

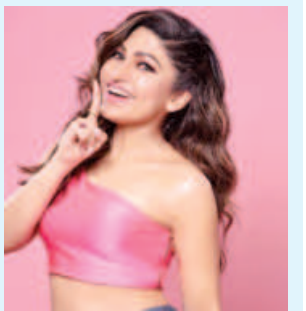
Womenia

TWEET PATROL



TULSI KUMAR
@TULSIKUMARTK

Let's be there for each other in every way possible #TulsiKumar #tkians #staysafe #staystrong #takecare



NEWS ROUNDUP

Mandira Bedi's headstand theory to keep 'anxiety at bay'

Actress Mandira Bedi took to Instagram on Wednesday to post a picture that captures her doing a headstand. The actress wrote about how such an exercise helps her beat anxiety and added that she has been able to achieve this after regular practice. "All inverted poses help keep my anxiety at bay. Be it the headstand (which I needed today after a long time) or the 10 wall assisted handstands I practice every day. Karam karo.. phal ki chinta mat karo. Bas chinta door hi rakho #stay-home #staysafe #stayactive," she wrote. On the work front, Mandira will soon be seen playing a cop in an upcoming murder mystery web series. It will also star Sid Makkar, Dipannita Sharma and Nauheed Cyrusi. The details of the series are under wraps, including the title.



Eat fresh to refresh

In our country all meals are freshly cooked and consumed. This practice preserves maximum nutrients. Food that is re-heated, loses its vitamin and anti-oxidant content. For example, Vitamin C rich food like lemon is best eaten raw. No wonder, it is freshly squeezed over food to preserve the Vitamin C present in it

So often, when I am sitting in peace, enjoying my summer fruits and vegetables, I receive frantic calls of people who are mentally and physically drained. I tell them all, especially women who are in charge of the kitchen, "I Thank god, we are born in a country where it is so easy to refresh and recharge!"

Nature has abundantly looked after therapeutic needs by imbedding fruits, vegetables, grains and other plant produce; with a variety of vitamins, anti-oxidants and minerals. But the former two are delicate darlings that lose their power easily when exposed to light, temperature and time. In fact, in our country all meals are freshly cooked and consumed. This practice preserves maximum nutrients. Food that is re-heated, loses its vitamin and anti-oxidant content. For example, Vitamin C rich food like lemon is best eaten raw. No wonder, it is freshly squeezed over food to preserve the Vitamin C present in it.

Simply seasonal

I know for a fact that nutrients in seasonal foods are far more than non-seasonal. Seasonal foods have travelled less, ensuring the nutrients are more intact. Unfortunately, a lot have forgotten this and will have apples in the summer.

Eating raw in often more palatable in summer



Naini Setalvad

than cooked food. Simply raw cucumbers with rock salt and lemon, or a mix of onions and raw mango with a sprinkling of rock salt, lemon, roasted cumin seeds, mint leaves, chopped green chillies makes for a tangy delight. Lemon and raw mangoes are packed with immunity boosting Vitamin C. Onions make you cry clearing up your sinuses and bronchial tract. The nutrient benefits in raw food are innumerable. Do add them on daily.

Vocal for local

Vocal for local is the way to go. For eg. In summer if you are from Andhra, have the Safeda mango. Similarly, eat fruits and foods grown in your region. They would be truly fresh, and more intact nutrients, as they would have travelled less. When you eat locally, your body assimilates the nutrients more easily because for generations our bodies have been used to that produce. Climatically too, that is what the body requires. By eating locally, we are additionally contributing to the environment and sustainable eating.

Let me share with you the fresh Indian summer produce:-

Vegetables - The entire gourd family. From Bitter gourd to bottle gourd, pumpkin, sword beans, cucumbers,

onion, tomatoes.

Fruits- Melons, mangoes

Grains- Wholegrains like rice, pearl millet, little millet and whole wheat.

All Pulses -Like mung bean, pigeon peas etc. sprouted or cooked as dals or rasam.

Fats - Cow's ghee, cold pressed coconut and peanut oil.

Spices and condiments - cumin, ginger, green chilli, asafoetida.

So let's consume the summer produce, to physically and mentally - refresh.



Accessories to use this summer season

GRUSHA KHANNA

The lockdown might have killed your mood to style yourself and move out during this summer season but we have got some cool accessories that you can style or wear being home.

Wearing a hat or a cap

A hat or a cap is something that will always be in trend no matter where you are inside your home or outside with your friends. You can sit around your balcony with your hat on it will protect you from sun rays and will give you a different feel altogether.

Cotton scarf

People usually prefer to wear sandos when they are home or a strap top, something that is comfy and summer friendly. You can wear a light color printed scarf around your neck, wrapping it in circular form. This way you wear and go to the market comfortably and will help you absorb the sweat too.

Smart watch

This summer switch to smart watches. Smart watches are one of the majorly



FASHIONISTA

used devices, as it helps people to work while keeping their phones aside. Not only this, it keeps a track of your health, routine activities and water intake too.

Minimal jewellery

Being home gives a peace and relaxation to our skin especially our ears and neck. Try to wear normal stud types earrings when you are home. This way your ear holes won't get close. You can also wear small gold or diamond earrings too. It depends on you what to wear or what jewellery type suits you. Also you can

wear them on alternate basis depending on your preferences.

Samosa salwar

You can go for samosa salwar when you are at home. They are one of the most trending and comfortable bottom wear that you can carry or wear during this summer season. They are loose and comfortable, giving you a flexibility to do exercise, home chores and other things too.

Mask

Don't forget to wear your mask! Whenever moving out don't forget to wear your mask in the current covid scenario. These accessories will eventually help you to stay motivated and photogenic with these trend setting accessories.

PLABITA SHARMA

A sunscreen is your best friend, whether you're stepping out shopping or going about your work and chores, it protects your skin from harmful UVA/UVB rays and pollutions that cause damage in any and every season.

Not only outdoors, sunscreens plays a crucial role in protecting your skin while you are indoors from UVA rays which enter through standard glass windows and can penetrate deeper into the skin than UVB rays, becoming a contributing factor to photo-aging - which are changes seen as dark spots, wrinkles, and leathery textured skin.

Broadly there are four types of skin and to choose the best sunscreen it's very important to know your skin type. This can be done by washing your face with the help of gentle cleanser. This will wash away the makeup, pollutants and other dirt. Wait for an hour and make sure that you do not touch your face. Your skin should return to its natural state which will help to determine the type of your skin. Take a tissue paper and dab your face. The area consisting of your

forehead and nose must be the place where you concentrate.

- Normal skin: If your skin shows no oil or no flaking and it feels smooth and supple, you have a normal skin type.
- Oily skin: If there is lots of grease on the tissue paper, then you have an oily skin type. It is common that you

might have a shine and large pores.

- Dry skin: If the tissue paper is accompanied by lots of flakes and dead skin, then your skin is dry. You need to consider moisturising your skin.
- Combination: Any combination of the above-mentioned skin types is a combination skin type. This is very common skin type. Your skin is generally oily in the forehead and nose area and dry elsewhere.

Now that you know your skin type, it's easy to choose the perfect SPF Sunscreen for yourself. If you have dry skin, look for a sunscreen with a moisturiser or sunscreens that contain hydrating ingredients (ceramides or hyaluronic acid).

If you have oily skin type, creamy sunscreens can usually feel sticky

and heavy. Opt in for water-based or a lightweight formula sunscreen which is considered ideal for oily skin type.

If you're blessed with normal, uncomplicated skin, your choice is easy. Any high-quality sunscreen will work for you, whether spray, cream or stick.

Along with the SPF factor it is equally important to look at the PA factor. SPF is a grade used to rate the level of UVB protection. The higher the number, the higher the UVB protection.

PA is a grade used to rate the level of UVA protection. The more "+" symbols, the higher the UVA protection.

Typical sunscreens offer protection from mostly UVB Rays. UVB Rays burn your skin while UVA rays cause skin aging and age spots when your skin is overexposed. A broad spectrum sunscreen or a full spectrum sunscreen protects you from both.

UVB rays burn your skin while UVA rays cause skin aging and age spots when your skin is overexposed



NO DIET DAY

Too long has health been associated with unrealistic body types and unhealthy, dangerous fad diets. No Diet Day has been pushed forward with the intention of promoting healthy lifestyles for all body types.

No Diet Day was first started by Mary Evans in 1992. The purpose of the day was to help men and women around the world to appreciate their own bodies. Having gone through anorexia herself, Mary began Diet Breakers, which is her organisation. She then created the first No Diet Day, bringing attention to the cause, and of course, her organisation as well.

Now, the day is used to help tackle tough issues regarding diet and body awareness, focusing on a number of agendas. This includes the following...

- Educating people about the right way to diet responsibly and effectively
- Having all people take a one-day break from their diets
- Celebrating the diversity of different shapes and sizes

Bodies can be beautiful at all shapes and sizes, with both the svelte look of the athletic beach nut and the more Grecian and Rubenesque body types merely exemplifying the natural body type. Considering that

the failures of dieting often result in yo-yo-ing weight, with all of the weight lost being regained in almost every case within 5 years. To combat these incredibly unhealthy habits organisations all over the world have been engaged in forcing the fashion industry to label those images that have been modified, or outlawing the use of photoshop altogether.

Celebrating No Diet Day is best done by recognising that your own body is beautiful exactly as it is. De-emphasising your efforts to shed weight to look a particular way, it is far better to celebrate the holiday



with efforts at beginning to live a healthier lifestyle altogether. Worry less about your final goal, and more about getting out and being active and keeping your body healthy. Losing weight rapidly or shooting for unrealistic body types is an excellent way of causing yourself harm in the pursuit of greater health. Instead, love your body by finding active hobbies and love yourself the way you look!



Fake drug rackets reaching rural areas, antibiotics sold as Remdesivir

NEW DELHI

BEWARE of fake life saving drugs. Instead of Remdesivir, which is required for critically ill Covid patients, similar looking vials of Monocef or Zetri, a low cost antibiotic injection, are being sold in the black market.

Criminal gangs and swindlers active in Delhi-NCR and Western Uttar Pradesh are reportedly buying Monocef vials in bulk, each piece costing around Rs 52, and selling them to desperate customers for over Rs 5,500 to Rs 10,000 apiece.

Taking note of such rackets gradually reaching the smaller

towns and rural areas, the Uttar Pradesh Police have alerted all the districts, particularly in western and central parts of the state, to keep a strict vigil on the stockists, distributors and wholesalers of medicines.

"We have raided over 68,000 places to seize genuine or fake drugs being sold in the black markets in the past few days. In a bid to punish such accused persons harshly, cases are being registered under the National Security Act," Prashant Kumar, Additional Director General of Police (ADG), Law and Order, UP, told IANS.

Acting on specific inputs, the

Delhi Police on Tuesday unearthed a gang involved in selling fake vials of Remdesivir for Rs 5,500 each.

The gang, which was active in the Nand Nagri area of the national capital, had purchased low cost Monocef injections in bulk.

"They got labels of Remdesivir printed from a local press fixed them on the Monocef vials. One Dhanesh Kumar from Ashok Nagar and Amit from Meet Nagar were involved in the racket. Both have been arrested. We are questioning them to ascertain how widespread the racket was," said an officer of the



Delhi Police. And it's not only in Delhi-NCR and its neighbouring states where such rackets

are thriving. Fake Remdesivir injections are being sold in far off places like Gujarat and

Odisha. In a major crackdown on such rackets, the Detection and Crime Branch of Ahmedabad Police arrested seven persons last week who were selling antibiotics as Remdesivir.

Fake labels of Hetero and Jubilant, two major pharma companies manufacturing Remdesivir, were also seized from the accused persons.

Even in Maharashtra where cases are multiplying in smaller towns, the merchants of death are reportedly selling fake drugs to the needy attendants of Covid patients. When asked how cheaper injections like Monocef are being sold in bulk to crimi-

nal gangs, the General Secretary of All India Organisation of Chemist and Druggist (AIOCD), Rajiv Singhal, said that instructions have been given to all chemists to keep a tab on the customers who demand injections in bulk.

"It is unfortunate if some criminals are selling antibiotics in the name of Remdesivir. We will take all measures to put a check on this crime, though as a practice we ensure that bulk drugs are sold only to the bonafide customers," said Singhal, a key functionary of AIOCD, which represents over 9.50 lakh chemists across India.

Punjab yet to get 30 lakh doses of vaccine from SII



CHANDIGARH

WITH government hospitals in the state failing to kickstart the process of vaccinating people in the 18-44 age group due to non-availability of vaccine doses, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Wednesday directed the Health Department to explore all options for the supply of vaccination.

Though the state had made payment of Rs 10.37 crore to the Serum Institute of India (SII) for procurement of around 30 lakh doses of Covishield on April 26, no schedule for supply had so far been received from them, Health Secretary Hussan Lal informed the Cabinet during a virtual meeting chaired by the Chief Minister.

Only some private hospitals, which had placed direct orders for the vaccines, had commenced the process of vaccinating the 18-44 population, the meeting was informed.

For the state government, the SII has only indicated that the

availability of Covishield will be known in about four weeks' time, he added.

The meeting was informed that in the circumstances, vaccination in the 18-44 age group could not be launched in government hospitals, nor was there any clarity on when the process could begin.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet approved one-time relaxation in Punjab Village Common Lands (Regulation) Rules, 1964 for transfer of five acres of panchayat land in Mohali to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for establishment of the National Institute of Virology. The Institute has been sanctioned by the Central government on a proposal by the Punjab government.

The cabinet authorized the Deputy Commissioner of Mohali to complete all necessary formalities for transfer of the land in Mullapur Garibdas village in Kharar block in the district.

Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan said construction for the institute would start by the end of this year.

Ayush app helps treat Covid patients in home isolation

LUCKNOW

THE Ayush Department of Uttar Pradesh has rolled out a new feature on the 'AYUSH Kavach App' which enables the citizens to access medical treatment which is locally and easily available.

This is an attempt to provide maximum benefits of the ancient and traditional health systems like Ayurveda which are not only affordable and accessible, but also help in increasing the body's disease resistance capacity and immunity.

It is particularly helpful in treating patients in home isolation. The Ayush department has prepared a pragmatic plan for promotion of Ayurveda in treatment of Covid-19.

In its new feature, the app recommends easily and locally available medicinal treatment, keeping in mind the comfort of the people, the lockdown and the social distancing norms.

Citing an example, Dr Ashok from the department of Ayush said, "Eucalyptus is widely grown



and is available in abundant quantities in west Uttar Pradesh, whereas Mahua flowers are largely grown in the Bundelkhand region. The feature emphasizes on educating people about

the benefits and importance of the natural resources available in their respective regions and informs them about their use in developing a strong and healthy shield against the Corona virus."

DU teachers' union warns against termination of 12 ad hoc teachers

NEW DELHI

TWELVE ad hoc teachers' services have been terminated in Delhi University's Vivekanand College, according to a teachers' organisation. This action has been condemned by the Delhi University Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe/Other Backward Class Teachers' Forum.

According to the DU SC/ST/OBC Teachers' Forum, of the 12 ad hoc teachers, five have tested positive for Covid-19. The overall condition of teachers suffering from the infection is quite bad. Their families have been struggling with a financial crisis while they have been terminated.

For the last five days, these teachers have pleaded with the Principal and Chairman of Vivekanand College to restore their services but to no avail. These teachers have also written a letter to the Delhi Teachers' Association (DTA) in-charge, apprising him of the situation.

Teachers' Forum President, Kailash Prakash Singh, has said two Commerce, one Economics, three English, two Computer Science, one Sanskrit, one Food Technology, one Mathematics and one Environment Sciences ad hoc teachers have been teaching in Vivekanand College for a



long time. Of these, three ad hoc teachers belong to the SC category, four to OBC category and five to the General category.

He said even in January 2021, the college principal had taken an arbitrary step to not reinstate these ad hoc teachers but after the intervention of Hansraj Suman, Delhi Teachers' Association in-charge, and Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA), the chairman of the college's governing body halted the interviews for these posts and got all 12 teachers reinstated. He said that if any teacher was terminated during the Covid-19 pandemic they would be forced to take to the streets against the college principal.

IB OFFICER'S MURDER CASE

Delhi riots: Court denies bail to accused

NEW DELHI

A DELHI court has dismissed the bail plea of a man accused of killing an Intelligence Bureau (IB) official during riots in the north east part of the national capital last year, saying that allegations against him were grave in nature.

Additional Sessions Judge Vinod Yadav said accused Nazim was instigated on communal lines by former AAP Councillor and main accused Tahir Hussain, because of which he lay charged to attack the other community. IB official Ankit Sharma's body was found in a drain near his home in North-East Delhi's Chand Bagh area on February 26, a day after he had gone missing after riots broke out.

"There is enough material on record which clearly identifies the applicant to be part of a riotous mob which had indulged in arsoning, looting, vandalizing public and private property; chanting communal slogans and attacking persons of other community," the judge noted, in the May 4 order. "The judge further remarked that the allegations against the applicant are "grave in nature" and if enlarged on bail, there is a possibility of the accused threatening the public witnesses.

He added, "Considering the facts and circumstances of the case in to-



tality, I do not find it to be a fit case for grant of bail to the applicant in the matter at this stage. The bail application accordingly stands dismissed." The postmortem report of the deceased Ankit Sharma had revealed 51 injuries caused by sharp edged weapons and blunt force on his head, face, chest, back and waist.

During the course of proceedings, Special Public Prosecutor Manoj Chaudhary said that as many as six injuries on Sharma's body could have been caused by the weapon of offence recovered from the possession of the accused. "It is very vehemently argued that the offence alleged against the applicant is very serious in nature; further investigation in the matter is still on and if released on bail at this

stage, the applicant can hamper the further investigation," the prosecutor said.

Advocate Salim Malik, counsel for accused Nazim, told the court that his client had been falsely implicated, just because he was known for the 'bad character' in the area and that the witnesses were planted. He argued that during the time of the alleged incident, the accused along with his brother and co-accused Kasim was not present in Delhi and instead were putting up at Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh, from where both of them were arrested.

"The recovery of the alleged knife has been planted upon the applicant. Even as per the FSL report received in the matter, the blood

stains found on the alleged knife did not match with the blood of the deceased," he claimed. Delhi Police in its charge sheet filed in June last alleged there was a deep rooted conspiracy behind Sharma's murder as he was specifically targeted by a mob led by Hussain.

The Delhi High Court recently dismissed the bail pleas of two other accused -- Sameer Khan and Kasim -- in the same case, saying they have been "playing hide and seek with the prosecution". Communal clashes had broken out in northeast Delhi on February 24 after violence between citizenship law supporters and protesters spiralled out of control leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured.

Akbar's plea against Ramani acquittal

● HC says will call for trial court records

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi High Court on Wednesday said it will call for the trial court records in connection with the defamation case filed by former Union minister M J Akbar's against journalist Priya Ramani who had accused him of sexual harassment.

The trial court had acquitted Ramani by dismissing Akbar's defamation complaint. Justice Mukta Gupta said she will call for the trial court records and listed Akbar's appeal against Ramani's acquittal for hearing on August 11. During the brief hearing, the Akbar's lawyer said the trial court judgement was "perverse". Akbar has challenged the trial court's February 17 order acquitting Ramani in the case on grounds that a woman has the right to put grievances before any platform of



her choice even after decades.

The trial court had dismissed the complaint filed by Akbar, saying no charges were proved against Ramani. It had said it was of the considered view that the case of Akbar regarding commission of offence punishable under Section 500 (punishment for the offence of defamation) IPC against Ramani is not proved and she is acquitted for the same.

The trial court had said it was shameful that crimes against women are taking place in a country where mega epics like Mahab-

harata and Ramayana were written about respecting them. The glass ceiling will not prevent Indian women as a roadblock in advancement in society of equal opportunities, it had said. Ramani had made allegations of sexual misconduct against Akbar in the wake of the #MeToo movement in 2018. Akbar had filed the complaint against Ramani on October 15, 2018 for allegedly defaming him by accusing him of sexual misconduct decades ago. He resigned as a Union minister on October 17, 2018.

Delhi govt not taking steps to create O₂ buffer

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi High Court on Wednesday said it appears that the Delhi government has not taken steps for creation of a buffer of liquid medical oxygen (LMO) and for streamlining its distribution in the na-

tional capital. A bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli said it is for the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) to explore the various possibilities to create storage facilities for LMO and oxygen cylinders in the city. The court said that the

GNCTD may take help of the Delhi Technological University to prepare a blueprint for storage and distribution of oxygen in the city. It said the obligation to create an oxygen buffer fell on both the Centre and GNCTD as per the Supreme Court's April 30 order. ^{PTI}

MHA asks States to review fire safety measures at hospitals

NEW DELHI

THE Union Home Ministry on Wednesday directed all the states and Union Territories (UTs) to carry out a detailed review of fire safety mechanisms at the hospitals and nursing homes to prevent fire incidents.

The direction came after several instances of fires were reported at different healthcare facilities, including those treating Covid-19 patients, in various parts of the country.

Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla issued the order to the

chief secretaries of the states and UT administrators, asking them to ensure proper fire safety measures at the hospitals and Covid care facilities.

"Given the recent fire incidents in the hospitals and particularly in view of the impending summer months, it needs to be highlighted that short-circuits take place, leading to fire incidents and loss of lives and infrastructure, either because of high temperature, lack of maintenance or high load on internal wirings within the facilities," the MHA notification read.

It further said that care should be taken to put in place a plan of action to ensure that there is no fire incident in any health facility, particularly those dedicated for Covid patients, both in the government and the private sector.

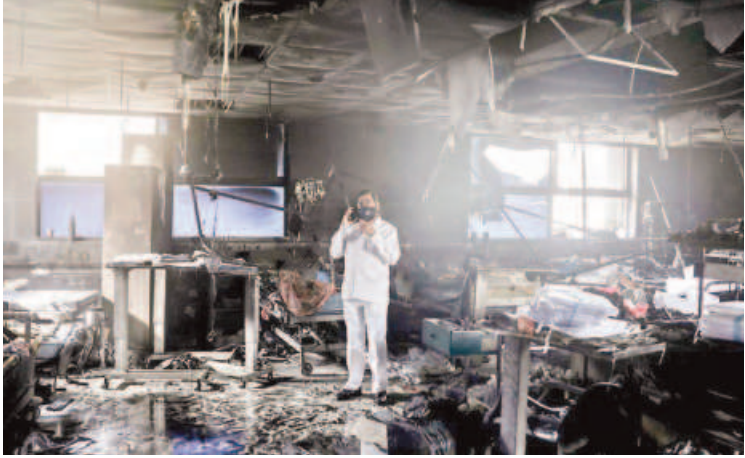
The Railways' Oxygen Express trains have delivered around 2,067 tonnes of medical oxygen across the country over the last 16 days with Delhi getting the highest 707 tonnes, followed by Uttar Pradesh with 641 tonnes.

Currently, trains carrying 344 tonnes of liquid medical oxygen

are on the run. "The Railways have delivered liquid medical oxygen to various states across the country. So far, Indian Railways has delivered around 2,067 Tonnes of liquid medical oxygen in 137 tankers to various states across the country," a statement from the ministry said. It also said that so far, 34 Oxygen Express trains have completed their journey.

While 174 tonnes of oxygen has been delivered to Maharashtra, 641 tonnes have been transported to Uttar Pradesh, 190 tonnes to Madhya Pradesh, 229

tonnes to Haryana, and 123 tonnes to Telangana. Delhi has got 707 tonnes of liquid medical oxygen so far. The first Oxygen Express was run on April 19 when seven trucks left Mumbai for Vizag to load the gas. These seven trucks were loaded on flat wagons and they were moved to the loading location. Each Oxygen Express trains' tankers carried nearly 16 tonnes of medical oxygen. These trains run at a speed of around 65 km per hour.



When the choice is lady or Modi, the former wins

HISTORY seems to have a way of repeating itself, as far as the political fate of BJP is concerned. The recently held, high-octane polls in West Bengal which saw Didi triumphing over the combined assault of Modi- Shah and retaining the CM slot for the third time in a row is just the latest example. For over two decades, the Tamil Nadu supremo Jayalalithaa had given a taste of what it means to deal with her brand of politics to the saffronites.

The tallest leader in BJP, A B Vajpayee himself bore the brunt of her power antics in 1998-99

when his government fell as her party withdrew support to it. Later, despite Narendra Modi being on her right side throughout his term as Gujarat CM and later as the PM, she never succumbed to his party's pressure tactics of alliances and seat sharing formulae till she was alive, five years ago.

During the 1990s, there were more tales of political jolts. The state unit of BJP under the leadership of Kalyan Singh can never forget the humiliation heaped on them by Mayawati, described as a 'miracle of democracy' by the then PM, P V

Narasimha Rao. In 1997, dishonouring a power-sharing deal, she had walked away after serving her term, withdrawing support to BJP, which had to indulge in naked power games by splitting the Congress to stay in power.

To continue the list of losing battles of BJP with wily lady politicians, the saffron party had yet another brush with 'stree shakti', when it was dethroned from the Delhi Assembly in 1998. Sheila Dikshit, the Congress politician who replaced the BJP went on to stay as the CM of Delhi till 2013, a record period of 15 years, unbroken till

date by a female neta. Of course, Mamata would attain the distinction when she completes her present term in 2026.

This is a trend which will continue to bug the BJP as more women are gearing up to enter Assemblies and the Parliament, as and when the 50 per cent reservation for women becomes a reality. It is not as if the party's approach is misogynistic as it had the late Sushma Swaraj as one of its leading lights till her unfortunate demise, two years ago.

In the present scheme of things, the Smriti Iranis and

Nirmala Sitharamans are shining examples of peaceful coexistence the male-heavy establishment of BJP has with the female leaders. During the recent polls in five states, there were many lady socialites and cinema heroines who had joined the party in Bengal and Tamil Nadu, campaigning ferociously and also making a mark here and there. The best example would be Vanathi Sreenivasan humbling Kamal Haasan in a tight contest. Still, this inexplicable outcome of coming a cropper before the power women leaders of other parties, who seem to have a great run against the BJP is a classic case study on its own.



Skill upgradation challenges in medical profession

SACHIN GUPTA

THE Covid-19 has highlighted the deficiencies and challenges in our healthcare sector. Healthcare professionals are facing new obstacles and it shows us what we have done in the medical field so far is not enough. It has become a global issue. Global problems require global solutions. As medical students, we are convinced that these skills and attitudes will be even more crucial in the coming years.

In the changing scenario, the role of the doctor must constantly evolve to meet the needs of an unpredictably changing environment and to fulfill the needs of society. Therefore, medical students should prepare to engage in such cases in the future. Covid-19 has had an unprecedented impact on medical education worldwide, leading to the cancellation of lectures, clinical rotations, and ultimately the temporary closure of medical colleges and institutions.

The Covid-19 pandemic, which is both a medical and a social disaster, is due to the attack of this conservative edema of medicine. The coronavirus crisis has highlighted the new challenges healthcare professionals must keep in mind, in the future. Due to Covid-19 doctors around the world needed to work with local authorities and international bodies, as well as with each other, to limit the effects of the outbreak. The epidemic has served to remove the aristocratic and individualistic barriers of medicine that keep the private and public, rich and poor, and individual patients and community apart.

Why there is need of medical practitioners to develop evolving skill sets?

Upskilling and reskilling is an integral part of developing skills and also become necessary to stay competitive in today's world given the changes brought by technologies and even societal shifts. Medical professionals are also expected to keep themselves up to date with the latest developments in clinical sciences and medical technologies.

The curriculum is yet to catch up to the global standards of medicine and education because the degree earned by Medical graduates today is with limited or no exposure to new technologies, so the skills they are learning have to be updated too.

To develop critical knowledge and understanding of medical education there is need of proper training, infrastructure, and guidelines, which is lacking in online learning. So additional training is required for those in the medical and healthcare services.

Today the process of treating a patient requires a communicative approach that involves technical expertise with good communication skills apart from just clinical expertise.

In this global Pandemic the role of the doctor to foresee and adapt to potential healthcare challenges are increased. Here are some details where medical students need to pay more attention.

Break Year

Students who appeared in NEET 2020 were low and many students took this year as a break year, so Class XII freshly pass-outs will face tough competition from break-year students. They will face a heavily revised syllabus, tough question papers, and tougher evaluations.

Promote a healthy lifestyle

A healthy lifestyle can be promoted through nutritious foods and hygiene for that it is a relevant and important strategy to involve nutrition education, as part of the curriculum of schools and colleges and reducing the burden of malnutrition and obesity. For that, it is needed to launch a nationwide social movement for better nutritional outcomes - through expanded actionable partnerships with agencies and institutions by creating a nutritional resource network of technical and educational institutions such as medical colleges, home science colleges, etc.

Stress

The pandemic has increased the stress of everyone and medical students are not immune to it. Due to the highly demanding course, there are many reasons for stress which causes various adverse impacts on students' physical and psychological health. Not being able to do the practice for the subjects in the lab is adding extra stress.

Orthodox syllabus and teaching style

In the current digital era, there are many changes in the medical field, but the medical syllabus is not updated. New opportunities in medical science are barely touched. Study patterns are teacher-centered which doesn't use technology as much as it is used abroad. It leads to a compromise in the quality of doctors. The traditional medical curriculum should be improvised with communication skills in the form of Continuous Medical Education (CME), to encourage students with proper training to develop good communication skills.

(The author is Chancellor, Sanskriti University)

PART-II

Indians and the Armed Forces

TALKING OF MANY THINGS



Dr Mohan Kanda

IN India, as is the case in most countries, the Army is the largest force, the Air Force following as the second largest followed the Navy, the smallest. India has one of the longest military histories dating back several millennia. One must take one's hat off to the manner in which the Armed Forces of today have not only done that rich legacy and heritage proud, but have, in fact, done a great deal to add to its glory and greatness.

Coming back to the question of the appeal the Armed Forces have for the youth of the country, one cannot but be impressed by the efficacy of the publicity blitz the three forces mount highlighting various factors such as the opportunity to serve the nation, the glamour of the uniform, the adventurous lifestyle, the challenging work opportunities, the esteem in which society holds them and such like.

The pride and sense of honour that come with the career also play a very important role. After all, wearing 'India' on your shoulders when you represent your country in a United Nations contingent is no small cause for pride!

Generally speaking, today's youngsters appear to prefer softer career options with attractive financial returns and perks, rather than those that involve sacrifice and hard work. Youth with an idealistic streak, however, find a career in the Armed Forces a choice option, especially as a contrast to the crass, consumerist, materialistic

and individualistic culture that today's society appears to nurture. The security offered by jobs in the government and the Armed Forces, not only to the individuals concerned but also to their families, also appears to weigh heavily in their favour in such cases.

The sheer width of the canvas of opportunities of serving in different disciplines that the Armed Forces offer is another major attraction. You can, for instance, find yourself working in a military college, a nuclear submarine, a hospital, the fighter aircraft, an air - ambulance, or in the intelligence services. The fact that the educational qualifications prescribed are not too high also helps. In fact, it is a different world of opportunities.

Increasingly, one also finds people from the less affluent sections of society showing a strong preference for a career in the military (as selection process is much more transparent and just, compared to some civilian counterparts).

It is truly amazing how, especially when compared to the quality of intake in civilian careers the Armed Forces have adhered uncompromisingly to criteria regarding medical fitness, physical endurance and psychological factors in the recruitment procedures.

One cannot but admire the ease with which the Armed Forces perform the difficult task of building a common bond between and amongst the recruits who come from varying family backgrounds and cultural factors. The emphasis on discipline, respect for chains of command and lines of control and strict compliance with standard operating procedures soon converts what were raw youth, to begin with, into mature and motivated soldiers and officers.

Another aspect in which the Armed Forces truly excel is the way in which progression and development in the careers are handled. No Buggins turn please, not for them! Promotions are invariably based on performance and merit with a



great deal of emphasis being placed on the qualities of leadership and the ability to build and nurture teams. And a robust environment is put in place that rewards efficiency and ruthlessly discourages indifferent performance.

In India, as is the case in most countries, the Army is the largest force, the Air Force following as the second largest followed the Navy, the smallest.

India has one of the longest military histories dating back several millennia. One must take one's hat off to the manner in which the Armed Forces of today have not only done that rich legacy and heritage proud, but have, in fact, done a great deal to add to its glory and greatness.

Before the NDRF came into being it was entirely the three Armed Forces that came to the rescue of the civil government when disasters struck and also during law and order situations. I recall how, during a flood relief operations in 1986 which I was asked to supervise in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh, I flew in an Air Force helicopter to Chennai to organise assistance from the Area Com-

mander of the Indian Army, who readily provided generous support.

Just as in the case of other similar families, the Armed Forces enjoy a companionable love hate relationship among themselves. Those who have read 'Yes Minister', will recall that in the episode titled 'the grand design' the chief of defence staff refers to the Air Force as a bunch of garage mechanics interested in nothing but flying around dropping things on people! The British version of humour is really in evidence as the Royal Air Force has always been treated among the best in the world. Similar jokes are often exchanged in the Navy and the Army Messes.

I have described, elsewhere in these columns earlier, the interesting incident of General Thimmayya and General Cariappa. While they were cousins, a formal relationship still obtained between them. And at the time and on the day Thimmayya, having spent a week meticulously preparing for the occasion, arrived on the dot and saluted promptly but without his cap! Overly thorough preparation

can sometimes lead to such costly slips!

Before I conclude I must share with the readers a thought I have been entertaining for some time now. I have been wondering whether it would not be a good idea to make a short stint in the Armed Forces (perhaps a year), mandated requirement for employment to be offered in the public and private sectors, subject of course, to other requirements such as academic qualifications, and previous experience have been satisfied. A similar requirement is mandatory in several countries accordingly such as Singapore.

Similarly, training with the Boy Scouts and Guides movement, and the National Cadet Corps (NCC), can perhaps be made a compulsory part of the curriculum in all schools and colleges. That will certainly ensure that the attention of the students is diverted away from political and, possibly, anti-social activities, and also help nurse the patriotic outlook.

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

LETTERS

Trust doctors, not WhatsApp

THIS refers to Dr Ramu Suravajjala's 'Combating the infodemic with digital civility'. The writer rightly mentions that the information which we spread through social messaging apps and social networking apps without verifying its veracity can cause huge impact on receivers. The fake messages which people send about Covid-19 can cause harm to readers if they believe it. People must believe doctors and not WhatsApp.

Kartikay Upadhyay, Vadodra

Deploy Ayush graduates

THE government can consider the Ayush graduates to take up Covid duties in all district hospitals. Being trained in Indian medicine as well as Allopathy, these doctors would be very well suited to serve the rural poor. Our visionary CM can well consider this and take appropriate steps immediately.

S Krishnan, Secunderabad

Maximise oxygen supply

BETTER coordination between the Centre and States and also among the states for arranging uninterrupted oxygen supply where it is needed most is the need of the hour.

Doctors are under stress in hospitals struggling to save serious Covid patients and also with other comorbidities. Covid positivity as well as death rate has already gone very high in India even in wake of only

fewer testing for our huge population. In cities, particularly more populace, the situation is precarious as people are not serious too in following Covid protocols. In view of inadequate medical facilities including that of fewer doctors and paramedical staff, we need to first invariably give these frontline warriors the Covid vaccine.

Unutilised ventilators rusting in many government hospitals must be made functional. In order that scarce resources are optimally used the bureaucrats at the helm must galvanise the working conditions of such hospitals. Private hospitals too need to be transparent in giving adequate care to the patients in such emergent situations.

Brij Bhushan Goyal, Ludhiana

Stalin sets an example

THE DMK supremo, Stalin is understood to have got furious on two of his party men and suspended them from the party over their vandalising acts on Amma canteen and throwing away two flex boards embossed the name and the pictures of Jayalalithaa, who was the matriarchal figure of rival party. That expelling two own party members for their acts of rudeness towards rival party by the chief sends strong signals to the cadre and gives the leader moral authority in public life. Stalin deserves praise for his graceful gesture that becomes a rarity in political class now. It's unfortunate that West Bengal has been witnessing post poll violence taking fourteen lives in two days. The chief minister Mamata should act in same manner with her counterpart in Tamil Nadu and take stern action against wrong doers with a sense of objectivity.

D V G Sankararao, Nellimarla

Can the world ever unite?

A pandemic should unite theoretically all nations and humanity as one. Instead, we have only massive fights at almost every level. In India, the entire narrative fixes around the central pole of our PM dissolving any sort of balance or sanity. The haters hold him responsible for every single evil in the country including the cat which lapped up their milk or the abusive drunk in their neighbourhood. The lovers make it a point to inform that Modi is responsible for the butterflies looking beautiful in their gardens.

The pandemic has overwhelmed all the countries in the world (except perhaps China). People in the western world are also rebelling against instructions and causing problems for the governments by holding public parties without masks. Vaccination shortage is acute even in the western world. Without exonerating our government which took the extremely foolish step of conducting elections across the country which no political party, media, intellectuals, or the judiciary (perhaps in summer vacation) bothered to oppose, these are just desperate times for the world.

Only two threats could have possibly dissolved borders and joined humanity as one: a pandemic or an extra-terrestrial threat (meteors, asteroids, and maybe aliens too). We have lost the first opportunity; perhaps the second undesired option remains the only hope. Carl Sagan said that we should always strive to become a two-planet species because the frail human mind does not have the intellectual and emotional capacity to protect itself and the Earth in-

definitely. We need a back-up.

Another scientist says, our Earth may have reached this stage of civilisation many times before. At a crucial stage of nuclear power development, humans or their equivalents endowed with similar kinds of brains might have simply blown themselves up. Our combined nuclear power has the capacity to destroy humanity and all living life many times over. But, a small corner of the human mind still allows us to live with some optimism as everyone seems to be fighting just about everyone else and solutions become new questions.

Pingali Gopal, Warangal

Say no to total lockdown

PROPOS to 'PM Under Pressure To Lockdown India' (THI 5 May). It is true that PM and his government are not only under attack for a failure to stem the spread of cases in the second wave and also lack preparedness to tackle the severe strain on health facilities. Like it or not it's indeed true both Centre and State have failed to use the lockdown to improve the health infrastructure both long and short term. There is no clue why the Covid facilities created last year were dismantled. The central and state heads have forgotten what Benjamin Franklin has said 'failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail'. When the virus was novel, like the rest of the world we had no clue on how the stem spread and lockdown hasty or otherwise was considered necessary. One hopes PM would not announce country-wide lockdown under pressure as it would affect poor and ordinary people more than salaried class and rich.

N Nagarajan, Hyderabad

thehansreader@gmail.com

Bandi condemns attacks on BJP cadre, supporters in WB

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

BJP State chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar lashed at Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for the continued post-poll violence in West Bengal.

He addressed media here on Wednesday before launching one-day protest, in response to the party's nationwide protest against the attacks and violence on BJP cadre and people in that State.

"The 17 crore BJP cadre across the country and the Hindu society in the country stand solidly behind the BJP cadre and Hindus in West Bengal. If need be, the BJP cadre is prepared to do Karseva in West Bengal to bring accountability, if the Mamata Begum and Mamata Khan fails to stop looting, arson, molestation of women, attacks on Hindu institutions, BJP cadre and offices," he warned.

Sanjay Kumar said that the one-day protest is being observed across the country and in all the mandals in Telangana to express solidarity to the BJP cadre and Hindu society in West Bengal by



- Telangana BJP alleges that illegal Bangladeshi and Rohingya immigrants are unleashing terror
- BJP's 17 crore cadre are prepared to do Karseva in WB if Mamata fails to stop violence

strictly following Covid norms. He said during the elections, the BJP has been cautioning the people by placing the facts before them as to how the left parties and TMC have been encouraging illegal immigration from Bangladesh and Rohingyas. "The BJP had contested in the election in West Bengal not for power. But, to protect democracy and to save that State from illegal immigrants, who were used as vote banks by the pseudo-secular par-

ties mortgaging the national interests," he pointed out.

"Women is being molested openly, shops of BJP supporters were looted and destroyed, 18 BJP cadre and supporters were killed, BJP party officers were attacked. Yet, the so-called secularists and liberal intellectuals could neither see nor hear anything about the goings on in West Bengal." Adding, he asked were Hindu women not women and lives of BJP cadre are not lives,

and attacks were no attacks?

The Karimnagar MP charged that the illegal Bangladeshi immigrants and Rohingyas armed with weapons have taken even the police vans to unleash atrocities, which exposes the grave situation in West Bengal.

"Even if any random incident takes place, the secular liberals unleash criticising BJP, RSS and Hindus. But, their eyes turned blind and ears deaf to the atrocities going on in West Bengal. A section of media that is failing to show what is happening in West Bengal vows an answer to the society for the same."

The BJP State chief said the terror being unleashed in the post-poll violence was an indication of the illegal immigrants, Rohingyas what they will do in the next five years. He said that Hindus have been observing maximum patience all the time. But, if Mamata Begum and Mamata Khan fails to fail to act, then the BJP cadre of 17 crores is ready to give a call for 'Chalo Bengal' to teach a lesson. Sanjay said that the BJP had sacrificed 300 of his cadre to protect democracy in West Bengal and rose from three to 75 seats.

Govt failed miserably in controlling corona: BJP leader Aruna

HANS NEWS SERVICE
GADWAL



BJP national vice-president DK Aruna

BJP national vice-president DK Aruna levelled serious allegations against Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and said that the State government has miserably failed in controlling the spread of coronavirus in the State and playing dirty politics to divert public attention from the prevailing crisis.

Speaking at a press conference at her residence in Gadwal on Wednesday, she alleged that to divert the public from the ongoing Covid chaos in the State, the TRS leader has brought to fore his party's internal political skirmish and misleading the people.

The CM has miserably failed to give the much needed confidence to the people and protect their health in this emergency situation. She suggested the people to take their own care and go into self-lock down as the entire healthcare machinery has failed to protect them. Except this, there is no other option left and we cannot trust the government which completely let off its arms, she criticised. Referring to the recent political high drama going on

in the TRS, the BJP leader said the Chief Minister has forcefully snatched health ministry from Eatala Rajender and made the health department headless by keeping the department under his purview. She felt that this was not a good development because as the pandemic is widely spreading killing hundreds of people and infecting lakhs every day and a full time Minister for the health department is a must. The CM seems to be unmindful of this issue and has been playing dirty politics, which is going to cost heavily for the public health but also to the State in the long run, observed the BJP leader.

Aruna advised Chief Minister KCR to take immediate steps to save lives of people and come out to serve in whatever way possible. Otherwise, the TRS and its leaders will face public ire, she warned.

TRS chief appoints observers for Mayor election

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

CHIEF Minister K Chandrashekar Rao on Wednesday appointed Ministers and other party leaders as observers for electing two Mayors, Deputy Mayors, five chairpersons and vice-chairpersons for which the election would take place on Friday (May 7). According to the party leaders,



for Khammam Municipal Corporation, Minister V Prashanth Reddy and party general secretary N Naresh Reddy will be the observers, for Warangal Municipal Corporation elections Ministers A Indrakaran Reddy and Gangula Kamalakara; for Kothur Municipal Talasani Srinivas Yadav; for Nakrekal TRS general secretary T Ravinder Rao; for Siddipet former Karimnagar Mayor Ravinder Singh and Forest Development Corporation Chairman V Pratap Reddy; for Achampet Municipality Minister Singireddy Niranjan Reddy; and for Jadcherla Civil Supplies Corporation Chairman M Srinivas Reddy.

The party supervisors were asked to reach their assigned municipalities by Thursday evening and take up the election process with the names given in sealed cover. They have been asked to take up the election process of mayor, deputy mayor, chairperson and deputy chairperson with discipline.



Dhanpal Lakshmi Bhai Vittal Gupta Trust Chairman Dhanpal Suryanarayana presenting mortuary freezer box to Dubba Vaikuntadhamam on Wednesday

‘Assure Covid patients with plasma donation’

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NIZAMABAD

DHANPAL Lakshmi Bhai Vittal Gupta Trust Chairman Dhanpal Suryanarayana called on the youth to reassure Covid patients with plasma donation. He handed over handed over mortuary freezer box to Dubba Vaikuntadhamam in Indur. Suryanarayana said that he donated mortuary freezer box to those in needy and it should be given free of cost.

He said Covid deaths have been increasing and there is uncertainty as to when and what will happen to anyone. He said his Trust will always be available for the people of the city in the current situation where the epidemic is rampant.

Dhanpal assured that he is always ready to serve if the people bring their needs to his attention. He asked the youth to come forward to donate plasma, as a life could be saved by donating plasma. He urged the people to come out of their house only during emergency as the pandemic is spreading fast. BJP district vice-president Nagolla Lakshmi Narayana, city general secretary Nichenga Krishna, corporators Master Shankar and Vinod Reddy, Illendula Prabhakar Gupta, Bikain Madhu, BJYM district general secretary Amandu Vijay Krishna, BJYM leaders Bhaskar Reddy and Dubba Sarvajani and others were present on the occasion.

Extended curfew in Parkal town

HANS NEWS SERVICE
PARKAL

IN a bid to curb the spread of coronavirus pandemic, Parkal town will have an extended curfew from Thursday. It was decided that the curfew will start at 1 pm every day and end 6 am next day. It may be mentioned here that the State Government has already been enforcing curfew from 9 pm to next day 6 am.

Municipal Chairperson Soda Anitha Ramakrishna, vice-chairman R Vijayapal Reddy and ACP T Srinivas, Municipal Commissioner Seshu and others took a decision in this regard in a meeting headed by Parkal MLA Challa Dharma Reddy here on Wednesday.

Stating that Covid-19 has assumed dangerous proportions, Challa Dharma Reddy urged the people to remain indoors as much as possible.

"The State Government has ensured better facilities at MGM Hospital, Gandhi, Osmania, NIMS and TIMS etc to treat the coronavirus patients. The people who were tested positive can go on home isolation based on their convenience. The needy can stay at the isolation centre set up at Gurukul School near Mallakapet Hanuman Temple free of cost, he added. ACP(Parkal) Srinivas urged the people to follow the restrictions. All the business establishments will be open till 1 pm every day, he said. The Municipal Commissioner said that they have taken all measures to keep the town clean.

Issue fresh GO on congregations within 24 hours: HC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

THE High Court Division Bench headed by Chief Justice Hima Kohli and Justice Bollam Vijayes Reddy on Wednesday heard a batch of public interest litigations on Covid-19.

The Chief Justice bench expressed its deep concern and dismay over GO dated 16-11-2020, which permits 200 persons to congregate following Covid-19 norms and the District Collectors concerned and heads of local bodies were authorised to permit congregations and during this period, implementing such a GO will be unsafe for the people of Telangana.

CJ Hima Kohli directed the State government to issue a fresh GO in this regard, wherein 50 persons should be restricted for marriages and 20 persons for funerals. Necessary GO in this regard should be issued by the State government without losing any time within 24 hours.

Due to the tremendous increase in the number of positive cases in Telangana, while referring to the Health Bulletins of the State, CJ Hima Kohli said "Adhering to the letter dated 25-4-2021 of the Union Health Ministry to the State governments, the Telangana government has imposed restrictive measures on the advice of the Central government namely, including night curfew which shall remain in



LEGAL NOTES

force till May 8, 2021 till 5 am.

Further, looking at the critical situation that the State is in, where the number of cases are mounting and fatality rate also increasing, the State government shall review the situation well before May 8 and consider imposing an additional restrictive measures besides those restrictions imposed through GO 87, dated 20-4-2021 and GO 91 dated 30-4-2021, which may include extending the hours of the night curfew or imposing weekend lock down so as to flatten the curve of Covid-19 in the State, CJ said in the order.

Chief Justice Hima Kohli directed the Additional Solicitor General of India to ensure that the Central government supplies 600 metric tonnes the Telangana State as it has supplied only 300 metric tonnes of Oxygen, which it has requisitioned as there is a huge demand in the state.

CJ further directed the Additional Solicitor General of India en-

sure that the Central government, supplies requisite number of Remdesivir lifesaving drugs to the Telangana State.

Chief Justice Hima Kohli directed the Director General of Police to create separate Help Centres at the government hospitals as well as at private hospitals so that police in coordination with self-help groups can reach out to the patients and people in distress, who through hospitals with corona patients, seeking any nature of assistance.

CJ directed the State government to step up testing to one lakh per day and further press into service the Mobile testing vans to get more testing done in all the 186 micro containment zones.

CJ directed the Advocate General Banda Shivananda Prasad to advise the State government to consider seizure of vehicles of the people, who do not wear face mask properly. Apart from imposing Rs 1,000 fine, such violators vehicles should be seized for at least 24 hours.

DGP M Mahender Reddy informed the Bench that cases are booked against the organisers, owners of banquet halls and hosts, when the norms of covid-19 i.e., social distancing is not followed by the guests as booking cases against the individuals is creating some social tension to which the CJ agreed upon.

For further hearing, the matter was adjourned to May 13.

Naidu calls for total shutdown

HANS NEWS SERVICE|
MANGALAGIRI

TDP national president N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday stressed the need for joint efforts by the Centre and the state government to pool all available public resources and thereby to use them to efficiently battle the deadly second wave of coronavirus.

Naidu called for a total lockdown for a limited period of time in all states and the country in order to break the current chain and to prevent rapid spread of the most dreaded mutants like N-440K.

Vaccination to all those above 18 years of age should be given immediate priority. As per reports, even those below 18 years would be badly affected during a future 3rd wave.

Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters here, the TDP chief said that they held an emergency politburo meeting in which their party discussed the Covid threat and made many suggestions. The Jagan Mohan Reddy government ordered just 13 lakh doses while all other states were procuring larger quantities to secure the safety of their people. Tamil Nadu has ordered for 1.5 crore doses while Karnataka and Kerala were procuring 1 crore doses. Maharashtra has decided to for universal vaccination for all its citizens.

- Says short-term lockdown needed to break Covid chain
- Suggests Centre and State pool resources to wage effective battle against the deadly virus
- States vaccine to all above 18 years only solution now

Naidu asserted that the Centre and the state should first aim at protecting the lives of the people in this dangerous time when whole families together were succumbing to the virus. The governments should go forward with positive thinking and respond immediately to the health calamity.

America and England could ensure safety of the people's lives by taking up a massive vaccination programme. Even Israel was now safe after having faced a severe crisis in the past.

Chandrababu Naidu reiterated that the N-440K variant was indeed proving more dangerous than expected. It might have originated in 2020 itself as per the officials' claims.

The fact was that this mutant was spreading rapidly all over the country. The scientists have es-



established that N-440K was first noticed in Kurnool, he said.

He urged the state government to focus on the oxygen supply logistics and management immediately so as to save the lives of patients. There should be a continuous monitoring on oxygen, beds and ventilators. It was unfortunate that the first meeting of the government on purchase of medical equipment took place only on May 3. This indicated the lack of seriousness with which the situation was being dealt with.

The TDP chief said that many of their party leaders and cadres have also fallen ill with the virus during and after the Tirupati by-election.

As a responsible political party, the TDP has begun special online counselling with the help of experts like Dr Lokeswara Rao who gave good services in the US. This way, online treatment was given to 195 members and all of them were safe now, he said.

JAGANANNA COLONIES

Construction to begin from June 1

- CM tells officials that Covid curfew should not come in the way of making arrangements
- Directs provision of power and water in the colonies immediately as they are important to begin construction
- Authorities inform CM that basement works will be completed by Sept, walls by Dec and houses will be completed by June 2022

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy said construction of houses in Jagananna colonies will start on June 1. During a review on 'Navaratnalu-Pedalandarkili Illu' at his camp office here on Wednesday, the Chief Minister directed the officials to complete the process for grounding the works by May 25. The works should not be stopped because of curfew and activities should be held from 6 am to 12 pm. He said water and electricity facilities should be provided in the colonies immediately as they are important to start construc-



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy reviewing housing for the poor at his camp office on Wednesday

tion.

The Chief Minister said a model house should be construed in every layout and a detailed report on it should be generated later. The details on expenditure, savings, modifications and other issues can be reviewed based on the reports. He said the usage of steel will be reduced due to Covid which might result in decrease of prices and added that the state needs 7.50 lakh tonne steel. He directed the officials to discuss with steel companies in this regard and ensure materials are given to the beneficiaries who would like to construct houses on their own.

He said all the infrastructure facilities should be developed in layouts apart from constructing

houses. CC roads, underground CC drains, water supply, electrification and internet are the main components of infrastructure facilities and all these facilities should be provided. He said the construction of these houses during the pandemic will contribute to economic growth as workers get work and also business transactions continue due to the purchase of steel, cement and other materials. Levelling is very important in the construction of houses and about 1.95 lakh plots have this problem, the Chief Minister said.

The officials gave a presentation on the housing projects in the state. They informed the Chief Minister that 15,60,227 houses were allotted to the state under PM

Awas Yojana, YSR Urban-BLC first phase, of which 71,502 houses are in dispute under the preview of courts and added they had written a letter requesting for alternative in this regard.

They said construction work started for remaining 14,88,725 houses and allotment of those houses is also completed. They said mapping in website is completed for 13,71,592 houses. The officials said construction of houses in Jagananna layouts will start in June, basement works will be completed by September, construction of walls will be completed by December and houses will be completed by June 2022. They said 81,040 TIDCO houses were almost completed and 75 percent of works are completed in 71,448 houses.

Municipal and urban development minister minister Botcha Satyanarayana, housing minister Cherukuvada Sriranganatha Raju, municipal administration and urban development special chief secretary Y Srilakshmi, housing special chief secretary Ajay Jain, panchayat raj principal secretary Gopalakrishna Dwivedi, finance special chief secretary K V V Satyanarayana, APTIDCO MD Ch Sridhar, APSHCL MD Narayana Bharat Gupta, APSFCL Madhusudan Reddy and other officials were present.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Low-cost tunnels with better safety essential

India has some of the most difficult mountain terrains in the world, therefore India chose to construct tunnels. Economising the construction cost of tunnels without compromising safety is the need of the hour. The government expects that 70-80% of freight traffic will move on national highways from 40 per cent now


— Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister



AUTOMOBILE

Maruti production dips 7% in April

The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Wednesday said its total production in April 2021 stood at 1,59,955 units, down 7 per cent from March this year. The company had produced a total of 1,72,433 units in the year-ago period, Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	74.65	South	
Euro	89.71	African Rand	5.89
UAE Dirham	20.72	Hong Kong Dollar	10.94
Thai Baht	2.61	Japanese Yen	0.78
British Pound	103.89	New Zealand Dollar	53.69
Australian Dollar	57.78	Saudi Riyal	21.67
Canadian Dollar	60.83	Swedish Krona	10.02
Swiss Franc	81.69	Singapore Dollar	56.47

DELHI THURSDAY 6 MAY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

UPS donates to India

The UPS Foundation has announced a \$1 million to fight the Covid-19 surge in India. The pledge is a combination of emergency funding, in-kind transportation movements and technical expertise to provide urgent relief, as well as strategic support. UPS is coordinating with strategic partners, including UNICEF, CARE, The Salvation Army, The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, MAP, Med-share, Rotary Club, the US Chamber Foundation to mobilize critical medical supplies including oxygen concentrators, ventilators, nebulizers, respiratory supplies, PPE, Covid-19 test kits and antiviral medications to India. "The UPS Foundation is committed to improving the well-being of communities impacted by Covid-19 and we want to help by leveraging our partnerships, our resources and our logistics expertise," said Nikki Clifton of The UPS Foundation.

New sanitizer unveiled

Ranga Rao and Sons, the makers of Cycle Pure Agarbathi, has introduced Ayush-certified, ayurvedic hand-sanitizer, and multi-disinfectant spray under the brand name of Healing Touch to curb the spread of Covid-19 virus. The lemon essential oil-based sanitizer has been crafted to ensure a gentle formulation on the skin and provides 99.9 per cent protection. The spray instantly eliminates germs on hard and soft surfaces, promoting a safe and pathogen free environment for loved ones. Kiran Ranga, Managing Director, Ripple Fragrances, said: "The guiding philosophy of Healing Touch is to offer solutions to help consumers improve personal and public hygiene practices. Given the resurgence of the pandemic, we have focused on optimizing our supply chain and distribution channels to cater to the increased demand".

ThoughtSpot buys Diyotta

ThoughtSpot has announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire Diyotta. The acquisition provides 60 new employees in North America and India to join ThoughtSpot to supercharge development of the modern analytics cloud. The new relationship with Diyotta will help the company rapidly expand integrations with best-of-breed services in customers' modern data stack. Customers will be able to deploy ThoughtSpot seamlessly as part of their modern cloud architecture and deliver instant value to their business. 50 per cent to the R&D team in India, including an expanded footprint in Hyderabad.

Amara Raja's initiative

Amara Raja Group has announced that it would be carrying out inoculation drive for all its employees and their immediate family members. The announcement comes soon after the Government launched its vaccination programme for all Indian citizens aged between 18 and 44. For all their plant location employees, the company will initiate the workplace vaccination programme. The cost for vaccination will be reimbursed to the employees. JayadevGalla, Vice Chairman, Amara Raja Group said: "We understand how indispensable it is for everyone to get vaccinated at the earliest and therefore, we are undertaking this collective drive for each of our employees and their immediate family members."

GDP outlook uncertain with downside risk: Das

MUMBAI

AS country battles the Covid crisis and States go for lockdowns, Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Shaktikanta Das has said that high frequency indicators are showing mixed signals for the Indian economy.

He said that aggregate demand conditions, particularly in contact-intensive services, are likely to see a temporary dip, depending on how the Covid situation unfolds.

With restrictions and containment measures being localised and targeted, businesses and households are learning to adapt, Das said, adding that, "consequently, the dent to aggregate demand is expected to be moderate in comparison to a year ago".

Citing reports, he said that disruption in manufacturing units so far is "minimal".

Consumption demand is holding up, with sales of consumer goods rising in double digits in January-March 2021, and average daily electricity generation up by 40.0 per cent year-on-year in April. Rail freight has registered growth of over 76 per cent year-on-year in April.

However, toll collections in April suggest that mobility has declined but quite unlike the abrupt halt in mobility during April last year.

Further noting that registration of automobiles in April 2021 has shown moderation compared to March and the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for manufacturing continued in expansion mode in April, he said, "Overall, the high frequency indicators are emitting mixed signals."

He said that the central bank will closely and continuously monitor all incoming data to assess on a real time basis the impact of the second wave on macro-economic and financial conditions.

The Governor was of the view that aggregate supply conditions are underpinned by the resilience of the agricultural sector. The record foodgrains production and buffer stocks in 2020-21 provide food security and support to other sectors of the economy in



'Normal monsoon will ease inflation'

MUMBAI

DESPITE admitting to price pressures both from food items and input prices, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday hoped that a normal Southwest monsoon will have a 'soothing impact' on inflation pressures and ruled out any wide variations in medium-term inflation forecast from what was given in April.

In an unscheduled address earlier in the day amidst the raging pandemic, Das said the overall outlook for the economy is highly uncertain and is clouded with downside risks. He offered a slew of relief and liquidity measures to individuals and small businesses apart from a Rs 50,000 crore spe-



cial liquidity window to the healthcare sector. Noting that retail inflation edged up to 5.5 per cent in March 2021 from 5 per cent in February on the back of a pick-up in food as well as fuel inflation while core inflation remained elevated, he said inflation trajectory over the rest of the year will be shaped by the pandemic infections and the impact of localised containment measures on

supply chains and logistics. "But even at this time, in the run up to the next Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meet that will analyse various incoming data which are being monitored by the RBI on a real-time basis, we don't expect any broad variation in our April inflation projection instead we will have to wait for the next MPC statement due in the first week of June," the governor said.

Explaining why he is sticking to the April forecast, Das said high-frequency food prices data for April from the department of consumer affairs suggests further softening of prices of cereals and key vegetables while price pressures in pulses and edible oils remain.

the form of rural demand, employment and agricultural inputs and supplies, including for exports, he said.

The forecast of a normal monsoon by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) is expected to sustain rural demand and overall output in 2021-22, while also having a soothing impact on inflation pressures, Das added.

On the global economic recovery, he said that global economy is exhibiting incipient signs of recovery as countries renew their trust with growth, supported by monetary and fiscal stimulus. Still, activity remains uneven across countries and sectors.

He noted that the outlook is highly uncertain and clouded with downside risks.

Industry hails RBI decision; says well-timed

NEW DELHI

Industry chamber CII said that opening of on-tap liquidity of Rs 50,000 crore till 31 March 2022 for health care sectors is encouraging as the health care and allied sectors are facing tremendous stress of increased demand, supply constraints, and liquidity scarcity.

"At a time when the pandemic is posing new challenges for the economy, the well-calibrated first tranche of measures announced by the RBI today pertaining to supporting the small businesses and incentivising lending to the healthcare sector is in-

deed well-timed and propitious," it said in a statement.

Hailing the decision, the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) said that it will help in expanding the health infrastructure in the country, which is in distress due to increasing coronavirus infection. "The federation together stands with the government in all its efforts to control the surge in Covid-19 pandemic and supports the economic growth of the country," it added.

Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPCC) Chairman A Sakthivel said these are timely measures to prop up the much-needed Covid-related

healthcare infrastructure in India.

"Apart from the loan restructuring facility, the decision to allow banks to extend the moratorium under restructuring frame 1.0 for a period of up to two years will provide breathing space to many MSMEs trying to recover from the impact of pandemic," Sakthivel said.

Assocham said that these are important confident-building announcements by the RBI.

"The targeted policy response and easy credit promised to the entire healthcare value chain, in the government and private sector including the vaccine manufacturers are the

most apt measures at this point of time," it said.

Niranjan Hiranandani, National President, NAREDCO said that these "pro-active moves" are positive for India's beleaguered economy, which was on the path to recovery from the impact of the pandemic in 2020 but is facing the challenge of the second wave.

The focus of the announcements "were small businesses, individuals and MSMEs; real estate as an industry looks forward to supporting in form of measures which will help tide over the challenges posed by the second wave," he said.

PPFAS MF's conservative hybrid fund

CHENNAI

PPFAS Mutual Fund on Wednesday said it will launch Parag Parikh Conservative Hybrid Fund. The scheme which opens on May 7 and closes May 21 aims to generate regular income through investments predominantly in debt and money market instruments. The minimum investment shall be Rs 5,000 and in multiples of Re 1 thereafter. The scheme will reopen on 28 May 2021.

According to PPFAS, the proposed scheme also seeks to generate income and capital appreciation by investing a certain portion in equity, equity-related instruments, and Real Estate Investment Trusts / Infrastructure Investment Trusts (REITs/InvITs).

Market snaps 3-session losing streak on RBI boost

MUMBAI

THE BSE Sensex darted up on Wednesday after three days of losses after the RBI unveiled a slew of measures to support the economy facing headwinds due to the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Banking, pharma and IT stocks led the rebound, even as a depreciating rupee capped the gains, traders said. The 30-share BSE index jumped 424.04 points or 0.88 per cent to close at 48,677.55. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty surged 121.35 points or 0.84 per cent to 14,617.85. Sun Pharma was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, soaring 5.94 per cent, followed by Kotak Bank, Axis Bank, IndusInd Bank, ICICI Bank, Dr

Reddy's, Titan and TCS.

Only three index stocks closed in the red - Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints and HUL, slipping up to 1.75 per cent. Earlier in the day, the RBI allowed certain individual and small borrowers more time to repay debt and allowed banks to give priority loans to vaccine makers, hospitals and Covid-related health infrastructure as it announced support measures to cushion the pandemic's blow to the economy.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das also said the central bank will buy Rs 35,000 crore of bonds under the Government Securities Acquisition Programme (G-SAP) -

India's version of quantitative easing - on May 20. RBI also allowed banks to dip into their floating provisions to set aside money for bad loans. "Domestic equities rebounded mainly supported by financials, IT and pharma. Notably, announcement of liquidity supports by the RBI Governor to tackle the challenges coming from second wave of Covid-19 crisis aided financials to rebound," said Binod Modi, Head Strategy at Reliance Securities.

While elevated Covid-19 cases in several states and rising number of deaths are matters of concern, visible modest decline in new cases in many states including Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat offers comfort, he added.



Apollo Computing Labs unveils portable ventilator

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

CITY-BASED defence, aerospace design and development solutions provider Apollo Computing Laboratories (ACL) unveiled an indigenously developed potable non-invasive ventilator - SwasthVayu. The briefcase-sized ventilator is used for treating mild to moderate Covid patients as well as non-Covid patients having ailments like lung disease, sleep apnoea and respiratory weakness.

SwasthVayu weighing 2.8 kg can be utilised in medical wards, make-shift hospitals, dispensaries, home healthcare operators and homes. Each device would cost around Rs 1 lakh. The in-built Li-ion battery provides 2-4 hours battery back-up to overcome any

power transmission exigencies. Baddam Jaipal Reddy, Managing Director of ACL, claimed it as a reliable, secure and affordable option to address the problem being faced by the healthcare delivery system especially during these challenging times of Covid 19 spike. It has provision to source oxygen up to 15 - 30 litre per minute either from oxygen concentrator or hospital supply source, through a specially designed nozzle.

He said: "It has been successfully tested on hundreds of Covid patients at several hospitals. Initially, 1,200 ventilators were supplied to the top nine hospitals under Government of Delhi are being used effectively for treating Covid patients. We currently have a capacity to produce 6,000 units a month, and planning to increase to 8,000 units a month."



India's services sector activities fall to 3-mth low in April

NEW DELHI

INDIA's services sector activities eased to a three-month low in April, as the rise in business activity was constrained by the pandemic and sentiment towards growth prospects faded, a monthly survey said on Wednesday.

The seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index fell to 54 in April from 54.6 in March, the slowest increase in output in three months. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes con-

traction. "The PMI results for April showed a more resilient economic performance for the service sector than expected given the escalation of the Covid-19 crisis in India," said Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at IHS Markit.

Lima further noted that firms foresee higher output volumes over the course of the coming year, but business sentiment was dampened by worries surrounding the pandemic.



As per the survey, Indian services firms were optimistic regarding the 12-month outlook for business ac-

tivity, but the overall level of positive sentiment fell to the lowest since last October. The escalation of the pandemic was the main drag on confidence.

On the prices front, service providers noted the steepest rise in overall expenses since December 2011. Some firms lifted their selling prices in April amid the pass through of rising cost burdens to clients, but 98 per cent of companies left fees unchanged due to efforts to secure new work

and remain competitive.

"One area of concern was inflation. Services firms noted the steepest rise in overall expenses in over nine years as global shortages of inputs and higher transportation costs continued to exert upward pressure on outlays," Lima said. On the jobs front, payroll numbers fell for the fifth month in a row in April, albeit at a slight pace that was the weakest since January. The vast majority of panelists kept headcounts unchanged amid reports of sufficient capacity to cope with current workloads, the survey said.

Moreover, travel restrictions and the Covid-19 crisis continued to curb international demand for Indian services. New export orders declined for the 14th month running and at a quicker pace than registered in March, the survey said. Meanwhile, growth of Indian private sector activity eased to the weakest in 2021 so far. The Composite PMI Output Index, which measures combined services and manufacturing output, fell from 56.0 in March to 55.4 due to slower increases at goods producers and service providers.

IPL POSTPONEMENT

BCCI'S CARAVAN MODEL, LAXITY COME UNDER FIRE

NEW DELHI

THE Indian cricket board has been left red-faced following the indefinite postponement of the Indian Premier League (IPL) with questions raised about the loopholes in following the bio-bubble.

The BCCI which was adamant in hosting the IPL in India this time and not the UAE "since it is an Indian tournament and belongs to India" is split as a body over the issue.

It has been learnt that certain sections of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) wanted the IPL to be held in the UAE. However, their suggestion was rejected. Among those suggesting for the IPL to be held in UAE were IPL chairman Brijesh Patel as well as former cricketer Surinder Khanna, a member of the Apex Council as Indian Cricketers' Association representative. Khanna has since been replaced in ICA by another former cricketer Pragyan Ojha.

"The biggest mistake the BCCI made was holding it in a caravan system. This was meant to ensure that the pitches don't get overused and no team gets home advantage. Additionally, it made associations happy," said an official in the know of things.

"What they didn't realise is that there was risk in travelling between different venues despite all the care taken. Some of the things demanded by BCCI like tarmac to tarmac transfer at airports was denied. Airport was a place where one could



catch Covid-19 virus," said the official.

A case in point was Kiran More's positive test prior to the start of IPL. The former India stumper, who is with Mumbai Indians, had boarded the flight to Chennai with a negative test but five days after arrival in Chennai, he tested positive. He possibly caught the infection during travel.

Similarly, the positive cases that emerged in four of the eight teams that led to the postponement of the IPL happened during the second phase in Delhi and Ahmedabad, where the Covid-19 pandemic had taken a serious turn and Covid patients are dying by the hundreds.

The teams travelled to both the cities from Mumbai and Chennai after the first phase ended there on April 25. Within

a week positive cases emerged and the IPL was postponed.

"It would have made sense had the tournament been played in one venue like Mumbai or better still the UAE," said the official.

In fact, the franchises were okay with hosting the IPL in Mumbai which has four grounds considering that it wasn't being held in the UAE.

IANs had reported prior to the IPL that Mumbai was being considered a venue to host IPL games. For some reason, the BCCI decided to have it on a caravan model.

There are questions over the BCCI's decision to allow food delivery from outside. In the UAE edition of IPL as well as India's tour of Australia, food delivery was allowed and there were no positive cases. The UAE

edition had witnessed positive cases only on arrival from India.

Realising that they have made a mistake in allowing the same leeway of food delivery in a country that is witnessing rapid surge in Covid-19 cases eventually banned it just last week. But by then, it was too late.

The management of the bio-bubble was always going to be tough in India. In the UAE, since the venues were three and within proximity of each other, it was easier to manage.

In India, there was no control over the local associations. In Delhi, for example, it emerged on Wednesday morning that two outsiders with the purpose of betting, managed to sneak into the bio-bubble by getting accreditation. The BCCI is yet to comment on the issue. (IANs)

Just don't see gap in calendar for IPL to be rescheduled: Atherton

LONDON

FORMER England captain Mike Atherton said that while a lot of people would want the Indian Premier League (IPL) to be held at some point considering the revenue it brings to global cricket, he can't see when it can be rescheduled to.

"I just don't see where the gap (in the schedule) is. India come to England for five Test matches in the summer -- and that ends around mid-September. Then the T20 World Cup, which is supposed to be in India - but who knows, they may have to move that tournament to the UAE -- takes place in mid-October," Atherton told Sky Sports.



"There is maybe a gap there, but all countries will already have their pre-T20 World Cup preparations baked in now -- England are due to go to Bangladesh and Pakistan, for example -- and you're also asking India's players, who have spent long, long periods inside these bubbles, and then asking them to spend more time in one, it seems hard to me," he

said. Atherton said that any argument for holding the IPL would have become unacceptable when Covid-19 cases started emerging within the bio-bubble.

"It became inevitable once the Covid cases got inside the franchises' bubbles -- three or four franchises had to go into quarantine or isolation -- and, once that happened, the tournament became impossible really," he said.

"Up until that point, they could make an argument that in a pretty horrendous time for India, the IPL was providing a bit of daily respite for people to watch in the evening. That argument held water, just about, but it didn't once the bubbles were breached," said Atherton. (IANs)

BCCI to move Aus players to SL, Maldives: CA

SYDNEY

THE Indian cricket board (BCCI) is looking to move Australian players involved in the postponed 2021 Indian Premier League (IPL) to Sri Lanka and Maldives before sending them home, Cricket Australia CEO Nick Hockley said on Wednesday.

"What the BCCI is working to do is to move the entire cohort out of India where they will wait until it's possible to return to Australia," Hockley told reporters in a press-conference Sydney.

"The BCCI has been working on a range of options. That's now narrowed down to the Maldives and Sri Lanka. The BCCI is committed not only to the first move but also to putting on a charter to bring



them back to Australia," he further said. Australia has placed a strict ban on travel from India, which is ravaged by the second wave of Covid-19, until May 15, stranding Australian players in India after the IPL was postponed on Tues-

day. The tournament, which was being held amid the healthcare crisis caused by the pandemic in India, was postponed after multiple positive cases came up within the bio-bubble in Ahmedabad and New Delhi. (IANs)

Indian rowers wait after Olympic qualifiers postponed

NEW DELHI

INDIAN rowers were greeted with windy conditions at the Olympic regatta course in Tokyo's Sea Forest Waterway which forced the cancellation of World Rowing Asia and Oceania Olympic and Paralympic Qualification Regatta.

"A nine-member Indian squad, including four in the women's category, are participating in the Asian Olympic qualification event. The programme has been revised due to tricky local weather conditions. The competition will start on Thursday and conclude on Friday," an official of the Rowing Federation of India (RFI) told IANs.

The qualification regatta in Tokyo will be organised in the men's and women's single scull, lightweight double scull and para



single scull. India's Jakar Khan will be the one to watch in the men's single scull that has attracted 14 entries. Only five will get an Olympic quota.

"The competition is expected to be fierce as athletes are making the most of the opportunity to race and secure a spot for the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. India is participating in all

the events," added the RFI official.

There are 14 entries in the women's single scull but five will get Olympic quota places. In the lightweight men's double scull, nine athletes will compete but there are three Olympic quotas in the event. In the lightweight women's double scull there are 12 entries and three quota places. (IANs)

Madrid Open: Thiem eases past qualifier Giron

MADRID

AUSTRIAN third seed Dominic Thiem needed less than an hour to brush past American qualifier Marcos Giron 6-1, 6-3, while Matteo Berrettini won against his fellow Italian Fabio Fognini 6-3, 6-4.

Meanwhile, world number seven Andrey Rublev had to work hard on his Madrid Open debut on Tuesday before booking a place in the third round with a 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-4 win over Tommy Paul, Xinhua reports.

Rublev had problems adapting to the speed on the ball on the Madrid clay, where conditions are made a bit harder by the altitude of the Spanish capital, but is on track to continue his record of reaching at least the quarter-finals of every tournament he has played in all season.

In the first round, No. 9 Roberto Bautista Agut needed three sets before edging past Marco Cecchinato 6-2, 6-7(3), 7-



5, and 11th seed Denis Shapovalov beat Dusan Lajovic 6-1, 6-3.

Qualifier Federico Dabonic produced a surprise by knocking out Spanish No. 10 seed, Pablo Carreno Busta, coming back from a set down to win 3-6, 6-4, 6-3.

In the women's tournament, No. 3 seed and two-time winner

Simone Halep lost 4-6, 7-5, 7-5 to Elise Mertens to crash out of Madrid before the quarterfinals for the first time since 2015.

The Romanian struggled to find her game throughout the match, and ultimately 48 unforced errors were the difference in a close match.

"She played really well, and she definitely deserved to win because she was stronger in the end. I cannot say I played bad, but I did some mistakes, important mistakes. Sometimes it's just a little bit and the match is going away," said Halep after the match.

Mertens will play No. 5 seed Aryna Sabalenka in the last eight in a clash between two players who have been doubles partners in the past. Sabalenka needed only 52 minutes to power past Jessica Pegula 6-1, 6-2.

No. 11 seed Jennifer Brady failed to make it through after losing a marathon match 7-5, 6-7 (8), 6-3. (IANs)

Padukone recovering from Covid-19 infection

MUMBAI

FORMER All England champion Prakash Padukone is likely to be discharged from a Bengaluru hospital where he is slowly recovering from the Covid-19 infection. All the members of the Padukone household, including wife Ujjala and daughter Anisha, got infected with the virus last week and are on the path to recovery.

"Prakash sir is doing absolutely fine," a top official of the Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy (PPBA) said on condition of anonymity from Bengaluru. "He was admitted on Saturday as a precautionary measure. His oxygen level and other parameters are absolutely fine. There is no reason to worry. He should be discharged in a day or two." Ujjala and Anisha are recovering at home. "They are in home isolation and are doing fine," the official said. Padukone, 65, was the first Indian to win the All England title in 1980. (IANs)

FIR filed against 2 for breach of IPL bubble in Delhi on May 2

NEW DELHI

AN FIR has been filed with Delhi Police against two individuals for illegally entering Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium during an Indian Premier League (IPL) match on May 2 in breach of bio-bubble and for the "purpose of betting". During the match between Rajasthan Royals (RR) and SunRisers Hyderabad (SRH), a Delhi Police sub-inspector spotted Krishan Garg and Manish Kansal, and after not getting satisfactory answers to their questions lodged an FIR against the two individuals. Two days after the breach in Delhi, the Indian cricket board postponed the IPL, following four of the eight competing teams reporting positive cases in Ahmedabad and Delhi.

"During the SRH vs RR match on May 2, at around 7.30 when SI (sub-inspector) and accompanying staff were going from Gate No.8 to VIP Lounge, they spotted two young men at the VIP Lounge gallery with their masks hanging on their necks [and not on their faces]. Suspecting something fishy, SI asked them to put their masks on and started questioning them about their presence," the FIR, a copy of which is with IANs, stated.

"None of the young men said could give a reasonable explanation (sic). One of the boys Krishan Garg said that he has a valid accreditation card. The SI asked him to show it and he showed him. There was 'JR. ASSISTANT & COMP. SDMC HEALTH & S. No. 0204' written on it. The SI asked him to show his SDMC card. Instead, the two boys started to run away. They were, however, caught," it said.

The FIR said that the police tried to verify the accreditation card of both the boys but could not.

"Upon detailed questioning the two admitted that they didn't belong to any department but had acquired the accreditation cards through illegal means for the purpose of betting," said the FIR. The two individuals have been booked for cheating and breaching Covid-19 norms under sections 419, 420, 468, 471, 188, 269, 120B, 34 of Indian Penal Code and 3 Epidemic Act / 51B Disaster Management Act. (IANs)



World champion and Olympic silver medalist P V Sindhu was felicitated on Wednesday at Badminton Indoor Stadium, Gachibowli after being nominated as Athlete Ambassador for International Olympic Committee's 'Believe in Sports' campaign