to deal with increasing volume of patients. Subsequently, it was decided that the senior-most Army officer in a state would get in touch with the chief minister to understand the requirement and take forward the process, including offering to treat civilians wherever possible, they said. The sources said the defence minister has been in touch with the top brass of his ministry and the three forces on how the civilian



administration across the country could be assisted in battling the coronavirus situation.

The sources said it was also communicated to the leadership of the Indian Air Force and the Navy to gear up their preparedness in dealing with the situation. Separately, Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar reviewed the possible areas where the armed forces can extend assistance to the civilian authorities. Following his review, the Defence Ministry in-

structed 67 hospitals run by Cantonment Boards across the country to ensure medical services to cantonment residents as well as those from outside.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has already been told to extend all possible assistance it can extend to civil administrations across the country. The DRDO has already reopened a medical facility near the Delhi airport for treatment of COVID-19 patients.

The facility has been made operational with 250 beds and their number is being increased to 1,000. The premier organisation is coming up with a similar facility in Lucknow.

India has witnessed a massive spike in coronavirus infections as the country recorded over two lakh cases daily in the last five days. In view of the rapid surge in infections, India is facing an acute shortage of hospital beds, oxygen, essential drugs. (PTD)



India's first Al-based Covid testing facility comes up at IGI Airport

New Delhi

INDIA'S first Artificial Intelligenceenabled Covid-19 testing facility for international passengers has commenced operations at Terminal 3 of the IGI Airport here.

The facility under the Garuda brand name is owned by AI company Thalamus Irwine.

According to the company, the facility is run by an Al-system using computer vision technology and a paper-free backend for processing mass volumes of international passengers. Presently, destination countries require an 'Antigen Test' negative report to allow the passengers inside their jurisdictions. Industry players such as Lufthansa, KLM and Air France, among others, have had success using the facility.

After the test, passengers get their results in 10-15 minutes on their on mobile phones. As per the company, the passengers of an entire international flight can be tested within a couple of minutes by using the 'scalable node architecture', 'complete digital systems for patient entry', 'Al driven process improvement' and 'SoP management'.

Besides, IGI Airport's HOI app al-

lows for seamless management of patient flow to the facility. In terms of the technology, the system even monitors the SoPs and ensures employees and users are maintaining high levels of security and compliance standards in the sample processing room.

It cited that the facility eliminates majority of the bottlenecks associated with the need to test multiple passengers in quick succession. The Cloud based infrastructure also ensures independence from physical storage on premise.

Furthermore, the facility offers several firsts such as AI based monitoring of every move the staff makes, so as to monitor the safety protocols such as adherence to SoPs during sample collection etc.

In case the SoPs are flouted, the system intervenes by alerting the employees to correct their behaviour and also informs the store manager. In addition, the Al ensures there aren't discrepancies between the results entered by the employees with those generated by the

Notably, the system acts as a second layer of protection to eliminate incorrect entry of data. (IANS)

Pak govt surrenders before radical Islamist party

Announces resolution to expel French envoy

SAJJAD HUSSAIN AND M ZULQERNAIN ISLAMABAD/LAHORE

SUCCUMBING to Islamists' demands, Pakistan's Imran Khanled government on Tuesday decided to introduce a resolution in Parliament to expel the French ambassador and quash all criminal cases filed against the banned radical Islamist party TLP after they reached a deal following a marathon round of talks.

The agreement came a day after Prime Minister Khan said that the expulsion of the French ambassador was not a solution to stop the incidences of blasphemy in the western world, noting that "it will only trigger incidents of blasphemy in other countries as in the West they call it freedom of expression". "Under a marathon round of talks and an agreement reached with the Tehreek-e-Lab-

baik Pakistan (TLP), a resolution on the expulsion of the French ambassador will be presented on Tuesday in the National Assembly," Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid said in a video statement.

The cases against TLP workers, registered under terrorism charges, will also be quashed. Besides, the names of TLP leaders from the Fourth Schedule will also be taken off, Rashid said. The expulsion of the French ambassador is one of the main four demands of the radical Islamist party, which was banned last week after its members staged violent anti-France protests across the country. The TLP shot to fame in 2017 when it held a massive protest for three weeks in the busy Faizabad interchange near Islamabad. The party lifted the lockdown of the city after the then government sacked the law

NATURAL SETTING



 $A \ yellow \ footed \ green \ pigeon \ rests \ atop \ a \ bunch \ of \ Gulmohar \ flowers \ in \ New \ Delhi \ on \ Tuesday$

Goa Speaker rejects Cong's plea to disqualify 12 BJP MLAs

Panaji

IN a reprieve to the ruling BJP, Speaker of the Goa legislative assembly passed two oral orders on Tuesday, dismissed two disqualification petitions filed against 12 BJP MLAs. The petitioners, state Congress president Girish Chodankar and Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party MLAs Sudin Dhavalikar said that they would take a call on future course of action, after going through the written order, a copy of which has not been made available to them yet.

"Now that an order has been passed, we have various options. Our legal team is assessing options. We will either challenge the Speaker's order in High Court or mention it in SC when the matter comes up there," Chodankar told reporters after emerging from the state assembly complex, where

the Speaker dismissed his petition against 10 Congress MLAs.

Chodankar, as the party's state president had filed a disqualification petition with the Goa Speaker's office in 2019 and argued the split by the 10 Congress MLAs and their subsequent merger into the BJP was illegal and violative of the provisions of Schedule 10 of the Indian Constitution. Chodankar had approached the Supreme Court, claiming that Patnekar was delaying his decision, after which the apex court directed the Speaker to pronounce his order on April 20. Dhavalikar, who had filed a petition against two BJP MLAs, who had quit the MGP to join the ruling party, also told reporters that Patnekar had dismissed his petition. "Our lawyers will decide once we read the order. We have not got

it yet," Patnekar said.

Real time satellite monitoring of Himalayas may help avoid disasters

TO avoid the Chamoli mishap from recurring, the Ministry of Science and technology with IIT Kanpur has conducted a study on how the satellite-based real-time monitoring of the Himalayan glacial catchments would improve understanding of flood risk in the region and help inform an early flood warning system that could help curb disaster and

save human lives.

"The integration of monitoring devices with satellite networks will not only provide telemetry support in remote locations that lack complete cellular connectivity but will also provide greater connectivity in coverage in the cellular dead zones in extreme topographies such as valleys, cliffs, and steep slopes," the authors explained.

"This should be the future strategy to reduce loss of human lives during glacial lake outburst floods

(GLOF)," said a study carried out by scientists from IIT Kanpur.

The study was carried out by Dr.
Tanuj Shukla and Prof. Indra Sekhar
Sen, Associate Professor from IIT
Kanpur, with support from the Department of Science & Technology,
Government of India, has been published in the international journal

The IIT Kanpur team suggests that efforts to help mitigate GLOF events in the future should include the creation of a network of satellite-based monitoring stations that could provide in situ and real-time data on GLOF risk.

Temperature and the numbers of extreme rainfall events are rising at an increased rate because of climate change. Suitably called Earth's "Third Pole", the Himalayan region is home to the largest ice mass outside of the planet's Polar Regions.

The glaciers in the Himalayas are melting at a faster rate creating new lakes and expanding the existing ones. Besides, the rising temperatures and extreme precipitation events make the region increasingly prone to a variety of natural hazards, including devastating glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs).

GLOFs occur when either a natural dam containing a glacial lake bursts or when the lake's level suddenly increases and overflows its banks, leading to catastrophic downstream destruction.

For example, in 2013, an avalanche caused the glacial moraine holding back Chorabari Lake in northern India to give way, releasing a sudden torrent of water, boulders, and debris that scoured the river valley below, resulting in the deaths of more than 5,000 people. With climate change, these events are likely

to increase in frequency and magni-

tude throughout the Himalayas.

However, the remote, challenging Himalayan terrain and the overall lack of cellular connectivity throughout the region have made the development of early flood warning systems virtually impossible. "In their recent work, the Scientists also point out that the surge of meltwater in mountain streams is most commonly caused by cloudburst events during the monsoon season (June-July-August) time frame."

However, the recent (February 7, 2021) sudden surge of meltwater in the river tributary of the Ganga, Dhauli Ganga, during the dry season suggests that this time frame needs to be expanded.

The catastrophe in the upper Dhauli Ganga basin is linked to processes other than precipitation



events, such as snow avalanches, rock landslides, or other unidentified drivers, and therefore determining all of the potential major and minor drivers behind sudden surges of meltwater into headwater streams is vital for understanding the hazard profile of the region. (IANS)



TODAY'S QUOTE

Nod for subsidy policy for coal gasification plant

HANS BUSINESS

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval for a specific subsidy to promote this innovative technology of coal-gasification for the first time in India.Coal gasification plants are strategically important as coal prices are non-volatile and coal is abundantly available in the country



COVID DISRUPTION

Credai seeks support from FinMin

REPRESENTATIVES of realtors' body Credai met Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and sought government's support to deal with the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. They also presented the recommendations addressing challenges in the real estate sector

		7	25 10
FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	75.68	South	A TA
Euro	91.24	African Rand	6.02
UAE Dirham	21.01	Hong Kong Doll	ar 11.1
Thai Baht	2.63	Japanese Yen	0.79
British Pound	105.81	New Zealand D	ollar 54.54
Australian Dollar	58.87	Saudi Riyal	21.98
Canadian Dollar	60.46	Swedish Krona	10.26
Swiss Franc	82.57	Singapore Dolla	ar 57.53

DELHI WEDNESDAY 21 APRIL 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Cashfree in pact with Dukaan

Cashfree has announced its collaboration with Dukaan, a leading SaaS platform to create online stores, to enable seamless digital customer payment collections and disbursals for merchants who set up their digital stores through the platform. Through this partnership with Cashfree, over three million merchants associated with Dukaan across 3,200 tier two and three cities will have access to the online payment stack and end customers can make online payments directly to the digital shop owners. Akash Sinha, CEO and co-founder, Cashfree, said: "Cash on delivery orders in the Indian e-commerce space have been on a decline since last year. Our partnership with Dukaan showcases how setting up an e-commerce store with an ability to collect online payments can be convenient for both merchants and end customers."

Bajaj Auto's new bike

Bajaj Auto has launched the new Pulsar NS 125 in India. The new Pulsar NS 125 is an addition to the Pulsar 'NS' range of motorcycles. The range is packed with features such as 125cc BS6 DTS-i engine which gives superior power delivery and immediate throttle response that delivers a power of 12 PS which is the highest in its segment. Its perimeter frame offers highstiffness. The motorcycle is available at Rs 93,690. Sarang Kanade, president, Motorcycles, Bajaj Auto said: "We are excited to bring the pedigree of the higher cc Pulsar NS series bikes, for first-time performance riding enthusiasts. The thrill that the new Pulsar NS 125 is built to offer, will appeal to a large segment of customers."

Motorola unveils g series

Motorola has launched a g series devices, moto g60 and moto g40 fusion. The moto g60 is equipped with a 108 MP1 camera system and a 32MP selfie camera which gives quad pixel technology with 4x more light sensitivity. Along with a led flash, the result is sharper, brighter selfies no matter what the conditions. The phone will go on sale starting April 27 from 12pm onwards on Flipkart. The price of the product is Rs 17,999. The moto g40 fusion will be available in two variants 4GB RAM + 64GB storage, 6GB RAM + 128GB storage and features such as 64MP quad function camera with a 6000 mAh battery. The product will go on sale starting May 1 from 12 pm on Flipkart at Rs 13.999.

Demand for IVF on rise

ovid infections since last year have taken the world literally by storm and left a lot of people in a state of perennial confusion but one need not delay IVF (in-vitro fertilization) consultation as IVF clinics have started implementing many internationally recommended safety measures and guidelines, say experts. The demand of IVF treatment during the pandemic has seen a substantial surge as people have had time with family. Fertility Specialist from Dr Padmaja Fertility (IVF & Surrogacy), Dr. Padmaja Divakar said: "Infertility clinics are equipping themselves with special air cleaning and sanitizing systems Steps are being taken to minimize contact. Most blood investigations are done in the premises. Patients are also sent to the labs and clinics near their place of residence for tests".

Covid surge: GST, TDS filings haunt taxpayers

MUMBAI

TAXPAYERS across the country are tense these days due to the fast arrival of due dates for filing tax returns as they find it difficult to do the job amid Covid crisis. The crucial dates like 20th April to 24th April (the due dates for filing of GST Return 3b) and 30th April (the due date for payment of TDS) are haunting the tax consultants and their clients the most these days in the wake of sudden spike in Covid cases across the country. "I am tested positive for Covid-19

and isolated at home. Due to this, neither I nor my wife can visit bank for payment of taxes. The government should immediately relax the due dates to save the small business from increased liabilities of interest and penalties at this critical time," says Rohit Verma, a Noida based businessman. The taxpayers have resorted to Twitter to raise their voice through hashtags '#Extend_Due_Date_Immediately' and '#Extend_Due_Dates'. These hashtags are trending on twitter for extension of due dates of GST and TDS returns in the wake of sudden rise of coronavirus cases. These tweets speak volumes the tough time taxpayers are having due to the surge in second wave of Covid-19 and their inability in filing tax return in the given timeline.

'With sudden wave of Covid-19, many tax payers and tax professionals who have got infected themselves

With second wave of Covid-19, taxpayers and tax professionals who got infected may not be able to pay taxes such as GST and TDS or file GST returns



or have to run around saving lives of near and dear ones may not be able to pay taxes such as GST and TDS or file GST returns before the due date," says a New Delhi-based Chartered Accountant Abhishek Aneja. Even last year, at the time of first wave of Covid-19, the central government had acted reasonably and came out with the required relaxations in the due dates. This is the need of the hour now as well, he added. The situation is so scary that some of the young CAs have died of the infection in the recent past, while they were busy conducting bank audits. "The finance and tax professionals are also struggling with office closure, staff shortage and physical documentation specially required for small business where they manage their entire accounting and tax work. All this is creating a problem for timely filing

of returns," says Ajay Mohan, a New

Mumbai-based Registered Valuer (SFA) and management accountant.

The central govt should extend dues dates of small businesses having turnover less than Rs 100 crore so that they could submit their compliances and avoid late payment and penalty for delay in filling returns,

With above mentioned issues, small businesses have problem in filing of various returns of GST, Income tax, company law and labour law compliances. The small businesses are already facing financing problems and burden of late fees and penalty will further increase their woes. They could have avoided these fees and penalties if things would have been normal. But in this situation, they are helpless and are under financial and mental pressure for no fault of theirs. Sanjay Aggarwal, president, PHDCCI told Bizz Buzz that

the Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman did speak to him over phone on Sunday to know his views on how to tackle the ongoing situation of second wave of Covid, but the very issue of extension of due date for filing of the return for direct and indirect taxes didn't figure in the interaction. "We are currently in the process of writing a letter to the government shortly, requesting the government to extend the due date of filing of returns by a minimum of 15 days, keeping in view the given scenario," Aggarwal said. The demand for extension of tax return filing dates is pouring in from various parts of the country. For example, the Federation of Trade Associations of Pune has raised a demand for extension of filing GST returns. In an interesting development, Maharashtra Chief Minister, Uddhav Thackeray has written a letter to Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, urging him to postpone the GST return submission or March & April at least for three months for small and medium taxpayers. Department of Trade and Taxes, GNCT of Delhi shall remain closed during the period of curfew imposed. Order dated April 19 issued by Special Commissioner T&T with specific directions to all the officers including the directions to work from home using VPN link. It has further added to the woes of the tax-

'India to be world's 3rd largest GDP by 2040'

China will overtake US as the largest economy in the world, says report

New Delhi/ Washington

WHILE China will overtake the United States as the largest economy in the world by 2040, India will be a distant third contributor to the global GDP.

This statistical prediction made by Oxford Economics has been published in the seventh edition of the US National Intelligence Council's Global Trends report.

The document, published every four vears since 1997. assesses the trends and uncertainties that will shape the strategic environment the United States during the next

two decades. As per the report, India is going to double its contribution to the global GDP by 2040 at 6.1 per cent from 3.1 per cent in 2020. India in 2020 was at the sixth rank, globally but by 2040 will be the third largest economy. The report said India will replace Japan in the global rankings. Even as China and India are poised to be the largest contributors to the global GDP at 29 per cent together by 2040, the standards of living or per capita GDP are likely to remain well below those of advanced economies. By 2040, developing countries in Asia are projected to account for approximately 35 per cent of global GDP, with India and China as the largest contributors at 29 per cent of global GDP, according to Oxford Economics.

During the next 20 years, the world's population will continue to increase every year, adding approximately 1.4 billion people to reach an estimated 9.2 billion by 2040, but the rate of population growth will slow in all regions.

Population growth in

most of Asia will de-

cline quickly, and after 2040, the population will begin to contract. Although India's population growth is $slowing, it\,will$ still overtake China as the world's most popu-

lous country around 2027, the report said. However, the US Intelligence Council said, "India's population size-projected to become the largest in the world by 2027 - geography, strategic arsenal, and economic and technological potential position it as a potential global power, but it remains to be seen whether New Delhi will achieve domestic development goals to allow it to project influence beyond South Asia. As China and the United States compete, India is likely to try to carve out a more independ-

States' lockdown hits economic activities: Crisil

 \mathbf{M} UMBAI

WITH the pandemic caseload remaining over 2.5 lakh for the second day, a report has warned of the grim economic scenario as with even limited restrictions on people's movement and some businesses, power consumption and eway GST bill collections are already down. The report has also called for speeding up the vaccination drive that of late has been on the decline on a weekly basis.

With cases spreading very fast, more and more states are clamping down more localised restrictions on people movement and commerce, falling just short of a complete lockdown. This already has electricity consumption and GST e-way bills collection, which are used as proxies to track economic activity, softening somewhat and it needs to be seen whether this softening is a blip, or marks a shift in a trend, Crisil said in a note on Tues-



day. What proves to be a saving grace is that manufacturing and construction activities are operating, and travel and recreation services are also allowed in most states with social distancing measures. But a greater concern is the stuttering pace of vaccinations as the number of people vaccinated per million daily was lower at 2,408 for the week to April 18 compared to 2,554 in the week to April 11. As a result, as of April 18, only 16.4 per cent of population in 45-65 agegroup is vaccinated, and those in the 65 and above age bracket, as much as 33.1 per cent are inocu-

Market fails to hold initial gains amid Covid-19, lockdowns

Sensex, Nifty extend losses in choppy trade; banking, IT stocks drag

MUMBAI

gains to finish with losses for the second day on the trot on Tuesday, as surging Covid-19 cases and growing localised restrictions continued to dent investor senti-

The BSE Sensex slipped 243.62points or 0.51 per cent to close the session at 47,705.80, an over twomonth low. Intra-day. the BSE gauge rose as much as 529

points to touch the day's peak of 48,478.34. Likewise, the NSE Nifty climbed 167 over points to reclaim the key

14,500-level during the day, but a threat to earnings recovery. "Insurrendered all its gains to end at DOMESTIC equity benchmarks 14,296.40, showing a drop of 63.05 back in its opening trade, however, Sensex and Nifty erased early points or 0.44 per cent. On the Sensex chart, UltraTech Cement, HCL Tech, HDFC, Tech Mahindra, HDFC Bank and HUL emerged as the major laggards falling as much as 4.70 per cent. On the other hand, Bajaj Finserv, Dr Reddy's, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Auto, M&M and Maruti were among the top gainers, climbing up to 3.70 per cent. Market analysts said a continued spike in fresh Covid-19 cases in the coun-

try and announcements of restrictions by several states have clearly dented investor sentiments

dian markets witnessed a bouncefailed to hold on to its early gains due to weak global cues and the possibility of a stricter lockdown in Maharashtra." Despite the vaccine drive kindling hopes of recovery, the trend in the market will depend on positive developments like decreasing Covid cases and lifting restrictions.

IT and FMCG were the sectoral laggards while mid and small-caps outperformed," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. Sectorally, BSE IT index fell over one per cent, followed by tech with 0.77 per cent drop. Other major losers were basic materials, FMCG, finance and banking. However, healthcare, capital goods, telecom and industrials closed in the green.

T-Hub ties up with **Digital Catapult**

HYDERABAD

STARTUP incubator T-Hub has partnered with Digital Catapult to boost UK-India collaborations. The partnership has enabled the creation of 'The UK-India Immersive Technology Sustainability Expert Group.' It aims to increase the innovation quotient between the two countries in immersive technology and towards achieving net-zero emissions target by 2050. T-Hub scouted relevant startups, corporates and academia from India, while Digital Catapult, the UK's national innovation centre for advanced digital technologies, shortlisted startups, and academia from the UK. The project has been funded by the UK government's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. On March 30, a half-day workshop was conducted for the expert group to agree on themes, discuss project ideas and challenges that immersive technologies can solve.

It was field day for e-com, OTT platforms in 2020

AMID the pandemic, online payments, indoor entertainment and gaming witnessed over 100 per cent growth in India last year, a new report said on Tuesday.

As theatres and offline entertainment avenues remained shut consumers turned to indoor entertainment, the OTT segment witnessed an incredible 144 per cent increase in the number of transactions and a 139 per cent increase in expenditure between 2019 and 2020, according to online payments solution provider PayU.

The pandemic gave a huge boost to online payments, seen in the 24 per cent increase in the number of transactions and 23 per cent increase in expenditure across the PayU platform, year on year.

"PayU is committed to partnering with merchants to facilitate adoption of digital infrastructure," said Hemang Dattani, Head-Data Intelligence, PayU.

Interestingly, during the festive season (October-December 2020) there was a 45 per cent spike in the number of online transactions vis-a-vis the same period in the previous year.



The number of UPI transactions grew by 288 per cent and expenditure through UPI grew a phenomenal 331 per cent between 2019 and 2020. The gaming segment saw a phenomenal 100 per cent increase in expenditure and a 154 per cent increase in average ticket size between the two years.

"For gaming and entertainment, the number of transactions made at night increased by 34 per cent while the number of transactions made during the day decreased by 11 per cent in 2020 vs. 2019, an indication of the increased dependence on indoor entertainment while

working from home," the findings showed. Travel and hospitality were some of the most impacted sectors with an 86 per cent drop in the number of transactions and expenditure between pre and post-Covid quarters (January-March vs April-June 2020).

Compared to 2019, there was a 46 per cent drop in the number of transactions and a 52 per cent in drop in expenditure in 2020.

"Edtech emerged as a winner, with a 78 per cent increase in the number of transactions and a 44 per cent increase in expenditure," the report mentioned.

Sand mining resumes in Kaleshwaram

HANS BUSINESS

MAHADEVPUR (BHUPALPALLY DISTRICT)

WITH water level receding in the Medigadda (Lakshmi) barrage, the starting point of the multipurpose Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS), the sand mining resumed in the Godavari river near Mahadevpur and its surrounding areas of Jayashanker Bhupalpally district in Telangana. The temple village of Kaleshwaram after which the mega irrigation project is named is 17 kilometers away from this mandal headquarters. The Jayashanker Bhupalpally district, which shares its border with the Maharashtra State, is home to 23 sand reaches - the highest among all the Telangana districts - where sand quarrying takes place. Sand quarrying at most of these reaches resumed and dumping activity kicked off earlier this month.

Quarry contractors mine the sand using cranes and transport it to nearby dump yards from where customers lift the sand after purchasing it online from the TelanganaState Mineral Development Corporation (TSMDC).

"Several sand quarries fall under the submergence areas of the Medigadda barrage. With the water level receding in the barrage, the quarrying activity has resumed here." Ravi Kumar. Project Officer, Mulugu, TSMDC, told Bizz Buzz. On deputation to the Mahadevpur area, he oversees 14 sand quarries in Mahadevpur, Bomma-



pur, Brahmanapally, Suraram, Begloor and Elikeshwaram villages. Villages like Palgula, Kuntlam are home to other reaches in the district. The sand quarrying is expected to reach full scale soon. "Mahadevpur-4 and 5 quarries started operations 15 days back, while Mahadevpur-1, 2, 3 quarries resumed operations a week ago. Brahmanapally and Bommapur quarries started a few days back," the Project Officer said.

However, transportation from dump yards is taking place at a few quarries only as it depends on the sales. At present, the corporation is releasing 50,000 to 60,000 cubic metres of sand daily from this area. Demand for fine sand which is used for plastering is very high and several quarries in this area produce fine sand. Sand from the Bhupalpally district is predominantly used for construction activities in Hyderabad, Warangal and a few other areas. However, Hyderabad is the main market. "All the sand is sold online," Ravi Kumar said.

WTC final to go ahead as planned: **ICC after India's** entry into Britain's travel 'red list'

DUBAI

THE World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand will go ahead as planned in Southampton from June 18, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has assured after Britain added India to its travel 'red list' following a massive surge in COVID-19 caseload.

India's entry into the "red list" effectively bans all travel from the country and makes a 10-day hotel quarantine compulsory for UK residents arriving back home. However, the ICC expressed confidence in staging the WTC final in a bio-secure environment.

"The ECB and other members have demonstrated how we can stage international cricket safely in the middle of a pandemic and we are confident that we can continue to do that and that the WTC Final will go ahead as planned in June in the UK," said the ICC in a statement on Monday night.

"We are currently discussing with the UK Government the impact of countries being on the 'red list'," it added. A BCCI source told PTI that it's difficult to say anything at this point in time and the Board is hoping that India will not be in the 'red list' by the time the team leaves for UK in early June for the WTC final.

"We still don't know how the situation will pan out in June. The travel related SOPs are always dynamic as per COVID situation. When India leaves for UK at the start of June, it might be that the country is not in red list which requires 10 days of hard quarantine.

"But, if it is needed, it would be done. The situation is too fluid right now," the source said on conditions of anonymity. Media reports in the UK said that in case it is required, the Rose Bowl in Southampton and it on-site hotel could be cleared for 'red list' arrivals by reverting to the full biosecure set up that saw it successfully stage international fixtures last season.

The Indian women's cricket team is also scheduled to tour UK in June while the men's team is to play five Tests in England starting August 4. There is also concern about how the inclusion of India in the 'red list' will impact the England and New Zealand cricketers who are currently playing in the IPL and intend to fly to the UK for the two-match Test series between the two countries that starts at the Lord's on June 2. (PTI)

ever WBC India C'ship on May 1

NEW DELHI: In what is being billed as a game changer for professional boxing in the country, the World Boxing Council (WBC) has endorsed the Indian Championship fight between Chandni Mehra and Suman Kumari on May 1 in Jalandhar.

The fight for the Lightweight 140lb belt is scheduled to take place as part of the LZ Promotions India Unleashed-Fight Night -- the country's first ever Professional USA boxing event, according to a release. Chandni and Suman have been India's No. 1 fighters in lightweight and featherweight categories and now will be challenging each other in this milestone-bout.

Indian Premier League

Desperate for wins: SRH and Punjab to battle it out

CHENNAI

TWO bottom-placed teams, SunRisers Hyderabad (SRH) and Punjab Kings (PBKS), will faceoff in an Indian Premier League (IPL) match here at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Wednesday.

While SRH are lying at the bottom of the table and are yet to win a game, PBKS have managed just one win out of their games and have the worst net run rate (-0.967) among the

All eyes will be on SRH, who had made the play-offs last year, but are struggling to come

SQUADS

SunRisers Hyderabad

David Warner (captain), Abhishek Sharma, Basil Thampi, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Jonny Bairstow (wicketkeeper), Kane Williamson, Manish Pandey, Mohammad Nabi, Rashid Khan, Sandeep Sharma, Shahbaz Nadeem, Shreevats Goswami, Siddharth Kaul, Khaleel Ahmed, T Natarajan, Vijay Shankar, Wriddhiman Saha (wicketkeeper), Abdul Samad, Jason Roy, Jason Holder, Priyam Garg, Virat Singh, Kedar Jadhav, Mujeeb ur Rehman, J Suchith.

KL Rahul (captain/wicketkeeper), Mayank Agarwal, Chris Gayle, Mandeep Singh, Prabsimran Singh, Nicholas Pooran (wicketkeeper), Sarfaraz Khan, Deepak Hooda, Murugan Ashwin, Ravi Bishnoi, Harpreet Brar, Mohammed Shami, Arshdeep Singh, Ishan Porel, Darshan Nalkande, Chris Jordan, Dawid Malan, Jhye Richardson, Shahrukh Khan, Riley Meredith, Moises Henriques, Jalaj Saxena, Utkarsh Singh, Fabian Allen, Saurabh Kumar.

to terms with the slow nature of the pitch at

The David Warner-led side ended up losing all the three matches from positions of strength. They will be aware that their opponents have the more difficult job of adapting as PBKS have played all their matches thus far in Mumbai.

SRH will also look to strengthen their middle order, which has been letting them down for the past two matches, and it will be interesting to see if they feature Kane Williamson in the match. The New Zealand captain is recovering from injury.

PBKS's Mayank Agarwal came back to form in the previous match against Delhi Capitals, but skipper KL Rahul took some time to get his 61 (51 balls). PBKS will hope that their talismanic batsman Chris Gayle comes into





Seven more Indian boxers in semifinals of youth Worlds

NEW DELHI

BABYROJISANA Chanu outclassed defending European champion Alexas Kubicka as seven Indian boxers stormed into the semi-finals at the youth world championships for men and women in Kielce, Poland.

Along with Chanu (51kg), Arundhati Choudhary (69kg), Sanamacha Chanu (75kg), Ankit Narwal (64kg), Vishal Gupta (91kg), Bishwamitra Chongtham (49kg) and Sachin (56kg) assured themselves of at least a bronze by advancing to the last-four stage on Day 7 of competitions.

With the confirmation of seven more medals, the 20member Indian contingent is now assured of 11 medals from the ongoing championship. Earlier on Day 6, Vinka, Alfiya, Gitika and Poonam had advanced to the semi-finals.

In a clash between two strong gold contenders in women's 51kg category, Asian youth champion Chanu put up a strong tactical performance. She did not allow her Polish opponent Kubicka to

score any point, blanking her 5-0. The Manipuri boxer will now take on Lucia Ayari of Italy.

Arundhati and Sanamacha were also dominant during their quarter-finals. While Arundhati outpunched Ukraine's Anna Sezko 5-0, Sanamacha sent Russian Margarita Zueva packing with referee stopping the contest in the second round.

In the men's category, Asian junior champion Bishwamitra and Asian youth championship silver medallist Narwal also lived up to expectations and notchedup easy 5-0 victories against Serbian Omer Ametovic and Brazil's Ezequiel Da Cruz respectively.

Manish (75kg) and Sumit (69kg) were the only two Indian boxers who suffered defeats in the quarter-finals. With seven women in the semi-finals, India is placed at the top of the table alongside Russia with highest number of boxers qualifying in the last-four stage.

In the men's section, India is placed fourth on the standing with four boxers in the semi-fi-

Dhoni-led CSK eye another win as fresh challenge awaits struggling KKR

POINTS TABLE

Team Played Won Lost Tied Net RR Pts

into bat towards the end of the innings and got

Young Shahrukh Khan has impressed for

very few balls to face.

 \mathbf{M} UMBAI

ON a roll after back-to-back wins, the vintage Chennai Super Kings would look to extend their winning run when they clash with struggling Kolkata Knight Riders in their next IPL match here on Wednesday.

After their abject campaign in UAE last year, the CSK started the season in an ominous fashion, losing to Delhi Capitals by seven wickets in a one-sided affair. But since then, the MS Dhoni-led side has come on its own with the 'Captain Cool' making the most of his resources at the batting-friendly Wankhede stadium.

Deepak Chahar's brilliance handed them their first win of the season against Punjab Kings it's been a tale of two Englishmen -- Moeen Ali and Sam Curran for the CSK. Explosive all-rounder Ali has embraced the number three spot with knocks of 36 from 24 (vs Delhi Capitals), 46 off 31 (Puniab Kings) and 26 off 20 in his matchwinning show against Rajasthan Royals on

Monday. He is also quietly doing the job with his off-spin with Dhoni cleverly bringing him in the mix in the nonfriendly conditions here.

In their chase of 189, Jos Buttler had started to look ominous and sent a goodlength ball from Ravindra Jadeja into the stands as the ball had to be replaced. Well aware that the dry ball would turn more than the dew-laden wet ball, Dhoni stepped up his attack with Jadeja and Ali from both ends.

Kolkata Knight Riders

Eoin Morgan (c), Dinesh Karthik, Shubman Gill, Nitish Rana, Tim Seifert, Rinku Singh, Andre Russell, Sunil Narine, Kuldeep Yadav, Shivam Mavi, Lockie Ferguson, Pat Cummins, Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Sandeep Warrier Prasidh Krishna, Rahul Tripathi, Varun

Chakravarthy, Shakib Al Hasan, Sheldon Jackson, Vaibhay Arora, Harbhajan Singh, Karun Nair, Ben Cutting, Venkatesh Iyer and Pawan Negi.

Chennai Super Kings

MS Dhoni (c & wk), Suresh Raina, Ambati Rayudu, KM Asif, Deepak Chahar, Dwayne Bravo, Faf du Plessis, Imran Tahir, N Jagadeesan, Karn Sharma, Lungi Ngidi, Mitchell Santner, Ravindra Jadeja, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shardul Thakur, Sam Curran, Josh Hazlewood, R Sai Kishore, Robin Uthappa, Moeen Ali, Krishnappa Gowtham, Cheteshwar Pujara, M Harisankar Reddy, K Bhagath Varma and C Hari Nishaanth.

Asian Championship: Lifter Sheuli finishes 2nd in men's 73kg group B

INDIAN weightlifter Achinta Sheuli finished second in the 73kg group B competition at the Asian Championship here on

The Commonwealth Championship gold medallist lifted 309kg -- 139kg in snatch followed by 170kg in clean and jerk. The Indian had the best snatch lift

(139kg) in the four-man field. However, he failed to lift 174kg in his final clean and jerk attempt which would have seen him top the

Kazakhstan's Sairamkez Akmolda 310kg (130kg+180kg) finished first in the group. Achinta's final standing will be determined

after the end of the group A pro-India has won two medals in the ongoing continental event. Ace weightlifter and former world champion Mirabai Chanu and Odisha's Jhilli Dalabehera bagged the bronze and gold medals respectively last week.

Olympic-bound Mirabai smashed the world record in the women's 49kg clean and jerk en-route her bronze. She lifted 86kg in snatch before setting a new world

mark of 119kg in clean and jerk for a total of 205kg. While Jhilli, a junior world champibronze

medallist, took home

the gold in the women's 45kg event, which though is a non-Olympic cate-

The Asian Weightlifting Championships is a gold level qualifying event of the Tokyo Games. The points gathered from this event will come in handy when the final rankings for the Olympics are made. (PTI)





"A premium Co-Living Space"

PROPERTY MULTIPLIER WITHOUT ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT

AT Residency approved by TIS RERA | Approved No. PO2400001598

Earn extra sft*

AFFORDABLE

SAFE

9% to 11% Returns

NO MAINTENANCE

Assured rental income for 20 years

+91 95337 76694

www.ktresidency.com | sales@kapilproperties.com

FIFA prez against Super League; anger, resistance mounts in England

LONDON

FIFA president Gianni Infantino has rejected proposals for a breakaway European Super League and threatened the clubs involved with unspecified "conse-

There was "no doubt" in the position of the world football governing body on the matter, Infantino said at the congress of European confederation UEFA on Tuesday, DPA reports.

"At FIFA, we can only strongly disapprove the creation of a Super League which is a closed shop, which is a breakaway from the current institutions, from the leagues, from the associations, from

UEFA, and from FIFA," said Infantino.

Infantino said the Super League involving 12 clubs so far was in contrast to these values and that UEFA had full support in opposing the move.

The Premier League 'big six' of Liverpool, Manchester duo United and City, and London's Chelsea, Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal said on Sunday they would join Spain's Barcelona, Real and Atletico Madrid, and Italy's Juventus, AC and Inter Milan, in forming a largely closed competition from August.What sanctions UEFA, or national leagues, could take, remains unclear and would certainly meet legal challenges. UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin, however,

said players could be excluded from national teams and clubs in the breakaway could face domestic penalties.

Infantino suggested that there would not be a compromise where clubs could play in their private competition but remain part of the current structure. "If some elect to go their own way, then they must live with the consequences of their choice. Concretely, this means either you are in or you are out. You cannot be half in or half out," he said. Ceferin accused the clubs of forgetting the history of the game and betraying fans.

"Selfishness is replacing solidarity. Money has become more important than glory, greed more important than loyalty, and dividends more important than passion," he said in his lengthy opening speech to the congress.

"For some, supporters have become consumers, fans have become customers and competitions have become products."

Ceferin said football belongs to everyone because it "is part of our heritage. Respect for history. Respect for tradition. Respect for others. This means

Printed and Published by K. Hanumanta Rao, on behalf of Hyderabad Media House Pvt. Limited, Flat.No.609, 6th Floor, Kirti Shikhar Building, Plot.No.11, Dist.Center, Janakpuri, New Delhi- 110058