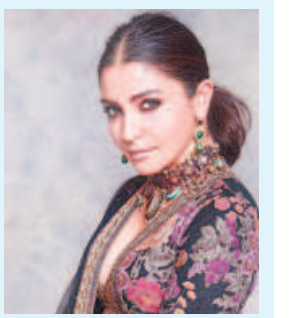


Womenia

TWEET PATROL


ANUSHKA SHARMA
@ANUSHKASHARMA

Virat & I are thankful to MPL Sports Foundation for strengthening our efforts to help India fight the pandemic. Your donation of 5 crore empowers us to keep going and has allowed us to increase our goal to 11 crore. @PlayMPL @actgrants @ketto #InThisTogether #Ac



Skincare to lighten your skin



Shahnaz Husain

As the weather gets warmer and humidity increases in the environment, the skin suffers from roughness, summer tans, and clog pores because of dust, pollution, and heatwaves. This can lead to blackheads, itchy skin, and loss of your beautiful skin tone.

If you're looking to whiten, lighten or brighten your complexion during the summer season, then look no further than your kitchen shelves. Because that's where you'll find most of the ingredients that help improve the texture of your skin.

There are many natural ingredients that we find on our kitchen shelf that help to lighten skin colour. These are safer than chemical bleaches and actually benefit the skin in other ways. For example, cucumber also tightens the pores, while turmeric is a natural antiseptic and skin softener. Tomato lightens skin colour and helps oily skin. Yogurt and buttermilk also help to nourish and soften the skin. Such ingredients keep the skin healthy and preserve its youthful properties. Grainy substances like ground almonds, rice flour, walnut powder, or oats can be used in masks and scrubs.

They help to remove dead skin cells along with their contained pigment. Fruit packs also help, as the fruit acids lighten skin colour over a period. The fruits can be mixed with yogurt and lemon to



There are many natural ingredients that we find on our kitchen shelf that help to lighten skin colour, like almonds, turmeric, yogurt, buttermilk, tomato, cucumber and fruits

make them more effective. Aloe vera also helps to lighten skin colour over a period of time.

Here are some ways to lighten skin colour at home:

- Add a few strands of saffron (Kesar) to warm milk and let it stand for a couple of hours. Then apply it to the skin, using cotton wool. It is said to lighten skin colour over a period of time. Add a pinch of turmeric (Haldi) to curd and apply daily. Wash it off after 20 to 30 minutes. You can also mix dried and powdered lemon peel with it. Mix lemon juice and cucumber juice in equal quantities and apply daily for 20 minutes. Wash off with plain water.
- Mix cucumber and ripe papaya pulp with curd. Lemon juice can also be added. Apply on face and neck, twice a week and wash it off after half an hour. If you want it to be like a face pack, add oatmeal.
- For oily skin, mix multani mitti with rose water and lemon juice into a paste, and apply on the

face. Wash it off when it is dry. Mix ground almonds with curd and a pinch of turmeric. Apply on the face. After 20 minutes, rub gently on the skin and wash it off with water. Aloe Vera can be added to face masks to nourish the skin. Take one tablespoon gram flour (besan), two tea-

spoons yogurt, and one tablespoon aloe vera gel. Mix together and apply on the skin, washing off after 30 minutes.

- Add a little turmeric (Haldi) to gram flour (besan) and aloe vera into a paste and apply daily. Wash it off after 20 to 30 minutes.
- Three teaspoons Aloe Vera gel or juice can be mixed with three teaspoons powdered milk. Put the ingredients in a blender, for a smooth paste. Apply on face and neck and rinse off with water after half an hour. This suits normal to dry skin. For normal to oily skin, mix one teaspoon of each cucumber juice, ripe papaya pulp, and aloe vera gel with

two teaspoons oats. Lemon juice can also be added. Apply on face and neck, twice a week. Wash it off after half an hour.

- Mix together two teaspoons aloe vera gel, a little milk, and rose water, with dried and powdered lemon peels into a paste. Apply two or three times a week on the face and neck. Wash it off after 20 minutes.
- Keep hydrated**
- Hydration is always important for our skin. Your water intake in summer should be a minimum of 2-3 liters a day. Coconut water, watermelons, and fresh juices are a good way to stay hydrated.
 - Include salads and vegetables like cucumber and lettuce in your food – this helps the body stay cool from within. Seasonal fruits like watermelons, musk melons; citrus fruits, and juices also help keep the skin healthy. Hydration can also help skin recover after a sunburn and will help wash out a lot of toxins.

Exfoliate regularly for smoother skin

- The ground rule of basic skincare is to exfoliate your skin. Exfoliation is the key to brighter and smoother skin. Use a face scrub at least twice a week to remove excess dirt and oil from the skin. Exfoliate with a natural home remedy, like coffee grounds mixed with oil and sea salt.
- Grab a body scrub and hit the shower. Gently rub your exfoliator in circular movements on your entire body from the shoulders down and rinse clean. Continue to do this 2-3 times a week for year-round beautiful skin.
- Always keep in mind that exfoliation is required for your entire body and not just your face. You should, however, make sure to be gentle while exfoliating your skin.

Protect yourself against the summer sun

SIDDHI JAIN

Too much balcony time, exposure to the sun and gadgets may increase skin-related problems.

With the temperatures soaring high, sunscreens find their way out of boxes. Follow the advice of a good dermatologist to protect your skin against UV and infrared damage while you stay indoors and continue to apply sunscreen at home.

When it comes to protecting the skin, the choice of the right sunscreen is extremely important. Besides the sun, infrared rays can also come from less obvious places like the computer screens, mobiles, hair dryers etc. which then travel deep into the skin releasing free radicals that damage the skin.

Here are three reasons listed by Cetaphil India on why the use of sunscreen is imperative at all times. The newly-launched Cetaphil Bright Healthy Radiance Range also offers a range of daily essentials, curated and formulated to offer complete day and night protection.

Prolonged use of gadgets can be damaging

Regardless of the extended 'stay

at home' and limited outdoor gatherings, the radiation from the lights, TVs, cell phone screens, and even lights from different indoor lighting(s) might add to skin problems. Moreover glass windows, do not filter the harmful rays from reaching you. Daily use of sunscreen will shield your skin from the harm brought by exposure to any kind of harmful UV and infrared rays.

Offering proven protection against harmful UV and infrared rays

Your sunscreen must contain broad spectrum filters to help protect from the sun's harmful radiation on your skin. A lightweight sunscreen that is easily absorbed, is hydrating and nourishing, water and sweat resistant, and non-greasy - like the Cetaphil Sun SPF50+ / SPF 30+ Light Gel. It is a dermatologically tested, fragrance free sunscreen that can be used even in sensitive skin.

Results in skin aging and skin worries

The harmful UV and infrared rays not only cause skin tanning but also penetrates the skin

causing premature skin aging, pigmentation or dark spots and other skin related problems. Hence choosing a sunscreen which offers proven protection against UV and infrared radiation is important.



NEWS ROUNDUP

Priyanka Chopra: Over 14,000 good Samaritans helped us raise \$1mn

Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas shared that over 14,000 contributors have helped raise \$1 million, to help India amid the second wave of Covid-19. Priyanka shared a video on Instagram featuring a world map and the countries from where donations have poured in to help India.

"Through some of the darkest days in our history, humanity has once again proven that we are better together. @nickjonas and I are so humbled by your support and by the outpouring of help for India from so many parts of the world," she wrote alongside the video.

Priyanka added, "Over 14,000 good Samaritans opened their hearts and helped us raise \$1 Million in these trying times. Countless others helped us spread the word to expedite the process. All the money raised is already being deployed across the country in the form of Oxygen Concentrators, Vaccine Support and so much more."

Priyanka shared that the fundraising target is now \$3 million. "We can all continue to help so let's not stop here. We're raising the fundraising target to \$3 Million and we know that with your help and support, we can achieve this too. Thank you all for your support and thank you @give.india for the incredible work you are doing on ground," the actress concluded.



Mandsaur's hidden 'jewel of music' recreates the 'Dama Dum' song

SIDDHI JAIN

An incredible voice from Madhya Pradesh's Mandsaur, Sugan Devi Gandharv, was discovered recently as part of Delhi-based record label DRecords, which is recreating the magic of the soulful classic 'Dama Dum Mast Kalandar' with Punjabi pop icon Daler Mehndi.

The label run by Mehndi and his filmmaker, architect and author wife, Taran Mehndi, launched a unique project titled 'Jewels of Music', under which they will be scouting for hidden talent to help them realise their dreams. For this project, DRecords is looking for artists, musicians, singers, composers, songwriters above the age of 40; those who have never received a platform owing to circumstances in their lives, poor financial conditions, society hindrances, or any other reason owing to which they never got a chance to showcase their voice.

Sugan Devi (Left) with Taran and Daler Mehndi (Middle and Right)

Sharing his experience in exploring talent like Sugan Devi, Mehndi said, "I had found



Sugan Devi

Sugan Devi ji's video as a WhatsApp forward and I immediately got into action, requesting my dear friend who is a senior TV journalist, who got his team to act upon it. They found her for me and as the Divine would have had it, I went to perform the same month in Madhya Pradesh for a government festival ahead of the forests of Jhabua. I not only met her there but also made a promise to release her album and shared my stage with her."

He urged: "The song 'Dama Dum Mast Ka-

landar' has recreated a magic with her voice. Please listen and allow space in your heart for her voice."

"Sugan Devi learnt music from her late husband while doing household chores just listening to him sing, with the elders in the family, she was never permitted to sing in public but her husband ensured she could listen to his riyaaz, with meagre finances and kids to raise, household responsibilities Devi could not make it to a stage," shares Taran Mehndi, CEO of Drecords.

The foot-tapping music for 'Dama Dum' pushed Sugan Devi out of her comfort zone of singing bhajans. Sugan Devi beautifully renders 'Dama Dum' with her rustic folk voice to the traditional song made famous by Runa Laila and many artists after. The song would be streaming online for music lovers to enjoy.

The Mehndis say they are excited to present Sugan Devi Gandharv to the world. "Another pearl in the ocean of music. We want to help people understand and share their gifts with the world and we feel privileged and happy to be able to facilitate that," adds Taran Mehndi.

Dance like a Chicken Day

We've all seen it, it's utterly ridiculous and usually performed in a bout of intoxicant-driven lunacy. You tuck your hands into your arm-pits to make 'wings,' and then you flap like an idiot in time with some particularly unfortunate music. All that aside, you have complete giggle fits with a bunch of your friends while you behave in a fashion that has the local sanitarium eyeballing you for membership.

What are we talking about? The Chicken Dance of course. Dance like a Chicken Day commemorates this dance and its origins and even gives you a chance to learn WHY anyone would do this terrible, terrible thing.

The best way to celebrate Dance like a Chicken Day is by getting out there and doing the Chicken Dance.

It's quite simple, and it all starts with making a beak with your hands, and 'squawk' them four times in beat with the music, then you make wings as described earlier, and flap them four times in time with the music.



Planning to beach in sunny days, go with natural fibre masks

By now, everyone realized that face masks are not all created equal. Some are too tight around the face, others sag and some still make you feel as if you're in a hot room. If you regularly exercise, you know that the wrong mask can make it difficult to breathe and even steam up your glasses. This is the same type of discomfort you may feel if you wear the wrong mask to the seashore. Rising temperatures make your body sweat more, and wearing a mask just adds to the steamy feeling. If you're planning to hit the beach, there are plenty of masks that can keep you cool and comfortable. Shop for face masks that are made from cotton and other natural fibers, if you choose a face mask made of nylon or other man-made materials, you may struggle to get enough ventilation. If you'll be taking your mask on and off for snacks and water breaks or to get some fresh air when no one else is nearby, using a mask lanyard is an easy way to keep your mask around your neck so it doesn't drop in the sand. Masks made with natural fibers will not irritate the skin in sweat conditions and it will be cool and comfortable in these sunny days when compared to man-made material masks. There are a lot of stylish masks in the market, with different prices starting from Rs 3 to Rs 2000 each. It's tempting to choose one that best complements your beach attire, but you may feel discomfort if the material can't handle your breath and the heat.

Jaipur schools block students over fees even as parents fight Covid

ARCHANA SHARMA
JAIPUR

EVEN though it has been just two months to the start of the new academic session, the private schools in Jaipur are ruling the roost, blocking students from attending online classes due to non-payment of fees, flouting the order of the Supreme Court and the state government.

Surprising, the hapless students are being tormented even at a time when their parents are fighting for life in hospitals.

Jaswant Choudhary, whose kid studies in Jaishri

Prerawal school told IANS, "I tested Covid positive on April 28 and two days later got a call for fee payment from the school. I told them that I have paid half the fees for last academic year and shall pay remainder till August in instalments as per SC guidelines issued recently. For this year, will pay the fee once I turn ok. However my kid was barred from attending online classes on May 3."

Similar is the story of many parents who are battling Covid in hospitals but the school is dropping their wards due to non-payment



of fees. Sudhir Sharma, a doctor by profession was hospitalised due to Covid on May 1 after he tested Covid positive on April 28. His son

and wife tested positive on April 29. The class teacher was informed about the illness but despite showing any courtesy or help, the

school blocked his son from attending online class on May 4.

He said, "I was in hospital till May 12 and have been discharged on Thursday, surprisingly, the government officials are also not lending their ears to the complaint and are asking us to shift our wards to government schools," he alleged.

Meanwhile, DEO Ramchandra Pilaniya, speaking to IANS, said, "We have already slapped a notice to the school concerned and asked them to take the students back into classes who have been blocked since this

comprises Supreme Court guidelines." IANS has the order copy which says that the department has received a complaint that many students are blocked even after paying the fees and it said that the schools can't drop students for non-payment of fees.

IANS tried to contact Madhu Maini, principal of Jaishri Prerawal school, but she did not take the call. However, even after receiving the notice, she asked parents to pay the fees and then only their wards will be allowed to join classes.

Many schools in Jaipur

are following the same trend and have blocked the students.

Warren Academy has blocked students who have not paid fees for the running quarter which include April, May and June.

Says Meena Goyal, "My daughter has been blocked from attending classes as we did not pay fees for the last two months. Since then, she has stopped talking to us going under depression. Can schools act so cruel in these testing times? She questioned adding that they have a shop which remains closed since last one month and

hence there is no income but we still have been paying fees regularly and non-payment of fees for two months should not be an issue, she added.

Meena is also under home isolation with symptoms of cough, cold and fever.

Pilaniya, when asked how schools are flouting SC order, told IANS, "As such our offices are closed due to lockdown and we have announced summer holidays. But some schools are running classes on their own. We are yet to receive SC order and then can work accordingly," he added.

'Companies will benefit if States compete for vax'

NEW DELHI

AS several State governments are contemplating to float global tender to procure Covid vaccines, the Congress has raised an alarm that ultimately it will benefit the companies if state governments compete with each other.

Congress leader Manish Tewari said, "It does not require rocket science to figure out that if different Indian States compete for vaccines in international market manufacturers/suppliers will go laughing to the bank."

"Until & Until this architecture has been put in place in cahoots with the manufacturers/suppliers," he added.

Manish Tewari's remarks came after Brihan Mumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Wednesday issued a global tender to acquire 1 crore vaccines.

The bids were issued after Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray cleared a proposal, said BMC Commissioner I.S. Chahal.

"The BMC has issued global bid to acquire 1 crore Covid-19 vaccines to inoculate the citizens of Mumbai at the earliest possible on a massive scale in its



decisive fight against the virus," he said. Chahal added that the BMC is resolved to make all possible efforts in future also to acquire sufficient quantity of Covid-19 vaccines to vaccinate all eligible citizens of Mumbai on war footing in the next 60-

90 days. Earlier on Wednesday, the Maharashtra government decided to put on hold vaccination for people in the 18-44 age group till sufficient stocks were built up.

Many States/UTs have been facing shortage of vaccine. The

Chandigarh administration decided that the priority is for those who are above 45 years of age waiting for the second dose. Karnataka on Wednesday also decided to 'temporarily suspend' the vaccination drive for those aged between 18 to 44 years.

Poor Covid-19 patients in Punjab to get free meals

CHANDIGARH

BEGINNING Friday, underprivileged Covid-19 patients living in Punjab can call up helpline numbers 181 and 112 for delivery of free cooked meals at their doorsteps through the Punjab Police Department.

The humanitarian initiative was announced at the Cabinet meeting by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, who declared that "we will not anyone sleep hungry in Punjab".

Such patients can call on these numbers any time of the day or night, and will be provided cooked food at their homes by the Police Department, through Covid kitchens and delivery boys. The department is tying up with such kitchens and delivery agents for this purpose, DGP Dinkar Gupta said, expressing pride at the initiative taken by Punjab Police for ensuring food for the poor Covid patients in the state. As part of the facility, which



will become operational from 10 am from Friday, poor patients living anywhere in the state and lacking access to food can dial 181 or call 112 at any time of day or night, on 24 by 7 basis, for delivery of cooked meals at their doorsteps.

During the first wave of the pandemic, too, the Punjab Police had converted its 112 emergency helpline into a 'Hunger Helpline'. The department had, in active collaboration with NGOs, gurudwaras, mandirs, and other religious institutions, successfully served over 12 crore cooked meals and dry rations to the people of Punjab in April-June last year.

Newly elected village head in UP booked for sedition

SITAPUR

A newly elected village head and his four associates who were arrested last week for breaching Covid protocols were booked under sedition laws on Thursday for allegedly raising anti-India slogans and praising Pakistan.

The village head of Belauta village, Aslam Khan, and his four associates, were arrested last week by Sitapur police.

Superintendent of police (SP), Sitapur, R P Singh, said that a preliminary probe was initiated and the video/audio footage of Khan's remarks were analyzed.

"He was clearly heard raising pro-Pakistan slogans and the sedition charge was added to the FIR on basis of evidence. We had arrested the accused on May 8," he said. The accused pradhan's elder brother, Shakeel Khan, alleged the rival candidate had 'planted' youngsters in the crowd, who raised pro-Pakistan slogans. "He (rival) videographed the procession and used the footage to frame my brother," he said. Shakeel said, the video circulated on social media showed children raising slogans and neither his brother nor any adult was part of the procession.

Priyanka raps UP govt after HC's stinging comments

NEW DELHI

CONGRESS General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday slammed the Yogi Adityanath government of Uttar Pradesh, saying the truth of fighting Covid has been exposed in the High Court and reiterated that the pandemic can only be fought with more testing and availability of medical services.

Priyanka Gandhi, who is also in-charge of Uttar Pradesh Congress in a series of tweets in Hindi said, "The Uttar Pradesh government's affidavit in High Court reveals the real story of fighting Covid-19. Less tests are

being conducted, no proper arrangement of Ambulance service, and no proper information of medicine and oxygen."

"When will the government realise that Covid cannot be fought with lies but with more

testing, availability of medical services and door to door vaccines," she tweeted.

Her remarks came a day after the Allahabad HC rapped the Yogi

Adityanath government for hiding key facts about Covid treatment facilities and the number of deaths, and failing to comply with earlier orders on furnishing details of hospitals with life-saving equipment and drugs.



Cop suspended for beating Imam in UP's Gorakhpur

GORAKHPUR

A police post in-charge was suspended for allegedly beating up an Imam while trying to disperse people after the completion of the namaaz at a Mosque here.

The accused official, Arjun Singh, posted in-charge of Pandey Hata area that falls under the Rajghat police station, was trying to disperse the people after namaaz on Tuesday evening. He later attacked Mohammad Hashim, the Imam, and beat him till the people around intervened. A video clip of the statement of the Imam had gone viral on social media on Wednesday evening.

In his statement, the Imam of Nai Masjid, Maulana Mohammad Hashim told the police that around 3.30 pm after Asra namaz he was in the mosque when the police outpost in charge, Arjun Singh, started dispersing people from the Mosque in view of the Covid protocols. He then turned to the Imam who was on the stairs of the mosque and beat him.

100-bed Covid facility to become functional soon in Gurugram

GURUGRAM

A 100-bed Covid care hospital set up by the Gurugram district administration in collaboration with the Vedanta Group will soon become functional at Tau Devi Lal stadium in Sector 38.

Deputy Commissioner Yash Garg took stock of the makeshift hospital on Wednesday and gave necessary directions to the authorities.

Although in the last few days, Covid cases have dropped

in Gurugram, but the district officials are prepared to deal with the third Covid wave.

"This temporary hospital is being set up with a capacity of 100 beds, where the patients will be provided with all the



possible healthcare facilities," Garg said. Anil Aggarwal, Chairman of the Vedanta Group, informed

that the company is mulling to arrange 1,000 beds for Covid patients through its Anil Aggarwal Foundation,

which was being started from the Gurugram district.

"All the preparations have been completed by the district administration and the company to set up this temporary hospital in Gurugram. While, establishing this Covid care centre, a technology called 'HEPA Filter' is being used which is effective in preventing the infection of the virus. There will be arrangements for 80 oxygen bad and 20 ICU beds in the initial phase," Aggarwal added.

HC ASKS GOVT TO SET UP PANEL FOR COVID PLAINTS

PRAYAGRAJ

THE Allahabad High Court has directed the Uttar Pradesh government to constitute a three-member Pandemic Public Grievance Committee (PPGC) in every district to look into the grievances of the public in Covid treatment in the state. The panel would comprise one chief judicial magistrate (CJM) or a judicial officer, professor of a medical college and an administrative officer of the rank of additional district magistrate (ADM).

The court, in its order on Tuesday, further directed that in rural areas complaints can be made directly to the sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) of concerned tehsil, who shall transmit the same to PPGC.

War of words between BJP and Cong over bodies found in river

BHOPAL

AFTER Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, dead bodies have been found floating in Madhya Pradesh, too. At least two bodies have been found in Runjh river in Panna district, triggering a war of words between the BJP and the Congress.

The district administration claims that both these bodies are of persons who were suffering from various diseases and were thrown into the river as per the local tradition.

However, according to unconfirmed reports, at least six bodies have been found floating in the Runjh river. After the recoveries of the bodies, a war of words has ensued between the BJP and the Congress.

Madhya Pradesh Congress President Kamal Nath said, "Shivrajji, till now we were seeing pictures of dead bodies floating in the Ganges river in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. But it is now seen in Nandampur village of Ajaygarh tehsil of Panna district

in Madhya Pradesh too. Horrific pictures of six floating bodies have come to light in Runjh river. This is a very serious matter."

Kamal Nath added that conditions in the rural areas are appalling due to coronavirus infections. The government should take immediate cognisance of the matter and conduct a thorough investigation and should increase the health serv-



ices and resources in rural areas on a war footing.

Rebutting the allegations of the Congress, BJP state president Vishnu Dutt Sharma said, "Kamal Nath ji should stop politics on dead bodies. This is totally untrue that six corpses have been found in Runjh river in Panna. Only two dead bodies have been found and they are of people suffering from cancer and leprosy, which are not cremated, as per the local tradition.

Stop firing from colleagues' shoulders, Sidhu to Punjab CM

CHANDIGARH

IN a bitter war of words with Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh over the sacrilege issue, his former Cabinet colleague and legislator Navjot Singh Sidhu on Thursday advised him to stop firing from his "colleagues' shoulders".

A defiant Sidhu reminded Amarinder Singh, a retired Indian Army officer and war historian, that "his soul demands justice for Guru Sahib".

A day earlier, four Punjab ministers had joined three of their colleagues in demanding the suspension of Sidhu from the party for indiscipline and launching verbal attacks on Amarinder Singh. The ministers urged the party high command to take action against Sidhu for his open rebellion against the



state party leadership.

Reacting to the demand of the ministers, Sidhu, without naming Amarinder Singh, tweeted: "Yesterday & Today, My soul's demand is Justice for Guru

Sahib, will reiterate it tomorrow as well! Punjab's Conscience is above party lines, Stop firing from party colleagues' shoulders. You are directly Responsible & Answerable - Who will

protect you in court of the Great Guru?"

As the Congress government is about to complete its five-year term in less than a year, cricketer-turned-politician Sidhu, who has been lying low since his resignation from the state Cabinet in July 2019, has launched scathing attacks against the Chief Minister over the alleged desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib in 2015.

Taking a tough stance last month, Amarinder Singh has categorically said that if Sidhu "wants to contest against him, then he is free to do so but that would only lead to Sidhu meeting the fate of General J.J. Singh who had lost his security deposit".

The Chief Minister had challenged Sidhu to clearly spell out whether he is a member of the

Congress party. "If yes, then his continuing rant against his Chief Minister and the government amounts to gross indiscipline," Amarinder Singh had said, adding that the Congress dissident ought to choose the side he is on because "he is indulging in breaking the discipline of the party, and the BJP won't take him back and as far as the SAD is concerned, they are also peeved with him". "Is sacrilege case not the top priority for the Home Minister," Sidhu had asked the Chief Minister.

"Evading of responsibility and making only the Advocate General a scapegoat means the executive authority has no supervisory control. Who controls the AG? Legal team is just a pawn in this game of shifting responsibilities," he had said.

The politics behind tension in Gaza

TENSIONS between Israelis and Palestinians escalated further on May 11 as Palestinian militants in Gaza fired hundreds of rockets into Israel, which in turn ramped up airstrikes on the coastal enclave, as unrest spread to cities and towns beyond Jerusalem. Signs of de-escalation are not to be seen at this movement. Hostilities between Israel and Hamas continue to escalate, with 35 Palestinians, including 10 children, killed in Gaza and five in Israel in the most intensive aerial exchanges for years. Local top leadership of Hamas has also been eliminated.

The Israeli military claims to have killed more than 15 Hamas commanders. Israel carried out hundreds of air strikes in Gaza into the early hours of May 12, as the Islamist group and other

Palestinian militant groups fired multiple rocket barrages at Tel Aviv and Beersheba. Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Gaza have fired at least 550 rockets into Israel since May 10. The militants say it is a response to the actions of Israeli police who fired stun grenades inside the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, one of the city's holiest sites on May 10 morning.

Hundreds of Palestinians were treated in hospital in ensuing clashes with Israeli police, in the most serious violence seen in the city in weeks. Israel called up 5,000 reserve troops to active duty, and an Israeli military spokesman said it would "enhance" its operation in Gaza after militants in Gaza extended the range of their rocket fire. The Israeli military had conducted more than 150

strikes in Gaza as of May 11 afternoon, the spokesman said. In all probability the fighting is in its early stages. We should look at the politics behind the escalation more than any to understand the latest conflict. The outbreak of hostilities led Netanyahu's political opponents to suspend negotiations on forming a coalition of right-wing, leftist and centre-left parties to unseat him after an inconclusive March 23 election.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid has three weeks left to establish a government, with a new election - and another chance for Netanyahu to retain power - likely if he fails. On the other hand Palestinian Legislative elections are also on cards later this month. Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority indefinitely postponed Palestinian

legislative elections scheduled for later this month. It is no surprise that escalation with Hamas arrives exactly at the moment when the anti-Netanyahu bloc is trying to cobble up a "government for change."

At his toughest moments, as he battles for his political survival, Prime Minister Netanyahu is getting some unexpected help from his veteran ally, the Hamas movement. Conspiracy theories are rife. Some argue that Netanyahu deliberately engineered the escalation of tensions in Jerusalem. Hamas is also experiencing a power struggle between its leadership outside Gaza and in Gaza with the external group pushing for confrontation with Israel and displaying militancy, while Sinwar prefers calm that would allow him to improve the conditions under which the enclave's residents live. How about deaths? Well, who is bothered. Politics is important.



Soil is the solution

VOLKAN BOZKIR

WHAT do you think of when you hear the word "desertification"? Sand dunes slowly encroaching on bountiful farmland? The Sahara and Gobi taking over Africa and Asia? Rivers and streams drying up? That's certainly part of it. But the key impact of desertification is the degradation of land - to the point where soil becomes so damaged that it no longer supports life.

Soil is so much more than dirt. And healthy soil is essential to a healthy planet. The ground beneath our feet is teeming with a hidden world of plants, animals and microbes - many too tiny to see. But our survival depends on them. This overlooked reservoir feeds our agriculture and food industries. It helps to regulate greenhouse gas emissions and keeps plants, animals and humans strong.

But today, more than one fifth of the planet's land - including more than half of our agricultural land - is suffering. Each year, more than 12 million hectares of land are lost to desertification, land degradation and drought. This loss hurts over 3 billion people, particularly poor and rural communities in the developing world. At the same time, when land is hastily converted to cropland, without considering the overall health of our environment, then carbon and nitrous oxide are released into the atmosphere. Climate change accelerates, biodiversity withers and infectious diseases blossom. This all jeopardizes water supplies, livelihoods and our ability to face natural disasters and extreme weather events.

Unless we act now, it's only going to get worse. Over the next 25 years, land degradation could reduce global food productivity by as much as 12 per cent, leading to a 30 per cent increase in world food prices. We will never achieve the Sustainable Development Goals if we remain complacent.

But there is much to be hopeful about - and much that we can achieve together. As we have seen with the rapid development of COVID-19 vaccines, when the will is there and resources are deployed, humankind can achieve truly astounding feats.

Restoring 350 million hectares of degraded land by 2030 could take between 13 and 26 gigatons of greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere. For every dollar spent on land restoration - including through low-skilled and labour-intensive projects - at least 9 dollars of economic benefits can be expected. Restoring land not only generates green job opportunities across a wide range of industries - but will also enable us to grow more nutritious food, provide clean water security, address biodiversity loss, and mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Today, more than one fifth of the planet's land - including more than half of our agricultural land - is suffering. Each year, more than 12 million hectares of land are lost to desertification, land degradation and drought. This loss hurts over 3 billion people, particularly poor and rural communities in the developing world. At the same time, when land is hastily converted to cropland, without considering the overall health of our environment, then carbon and nitrous oxide are released into the atmosphere. Climate change accelerates, biodiversity withers and infectious diseases blossom. This all jeopardizes water supplies, livelihoods and our ability to face natural disasters and extreme weather events. Unless we act now, it's only going to get worse.

Over the next 25 years, land degradation could reduce global food productivity by as much as 12 per cent, leading to a 30 per cent increase in world food prices. We will never achieve the Sustainable Development Goals if we remain complacent

Whether we're talking about city dwellers, who need reliable supplies of fruits and vegetables, or island hoteliers, who count on protected beaches and swaying palm trees to draw in tourists, or hospital patients, whose lives depend on nature-derived medicines, one thing is clear: There is no person on earth - or for that matter any being - whose existence is not tied to land.

So, what can you do to help protect our land and soil? One simple step is not to waste food - because when farmers work the land to produce food we're not eating, that just exhausts our soil unnecessarily. And if you're an urbanite, you can work with your local officials to make your city greener - through such innovative methods as rooftop gardens and vertical forests.

Here at the United Nations, promoting land regeneration is a critical part of our work. In the coming months, major conferences to follow up on the three Rio Conventions - the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) - will all be held during the same year for the first time ever. This a unique opportunity to reflect on the health of our planet - and on what we can do to improve it and protect our very existence.

For my part, on 20 May, I will host a high-level meeting on desertification, land degradation and drought, in the iconic United Nations General Assembly Hall in New York. This meeting - the first of its kind in more than a decade - will build on previous achievements, highlight gaps in our collective efforts and spur momentum towards the three big Rio-related conferences. It will remind us that land degradation is real and needs to be fought. It will show how three seemingly different issues - climate, biodiversity and desertification - are actually intrinsically linked. And it will drive up ambition for global action.

The General Assembly is the only body where all 193 Member States of the United Nations sit as equals. So, there is no better place to tackle the problems that transcend borders and affect us all. When it comes to the very earth we stand on - the life-giving soil that sustains us - there is no time to waste. High-level conferences may not improve the situation overnight. But in making sure we're all on the same page, sharing best practices and taking real steps together, we can change course. Ultimately, we will reverse desertification, land degradation and drought - because there is no other choice. But we will need to work together. We will need to change some of our practices. And I hope the United Nations can count on your support.

Covid-19 and emotional intelligence



INDIA is facing a brutal onslaught of Covid-19 second wave, and the pain is unprecedented.

There is a massive emotional impact of this global pandemic not just on physical being, but on the human mind too. The negative implication of human emotions is all pervasive globally. However, the degree of emotional impact can vary from one nation to another.

As an eternal student, and an expert in Emotional Intelligence, I wish to highlight a few higher order emotions, which are impacting individuals during this pandemic, and consequentially leading to devastating behavioural outcomes.

Emotion is the core of human life. If there are no emotions, there's no life. Every single action you perform every day in your life, is simply to satiate a set of emotions. It's a big statement and I am making it responsibly.

Everything which is currently underway in your life is driven by a set of emotions, in reaction to a stimulus (environment). All feelings (synonymous to emotions) you are currently experiencing are either your reaction to the environment which is impacting you, others' emotions, or proactive decisions driven by your own. Either ways, your entire life can be summed up in 'Feeling - Thought - Action Cycle'.

Emotions are triggered by external or internal stimulus. Covid-19 is both an internal and external stimulus. Infected patients are impacted from inside-out, and those who have recovered or yet to be infected are impacted outside-in. Structured human societies across the world are going through historic and unprecedented emotional turmoil. It is leading many individuals, who lack emotional intelligence into making catastrophic decisions, with even serious and life-changing outcomes.

I am outlining only a few higher-order emotions, which are currently impacting emotional health across the spectrum globally. I will also recommend a few counter-measures to manage these challenging emotions, to effectively re-route them for positive outcomes.

Uncertainty

I feel 'Uncertain', is a higher-order, high-impact emotion. It can trigger many subsidiary emotions and drive disempowering

'thoughts'. Disempowering thoughts definitely lead to similar type of actions, if not managed well in time.

Individuals, families, businesses, institutions and even nations are heavily impacted by this higher-order emotion - 'Uncertainty'.

'Feelings of uncertainty' can lead to reactive and thoughtless decisions while trying to minimize damage. It can lead to wrong bets both in investments and savings. The flurry of negative thoughts driven out of lack of certainty can fog planning, for short, intermediate and even long-term. At a personal level, it can drive confusion, feelings of despair and helplessness.

Hope is a very powerful and empowering emotion. It can act as a countermeasure to all feelings of 'uncertainty'. In these challenging times, 'Hope' is a massive emotional anchor.

Reading positive stories, being associated with positive people, engaging in positive conversations and relating with people who invoke hope are some measures, critical to managing 'uncertainty'.

Uncertainty has the potential to drive negative thoughts of contemplation, confusion, indecisiveness, helplessness, misjudgment and even hopelessness. These thoughts are potent enough to push you to make or not make effective decisions in time, leading to immense pain, loss and failure.

I also suggest that you build 'multiple options' as a countermeasure to this disempowering emotion, whenever you feel it. Outline the top five options you have and reflect on them, before making any decision in a hurry.

Fear

Fear is a very powerful higher-order emotion too. It can easily override many subsidiary positive emotions. In fact, fear is one of the primal emotions, which our ancestors have used positively to survive complex natural challenges and environmental threats. It is one emotion which can work both ways. It can ensure your survival or lead you to extinction.

Covid-19 infection, painful symptoms and increasing number of deaths across the social spectrum is triggering 'fear' everywhere. On one end 'fear' is ensuring that people protect themselves from this infection by using masks, physical distancing and other cautious acts.

On the other end, 'fear' is leading people to trust rumours, over react to infection, be unempathetic to infected people, exhibit unprecedented selfishness and self-centeredness for survival.

Fear is also causing unwarranted trauma, pain through anticipation of infection, secondary illnesses, loss of natural immunity and severe mental distress. It is also leading few individuals to rush to hospitals, while they could very well manage under home care blocking precious hospital



beds and other essential medical services. Extreme levels of fear can seriously impair the natural immunogenicity of the body to fight the Covid-19 infection, which can further lead to fatal outcomes.

Extreme fear can trigger primitive 'fight or flight' syndrome, leading to catastrophic actions by an infected individual. Mere possibility of getting infected can drive serious insecurities in few individuals, leading to physical and mental isolation.

Many of those who cannot manage 'fear' are prone to panic attacks, which can negatively impact heart rate, blood pressure and malfunctioning of many vital organs in the body. Panic naturally results in lowered defence and capability of the body to fight disease.

One need to understand that 'fear' is the least resourceful emotion, when it comes to fighting anything. Covid-19 is no exception to this fact. You can allow the emotion of fear to drive caution in you, but nothing beyond that.

The best way to override 'Fear' is to focus on positive possibilities. For example, if one per cent is the current death rate due to Covid-19 in India, it's important to note that there's a 99 per cent possibility that you will make it through successfully. Getting into the habit of always looking out for 'silver-lining in dark clouds' - will enable you to manage 'fear'.

Loneliness

This emotion can be quite dangerous, if not dealt in time effectively. You can feel 'lonely' even while being in a group. Being alone is not being lonely, it has nothing to do with the number of people around you. It is an emotion which will creep-in when one feels unsupported, invalidated, left-alone, deserted or isolated.

Loneliness can lead to many disempowering thoughts. During Covid-19 many people are experiencing this emotion quite frequently. Especially those in isolation after infection and those recovering at hospitals can go through severe impact of this emotion, which can lead to many self-defeating thoughts. Senior citizens and old parents staying away from their children will go through severe trauma of not being physically close to their loved ones. Even couples separated through isolation protocols experience similar distress.

It is very important to stay connected with people you love and care for, during times of infection,

isolation and recovery. It is also incumbent upon the medical care-givers to have small conversations with the patients and give them emotional support and assurance. Though subtly, family and friends should stay engaged with infected individuals and reduce the emotional distress with kind words of reassurance and strength.

Extreme feelings of loneliness can lead to suicidal thoughts and serious deprivation. If unmanaged, feelings of loneliness can lower the natural immunity and defense of the body to fight disease.

Frustration

Long periods of forced lockdown with confinement to small living spaces with less privacy can lead to serious emotions of 'frustration'.

Feelings of lack of purpose, wasted time, unutilised resources, lack of revenue, loss of livelihood, losses in business, debt burden and related stress can lead to higher-order negative emotions of 'frustration'.

Frustration can lead to many aggravated thoughts. It can drive knee-jerk reactions, thoughtless decisions, impatience, incoherence, aggression, verbal abuse or even physical abuse.

This emotion is more rampant in young adolescents, young adults, career professionals, home-makers, mid-level and senior-level organisational managers and sole-salary earners in the family.

Disturbed daily routines, non-utilisation of time and skills, loss of earnings, excess spending on medical expenses, financial mess, relationship conflicts, confinement to home for longer periods of time, can trigger extreme levels of frustration during this pandemic.

Finding an alternate purpose, upgrading skills, enrolling into an online refresher course, reading books, exercising regularly and being engaged with the outside world through small conversations with friends, can help manage feelings of 'frustration'.

Those in businesses must plan methodically for short-term, near-term, intermediate and long-term counter measures to survive and continue in business. Those who lost jobs should rely on a support system to survive and target jobs in sectors not negatively impacted by Covid-19 lockdowns. It is essential to take up whatever comes your way, to ensure steady flow of income and occupational conti-

nunity to avoid 'frustration' to play havoc with you.

It is important to know that all frustration in your life is because of 'unmet emotional needs'. It is important to work towards satisfying your emotional needs and of those who depend on you. Fulfilling emotional needs to the extent possible consciously, will ensure that feelings of frustration don't arise.

Anger

This emotion is a top order negative emotion, capable of jeopardising and destroying everything you built in your entire life.

Anger is the least manageable of all emotions. As it's a top-order basic instinct, managing it requires a higher degree of emotional intelligence. This powerful emotion is triggered by accumulation of multiple negative emotions, which went unexpressed for a prolonged period of time.

Lack of emotional expression, especially of the negative and disempowering emotions can lead to accumulation and eventually results in an 'emotional outburst' through - 'Anger'.

Anger if unmanaged, will drive many unmanageable negative thoughts which in turn, can lead to regrettable mental and physical actions. Anger at its worst, can drive you to hurt yourself or others seriously. All those actions which you would regret in future, are driven by this highly actionable emotion.

Anger can be managed by a conscious individual who has the competence to withhold, delay or stall actions driven by this emotion. Individuals who are highly enabled by emotional intelligence have the capability to manage 'Anger' of any degree.

Being aware and extremely mindful of the consequences of your actions driven by anger is critical competence to manage this emotion. Forecasting the impact of anger on relationships, quantifying the actual loss in numbers, resisting the urge to act through 'positive-distraction' method, are some countermeasures to manage and reroute this emotion.

To conclude, the above five are not the only negative emotions human enterprise is going through for the last 15 months. These are just a few important ones. It is essential to understand and empathise with each other during this challenging phase, knowing that most people are going through serious emotional challenges.

It is not enough to manage your physical health during this surge of Covid-19, it is extremely important to also manage your mental and emotional health. If you are conscious of your emotions and manage them well, you will be equipped to manage your mind and body impeccably well too.

(The author is the chief spokesperson of the BJP Telangana State, an organisational strategist & a leadership coach)

LETTERS

Celebrate Ramzan safely

THE Muslims in India are going to celebrate Ramzan today, under lockdown and tight restrictions due to Coronavirus outbreak that has paralyzed the entire country. This year too we are facing a different enemy which is invisible and merciless. This Ramzan to prevent community spread of the virus all religious places are to be shut down. Large events and gathering should be avoided. I request Muslim brothers and sisters to observe all Covid appropriate measures during Ramzan. The safest way to worship this Ramzan is to pray at home.

Celebration is not just eating sumptuous food and wearing new clothes, its more about sharing with and caring for those, who deserve two square meals a day as human. The money saved for the festivities has to be given to those who can't afford even plain rice or bread. Teachings of Islam say that if you're neighbour goes to sleep hungry and you are eating your food then it's definitely not right. So this Ramzan let us avoid large events and gatherings, congregational prayers, help the needy, pray at home and stay safe at home.

Zakir Hussain, Kazipet

thehansreader@gmail.com

Zooming fuel prices

WITH petrol touching the three figure mark in a number of Indian cities, somebody should remind Modi and the BJP of their slogan 'Bahut ho gayee petrol ki maar...' While the minions are busy justifying the hikes, the PM himself is silent. The hikes pause whenever there is an election, making a mockery of the governments claims that the prices are decide by the OMCs.

Anthony Henriques, Mumbai

Booze and lockdown 2.0

THOUGH it is not surprising that our CM again has taken a U-turn in imposing the lockdown 2.0, the shock is the immediate effect. Many of us assumed it will be after the Ramdaan since he vibes well with our other fraternity. However, though the summer has not yet struck as severely as it normally strikes, it is a welcome move to have summer vacation for all of us, albeit forced. What needs to be deplored is the short time period citizens had to store to quench their thirst.

We have witnessed mini-Kumbh Melas across the city at wine shops. Hope this goes unnoticed by our judiciary lest the government gets another reprimand. The surreal thing was that liquor shops were included in the essential goods category by opening from 6 am to 10 am. The government left this part of the lock down well hidden to enable the Excise department to laugh all their way to the coffers for just a day.

We pray none of these citizens run to Covid centres later.

Yaddanapudi Srinivas, Secunderabad



Free vaccine to all

ONE of the demands of twelve opposition parties to the central government is to give free vaccine to all, which is just and apt. Though it is a herculean task, it would be an inevitable step to contain the pandemic effectively. The government should take steps to ramp up vaccine production and end the duopoly on it by introducing compulsory licensing and encouraging more producers in that regard. Meanwhile it should ease the process of making imports of many other candidate vaccines available globally. If the government can regulate the affairs and assure free vaccination for poor and low cost affordable vaccination to all others, it would prove to be a game changer.

Dr D V G Sankararao, Nellimarla

Ensure better treatment to corona victims: Sabitha

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIKARABAD

EDUCATION Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy suggested that the district should take initiative to ensure better treatment for corona victims. She held a Covid review meeting with MLAs and officials on Thursday regarding the steps to be taken in Vikarabad district during the second wave.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Sabitha said that according to a fever survey conducted on 2,22,389 families in the district, 6,333 people had mild symptoms and 6,026 of them were provided with kits and medicines. She said that most of the patients currently are receiving treatment at three private hospitals out of the 14 private hospitals in the district. The Minister said 76,182 people in the district have been vaccinated so far and another 46,000 need a second dose. Corona tests have been conducted on 2,36,596 people in the district so far and there are currently 6,737 active cases in the district, she added.

The Minister said the district was getting adequate supply of medicines and efforts will be



Education Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy addressing the officials at a Covid review meeting on Thursday

made to increase the number of beds and oxygen beds in hospitals. Later, the Minister said lockdown was imposed under mandatory conditions for the welfare of the people and asked everyone to cooperate. The officials were instructed to monitor grain purchasing centers from time to time. Chief Minister K

Chandrashekar Rao had set up grain purchasing centers with an aim for the welfare of the farmers and wanted to see that the process would not be hampered, she added. Sabitha instructed all the district level officials to visit Covid centers and give courage to the patients.

MLAs Methuku Anand, Kale

Yadaiah, Pilot Rohit Reddy, Patnam Narender Reddy, District Collector Pausumi Basu, SP Narayana, Education Infrastructure Chairman Nagender Goud, ZP Vice-Chairman Vijay Kumar, Library Chairman Murali Krishna, District Education Officer Renuka, District Medical Officer Shinde and others were present.



Police officials briefing the media about theft offender at LB Nagar on Thursday

Police apprehends theft offender

HANS NEWS SERVICE
LB NAGAR

CCS LB Nagar police along with Hayath Nagar police of Rachakonda police Commissionerate apprehended theft offender on Thursday. On receiving credible information from sources, police apprehended theft offender Hussain Khan, resident of Narapally village at ORR in Pedda Amberpet and recovered 90 grams of gold ornaments, Rs 45,000 cash, Honda Activa and a mobile worth about Rs 3.95 lakh from him.

In 2016, Gopalapuram police of Hyderabad city, imposed PD Act against the accused and sent him to Cherlapally jail for one year. Rachakonda CP Mahesh Bhagwat appreciated the CCS LB Nagar team for early detection.

On the occasion, police said that Hussain Khan has committed several thefts in the past few years. They said that the solo offender's passion was to target lone ladies at toddy compounds and follow the target until some distance from toddy compound, later convincing the targeted lady for

sexual intercourse by offering huge money. Those, who believed his words, were taken to the outskirts area on his bike and there he would blackmail them and take the lady's valuable belongings. He would later flee away from the spot on his bike by leaving the victims alone on the outskirts.

Additional Commissioner of Police G Sudheer Babu, LB Nagar DCP Sunpreet Singh, Crimes DCP P Yadagiri, Vanasthalipuram ACP K Purushotham Reddy, inspectors and other police staff were present.

Corona haunts 4 of a family in 11 days

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MAHABUBABAD

COVID-19, which continues to wreak havoc in the region, left a family of Nellikuduru village under Thorru mandal shell-shocked as it accounted for the fourth person of the family. In 11 days, the family lost four members, all due to coronavirus. The latest to die on Thursday was the 60-year-old Mangamma. She breathed her last while undergoing treatment in a private hospital in Hyderabad.

It all began on May 2 with the death of Biksham (65), a retired government employee, Mangamma's husband. The couple's two sons were also found positive by then. First son Veeranna (45), working as a sericulturist lab assistant at Nellikuduru Government College, died on May 4. He is survived by wife and a daughter. Second son Upender (35), an employee with the veterinary department in Warangal, died on May 11. He is survived by his wife and two daughters.

Excise Minister reviews Covid treatment in Shadnagar

HANS NEWS SERVICE
SHADNAGAR

EXCISE Minister Srinivas Goud along with MP Manne Srinivas Reddy, Shadnagar MLA Anjaiah Yadav, District Collector Amoy Kumar and medical department officials held a review meeting on the ongoing treatment and vaccination of Covid patients in Shadnagar on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, Excise Minister Srinivas Goud said that every district in the State will have one task force to control corona and the task force will aim to protect the people from these catastrophic situations. Task force works with the District Collector, District Medical Officer, District Hospital Superintendent, Drug Inspectors and under the supervision



Excise Minister Srinivas Goud along during a review meeting on the ongoing treatment and vaccination of Covid patients in Shadnagar on Thursday

of the Ministers in charge of the respective districts, he added.

The Minister said that the role of paramedics, sanitation personnel, and police in corona

control is prominent. He said a person, who is affected with corona, should be brave enough because when a person loses temper, they stop producing an-

tibodies.

MP Manne Srinivas Reddy said that there is no problem in keeping people with symptoms of the disease in isolation. Therefore, in a household survey, those with symptoms are identified and medicines are given. He said that the government will take immediate action on receiving the details of the need to provide oxygen and other medical facilities.

Shadnagar MLA Anjaiah Yadav said those, who were infected with corona, should not feel ashamed and they should come forward with courage and seek treatment, stay in isolation and take medication.

DMHO Swarajyalakshmi, Zilla Parishad Vice-Chairman Ita Ganesh and other TRS leaders were present.

Astrologer with 100% accurate predictions

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

SOME important predictions

by famous astrologer and Srikalahast temple Asthana Siddhanthi Sri Mulugu Ramalingeswara Siddhanthi, that were scripted in 2020-21 Almanac, came true.

He predicted the future incidents and social events through his Astrology through planet movements in 2021. The following are some of them: Trinamul Congress wins in West Bengal; DMK wins in Tamil Nadu; BJP will

hoist its flag in Asom (Alliance); NDA will capture majority seats in Puducherry; LDF will form government in

Kerala; Bitter experience to Mamatha Banerji (but retains her seat); and Kamal Hasan's party will lose its deposits in Tamil Nadu.

Ramalingeswara Siddhanthi is the son of late Mulugu Viswanatham and grandson of Shiva Sri Mulugu Naga Lingaiah and Bhramaramba. He has been continuing his predictions in print and electronic media since 18 years.



Astrologer Siddhanthi Sri Mulugu Ramalingeswara Siddhanthi

RUTHU BHAROSA-PM KISAN

CM CREDITS 3,928.88 CR INTO FARMERS ACCOUNTS

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday released the first tranche of YSR Rythu Bharosa- PM Kisan for the third consecutive year, by crediting Rs 3,928.88 crore into the accounts of 52.38 lakh farmers, where each eligible farmer would get Rs 7,500. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister said that the state government hasn't held back any welfare schemes, despite going through Covid crisis and so was Rythu Bharosa. As promised by him during padayatra, the scheme was initiated to benefit the farmer fraternity across the state. He said so far, the state government had spent Rs 68,000 crore for farmers alone in the 23 months, whereas 17,029 crore was spent for Rythu Bharosa alone. In all these 23 months, the government had directly credited Rs 89,000 crore in to the accounts of beneficiaries under various schemes without any discrimination or corruption, with full transparency and accuracy.

Further, the Chief Minister said that Andhra Pradesh is the only state in the country which is extending an input subsidy of Rs 13,500 to farmers, including the tenant farmers and peasant cultivating forest and assigned lands, under the Rythu Bharosa. Although the government promised to provide Rs 12,500 under Rythu Bharosa for four years, seeing the hardships of the farmers, the government increased the amount to Rs 13,500 for a period of five years.

Going into the details, the Chief Minister said that the state



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy releasing Rythu Bharosa-PM Kisan funds into the account of beneficiaries at camp office in Tadepalli on Thursday

government had spent Rs 1,261 crore benefiting 67.50 lakh farmers under YSR Zero-Interest Crop Loans and also provided Rs 1,968 crore to 15.67 lakh farmers as YSR Free Crop Insurance scheme. Also, Rs 1,038 crore was given as input subsidy for those farmers who lost their crops in natural calamities.

In addition, the government had spent Rs 18,342 crore for procuring paddy and Rs 4,761 crore towards purchasing other crops and support the farmers. In order to provide free nine-hour electricity to farmers during daytime, Rs 17,430 crore was spent. Additionally, the government had cleared Rs 960 crore paddy procurement arrears and Rs 384 crore seed procurement arrears left by the previous government.

Chief Minister Jagan Mohan

Jagan asks Centre to explore ways to up vax production

AMARAVATI

ASSERTING that the entire country is in a battle with Covid-19, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy said that vaccination is the only way to win over the pandemic and stated that the Centre has to come out with alternatives to increase the vaccine production in order to fill the gaps for vaccination drives.

Speaking on the occasion of releasing the first tranche of YSR Rythu Bharosa, the Chief Minister said that the Central government has to take steps to increase vaccine production to meet the existing demand. In the current scenario, if about 26 crore people over the age of 45 are there in the country, they should be given a total of 52 crore doses. Similarly, those between the ages of 18 and 45 are 60 crores need 120 crore doses. Thus, a total of 172 crore doses would be required to vaccinate everyone across the country, but so far only about 18 crore doses have been administered, which is less than 10 per cent of the actual requirement.

Reddy said that Rs 2,000 crore will be credited into the accounts of 38 lakh farmers on May 25 under the YSR Free Crop Insurance.

He said that the government kept every promise made during elections and strictly implemented the election manifesto.



German shed at SVIMS Sri Padmavathi State Covid hospital

TTD to fund German sheds for Covid patients' treatment

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUPATI

TIRUMALA Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) sanctioned Rs 3.52 crore from its Sri Venkateswara Sarva Shreya Nidhi (Welfare Trust) for construction of 22 sheds with German technology popularly known as German sheds in districts for Covid patients' treatment.

TTD executive officer Dr K S Jawahar Reddy, who on Thursday issued orders for sanction of the amount from its trust fund, said the sheds each with 30 beds with oxygen facility would help to ease the huge demand for oxygen beds for Covid patients' treatment.

In Tirupati, such sheds which

were put up at SVIMS Sri Padmavathi state Covid hospital and also at SVRR hospital proved immensely helpful to cope with the huge demand for beds with oxygen facility in the state Covid hospital.

The success of the ad hoc German shed model providing beds with oxygen facility helping SVIMS hospital authorities saw requests from various places pouring in for construction the German sheds by TTD to help district administrations to meet the growing demand for oxygen beds which steeply increased following the galloping of Covid cases in the districts of AP, TTD EO said adding that the amount towards the cost for building German sheds would be transferred

from the TTD trust fund to district collectors who are responsible for taking up the construction of sheds as per the estimates approved by TTD.

The construction of sheds will be taken up immediately. Four sheds will be built in Visakhapatnam, two each in Prakasam, Kurnool and Anantapur, three each in Krishna, East Godavari and Guntur each and two more in other districts, Jawahar Reddy added. It may be noted here that TTD a few years back introduced German shed in Tirumala for providing temporary shelter to pilgrims during the 10-day annual Brahmotsavam to cope with the heavy rush of pilgrims congregating on the hills to witness the religious fete.

Active cases cross 2 lakh in State

AMARAVATI

FOR the first time, the number of active coronavirus cases crossed the two-lakh mark in Andhra Pradesh, touching 2,01,042, as the state added 22,399 fresh positives in 24 hours ending 9 am on Thursday.

The latest bulletin said 18,638 Covid-19 patients had recovered and

89 others succumbed in a day. The state Covid-19 chart now showed 13,66,785 total positives, 11,56,666 recoveries and 9,077 deaths.

In 24 hours, East Godavari district reported the highest 3,372. Chittoor 2,646, Guntur 2,141, Anantapur 2,080 and Visakhapatnam 2,064 new cases.

Five districts reported between 1,400 and 1,600 new cases each and

another three added less than 1,000 each.

Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram districts saw 11 fresh fatalities each, Chittoor and East Godavari nine each, Krishna and Prakasam eight each, Srikakulam seven, Guntur six, Nellore five, Kadapa, Kurnool and West Godavari four each and Anantapur three in 24 hours

‘Tera mujhse hai pehle ka nata koi’, man sings for dead mom

The song has now changed for us and I will forever associate it with the mother-son duo: Dr Ghosh

Doctors and health workers have been at the forefront of the fight against the coronavirus and amid the ongoing battle in saving lives, they often recount tales of grit, determination and conviction in the face of the pandemic which boosts the morale of everyone. But the sadness and turmoil associated with death and despair has equally enveloped us and as those at the forefront of the battle against the menacing virus, doctors often are forced to see it all.

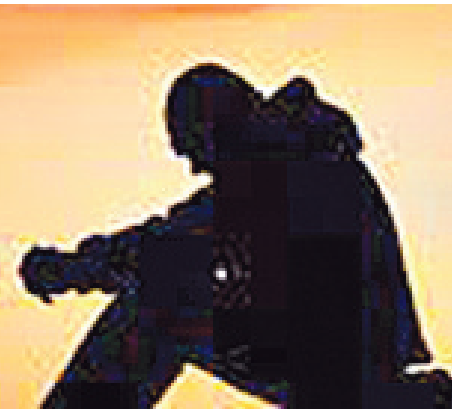
A doctor recently took to social media to talk about an incident she witnessed where an elderly Covid-19 patient who was hospitalised and not going to survive the ordeal, spoke to her son in an emotional moment. Her son, the doctor said,

requested a few minutes to stay connected to the call and he sang a popular Bollywood number for his mother.

Dr Dipshikha Ghosh took to Twitter on Wednesday to post, “Today, towards the end of my shift, I video called the relatives of a patient who is not going to make it. We usually do that in my hospital if it’s something they want. This patient’s son asked for a few minutes of my time. He then sang a song for his dead mother.”

Dipshikha said that the man started singing ‘Tera Mujhse Hai Pehle Ka Nata Koi’ while all the nurses came and stood near the elderly woman’s bed.

“I just stood there holding the phone, looking at him looking at his mother and singing. The



nurses came over and stood in silence. He broke down in the middle but finished the verse. He asked her vitals, thanked me and hung up.”

Ending her tweet, Dipshikha said after the incident, how the song has now changed for them and she will forever associate it with the mother-son duo.

Dipshikha’s tweet went viral and netizens commented on her heartbreaking post. Many others also joined in with their own stories of unfinished goodbyes and struggles of coping with the loss of their loved ones.

Meanwhile, TV actor Mukesh Khanna, who recently shared a social media post quashing the rumours about his death, on Wednesday, lost his sister due to post Covid-19 complications. In an

emotional social media post, Mukesh Khanna shared that his sister Kamal Kapoor has died due to lung congestion after recovering from Covid-19, in Delhi. “Yesterday, I struggled for hours to tell the truth about the false news of my death, but I didn’t know that a terrible truth is hovering over me. My only elder sister Kamal Kapoor passed away in Delhi.”

A lion, named Tripur, living in Jaipur zoo, tested positive for Covid, Indian Veterinary Research Institute officials said.

While Tripur was positive for SARS-CoV-2 that causes Covid-19, the sample reports of a panther, a white tiger and a lioness from Jaipur, were inconclusive, IVRI Joint Director KP Singh said, adding there was a need to resample them.

WINDOWS

UPSC (Prelims) rescheduled

NEW DELHI: Civil Services (Preliminary) examination, 2021 was on Thursday deferred and rescheduled in October -- four months from its original schedule. The examination will be held on October 10, which was earlier scheduled to be held on June 27. Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) deferred the examination due to the prevailing conditions caused by the second wave of novel coronavirus or Covid-19 which so far has infected 2,37,03,665 people that include 37,10,525 active cases and 2,58,317 deaths. The top body, responsible for holding the Civil Service examinations, had also deferred and rescheduled examinations last year too due to the Covid crisis.



Siberian tiger cubs at Kecskemet Zoo in Kecskemet, Hungary on Thursday

TN: 4 killed in boiler blast

CHENNAI: Four workers, including a woman, were killed and 10 others injured in an ammonia boiler blast at Crimsun Organics in Tamil Nadu’s Cuddalore district on Thursday morning, officials said.

The company’s plant in SIPCOT Industrial Estate in Cuddalore manufactures pesticides.

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin announced a solatium of Rs 3 lakh to the families of the dead and Rs 1 lakh for the injured. The injured have been admitted to the government hospital in Cuddalore.

Should we hang ourselves: Union Minister

Clinical trials of Covaxin on 2 to 18 yrs allowed; C’garh junks tenders for new Assembly bldg

NEW DELHI/RAIPUR/BENGALURU

UNION Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers D V Sadananda Gowda on Thursday sought to know whether people in the government should hang themselves for their failure to produce vaccines as was directed by the government.

“The court has with good intention said everyone in the country should get vaccinated. I want to ask you, if the court says tomorrow that you have to give this much (of vaccine), if it has not been produced yet, should we hang ourselves?” Gowda told reporters.

Replying to queries on the shortage of vaccine, the Union Minister stressed on the plan of action of the government and said its decisions are not guided by any political gain or by any other reason.

India will have enough doses to inoculate all citizens by December, the head of the national task force on Covid-19 vaccines said.

Between August and December, Niti Aayog member Dr Vinod Kumar Paul said, 216 crore vaccine doses would become available, which means that there would be surplus doses after every Indian is vaccinated.

India reported 3,62,727 new cases, taking the total tally of infections to 2,37,03,665.

The death toll climbed to 2,58,317 with 4,120 fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has accorded permission to conduct the Phase II-III clinical trial of Covaxin (Covid vaccine) in the age group of two to 18-years-old to its manufacturer Bharat Biotech Ltd, Union Health Ministry said on Thursday.

In view of a surge in cases, the Chhattisgarh government cancelled tenders for the construction of the new assembly building and also stopped work on major projects in the state.

It has also decided to take more stringent measures to prevent the infection from spreading.

The Nepal government asked private hospitals to instal their own oxygen plants to meet the need of oxygen within 15 days, the Himalayan Times reported.

Hospitals have stopped admitting patients due to oxygen scarcity. The virus has so far infected 413,111 people and claimed 4,084 lives, which has a population of approximately 29.5 million.



A patient on oxygen support waits for admission at a hospital, in Kanpur on Thursday

O2 crisis: Nepal hospitals stop admitting patients

India reports 3.62L new Covid cases, 4,120 deaths

‘PM missing along with vaccines, O2’

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi launched an attack on PM Narendra Modi, alleging that he is missing along with vaccines, oxygen and medicines during the COVID-19 pandemic and what remains is the central vista project and the PM’s photos. “The prime minister is also missing, along with the vaccine, oxygen and medicines. All that remain are the central vista project, GST on medicines and the prime minister’s photos here and there,” he said in a tweet in Hindi. Gandhi has been attacking the PM over the government’s handling of the pandemic and has been critical of the Centre for the lack of oxygen, medicines and vaccines in the country amid a surge in the number of cases during the second wave of Covid-19.

Harassment: 14 doctors resign

Unnao: Fourteen doctors working at community and primary health centres in Uttar Pradesh’s Unnao have tendered their resignation alleging misbehaviour and mental harassment by administration officers. The doctors, however, assured that they will not let their COVID-related work be affected till talks are going on with the district magistrate and the chief medical officer over the resignations. The fourteen doctors, who are in-charge of CHCs and PHCs here, submitted their resignation letters at the CMO office on Wednesday evening. They also forwarded a copy of their resignation letters to the additional chief secretary (Health), director general (Health) and other senior officers.

Bodies found buried in sand

Lucknow: Days after dead bodies of suspected Covid patients were seen floating in the Ganga River in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, multiple bodies have been found buried in sand at two locations along the Ganga river in Unnao district. Unnao DM Ravindra Kumar told news agency ANI, “Some people do not burn the bodies but bury them in the sand by the river. After I got the information, I have sent officials to the spot. I have asked them to carry out an inquiry and we will take action”. Most of the bodies were wrapped in a saffron cloth. There is no confirmation if these bodies were of Covid patients. The bodies were mainly found buried at the Rautapur Ganga Ghat in the Hajipur area.

Al Qaeda man seeks court nod to work as doctor in Bihar

NEW DELHI: An alleged Al Qaeda member who is a doctor and lodged in Bihar jail, moved a Delhi court on Thursday seeking permission to assist the prison authorities to deal with the Covid-19 cases.

In an application before Special Judge Dharmender Rana on Wednesday, the accused -- Sabeel Ahmed -- submitted that his experience and expertise as a medical professional would be helpful in dealing with the surge in COVID-19 cases and treatment of inmates in the central jail.

Ahmed, member of banned terrorist outfit Al Qaeda in the Indian Sub-Continent (AQIS), was arrested on February 22 by the special cell of Delhi Police, for allegedly providing logistic and financial assistance to other members of the organisation in India and abroad.

Ahmed’s advocate M S Khan sought a direction to the jail superintendent for allowing the accused to assist the jail administration.

It is pertinent to mention herein that accused is a qualified MBBS doctor with seven years of experience in treatment of critical cases.

His experience and expertise being a medical professional would be helpful for dealing with the surge in COVID cases and treatment of inmates in central jail, Bihar, the application said.

“It is, therefore, most respectfully and in the interest of justice prayed that directions may be issued to the jail superintendent for allowing the accused to assist the jail administration in for medical purposes on such terms and conditions as may be deemed fit and proper,” it added.

He is also an accused in suicidal terror attack at Glasgow Airport (United Kingdom) on June 30, 2007.

He was deported from Saudi Arabia on August 20, 2020 and was taken into custody by the National Investigation Agency in another terror case lodged in Bengaluru.

His custody was later taken by the special cell of Delhi Police in the present matter on February 22, this year.

1,600 rockets fired from Gaza, 7 Israelis dead

TEL AVIV: Palestinian militants have now fired more than 1,600 rockets from Gaza at Israel since the latest flare-up of fighting began earlier this week, Israel’s military said on Thursday.

Around 400 went down over Gaza, dpa news agency quoted military spokesman Jonathan Conricus as saying.

The success rate of Israel’s Iron Dome aerial defence system continues to average around 90 per cent at intercepting rockets, he added.

Seven people have died in Israel since the rocket launches began on Monday - six civilians and one soldier. Israel’s military has attacked

around 600 targets in the Gaza Strip, including rocket production and storage facilities.

A tunnel was also targeted that Conricus said was used partially to hide fighters and was built under a school in a populated area.

Conricus did not give concrete answers on how much arsenal the Palestinian militants have.

They had a very large amount and still have a considerable quantity, he said. Israel blames Islamist Hamas, the de facto rulers of the Gaza Strip, for any attacks from Gaza.

The group is classified as a terrorist organization by Israel and the European Union.



Smoke rises following Israeli airstrikes on a building in Gaza City on Thursday

Tejpal’s lawyer succumbs

PANAJI: Former Tehelka editor-in-chief Tarun Tejpal’s defence lawyer Rajeev Gomes died following Covid-related complications at a private hospital in South Goa district late on Wednesday.

The 47-year-old lawyer was Tejpal’s lead lawyer in the rape trial, whose long-drawn proceedings wound up earlier this year.

The death occurred on the same day when a trial court adjourned the pronouncement of judgement in the case, due to paucity of staff. Goa is currently in the midst of a 14-day curfew which ends on May 23.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant as well as Leader of Opposition Digambar Kamat condoled the death of the advocate, who was considered as one

of the top young lawyers in the state.

“Saddened by the passing away of prominent Goan lawyer Adv. Rajeev Gomes. May God give strength to his family to bear this great loss. My heartfelt condolence,” Sawant said.

“Feeling devastated with the passing away of eminent lawyer Adv. Rajeev Gomes. My condolences to his family. May his soul rest in peace,” Kamat said. Gomes had emerged as the face of the defence team in the rape case filed against the former Tehelka editor.

Tejpal has been booked under sections 376 (rape), 341 (wrongful restraint), 342 (wrongful confinement) 354A (sexual harassment) and 354B (criminal assault), of the Indian Penal Code.

Old graves being dug up for new burials at AMU

ALIGARH

Despite assurances of all help by UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath to the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) in dealing with the pandemic, the rising death toll has cast an unnerving shadow on the campus graveyard.

With at least three dozen serving and retired AMU employees having died in the past few weeks due to Covid, old graves are now being dug up to bury the dead.

The AMU campus has seen more deaths in past few weeks than in the entire year. The alarming death toll has sent shock-waves leading to apprehensions that a deadlier ‘AMU strain’ of the virus is wreaking havoc.

Vice-Chancellor Tariq Mansoor has written

to the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) so that all aspects can be studied through genome sequencing.

AMU Proctor, Professor Mohammad Waseem Ali, said, “In the past 20 days, we have lost almost 16 members of our faculty, eminent teachers, including the chairman of the medicine department, dean of law faculty and many others. As we come to terms with this loss, there is a sense of fear and restlessness.”

A senior faculty member said, “The graveyard is comparatively small and old graves are now being dug up to make way for the new. This is not entirely unforeseen but it also explains the situation. At AMU, we never witnessed so many deaths.”

The Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College



(JNMC) is one of the biggest hospitals in Aligarh and caters to four neighbouring districts. Doctors at the hospital have been dealing with an unprecedented situation with the rising number of Covid cases.

A high inflow of Covid patients from surrounding areas along with the faculty from within the AMU campus, has strained the facility.

Sources said that 8 to 10 burials are taking place on an average every day. “Even the ‘namaz’ is being offered collectively,” said a student.

CM visited AMU that has seen a number of faculty members losing their lives to Covid. He is the first Uttar Pradesh chief minister to do so. The chief minister took stock of the arrange-

ments made to prevent corona infection and held discussions with vice chancellor Tariq Mansoor, and other officials.

Two days ago, Adityanath had spoken to the vice chancellor on phone and had expressed his concern over Covid deaths, including 16 serving and 18 retired faculty members, on the campus.

He had assured all possible assistance in terms of medicines and oxygen cylinders for Covid treatment.

According to an official release, the chief minister also inquired about activities in the university.

The Aligarh Muslim University was established in 1920 by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and became a central university in 1921.

TODAY'S QUOTE

SWAMIH fund will benefit home buyers

“The Special Window for Affordable and Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH) Fund will benefit 1.16 lakh home loan borrowers whose housing projects were stalled due to last mile funding issues. Departments of the government and SBICap despite Covid-19 worked relentlessly in getting the stalled projects completed.


— **Nirmala Sitharaman**, Finance Minister.



TESLA EFFECT

Bitcoin value has slipped below \$50k

The price of bitcoin fell below \$50,000 after Tesla CEO Elon Musk tweeted a day earlier that the electric carmaker would stop accepting the digital currency as payment for its vehicles. Musk cited environmental concerns for the change in policy.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	74.15	South	
Euro	89.47	African Rand	5.95
UAE Dirham	20.59	Hong Kong Dollar	10.87
Thai Baht	2.57	Japanese Yen	0.77
British Pound	103.95	New Zealand Dollar	52.92
Australian Dollar	57.06	Saudi Riyal	21.52
Canadian Dollar	61.03	Swedish Krona	10
Swiss Franc	81.61	Singapore Dollar	56.06

DELHI FRIDAY 14 MAY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Jio adds 1.48L subscribers

Reliance Jio has added over 1.48 lakh new subscribers in the month of February 2021 in two Telugu states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, according to TRAI data. The company extended its market leadership in the Telangana and AP with over 3.16 crore mobile subscribers and nearly 40 per cent market share in the region. Airtel which added 72,559 mobile subscribers in February is at distant second in adding new customers. Vodafone Idea lost 1,90,341 subscribers and BSNL lost 7,880 subscribers in the same month, as per the official data. Total mobile subscriber base in the country increased by 82,92,668 in Feb 2021. Reliance Jio topped the 4G speed chart with data download rate of 20.1 megabit per second, while Vodafone was ahead of others in upload speed at 6.7 Mbps in April.

Forevermark's new offer

Forevermark, the diamond brand from the De Beers Group, said it provides a symbol of hope through its' natural and uniquely inscribed diamonds as the customers celebrate auspicious Akshaya Tritiya in coming weeks. In a time where we all seek the wealth of health and the light of hope, natural and precious diamonds represent the strength to move forward during tough times, the company said. "Lighting a lamp in a dark room always has its way of creating a passage of hope. While diamond jewelry may not be top of mind for many this season, it does hold a great significance on the occasion of Akshaya Tritiya. If you decide to purchase diamond jewellery this season, may it light your path ahead and reign in positivity," said Sachin Jain, MD, De Beers India.

Home Credit to support staff

Home Credit India has announced financial and medical assistance measures for safeguarding the life of employees and their families. The company has set up a Covid task force comprising of employees who go that extra mile to help other colleagues. The task forces help in a range of activities, from creating awareness regarding plasma donation, providing vehicle assistance in case of emergency, acquired oxygen concentrator and oxygen cylinder at various office locations for emergency usage, assistance for arrangement of beds in hospitals. The company is providing all employees, advance leave allocation for the entire year that can be availed for Covid-19 period and initiated other programmes to support employees.

Nasscom for vax import

Nasscom on Thursday said it has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking a temporary relaxation in the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) norms and further liberalisation of vaccine import to navigate through the deadly second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. The IT industry body said insights and analytics from Covid tracking and vaccination data could play a key role in decision making and early warning signals. All these steps will enable the industry to do more and act faster to help the country navigate the second wave. "While we are attempting to source available vaccines in India, we request the government to provide emergency use authorisation for all WHO-approved vaccines – Pfizer, Moderna, J&J, and others," it said

Intense bidding takes place for KG-D6 gas

NEW DELHI

AS many as 14 users across sectors slugged it on a third party electronic platform for seven-and-half hours to secure natural gas supplies from the eastern offshore KG-D6 block before the oil-to-chemical (O2C) unit of Reliance Industries Ltd bagged most of the supplies, sources said.

Reliance Industries Ltd and its partner BP Plc of the UK, who are bringing a second set of gas discoveries in their Bay of Bengal KG-D6 block, had offered 5.5 million standard cubic meters per day of additional gas in the auction for a flexible tenure of between three to five years. Gas users companies like Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Reliance O2C, GAIL Gas, Adani Total Gas Ltd, Torrent Gas, Torrent Power and gas trading companies like GAIL, Shell and IGS were locked in the intense bidding war on the e-auction that happened on May 5, sources in the Reliance-BP consortium said.

At the end of the intense bidding war, Reliance O2C walked away with 3.2 million standard cubic feet per day (mmscmd) of supplies offering better prices than competitors, they said. India Gas Solutions (IGS) - a gas sourcing and marketing joint venture of Reliance and BP - bagged another 1 mmscmd, while the remaining volume was picked by Adani Gas (0.15 mmscmd), IIR Energy (0.10 mmscmd), GAIL (30,000 cubic meters per day) and Torrent Gas (20,000 cubic meters per day).

This is the third auction that Reliance-BP conducted on a third-

Reliance O2C has bagged most of KG-D6 supplies in e-auction on DGH-approved platform



Reliance Industries Ltd and its partner BP Plc are bringing a second set of gas discoveries in their KG-D6 block, had offered 5.5 million standard cubic meters per day of additional gas in the auction for a flexible tenure

party independent platform approved by the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH). The online web-based electronic bidding platform of CRISIL Risk and Infrastructure Solutions Ltd (CRIS) was also used for e-auction in February this year as well as in 2019.

In the three auctions, Reliance-BP has sold around 18 mmscmd of domestic gas from new fields in the KG-D6 block, which would help substantially reduce reliance on imported LNG, sources said. In the May 5 auction, Reliance-BP had asked bidders to quote a price linked to Platts JKM (Japan Korea marker), the liquefied natural gas (LNG) benchmark price assessment for spot physical cargoes.

The lowest bid that could be placed was JKM minus \$0.3 per million British thermal unit. The highest acceptable bid would be JKM plus \$2.01 per mm Btu. The bidding, they said, started with a \$0.45 discount to JKM price and intense competition led to the discovery of a price of JKM minus \$0.6 per mmBtu (discount of \$0.6 to ruling JKM price). The intense competition indicates a preference for domestic gas vis a vis LNG for Indian consumers. At current prices, the discovered price translates into a price of about \$9 per mmBtu, but the buyers will be required to pay only the cap or ceiling price that the government has set for such fields.

New platform for hiring industry-ready personnel

HANS BUSINESS
HYDERABAD

BENGALURU-BASED online edtech platform Newton School has introduced a new initiative CampusPlus with an aim to provide easy and convenient bulk hiring of job ready software developers to top MNC's. Until now, fresh college graduates were the only option for MNCs to hire at scale. But, hiring college graduates means investing a lot of time and cost. This new initiative will solve the problem by providing industry ready resources with minimal effort from the recruiters.

Nishant Chandra, Co-Founder of Newton School, said: "On one side you have over a million college graduates every year with low single digit employability rate and on the other side there are thousands of companies struggling to find talent. We aim to bridge this massive gap through our new drive."

BREAKING COVID CHAIN Stop e-coms from selling non-essentials: CAIT

NEW DELHI

THE Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) in a communication sent to Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has said that going one step further, various e-commerce entities even in the ongoing Covid-19 induced national emergency are delivering non-essential goods in blatant contravention of lockdown guidelines imposed by various State Governments.

The CAIT has also sent similar communications to Chief Ministers of all States urging them to take immediate cognisance of this violation by e-commerce portals.

The CAIT said that the sole purpose of the lockdown is to limit human-to-human interaction and reduce exposure of the general population to the Covid-19 virus and thereby break the chain of the



Lockdowns will cost economy ₹1.2L cr

NEW DELHI

RESURGENCE of Covid-19 has changed India's macroeconomic narrative from being a linear V-shaped recovery in FY22 to being a story of a lost quarter, says Emkay Global in a report. Accordingly, the report cited that amid increasing geographical spread of virus, the bottom-up projections now suggest that for every month of current localised lockdowns, the output loss would now be Rs 1.25 lakh crore from Rs 75,000 crore as per the restrictions seen in mid-Apr 2021. "The fall in secondary and tertiary sector capacity utilisation varies between 10 per cent and 40 per cent among States," said Madhavi Arora, Lead Economist, Emkay.

She said the estimates imply a monthly loss of GVA growth by 90 basis points compared with loss of more than 40 basis points in output growth per month during Covid-1 lockdown.

"Clearly, factors such as better adapted firms and policy response, stable financial conditions, vaccine drive, pent-up demand release and robust global

growth spillovers create growth buffers," she said. "Assuming Covid-II peaks in May 2021 and restrictions ease by Q2FY22, we mark down our FY22 GDP forecast to 9.9 per cent from 11 per cent earlier." However, she pointed out that the situation is still in a flux, but as per current dynamics, the expected Q1FY22 annualised growth is seen at 16.5 per cent from more than 22 per cent estimated before the second wave. Their estimated monthly loss of output of 0.9-1 per cent of GDP is much higher than the estimated welfare cost of universal vaccination at 0.6-0.7 per cent of GDP, thus making a successful vaccine strategy the cheapest policy path to economic normalisation. Later, India reported record new daily increase in coronavirus infections, prompting new lockdowns and restrictive measures to curb the spread of the pandemic.

The exponential rise in new Covid cases in India is a humanitarian crisis. It also raises concerns about the country's economic recovery and currency fluctuations.

'Mfg units shall follow Covid norms'

HANS BUSINESS
HYDERABAD

EVERY manufacturing industry in the State is permitted to operate in the ten-day lockdown period, but they should follow all the protocols and norms announced in GO No.8 issued by the Industries Department, said Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary, IT and Industries and Commerce, Telangana.

Speaking at the virtual interaction on "Understanding Covid lockdown guidelines for the industries" organised by industry body FTCCI, he gave clarification about the industries operation in this ten-day lockdown. He also said if any extension is decided by the State government, the government will add the requests made by the industry body depending on the situation. "People should not move unnecessarily, and companies need to rationalize the movement of employees in such way that only those stay near the unit," he added.

DRL, MSN get license to launch Covid drug

HANS BUSINESS
HYDERABAD

CITY-BASED Dr Reddy's Laboratories (DRL) and MSN Laboratories along with Ahmedabad-based Torrent Pharmaceuticals have entered into a royalty free, non-exclusive, voluntary license agreement with US-based pharma firm Eli Lilly for manufacture and commercialisation of 'baricitinib' drug for the treatment of Covid-19 in India.

The drug baricitinib has been granted a restricted emergency use approval in India by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) for emergency use in combination with remdesivir for the treatment of Covid-19 in hospitalised adults requiring supplemental oxygen, invasive mechanical ventilation, or extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO).

This partnership comes at a critical juncture in the fight against the pandemic in India, and adds to the company's existing range of Covid-19 therapeutics covering the full spectrum from mild to moderate and severe conditions of the disease, and a vaccine. Deepak Sapra, Chief Executive Officer, API and Services, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, said: "From the start, we have been determined to explore every possible avenue against Covid-19. Our collaboration with Lilly will help us make yet another treatment option available to patients in India." Speaking about the collaboration with Eli Lilly, MSN Reddy, CMD of MSN Group said: "This is a landmark milestone in India's fight against Covid-19 and will thus help in increasing the availability and affordability of baricitinib. We will be launching the product under the brand name Baridox in two strengths 2 mg and 4mg."



Gold prices may rise above ₹56K/10 gm

NEW DELHI

THE price of gold is expected to rise above the Rs 56,500-level (per 10 gm) over the next 12-15 months, according to a report by Motilal Oswal Financial Services. "On the domestic front, the post-budget price correction is a good level to enter an immediate target towards Rs 50,000 and eventually hitting new highs of Rs 56,500 and above over the next 12-15 months," it said.

Gold's volatility in 2021 until now has been no less than any ride in an amusement park, the report said, adding that after a good rally last year, the market witnessed some profit booking and consolidation at the lower levels amid the US Presidential election uncertainty, vaccine reports from various pharma companies and volatility in dollar and yields.

This led to some profit booking in ETFs and CFTC positions suggesting that speculators too gave up their positions, hence affecting the overall

Prices have consolidated over the last few months and recently caught up some momentum and returned to around \$1,800 on the COMEX where we are comfortable suggesting buying for a short to medium perspective targeting new life time highs towards \$2,050 followed by \$2,200

sentiment. Although, with all these uncertainties, the precious metal pack was backed by strong fundamentals which kept the hopes high for all bulls.

"While we talk about the pandemic and bullions fundamentals, it is hard to forget the supply and demand dynamics that have been changing due to the measures the government announced in these times. The year 2020 started with prices at peak as there was ample demand and not sufficient supply," the report said. Physical market was hit, as amid the pandemic, stores were shut, and market participants could not go out and buy or recycle their gold. On other hand, with less gold recycling



and mines taking a hit, the overall supply was in question. Talking about demand and supply numbers in Q1, according to World Gold Council, strengthening consumer demand mitigated the impact of ETF outflows as global economies continued to recover. And total supply fell four per cent in Q1 despite increased mine production.

In 2021, the pandemic struck again, and a lot of economies announced stricter restrictions that led to safe haven buying in the precious metal pack. Covid cases are still on the rise in India and the pandemic fears still hover the market, but the situation is a bit different from last

year. A complete lockdown is not yet announced pan India. While there are a few restrictions, the demand supply dynamics are different from the previous year. Also, import duty in Q1 was declared earlier this year in the Union Budget announced by the Centre, which also weighed on the prices and encouraged jewelers to import more. The effect of the same can already be seen as the March import numbers were reported at 160T which is almost 470 per cent higher than the previous year. Strong fundamentals are helping gold gain momentum and are justifying our bullish stance maintained for more than a year, the Motilal Oswal report said.

Akshaya Tritiya, an annual spring-time festival of the Hindus and Jains, is approaching this week. Gold's demand increases more during such festivals and looking at the import numbers, the same is expected this time too.

Blue Dart forms team to run drone delivery

HANS BUSINESS
HYDERABAD

LOGISTICS service provider Blue Dart formed Blue Dart Med-Express Consortium with a mission of revolutionising the delivery of vaccines and emergency medical supplies to the remotest parts of India with drones. The consortium is part of the 'Medicine from the Sky' project in collaboration with the Government of Telangana, World Economic Forum, Niti Aayog and Healthnet Global.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has granted the project with necessary exemptions and rights to fly drone flights on an experimental basis in Telangana. The aim is to assess an alternate logistics route in providing safe, accurate and reliable pickup and delivery of healthcare items such as medicines, covid-19 vaccines, units of blood, diagnostic specimens and other life-saving equipment.



Balfour Manuel, Managing Director of Blue Dart says: "It's been over a year and our battle against Covid-19 continues to unfold new challenges that need solutions in real-time. The pandemic has taught each one of us the importance of logistics and the need for a tech-led supply chain infrastructure. The current situation calls for a much deeper penetration of vaccines."

Rama Devi Lanka, Director of Emerging Technologies and Officer on Special Duty (OSD), ITE&C Department, Government of Telangana, said that the project would generate real and actionable insights to drive future adoption policies and integration with the existing healthcare supply chain.

Badminton Olympic Qualification

Srikanth keeps fingers crossed over BWF assurance

Those assured of Tokyo berth take break

NEW DELHI

LEFT stranded after the final three Olympic qualifiers were cancelled, Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth still harbours "some hope" of making it to the Tokyo Games, his faint optimism resting on the world body's assurance of a statement on the qualification process.

Former world number one Srikanth and London Olympics bronze-medallist Saina Nehwal were all but out of contention after the Badminton World Federation (BWF) on Wednesday cancelled the last qualifying event in Singapore due to coronavirus-related travel restrictions.

The cancellation of the Singapore event (June 1-6) was after Malaysia Open and India Open had to be shelved due to the health crisis. The BWF, however, said it "will issue a further statement on Tokyo Olympics qualifying at a later date."

"I could have qualified if I had participated in the qualifiers but there is nothing much I can do about it now. Just waiting to see what BWF says about this whole qualification things, so yeah holding on to some hope," Srikanth told PTI.

"I'm not really thinking about what BWF can do, because whatever I think it will naturally be to make my qualification possible." There is no tournament scheduled till August and Telangana too has gone into a lockdown. Srikanth said he would now take a break from training.

"I have taken a break. They are trying to get some permission for training. If we get that then probably from next week I will

start training."

Asked if BWF could have done anything differently, Srikanth said: "Now we can say a lot of things because the tournament is not happening but we really don't know what is happening between the organisers and BWF."

"So, I don't know what else can be done, maybe BWF can communicate things better to players." With no events lined-up, Olympic-bound shuttlers such as P V Sindhu, B Sai Praneeth and men's doubles pair of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, too have decided to take some time off.

"Definitely disappointed that all the three events got cancelled. I have been training for 7 weeks but now just training without pur-

pose makes no sense," world no 15 Praneeth said.

"I, at least, have Olympics to look forward to and I plan to start training again from next week." Chirag said "it is difficult to stay motivated" in such uncertain times.

"We trained for one and half months for India Open but the situation worsened. Now we are left with no events after constant planning and training," he said after returning to Mumbai.

"Me and Satwik have decided to relax a bit and not think about badminton. We will be back to the camp next week but the main training for the Olympics will be just one and a half month before the event."

Sindhu too will take the week off. "Coach Park (Tae Sang) had put a good amount of load on Sindhu till last Monday, so now he asked her to take her mind totally off badminton," Sindhu's father P V Ramana said.

Will the lack of events affect preparation of the players? "It is not an ideal situation to go into the Olympics without any match practice. But I feel it can be a boon also," said Chirag.

"The top players like the world number ones will need a tune up ahead of Olympics, for them it will be a pressure to perform. For example, Kevin (Sanjaya Sukamuljo) and Marcus (Fernaldi Gideon) have played just one match after a year ... so comparatively we would be under less pressure." Praneeth too feels no competition could be an advantage.

"I have played only Swiss Open and All England this year, I thought I will get a few good wins in the three events and get some confidence but it's okay, guess it is same for all. "It could be an advantage also, since we play each other so much, but in the last one year, I have played just two players, so it could be



NEW DELHI

FORMER spinner Ramesh Powar on Thursday replaced W V Raman as the Indian women's cricket team's head coach, regaining the position more than two years after he was sacked owing to a bitter fallout with ODI captain Mithali Raj. The 42-year-old was recommended by the Madan Lal-led Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) after interviewing eight candidates, including Raman.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announces the appointment of Mr Ramesh Powar as the Head Coach of Team India (Senior Women). The BCCI had advertised for the post and received over 35 applications," a BCCI statement read. The others in fray were former India wicket-keeper Ajay Ratna and four female candidates including former chief selector Hemlata Kala.

"Looking forward to take India women's cricket ahead. Thanks a lot CAC & bcci for this opportunity," Powar tweeted after his appointment. The CAC chose Powar for his clear vision for the team, said Lal.

"He has been coaching for a while. His vision for the team impressed us the most. He has a clear cut plan for the team, what he wants to do with it to take it to the next level. He also has full clarity on all aspects of the game. Now he needs to deliver on that," Lal told PTI.

It remains to be seen how Powar works alongside Mithali, who had accused him of bias after the Harmanpreet Kaur-led T20 team dropped the veteran batter for the all-important World Cup semifinal against England.

Mithali, in a letter to the BCCI after the event, had alleged that Powar "was out to destroy and humiliate" her. Powar had hit back asserting that Mithali "threw a lot of tantrums and created chaos in the team".

After being removed from his position in the women's team, Powar proved himself as a coach and earlier this year, led Mumbai to the Vijay Hazare Trophy after the domes-

qualified for the semi-final of the T20 World Cup that year and also won 14 T20 matches in a row.

Raman, who had replaced Powar in December 2018, now finds himself in a similar situation. The former India batsman had coached India to the T20 World Cup final last year but it seems the ODI and T20 series loss to the visiting South African team in March cost him the job.

Powar back as Indian women's cricket head coach, replaces Raman

tic giants failed miserably in the T20 competition. He has also worked at the National Cricket Academy as a bowling coach.

Asked whether his acrimonious exit from the team and relationship with Mithali was discussed during Powar's interview, Lal said: "We did ask him about it and he said he wasn't at fault. He is okay working with all the players".

"I was also very impressed with the views of the four female candidates. It showed they are very much in touch and involved with the game. Future is bright for all of them," Lal added.

Powar worked two Tests and 31 ODIs for India. In his first stint with the women's team, Powar was at the helm from July to November 2018. It was under his tutelage that India

A few selection calls during the series, like the dropping of teenage big-hitter Shafali Verma and senior pacer Shikha Pandey, had raised eyebrows. "All the best @im-rameshpowar with the @BCCI-Women in this spell. Look forward to seeing the girls soar under your guidance..." Raman tweeted.

It was the team's first assignment in 12 months after a prolonged break due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Powar's major challenge will be to prepare the team for the ODI World Cup in New Zealand next year. His first assignment will be a full-fledged tour of the UK starting with India's first Test in seven years from June 16 against hosts England. The team is also scheduled to tour Australia before the World Cup. (PTI)

Chelsea-City Champions League final moves to Porto with 12,000 fans

LONDON: The all-English Champions League final will be held in Porto with 12,000 fans from Chelsea and Manchester City, UEFA confirmed Thursday. The May 29 showpiece was moved from Istanbul to the 50,000-capacity Estadio do Dragao due to England imposing tougher pandemic travel restrictions on Turkey that would have prevented fans flying in. The initial alternative had been to use Wembley Stadium in London, but talks with the British government stalled on Monday over being able to secure quarantine waivers for the guests and broadcasters required by UEFA to attend the game. But Portugal is among the 12 territories that England is allowing people to return from without quarantine beginning next week. UEFA said 6,000 tickets to both Chelsea and City fans would go on sale on Thursday. "Fans have had to suffer more than twelve months without the ability to see their teams live and reaching a Champions League final is the pinnacle of club football," UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin said. (AP)

ICC Test rankings: India keep top spot

NEW DELHI: India have retained the top spot in the International Cricket Council's (ICC) annual update of the Test rankings. India are on 121 rating points while second-placed New Zealand are on 120. England overtook Australia to take third place with 109 rating points. Australia currently have 108. The West Indies, who beat Bangladesh 2-0 and drew 0-0 with Sri Lanka in series played this year, have moved from eighth to sixth with 84 points, their best position since 2013. The ICC said that the latest update eliminates the results of 2017/18. It rates all matches played since May 2020 at 100 per cent and those of the previous two years at 50 per cent. "India's 2-1 win over Australia and 3-1 win over England over the past year and New Zealand's 2-0 series wins over the West Indies and Pakistan have helped them keep ahead of the pack," said the ICC. Pakistan have gained three points but remain in fifth position. South Africa are in seventh position, equaling their lowest in Test ranking history, while Sri Lanka are next on the list. Bangladesh have lost five points but remain in ninth position while Zimbabwe have gained eight points but are still nine points behind Bangladesh. (IANS)

India better than Aussies at identifying talent: Chappell

SYDNEY: Australia is no more the best country at identifying cricket talent, an aspect that India have mastered after taking inputs from the Aussie structure, former Aussie captain Greg Chappell has said. Chappell said that both England and India are ahead of Australia in grooming young talent. He has proposed a radical overhaul of Australia's domestic programme. "India have got their act together and that's largely because [India's National Cricket Academy chief and former Test captain] Rahul Dravid has picked our brains, seen what we're doing and replicated it in India and with their much larger [population] base," Chappell told cricket.com.au. "I think we've already lost our position as the best at identifying talent and bringing it through. I think England are doing it better than us now and India are doing it better than us." The former batsman warned that Australia face slipping further behind India and England unless major structural changes in domestic cricket are considered. "Historically, we've been one of the best at developing young players and keeping them in the system, but I think that's changed in the last couple of years," the 72-year-old cricketer said. (IANS)

Olympic-bound race walker Irfan, 4 others test Covid +ve in SAI Bengaluru

NEW DELHI

OLYMPIC-bound race walker K T Irfan is among five elite track-and-field athletes who have tested positive for COVID-19 at the Sports Authority of India's Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru. The tests were conducted last Friday and those who returned positive have been kept under quarantine.

"At least five elite athletes have tested positive for COVID-19 when tests were conducted on Friday. They have been kept isolated from others," a source at the SAI Centre told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

The source said another male race walker also tested positive but his name could not be confirmed. "4 male players and 1 female player and 4 support staff tested positive for COVID-19," a SAI source stated. "The female player had come from home. The players were tested on 6th and their results came positive on 7th. They received their first vaccine dose on 29th April.

"One male player and one female player were not vaccinated. They have been tested again on the 10th and their results are awaited tomorrow. One athlete would also be tested once more in 2-3 days' time." It is learnt that none of the female race walkers are among those who returned positive.

The SAI source said the whole hockey team training at the Centre other than one player has tested negative. "This one hockey player will be tested again tomorrow," the SAI source said, without giving the name of the player. (PTI)

Former Manchester United defender Valencia retires

QUITO (ECUADOR): Former Manchester United and Ecuador player Antonio Valencia on Thursday announced his retirement from football because of chronic knee problems.

The 35-year-old Valencia made the decision after playing just 15 matches in almost six months for Mexican side Queretaro.

"It is a tough decision. I feel mentally strong, I feel good, but there is something that is not right with my body, and that's my knee," he told a virtual news conference, Xinhua reports.

"It is time to say thanks to this beautiful sport. If I've let anybody down, I apologise. I've always tried to give my all for my country."

Valencia was capped 99 times for Ecuador's national team in a career that included a decade at Manchester United as well as spells with Villarreal, Wigan Athletic and LDU Quito, among other clubs. (IANS)






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