

Trust, Reliability & Service
Synonymous with **Kapil Chits**

41 YEARS
TRUSTED SERVICES

Visit Us: www.kapilchits.com

KAPIL CHITS

SMALL SAVINGS GROW BIG WITH KAPIL



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

• Follow @ [/thehansindia](https://twitter.com/thehansindia) | [/thehansindiaweb](https://www.thehansindia.com) | [/thehansindia](https://www.thehansindia.com) | [/thehansindia](https://www.thehansindia.com) | [/thehansindia](https://www.thehansindia.com) •

WINDOWS

WHO's help to Haryana

GURUGRAM: The World Health Organization (WHO) in first phase provided 100 oxygen concentrators to Haryana CM Manohar Lal through one of its top representatives -- National Profession Officer, Regional Team Leader, North India, Dr. Vishesh, here on Monday. Khattar thanked the WHO for the assistance and said Haryana is following its guidelines to combat the pandemic. He hoped that the WHO would keep on helping Haryana in terms of providing medical equipments and also continue guiding for tackling the pandemic in more effective ways. Dr. Vishesh said that WHO stands in solidarity with the people of India in this crisis and our sympathies are with the families that have lost their loved ones.

4-year-old abducted, raped

BANDA: A four-year-old girl was allegedly abducted and then raped at a wedding in Banda district. Police said the accused Umesh Nishad, who was arrested on Sunday, has been booked under relevant sections, including section 376 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). He was also charged under the stringent Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. According to reports, Umesh took the girl away when her family members were busy in the wedding ceremony to a desolate spot in nearby jungles. He raped her and later tried to strangle her, police said.

Under 5K Covid cases in Delhi

NEW DELHI: The national capital reported 4,524 new COVID-19 cases, lowest since April 5, and 340 fatalities on Monday while the positivity rate dipped to 8.42 per cent, according to the latest health bulletin released by the city government. The COVID-19 situation has been improving in Delhi with the number of cases and positivity rate going down steadily in the past few days. Medical experts have attributed the lockdown as the main factor behind the dip amid the second wave of the pandemic. However, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Sunday extended the lockdown till May 24, saying the gains made so far in combating coronavirus cannot be lost due to relaxations now. At 8.42 per cent, the positivity rate is the lowest since April 9 when it stood at 7.8 per cent. The number of new infections is the lowest since April 5.



HC questions police's clean chit to politicians

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Monday expressed its displeasure with the Delhi Police clean chit to nine politicians, including city MP Gautam Gambhir and Indian Youth Congress (IYC) President B.V. Srinivas, in a matter connected with alleged hoarding of Covid medicines.

In its initial inquiry, Delhi Police, gave clean chit cricketer-turned-BJP MP Gambhir, Srinivas, Delhi Congress President Anil Kumar Chaudhary, ex-MLA Mukesh Sharma, BJP leader Harish Khurana, AAP MLA Dilip Pandey, among others.

The allegations against the politicians in-

involved hoarding and distributing Covid-19 medicines, including Remdesivir, in the capital. In their report, the police said they were actually helping people without charging money and no one was defrauded.

Objecting to Delhi Police's clean chit to politicians, a bench comprising Justices Vipin Sanghi and Jasmeet Singh said: "This is completely unacceptable. Political parties cannot make this pandemic a selling point. How could they purchase it without prescription?"

The court queried the police if it realises

'HOARDING' OF COVID MEDICINES

how many people have succumbed to the viral infection due to shortage of medicines. Asking it to act with responsibility, the bench told the Delhi Police: "They have no business to buy medicines and hoarding them to earn some goodwill. Now it seems that you are not interested in getting out the truth."

It added that if there were some political leaders involved in the matter, it should not

deter the police from investigating it properly. "Your force should stand up, you have a duty towards the people... People all over are suffering," said the bench.

The bench further added that it expects the medicines to be surrendered to the Director General of Health Services (DGHS) and the Delhi Police to conduct a "proper investigation" and register an FIR, if a case is made out.

The bench told the police that it wants to see a complete status report. Emphasising the stocks of medicines held by political leaders should be handed over to the

DGHS, the court said: "In case, they want to do public good, that would be the best way it can be done... we are appealing in good sense that this should not go, and they should go and surrender it with the DGHS."

The court made sharp observations during the hearing of a PIL seeking registration of an FIR on allegations that politicians are procuring large quantity of Covid-19 medicines even as patients were running around to get these medicines. It was alleged that while the oxygen cylinders were provided to those in need, but it was done for "political gains".

Tauktae: 6 dead

Winds up to 185 km/h begins making landfall on Guj

MUMBAI

A very severe cyclonic storm with winds gusting up to 185 km per hour began making landfall on the Gujarat coast Monday night, after dumping heavy rains on Mumbai, forcing the evacuation of over 1.5 lakh people in Gujarat and leaving two barges with 410 people on board adrift in the Arabian Sea. Tropical storm 'Tauktae' (pronounced as Tau'Te) which had intensified into a very severe cyclonic storm, lies close to the Gujarat coast, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. "The landfall process has started and will continue during next two hours," the IMD said.

Six persons were killed in Maharashtra's Konkan region in separate incidents related to the severe cyclonic storm and three sailors remained missing after two boats sank in the sea, officials said. Three persons died in Raigad district, a sailor in Sindhudurg district and two persons were killed in Navi Mumbai and Ulhasnagar in Thane district after trees fell on them.

Two boats with seven sailors on board, anchored in the Anandwadi harbour in Sindhudurg district capsize, an official statement said. As the



cyclone moved past the Maharashtra coast in the morning, Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport initially announced the suspension of operations from 11 am to 2 pm and later decided to keep all operations shut till 8 pm.

Over 1.5 lakh people were shifted from low-lying coastal areas in Gujarat, while 54 teams of the NDRF and SDRF remained deployed, an official said. At least 17 COVID-19 patients on ventilator support in the Porbandar

Civil Hospital's ICU were shifted to other facilities on Monday as a precautionary measure because of cyclone Tauktae which is heading towards the Gujarat coast, an official said. The Centre has offered all help to Gujarat to deal with the cyclone and asked the Army, Navy and the Air Force to remain on standby to assist the administration if the need arises, the Gujarat government said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah are in touch with the state government and have extended all possible help, said Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani after holding a meeting with collectors of coastal districts which are likely to face the maximum brunt of the cyclone.

The PM called up Rupani and enquired about the state government's preparedness to deal with the cyclone, the CMO said. A major cyclone in Gujarat on June 9, 1998 had brought widespread death and destruction in its wake, particularly in the port town of Kandla. While official figures had then put the death toll at 1,173, adding 1,774 went missing, media reports, eyewitness and volunteer accounts suggested that this was grossly an understatement.

Chandigarh extends curfew till May 25

CHANDIGARH

THE Chandigarh administration on Monday decided to extend the curfew in the city till May 25 morning to further contain the coronavirus. A decision in this regard was taken at a review meeting chaired by Administrator V.P. Singh Badnore here. Responding to complaints against private hospitals for overcharging Covid patients, he directed the Health Department to again notify the approved rates for the treatment.

Keeping in view the additional availability of vaccines for those above 18 years, it was decided at the meeting to administer 2,000 doses every day to the eligible beneficiaries. Badnore thanked the Indian Army, NGOs and charitable Institutions for setting up mini-Covid care centres in the city. He appealed to other organisations to come forward to set up such facility with provision for oxygen. At present, Chandigarh has 7,644 active cases, while the neighbouring Panchkula in Haryana has 2,414 cases and Mohali in Punjab has 8,717 active cases.

Remdesivir production scaled up to 1.19 crore vials per month

NEW DELHI

ALL seven domestic licensed manufacturers of Remdesivir have scaled up production from 38 lakh vials per month to nearly 119 lakh vials per month, following government directives, an official statement said.

With accelerated approval of 38 additional manufacturing sites, the number of approved manufacturing sites of Remdesivir in the country has increased from 22 to 60. With the help of the Ministry of External Affairs, the manufacturers are being facilitated for getting supplies of requisite raw materials and equipment from foreign countries. Meanwhile, Department of Pharmaceuticals intensified monitoring of availability, production and supply of drugs used for Covid-19 treatment in early April, as number of cases of Covid-19 started increasing steeply. Remdesivir is a patented drug, manufactured in India under voluntary licenses granted by patent holder Gilead Life Sciences US to seven Indian pharmaceutical companies -- Cipla, Dr

Reddy's Lab, Hetero, Jubilant Pharma, Mylan, Syngene and Zydus Cadila. According to the statement, all efforts are being made to enhance the availability of the drug, both through imports as well as augmented domestic production.

Exports of Remdesivir has been prohibited since April 11, while customs duty has been exempted on Remdesivir injection, Remdesivir API and Beta Cyclodextrin (SBECD) used in its manufacture with effect from April 20.

After the demand surged, the Central government has been making allocations to states and UTs since third week of April. Interim allocation of 11 lakh vials was made for 19 states and UTs with high demand on April 21 for period up to April 30.

This allocation was increased to 16 lakh vials on April 24 as more supplies became available. In a series of allocations issued subsequently, with latest on May 16, 76 lakh vials in total have been allocated among states for period up to May 23.



'Transparency should be maintained on vax supply'

PURNA SINGH NEW DELHI

AMID the shortage of anti-Covid vaccines, the AAP-led Delhi government on Monday wrote to the Centre and demanded full transparency in the vaccine allocation system.

In the letter, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) mentioned that similar to medical oxygen allocation, wherein the Centre has fixed a quota for each state and Union Territories (UTs), the same should be done for vaccine allocation. Addressing a virtual press conference, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia who is also the Nodal minister for Covid management, said Delhi is ready to purchase vaccines but the Centre said Delhi will not be given more vaccines in May. "The Centre has in a letter to Delhi government today has informed that Delhi will be supplied 3.83 lakh doses (3,83,000) of vaccines in May and no vaccines to be supplied for the age group 18-44 years. If vaccines are not received in the next three

days, all vaccination centres for the 18-44 age group will be shut," Sisodia said.

Sisodia told the press that the Delhi government has requested the Centre to provide vaccines for 18-44 age groups at least



equal in number to the doses provided for the 45 and above age groups.

"We want to vaccinate both sections (18 to 44 and 45 and above) at the same time so that all age groups of people in Delhi can be administered vaccines before the third wave of Covid pandemic starts," he added.

Starting vaccination with frontline warriors paid rich dividends: PM

NEW DELHI

ASSERTING that the strategy of starting the vaccination programme with frontline warriors has paid rich dividends in the second wave of Covid-19, PM Narendra Modi said on Monday that the vaccines have ensured the safety of most of the doctors as 90 percent of health professionals have already taken their first dose. In an interaction with a group of doctors via video-conferencing, Modi said he is testing, supply of medicines or setting up new infrastructure in "record time", all these are being done at a fast pace, according to a statement. His assertions came amid criticism from opposition parties of his government's vaccination programme and also alleged poor handling of the second wave of the pandemic. Noting that challenges of oxygen production and supply are be-

ing overcome, Modi said steps taken by the country to augment human resources, like including MBBS students in COVID treatment and ASHAs and Anganwadi workers in rural areas, provided extra support to the health system.

The prime minister also thanked the entire medical fraternity and paramedical staff for the "exemplary fight displayed by them against the extraordinary circumstances" of the second wave, adding that the entire country is indebted to them. He urged doctors to include oxygen audit in their daily efforts.

Noting that a large number of patients are undergoing treatment in home isolation, he asked the doctors to ensure that the home-based care of every patient is SOP driven. He said telemedicine has played a big role for patients in home isolation, adding that this service needs to be expanded in rural areas as well.



Praising doctors who formed teams and are providing telemedicine service in villages, Modi appealed to the fraternity across states to form similar teams, train final year MBBS students and MBBS interns, and work towards ensuring that all tehsils and districts of the country have this service.

Touching on the challenge of mucormycosis, he said doctors may need to put in extra effort towards taking active steps to deal with it and spread awareness about it.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday reviewed efforts of the armed forces, defence public sector undertakings (DPSUs) and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in India's fight against a severe second wave of the coronavirus pandemic that continues to spread in rural areas. The focus of Singh's review at a video conference was on set-

ting up dedicated COVID hospitals in different states, the creation of additional beds in military hospitals, the establishment of oxygen plants and the augmentation of doctors and other health professionals to deal with the crisis, officials said. Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar said at the meeting that nearly 800 doctors have been mobilised through various measures to meet the shortage of health professionals, according to an official statement.

The defence ministry has initiated a number of steps to increase the availability of doctors, which included giving extension till December 31 to all short service commissioned doctors in the Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) who were due for retirement. The ministry also roped in retired military doctors to provide online consultations to civilian patients through a telemedicine platform.

Womenia

TWEET PATROL


KAJOL
@ITSKAJOLD

To all the people living in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka & Tamil Nadu, #StayIndoors & #StaySafe



'Always loved performing,': Barkha Singh

TEJAL SINHA

Barkha Singh started her career as a child artist. She played the younger Kareena Kapoor Khan as Tina in Mujhse Dosti Karoge. Barkha Singh is well known for her role as Gia Sen in the show Girls on Top broadcast on MTV India. She also played her cameo role in the serial MTV Fanaah as Vedika. Barkha is known for her character in the serial Yeh Hai Aashiqui and Love by Chance, as well as her role of Surbhi Varun Shukla in the soap opera Bhagyavallabhi on &TV. She is also known as VJ Singh through MTV India.

She started her own YouTube page in January 2018, posting several travel and fashion blogs. [6] She has gained fame from doing several popular web shows like Work Life Balance, Engineering Girls, Please Find Attached and Please Find Attached 2.

Sharing about her journey, Barkha shares, "Honestly, I have always loved performing and not just acting. It started with some randomly selected acting projects when I was in school since my parents were very particular about prioritizing education over any-

thing. After college, even though I had a corporate job offer through my campus placement, I picked a television show and from there I moved to the youth space to digital platforms and now to OTT. All along I have created travel and lifestyle content and tried to do everything that I enjoy doing. So, I guess if I have to summarise my journey, it's been full of surprises and I can't wait to see what more life has to throw at me and everyone else around me. But everything that I have done whether it's creating content or being an influencer, a host, a VJ, or an actor, it's all being a conscious choice with a lot of hard work, and I'm so glad that I have managed to create an audience of my own although I still have a long way to go."

With a super fun and fast paced storyline, eccentric characters and the hilarious circumstances that they find themselves in, Barkha shares that Murder Meri Jaan is a complete entertainment package.

Sharing about her character in the web series, she says, "My character Sonal is an innocent-looking, but very sharp young girl with a long criminal history that includes duping men after marrying them. One can never know what's on her

mind. Things turn awry when her latest catch is none other than a cop himself, resulting in a series of difficult and funny situations for both her, and ACP Aditya. Playing Sonal in Murder Meri Jaan was a great learning experience. She is an innocent-looking, but very sharp young girl with a long criminal history that includes duping men after marrying them. You never know what's on her mind. Things turn awry when her latest catch is none other than a police officer himself, resulting in a series of difficult and funny situations for both her, and ACP Aditya."

With Murder Meri Jaan, this was the first time Tanuj and Barkha had worked together. Talking about her experience with Tanuj Virwani, Barkha adds, "When we first met in Bhopal, 2 days before the shoot started, I was sick with food poisoning and he was exhausted from a previous project and the wrap party that followed. We were anything but excited to work together. However once we did start shooting and with all the shenanigans that followed through the schedule, I think it is safe to say that Tanuj is a great co-actor and a good friend. He is brutally honest, helpful and

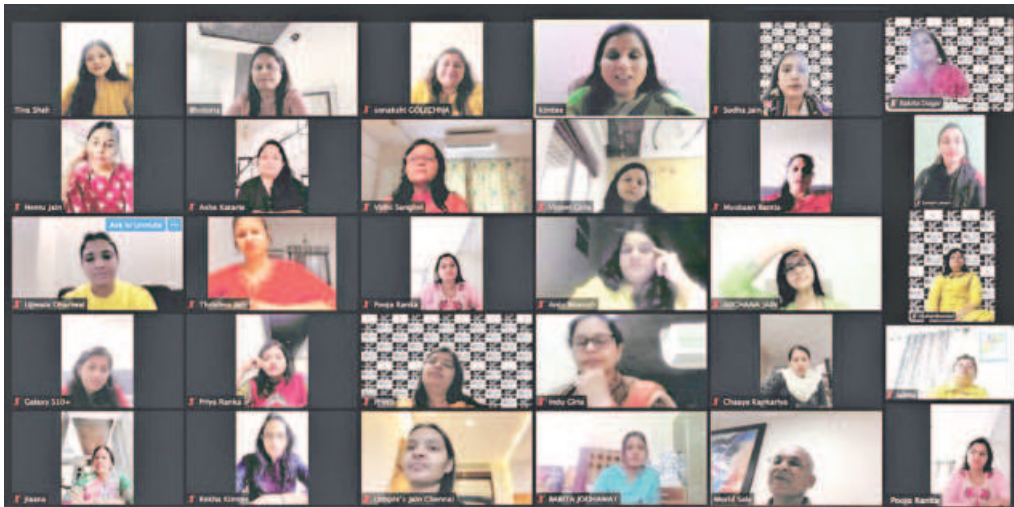
encouraging as a co-actor. There are loads of pranks and jokes and a whole lot of cricket and 'Bhindi ki sabzi' when Tanuj is on set."

Barkha wanted to make a shift towards web content because that was being created not just in India but also globally. She felt that she would be able to make a mark here and enjoy it a lot, and also relate to it.

"It was around that time that FilterCopy was also one of the platforms that was gaining popularity. I felt I could resonate with their content and one thing led to another. I was lucky to be one of the few people to be associated with FilterCopy during its growing years and since then we've all grown together. Silence released in March and after Murder Meri Jaan in May, I am all set to begin work on a couple of exciting projects which I sadly cannot disclose yet as they haven't been

announced as yet. However due to the lockdown the shoot for those have been on hold. We will resume shooting as soon as the situation eases out and it is safe to resume shoots. I can't wait to let all of you know about them," ends the Girls on top actress.

Barkha Singh is an Indian model and actress. She began her career as a child artist at the age of 10 and has since been associated with big brands such as Amazon, Cadbury, Coca-Cola and Clinic Plus. On recent note, Barkha is seen in the web series 'Murder Meri Jaan'



JITO Ladies Wing Hyderabad announces 'Kalakaar Ki Khoj Season-2'

JITO Hyderabad Ladies Wing on Monday announced the launch of 'Kalakaar Ki Khoj Season-2' in a virtual mode. The Organisation announced the various competitions that are to be held as part of Season-2. 'Kalakaar Ki Khoj Season-1' was held in 2020 and received an overwhelming response, the organisers said.

Speaking on the occasion Sarla Bhutoria Chairperson of JITO Ladies Wing (JLW) Hyderabad said that, "As part of Season-2 we are conducting five competitions Dancing (Dance Ke Deewane),

Signing (Sur Ke Sartaaj), Styling (Style & Beyond), Short movie making (Screen Master) and Zayka - the cooking show (Swad Ki). The competition will be organised in three rounds, two rounds virtually and the finale Zayka-the cookery competition will be physically in the city once Covid-19 situation subsides."

Bhutoria said, "This is not just a competition but it is to empower women by training them by experts and at JLW we are supporting child education every year. We are extending support to 40 students under the Project

Roshini." And other initiatives we are taking up, she added.

Sudha Kimtee, Chief Secretary of JLW said, "The inauguration of the season will be on May 22, 2021, and the process of registration and other details will be revealed then. Some 300 people participated in the competition during season-1."

Kushalji Kankaria, JITO Chairman, Tina Shah, Vidhi Sanghvi, Chaya Kankaria, Veena Ostwal, Urmila Surana, Rekha kimtee and the entire team of Kalakar Ki Khoj took part in virtual session.

NEWS ROUNDUP

Saloni Khanna joins cast of 'Broken But Beautiful 3'

Actress Saloni Khanna, who has worked in shows such as "The Raikar Case" and "Cold Lassi Aur Chicken Masala", will soon be seen in the web series, "Broken But Beautiful 3".

Saloni will share the screen with Sidharth Shukla and Sonia Rathee. She will play Maira Desai, Rumi's younger sister.

Her character is elegant, poised, and knows what she wants to do with her life.

"The story of the show is very different from what I have done before. Also, my character is someone who I look up to. She continues to care for her sister

despite whatever she does to her. I love taking up characters that are challenging and this one just fits the bill perfectly," she says.

The series showcases the broken love story of Agastya and Rumi. Agastya is an aspiring director and falls in love with Rumi, his muse. The series showcases the ups and downs in their relationship.

The series has been directed by Priyanka Ghose. It will stream on AltBalaji.

FASHIONISTA

T-shirts with natural fibers make you feel comfortable

Like a good pair of jeans, the softest women's T-shirts feel broken-in and only get better with time. Tees made from natural materials will deliver that sumptuous feel, and below you'll find a breakdown of some fabrics to look for to ensure you're getting a tee you never want to take off.

Supima cotton: Accounting for less than one per cent of all cotton in the world, this high-quality cotton has extra-long staple fibers that result in a supremely soft and durable fabric that's less likely to wear out no matter how much you live in it. If you're shopping on a budget, regular cotton will still feel downy to the touch and offer breathability. If you're after a white tee that isn't see-through, medium-weight cotton will do the trick.

Linen: Woven from flax, this lightweight natural fiber is stronger than cotton and gets softer with every single wash for a broken-in look and feel. It's naturally moisture-wicking (unlike cotton), but wrinkles easily.

Rayon: Derived from wood and bamboo pulp, this semi-natural fabric is famous for its light and silky drape that blends well with other fabrics. It's absorbent and breathable and feels buttery-soft on your skin. Depending on the particular fabric blend, it may require a bit of hands-on care to stay looking pristine, however. You will also find tees made from a blend of materials, like cotton and rayon, that harness the best properties of both. Some tees have a tiny bit of synthetic material like spandex or polyester woven in to help them hold their shape and prevent fading, as well. From a fitted scoop-neck tee made from organic cotton to a flowy tunic that's perfect with leggings and jeans.

GET YOUR SKIN GLOW THIS LOCKDOWN

Summers can be brutal. When the temperature soars, the heat and humidity can make your active oil glands hyperactive. You eventually end up with excessive sebum around the T-zone, itchy rashes, sunburn, and premature signs of aging. This is why you need a proper skin care routine as your first line of defence. There are several home remedies that can help you save your skin. As the lockdown is announced in maximum states, people can follow these simple home remedies and make their skin glow than before.

Here is the list of some home remedies to follow for a brighter skin.

Regular face wash: Cleaning your face is the most basic skin care routine that you need to follow, irrespective of the season.

During summers, the climate is hot and humid. Your face tends to produce more oil in this season. So regular face wash should be a part of your daily routine to avoid skin damages.

Anti-tanning scrub: Add a teaspoon of milk to two spoons of oatmeal. Then add two table-spoons of tomato juice, some orange pulp and a few pinches of poppy seeds. Blend the mixture together so that it forms a thick density like a face-pack. Apply it all over your face and neck, leave until it dries and scrub it off while rinsing. The tomato and orange extracts will brighten your skin tone, while the milk will add glow.

Neem cure: Neem leaves are also a great ingredient. Boil a handful of neem leaves on low fire in four cups of water for one hour. Leave it overnight. Next morning, strain the water and make a paste of the leaves. The water can be used to rinse the face. Neem contains organic sulphur compounds, with versatile healing actions that are of particular benefit to the skin.



BEAUTY FUNDA



Museum Day

Few places in our world are more educational than museums. After all, where else could we hope to see so many pieces of actual history that tell so many stories about our ancestors? From prehistoric spears to Egyptian mummies, from ancient Greek sculptures to medieval armor, and from the first radio to the first planes used in war during WWI, museums have it all. Unfortunately, there are millions of people with direct access to museums that have never even visited one.

There are many possible reasons for this—perhaps they think just looking at old things would be boring, or perhaps they are unaware just how different the world was in the past and see no reason to take an interest. Whatever the reason for not taking advantage of the incredible amount of tangible knowledge museums offer, and regardless of age, Museum Day is the time to invest in education in its most fascinating form.

Many people may ask why they would invest in something like Museum Day when modern technology can give them all the answers that they may need. Well, to answer that fairly, all you need to do is a little Google search.

Nowadays, if you need to find an answer to something, you can surely just jump online and get it right? Well, yes, but what you need to realize is that the answer you get is quite possibly wrong.



THIS DAY IN HISTORY
with HANS INDIA

Gujarat bizman sets up firewood bank for cremations in UP

GHAZIPUR

GUJARAT-BASED businessman Sanjay Rai has set up a firewood bank at the cremation grounds on the banks of the Ganga to help poor people perform the last rites of their kin, instead of dumping the bodies in the river.

Rai, who is a native of Sherpur village in Ghazipur district of UP, and now residing in Gujarat, decided to start the facility after dozens of bodies were washed up on the banks of the

river last week.

The bodies were apparently immersed in water after the relatives could not afford the cost of cremation.

Rai was in his village when the bodies washed up, and decided to help out the poor.

"People from various parts of the country called me to know the facts. The dumping of bodies as well as floating corpses in the river was upsetting" Rai said.

He discussed the issue with his associates and family mem-



bers and decided to launch a firewood bank on the nine cremation 'ghats' located near the river.

"We informed the district administration about the plan and transported firewood, procured from the timber merchants from various parts of the districts. On May 14, the firewood banks were launched near the nine cremation grounds," he said.

Rai has got a group of volunteers who ensure maintenance of stock at the cremation

grounds where poor people are given wood for the last rites from the bank without any cost.

On an average, Rs 5,000 is spent on firewood for a single pyre. Rai has so far spent close to Rs 3 lakh to cremate 60 bodies. He has been helped by family and friends in generating resources for the cause.

Ghazipur District Magistrate Mangala Prasad Singh said that Rai's contribution was praiseworthy.

"His organization is also cre-

ating awareness among the villagers urging them not to dump the dead bodies in the river," Singh said.

The district administration has also started an awareness campaign while the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) is conducting patrols to dissuade villagers from dumping the bodies in the river.

The newly-elected gram pradhans have been asked to reach out to the district administration for assistance for the last rites if needed.

UP women manufacture solar lamps for kids



LUCKNOW

THE Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has launched a project to manufacture solar lamps and distribute them to children in rural areas of the state at a reasonably low cost. With the help of the government and the CSR Fund, women of self-help groups are creating these solar lamps, which are being made available to the school children by the government for Rs 100 per piece against their market rate of a whopping Rs 500 per piece.

Earlier, the Yogi Adityanath government had distributed 28 lakh solar lamps made by 4,000 women to school children in 75 blocks spread over 30 districts of UP. The initiative is part of the Prerna Ojas Programme of Uttar Pradesh State

Rural Livelihoods Mission (Rural Development Department) that helps women of self-help groups to become self-reliant and socially and economically empowered. Kanpur Dehat District Magistrate, Jitendra Pratap Singh, said that this initiative would help children a great deal in pursuing education, adding that it is a matter of pride for the district that women have found a way to become self-reliant by making solar lamps. The Chief Development Officer (CDO) of the district, Soumya Pandey said that a total of 978 self-help groups have been formed in the district to which 10,758 rural women are linked. Pandey added that the solar lamps made by these women are far cheaper than those available in the market. In the first phase of the Prerna Ojas programme, 35 women from 18 groups were selected to receive training in manufacturing cheaper solar lamps and selling them while a unit was set up at Paraunkh village of President Ram Nath Kovind.

Shailendra Dwiwedi, CEO of Prerna Ojas Programme, said that the women of the group are given Rs 12 for manufacturing and Rs 17 for sale per piece with their daily income reaching Rs 250-Rs 300.

Jaish operative tasked to kill Hindu priest held from Delhi hotel

NEW DELHI

A JAMMU and Kashmir resident who was allegedly tasked to kill priest Swami Yati Narsinghanand for Pakistan-based terrorist outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), has been arrested from a hotel here, the Delhi Police's Special Cell said on Monday.

According to a Special Cell source, John aka Jaan Mohammad Dar, a resident of J&K's Pulwama, was held from his room at the Shiva Hotel in Paharganj area on Sunday evening.

A .30 bore pistol, two magazines, 15 live rounds, an orange-coloured kurta, a piece of 'kalawa' and several other religious items were recovered from him. A Special Cell officer said that Dar was arrested in connection with a case registered on April 28 this year. During questioning, he revealed that he has studied up to Class 12 and currently works as a carpenter. It was also found that he was booked by the Jammu and Kashmir Police for stone pelting in 2016 at the time of death of terrorist Burhan Wani. The officer said that Dar stated that he had met JeM terrorist named Aabid while roaming in his field in December 2020.

"Aabid informed him that he is from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and that he is a 'Mujahid' of JeM. Over the period, Aabid and

Dar grew a strong bonding as both wanted to fight against the Indian government," the officer said. Though they again met in April this year, they were frequently in touch with each other on WhatsApp, he said.

The officer said that in February this year, Dar had come to Delhi for treatment of his nephew who has some heart ailment, and on returning home, told Aabid about it.

"Upon hearing about Dar's visit to Delhi, Aabid assigned him with the task to assassinate Swami Narsinghanand as he committed 'Gustakh-e-Rasool' (insult of the Prophet).

"Aabid also gave weapon handling training to Dar for the purpose of target killing and Rs 6,500," he said, adding that Aabid promised him that he would be paid substantial amount for carrying out the action and also told him that a person, code named Umar would receive him in Delhi.

Revealing the plot, the officer said that Aabid had called Dar to meet in Sangam area of Anantnag in the second week of April and informed that he would have to go to Delhi to kill Yati Narsinghanand whose video were shown to him by Aabid.

"Dar left Jammu and Kashmir on April 23 and after arriving in Delhi, he was in touch with Umar through Telegram.

Yogi: Oppn triggering panic among people on Covid



LUCKNOW/MUZAFFARNAGAR

UTTAR PRADESH Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday accused the opposition of triggering panic among people and health workers instead of increasing their confidence during

the second wave of Covid-19.

Adityanath made the allegation while reviewing the Covid situation in Muzaffarnagar district and inspecting an Integrated COVID Control Room there.

Without naming any political party, Adityanath said, "When

the need was to increase the confidence of the people and health workers, some people intentionally and mischievously tried to lower their morale and create an atmosphere of fear."

This led to a panic situation, he said, adding, "Due to this, every

Gurugram: 77% patients aged above 50 die of Covid

GURUGRAM

A DATA of the Gurugram health department revealed that between April 1 to May 10, 77 per cent of the patients who succumbed to the lethal virus in the district were over 50 years of age while, only 23 per cent patients who died due to the dreaded virus were below 50 years of age.

In Gurugram, so far, a total of 673 people have lost their lives amid a high number of Covid-19 infections.

According to a daily health bulletin, between April 1 and May 10, 235 patients have died due to Covid in the district, of which 181 were over 50 years of age. Among them, 62 patients are in the age group 61-70 and only 1 patient in the age group of 91-100 died due to the coronavirus infection.

Besides, only 1 patient in the age group of 11-20 died due to the novel coronavirus.

The figure also showed that the virus has claimed lives of more men than women. Of the 235 patients who died of the coronavirus between April 1 and May 10, around 82 were women and 153 men. Meanwhile, the Covid recovery rate in Gurugram has reached 79.64 per cent.

The officials said that to prevent Covid infections, an action



plan has been prepared by the district administration which focusing on testing, tracing and treatment. "To curb Covid infections, around 138 teams of the health department are working in a planned manner in different areas of the district. Also, a dedicated team of the health depart-

ment is monitoring the conditions of home isolation patients," Chief Medical Officer Gurugram, Virender Yadav said.

Yadav said that due to awareness among the district residents, administration and health department, the rate of recovery of Covid is constantly improving.

Uttarakhand reports first black fungus death



Rishikesh

A 36-year-old Covid-19 patient has died of mucormycosis or black fungus at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences here, according to hospital officials, marking the state's first fatality from the fungal infection. The man died as he was in an inoperable condition, the officials said.

Mucormycosis or black fungus is caused by a group of moulds known as mucormycetes present naturally in the environment. It spreads through the nose and affects other parts of the body such as the eyes. Diabetics are more vulnerable to the infection. Recently, several states have reported a rise in black fungus cases among COVID-19 patients.

Ravikant, director of AIIMS, Rishikesh said the man was

brought to the hospital from Dehradun in a serious condition on May 13 and died a day later. He succumbed to the black fungus infection because he was in an inoperable condition. Currently, 19 COVID patients who have contracted the infection are admitted in the hospital. Surgeries have been performed on 13 of them while the others are awaiting their turn, he said.

The eyes of two of the patients had to be removed, he added. So far, Uttarakhand has reported at least 23 black fungus cases, including three in Max Hospital, Dehradun. In an advisory released on May 9, the Centre had said that mucormycosis may turn fatal if it is not taken care of. The fungal infection mainly affects people who are on medication that reduces their ability to fight environmental pathogens.

IIT-K sets up fund to help needy students in Covid times

KANPUR

IIT Kanpur has raised over Rs one crore by way of donations from around 650 contributors for providing financial aid to students who are facing medical emergencies. Some of the students who approached the IIT-K authorities needed money for treatment of their family members. The initiative, according to IIT-K director Prof Abhay Karandikar, was started on May 1 but the portal for this was launched on May 5. Students can send their requests at the portal. "We had been receiving requests



for help from students and so we decided to set up a relief fund.

Our target is to raise Rs five crores," he said. He explained

that there are over 8,300 students at IIT K and is even 500 need financial help of Rs one lakh each, a corpus fund of Rs five crores is needed. The IIT K director said that he had reached out to alumni and well-wishers through the social media and the response was overwhelming. The IIT-K has set up a committee headed by dean students' affairs and dean of resource and alumni, student president and two representatives of the alumni community to evaluate each request and decide on the beneficiaries. The committee will meet virtually to review the

requests. The decision on appeals will then be communicated to the applicants and the funds will subsequently be transferred to them.

The IIT-K director said that the second wave of the pandemic had caused immense financial distress to students and their families. Covid related health issues may require large sums of money at short notice and it may be difficult for many to arrange for this at short notice. "The purpose of this fund is to provide immediate assistance for medication, food and other such issues.

Four cattle smugglers held after shootout

AGRA

FOUR cattle smugglers were arrested in Agra on Monday after a shootout following the recovery of 26 animals from them, police said.

The arrests were made after a truck was checked at the Korai Toll Plaza in Fatehpur Sikri of rural Agra and was found carrying the animals, being brought from Rajasthan to be sold in Moradabad of Uttar Pradesh.

The truck used to transport the animals too was seized.

The police identified the alleged smugglers as Khushi Mohammad, Akram, Mohammad

Feroz and Ashu.

Fatehpur Sikri Circle Officer Achhnera Mahesh Kumar said the police also seized Two country-made pistols, two live cartridges and two knives from the arrested accused.

Kumar said the arrested accused had also opened fire at the police team, which managed to arrest them.

Agra West (Rural) Superintendent of Police Satyajeet Gupta said the accused confessed to the police that they used to buy the animals from the Rajasthan villages at Rs 4,000 to Rs 5,000 per cow and sell them in Moradabad for slaughtering.

Continuing challenges for Tokyo Olympics

NORTH Korea has decided to drop out of the forthcoming Tokyo Olympics due to concerns its athletes could contract coronavirus. It became the first country to withdraw from the quadrennial event. Japan said it hopes many countries will join the Olympics and promised ample anti-virus measures. The Games are currently scheduled to take place from July 23 to August 8. The Paralympics will follow, from August 24 to September 5. Tokyo Olympic organisers grappled with the cancellation of test events for several pool sports just days after they were restarted, as the Covid-19 pandemic continued to disrupt preparations for the start of the Summer Games in July.

The International Swimming Federation (FINA) has cancelled Olympic qualifiers for diving and artistic swimming that were to double up as test events this month and next. Separately, a water polo test event involving only Japanese athletes, that was due to take place at the weekend, will be cancelled because overseas officials are unable to come to Japan due to strict Covid-19 countermeasures. The news is a blow for organisers just days after they restarted test

events, which are an important dry run to confirm the Games' operational capabilities, for the first time in more than a year.

It also highlights the mammoth task of planning for the world's biggest sporting event at a time when Japan is struggling to combat a fourth wave of Covid-19 infections that has begun to gather. Organisers were initially planning 18 test events in April and May, starting with wheelchair rugby April 3-4. But FINA has cancelled its Olympic qualifiers in Tokyo, which were also to be test events, for diving scheduled for April 18-23 and artistic swimming May 1-4. FINA has also cancelled a non-test event, the Olympic marathon swim qualifier in the southern Japanese city of Fukuoka in late May, its website shows. Meanwhile, an Olympic preparatory event was cancelled after Covid-19 infections broke out at a training camp for the Japanese water polo team - with seven people testing positive for the virus.

Meanwhile, the torch relay that started on March 25 from northeastern Japan is circulating the country and is to reach Tokyo on July 23. It involves about

10,000 runners. The Tokyo Summer Olympics has survived being postponed, a mountain of scandal and bad publicity. Now comes the real challenge: pulling off the world's biggest sporting event safely in the middle of a pandemic. When the games kick off on July 23, Covid-19 will still be a global reality. Even with the decision to exclude foreign spectators, more than 60,000 athletes, coaches, national team staff, media and other essential workers will converge on Tokyo from more than 200 countries — each with different rates of transmission, vaccination and viral variants.

Based on the number of people arriving and the prevalence of the disease around the globe, the Olympics absolutely could become a super-spreading event that leads to quite a number of infections, as well as spreading internationally as people return home. If there is an outbreak in the Olympics village, not only could the event become the site of a sizable outbreak that spreads into Japan, it could become the birthplace of novel variants gathered from around the world.



A new bipolarity is in the offing

D C PATHAK

THE Cold War that ended three decades ago, inevitably left behind a legacy, existing even today, of a divide between the US-led West and the residual of the world of Communism inherited by the Chinese leadership. In the era of Cold War the world was tightly divided ideologically between the two politico-economic camps of democracy and free market on the one hand and the State-controlled means of production and democratic centrism, a synonym for one party rule, on the other.

Over years the world is beginning to move once again towards a bipolar order, of course with a different set of paradigms. The lead player in the Communist camp this time is China, not Russia, since Deng Xiaoping having taken all the lessons from the collapse of the Soviet Union -- he saw the latter becoming an oligarchy with serious economic contradictions internally -- proceeded to open the Chinese economy to global markets outside in a highly controlled fashion and build the new technology brought in by the success of IT revolution that had ironically coincided with the dismemberment of the USSR. Xi Jinping has carried this forward but he has also deepened the Communist hold on the state by emphasising on 'Sinicization of Marxism'. China has successfully pursued the economic route to becoming a superpower -- with a huge favourable balance of trade against US and a potential for putting many countries around it under a debt burden through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China's strategy of restricting the influence of India as a major Asian power is presently in full play. The Sino-Pak military alliance sustained by CPEC and the trade relationship with ASEAN countries fortified through the Regional Comprehensive Economic Pact (RCEP) are the instruments used by China to contain India.

The advent of the Biden Presidency in the US is setting off the process of reviving the US-NATO bonds that had been weakened in the times of Donald Trump and bracketing China and Russia together as the adversaries of the Cold War era. The activation of QUAD with Japan as its anchor in the Indo-Pacific and the participation of France in the recent naval exercises of QUAD have impelled Russia to firm up its axis with China for monitoring US moves in this area and speak up against the alleged rise of an 'Asian NATO'. India is now an active partner in QUAD to give a message to China that it would not only take on the latter on LAC but also join any multilateral initiatives to counter Chinese aggressiveness in the Indo-Pacific -- that helped our strategy for the defending Indian Ocean as well. The depth of Indo-Russian relations -- Russia is the largest supplier of defence equipment to India ahead of US and Israel -- can be maintained by India as our diplomacy is in a position to convince the US that none of this would be at the cost of American interests. India has to project its role as a major sovereign power exercising a balancing influence geopolitically for the cause of global peace -- this can be a nuanced aspect of the 'non-aligned' approach of the past sans ideological tints. This would be tested in our ability to simultaneously maintain friendship with Iran, Israel and Saudi Arabia in bilateral terms.

A new trend gone unnoticed in many quarters is that the increasing geopolitical alignments towards a bipolar world are, unlike in the Cold War years, revolving round 'political' opposition to the US and not the 'ideological' contradiction between Communism and Capitalism that had guided them earlier. There is a notable drift of some Islamic countries towards the Communist block led by the China-Russia combine and its allies, in consequence of the prolonged 'war on terror' that had been launched by the US-led world coalition following 9/11. Pakistan became increasingly ambiguous about supporting the US in countering Islamic radicals of Al Qaeda-Taliban axis and in the process drew international approbation for harbouring Islamic extremists and terrorists on its soil. It invited a clear reprimand from President Donald Trump on this score.

Pakistan chose to strike a military alliance with China primarily driven by its hostility towards India on the issue of Kashmir. The Sino-Pak collaboration is sustained by the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) the high investment project of China built on the territory of POK that was ceded by Pakistan to its new 'all weather friend'. In a situation of internal economic decline aggravated by the financial curbs imposed by the Trump regime, Pakistan is now greatly beholden to China for economic support. All of this has added to Pakistan's recalcitrance towards the US on the issue of the threat to the latter from 'radicalisation'. It has also crystallised a group within the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) comprising Pakistan, Turkey, Malaysia and Qatar, that directly or indirectly supports Islamic radicals on the ground of faith and is not with Saudi Arabia's leadership known for its staunch political alliance with the US.

In this developing geopolitical scenario, the strategy of the Modi government to go in for bilateral or even multi-sided understandings and alliances based on mutuality of economic and security interests and in tune with the requirements of world peace and global harmony, has served India well. The polarisation is ultimately between the democratic world and the regimes run by dictators or fundamentalists and there is no doubt about which side India will be on. While President Biden values India as the largest democracy in the world -- considering the latter as 'a natural ally' of the oldest democracy of US -- some of the European powers owing to the colonial past might still be a little deprecatory towards this country. India has to launch a diplomatic mobilisation in the democratic countries against the rise of faith-based militancy in the Muslim world and the unholy alliance between Pakistan and China that was supporting it.

India has to continue striving for friendly relations with countries of South and Southeast Asia apart from the closeness it had developed with Saudi Arabia and UAE -- leaders of the OIC who were on the side of US and against Islamic radicals. India can work for multipolarity in Asia and for this it has to build its economy, military strength and internal governance to emerge as an important voice in international relations. We are in the era of covert offensives, cyber attacks and information warfare and India has to develop its capabilities for dealing with the same. The 'jointness' among our defence services being developed by the CDS was in evidence in the build-up achieved by India in Ladakh recently for the purpose of countering Chinese designs on LAC.

It is possible that due to a sense of comfort of distance felt by the US in relation to the threat of Al Qaeda and an accommodating attitude shown by the Biden administration towards Pakistan because of factors relating to Afghan peace process involving Taliban, India may not witness the kind of convergence it expected to have with America on these issues. This would be another reason why India must believe in its own strength and capabilities in dealing with its security and economic concerns while continuing to offer wise counsel on matters affecting global peace and the cause of humanity. The crippling effect of the Corona pandemic at home has put the entire energy of the government on the domestic challenge but the country has to keep up its guards against any external threats to national security in the prevailing environ.

(The writer is a former Director Intelligence Bureau)

Whether all Indians will get vaccinated? When?



Madabhushi Siddhar Acharyulu

THE world and especially India need two doses of vaccine for entirety of its population to prevent the spread of corona virus. Even if a state in India or India in world is left out, or any other poor country is not vaccinated, it will remain a highly dangerous risk factor for whole of the world. Martin Luther King Junior said, 'injustice anywhere is threat to justice everywhere'. The truth of this quote is difficult to be proved. But there will be no difficulty in understanding a similar statement 'virus anywhere will be a threat to life everywhere'.

If entire Indians are not vaccinated twice, it will not be the problem of Modi alone, but that of the world. 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' is yet another Sanskrit maxim which is used as an empty sermon as none practice it. But as far as corona virus is concerned every life is same. This virus has no borders and knows no racism. It has no reservations.

In India, between the Serum Institute, Bharat Biotech and Biological E, India had about 2.3 billion doses' capacity to make any kind of vaccine. Serum Institute had two manufacturing relationships one with AstraZeneca promising a billion doses, and one with Novavax, again promising a billion doses. They had also announced that they are setting up additional manufacturing capacities for up to another billion doses, which may take some months or a year and probably in 2022 they may acquire the new capacity. The SII's current capacity of the AstraZeneca vaccine (Covishield) is about 70 plus million doses per month, and capacity of BB is around five-10 million doses as per report of Rajya Sabha committee.

Dr Reddy's Laboratories and the Sputnik V vaccine is another hope if necessary authorisations are given. Through Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Sputnik V has announced that the Russian Direct Investment Fund has promised about 250 million treatments or 500 million doses. Doctors say that the other one to watch out for is Zyklus, which is hopefully wrapping up their phase three clinical trial. That is another 140 million doses of additional capacity that would show up in the market. If import restrictions are removed, the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are also ready to enter.

Meanwhile Adar Poonawalla has left India and planning to produce it in other countries. Perhaps he will sell it to India in much higher price, and we might even purchase. We have a wonderful government which strangely thinks only SII and BB would produce and ignore several PSU and private vaccine makers in India.

Reportedly he complained that he was

threatened to the extent that head would be chopped off if vaccine doses are not produced and supplied to them. He talked about unprecedented aggression and serious implications. He said: "I'm staying here for an extended period because I don't want to go back to that situation". None even think of ordering a probe into the allegations made by Adar in an interview with an International Media channel. The silence could be adversely inferred as possible truth. Adar is driven out and he forgets 'make in India' and 'make for India'.

The R & D behind the vaccine is quite expensive and its testing is a very costly affair. The meritorious part of patenting system is that the knowledge used for production of innovative drug will be known to all which would boost up further research to invent easiest, more effective vaccines might be made available to humanity with less cost. In return to this disclosure of knowledge, the inventor is permitted to have ten-year monopoly over the commercial gains from the product denying others from imitating it. But some experts believe that more than ten-year monopoly, the offer of prize fund to innovators will help the mankind to have benefit of science and research, at least in pharmaceuticals especially during the unprecedented critical situations like Covid.

While waiver is a global requirement, the Government should use the compulsory licensing clauses to increase vaccine production, assigning the work to all vaccine makers in India. To incentivise the research and the hard work put in developing the vaccine, the firms should be given a prize fund instead of allowing them to have monopoly over production and distribution.

India initially permitted only process patenting, which is a simple single-most policy that helped phenomenal growth of pharma industry that now can stand in competition with superpowers. India succumbed to international 'blackmail' like pressures and switched over to product patenting also. Before that India successfully fought the AIDS disease with its own vaccines and medicines. But from the last one year, we are struggling with pandemic. Prof Srinath Reddy questioned criticism against quality of production in countries like India, "between 1972 and 2005, India had adopted process patenting rather than product patenting, and built up a huge generic industry. If western companies are interested in contracting Indian companies for manufacturing their vaccines in India, then how can they say you do not have the quality to produce on your own?"

In India, its public sector unit ICMR is contributing the knowhow of the vaccine produced by Bharat Biotech for a five per cent royalty, while Serum Institute of India is having an agreement with Oxford University. Since the public sector com-



India initially permitted only process patenting, which is a simple single-most policy that helped phenomenal growth of pharma industry that now can stand in competition with superpowers. India succumbed to international 'blackmail' like pressures and switched over to product patenting also. Before that India successfully fought the AIDS disease with its own vaccines and medicines. But from the last one year, we are struggling with pandemic

pany is the inventor, it is easy for Indian government to negotiate with all vaccine producers in India to maximise their production. It can also offer incentives and financial support to increase their capacity. They should help Bharat Biotech and SII to double the production besides roping in all other vaccine makers. With this the Government also can counter the criticism that it is unduly favouring one or two vaccine makers.

It is reported that the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is willing to share the know-how to produce the indigenously developed Covid-19 vaccine, Covaxin, with any company as the contract with co-developer Bharat Biotech is not close-ended. As on today, Bharat Biotech has the sole licence to manufacture Covaxin, which it developed in collaboration with scientists from ICMR's Pune-based National Institute of Virology (NIV). An official told a media house that the terms and conditions agreed upon while transferring the Covid-19 vaccine technology was that Bharat Bio will pay the ICMR 5 per cent royalty on the net sales of Covaxin. "The contract with Bharat Biotech is not close-ended, it is open-ended in terms of sharing of technology. So, we are free to share the know-how with other companies. Currently, we are entitled to get 5 per cent royalty from Bharat Biotech on an annual basis," as per a media report quoting unnamed official.

India has administered 9.5 crore vaccine doses to 8.4 crore people -- 6 per cent of the total population -- by April 10. India has also exported about 6.4 crore vaccine doses, per commitments made by private sector manufacturers like the Serum Institute of India before the current crisis. Giridhar R Babu, professor and head,

life-course epidemiology at the Public Health Foundation of India in Bengaluru said that "If we were to look at just the vulnerable people [with comorbidities] in India, one in three adults has high blood pressure/hypertension and one in 10 has diabetes mellitus type-II. If they are not vaccinated in the next few months, the risk of seriousness and mortality from Covid-19 they face is high. So, it is imperative to cover at least the vulnerable groups as soon as possible, and then think of expanding to other age groups".

There is also a huge gap between the capacities announced for the developed nations versus those announced for the developing countries. There is a very wide supply-demand gap, from a market perspective. The United States and Europe have double- or triple-booked the number of vaccines actually required for their populations. The countries like Chile, Argentina or Ukraine, which are all seeing a very high Covid-19 burden, do not have any hope to meet their demand in near future.

Even if we secure necessary stocks of vaccine in near future, its cost and affordability will be real challenges. Unless globally the corona vaccines and medicines are freed from patents regime and India allows all PSUs and Private Units to produce vaccine increasing their capacities to cope up with the demand of Indian population, vaccinating all is not possible. Government should come out with a plan and inform the people about their vaccination.

(The writer is Professor of Law, Bennett University and former Central Information Commissioner)

ister and the President did.
K V Raghuram, Wayanad

Come clean on Covid preparedness

SURPRISINGLY many State Governments are declaring that there is no dearth of oxygen and beds in their hospitals. We are witnessing on television screens and on front pages of newspapers that many people are meeting death in front of hospitals or before reaching the hospitals in miserable conditions. When there is abundant oxygen and plenty of beds why people are dying in thousands? And on the other side country importing oxygen from small and poor countries. It is clear from the inferences that our political leadership measurably failed to protect the lives of the people. Both central and state governments are responsible for continuing deaths of the people in thousands for mere simple reasons of scarcity of Oxygen and Beds in the Hospitals. It seems that rich people are getting treatment in Govt or private hospitals, only poor people are left to their fate.

J Narsimha, Mahbubnagar

Control infection spread urgently

WITH reference to the article "Govt must stay alert as black fungus looms large" dated May 17. Excessive use of steroids and oxygen support due to surge in Covid-19 cases has led to an increase in black fungus cases. Steroids are the part of treatment for covid, but it is important to prescribe at the right time and at the right dosage. Doctors have also been warned to use distilled water and not tap water during humidification of patients on oxygen support, in order to avoid germs.

However, even those patients who were not hospitalised or administered steroids have reported mucormycosis. These patients are buying the unprescribed steroids from the black market and are worsening their health conditions. The Central drugs authority should update their guidelines and take necessary measures to curb black marketing. Otherwise, the patients will have to face serious health complications from the unprescribed doses. Also, the government should ensure all public and private hospitals take appropriate steps to prevent the spread of the infection.

M Vinesh, Visakhapatnam

Dispel fear of vaccine among public

THIS refers to the letter 'Deficit of humanitarian attitude and scientific criteria' by Nalapatla Ashok Babu. It is interesting that we all continue to be in doubt and have a diffident mood and mindset when the new life-saving vaccine is produced in the country after a great deal of research and required human trials that are recommended and mandatory. The tactics of avoidance and delaying the job to maximum extent possible, seems to be a general trend that is prevailing among us; and is evident even among the educated and scientific community, who are coming up with various logics about the Indian produced Covid vaccines not completing the third phase trials as mandated, and the third phase trial report not being published to their satisfaction. At the same time, it is pleasant and heartening that top medical professionals and famous heart surgeons who took the jab for all to see, in dispelling misconception and doubt lingering in the minds of general public, and other fellow professionals, which I regard as an excellent example

thehansreader@gmail.com

Probe intensified into land grab charges against Eatala's kin

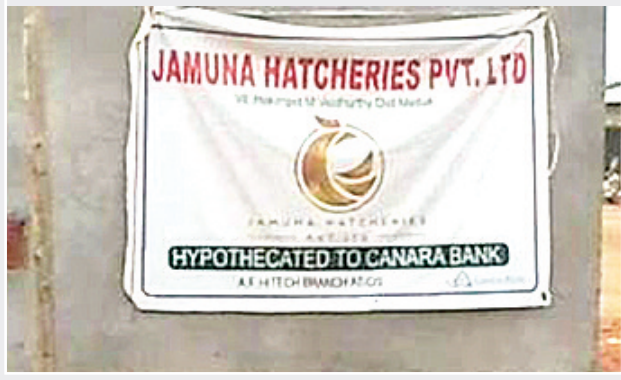
HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE revenue officials once again initiated inquiry into the alleged land encroachments by the family of former Minister Eatala Rajender as the Tahsildar of the Masaipet mandal summoned panchayat secretaries and inspected the lands in the Jamuna Hatcheries.

The officials summoned the panchayat secretaries and sought information from them on the issuance of no objection certificates to the Jamuna Hatcheries reportedly owned by the family members of Eatala.

Masaipet Tahsildar Malathi said that the management of Jamuna Hatcheries had obtained an NOC twice, including once in 2018 and later in 2019. There are some discrepancies in the statement given by the management, hence the panchayat secretaries were

- Revenue officials summon panchayat secretaries and seek information with regard to issuance of NOCs to Jamuna Hatcheries
- Officials say there are some discrepancies in the statement given by the Hatcheries management, hence the panchayat secretaries were called for clarification



called for clarification, she said.

It may be mentioned here that the Jamuna Hatcheries had approached the High Court stating that the government had initiated in-

quiry without even serving a prior notice. The High Court gave a clear ruling that the authorities should serve notice and then proceed with the inquiry.

It can be recalled that

based on a complaint by the villagers in Achampet in Masaipet mandal, Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao had ordered an inquiry into alleged land encroachments by Eatala. The officials, including Revenue, ACB and other departments took up an inquiry and submitted a preliminary report stating that there was encroachment.

Officials said that two notices were served to the management and they responded on the second notice and gave a memorandum on May 5. Based on the memorandum, they have conducted an inquiry.

The official said that primarily it was found that they had taken up construction activity in the assigned lands in Survey number 111 and hence, they were served notices. However, the officials refused to disclose further details stating that the inquiry was going on and they cannot talk on the issue.

Eatala's aides, TRS leaders spar over charges in Huzurabad

He will face defeat as the people support the TRS leadership and KCR government. Every leader and activist of the TRS in Huzurabad is with KCR and will not support Eatala. His (Eatala's) ouster will not cause any loss or problems to the party," Kamalakara said.

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE followers of former Minister Eatala Rajender and Telangana Rashtra Samithi leaders are at loggerheads in Huzurabad constituency. While the former Minister's followers alleged that the government was using power to intimidate them, Minister Gangula Kamalakara said that Eatala was enacting dramas in the name of self-respect instead of resigning from the post.

Ever since the Eatala was axed from the state cabinet, there has been a tussle going on between the followers of Eatala and the TRS cadre. Every day while the party leadership tries to show that the party cadre in Huzurabad was with TRS, the followers come up to show their presence. Of late, the TRS leaders addressed press conferences and said that they were not with the former minister.

The party leaders in Veena-vanka are a divided lot and frequently involved in quarrel. When

- While followers of former Health Minister allege that the government is using power to intimidate them
- Minister Gangula Kamalakara accuses Eatala of enacting dramas to gain sympathy from people

the Jammikunta Market Committee Chairman V Balkishan Rao and his group were addressing a press conference, the followers of Eatala came in large numbers and raised slogans in favour of their leader. The police had to intervene and arrest the followers of Eatala, who alleged that the TRS leaders were using power to intimidate them.

Meanwhile, the BC Welfare Minister G Kamalakara, who has been taking care of the TRS leaders in the constituency, on Monday criti-

cised the former Minister stating that instead of resigning from the post, he was enacting dramas of self-respect.

Kamalakara alleged that Eatala, facing the land grab charges, was trying to spread falsehood and lies. He said that people would teach a lesson to Eatala for spreading lies and law would take its own course of action on land grab charges. "He will face defeat as the people support the TRS leadership and KCR government. Every leader and activist of the TRS in Huzurabad is with KCR and will not support Eatala. The TRS is strong in Huzurabad and the erstwhile Karimnagar district and will get people's support. Eatala's ouster will not cause any loss or problems to the party," Kamalakara said.

He also added that he too had participated in Telangana agitation and the cases registered against him were the proof. People will teach a lesson to Eatala, who is trying to gain sympathy with lies, he said.

Do not neglect fever survey, MLA tells Asha workers

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIKARABAD

LEGISLATOR Dr Methuku Anand visited Kerelli village in Dharur zone on Monday and enquired with medical authorities about the number of active corona cases in the village, people in home isolation besides those who have recovered.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLA suggested the villagers, especially those who go out for employment to wear a mask and maintain social distancing. He said that Asha workers and paramedics should not neglect the fever survey in villages. Anand also instructed the authorities



concerned to remove an electric pole from the middle of the houses and install in an empty area besides expediting the works taken up earlier in the village. Local Sarpanch Narasimha Reddy, MPTC Srinivas, former

Sarpanch Santosh Kumar, village party president Ramakrishna Reddy, AMC director Narasimha Reddy, Covid district officer Arvind, doctors and medical personnel and others were present.

Sabitha reviews Covid situation, visits local hospital

HANS NEWS SERVICE
CHEVELLA

EDUCATION Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy along with Chevella MLA Kale Yadaiah conducted a Covid review meeting in Chevella on Monday. Later, the Minister visited a ward at a local hospital and interacted with the patients and enquired about the treatment and facilities provided to them.

Speaking on the occasion, Sabitha said that the government was reviewing and taking decisions from time-to-time on the steps to be taken to provide proper control measures to prevent corona infections and to provide treatment to those affected by it. She said that as part of the fever survey, medical teams have identified people with mild symptoms and gave



them the needed medicines. All arrangements are being made to provide proper treatment at the right time to the corona patients who come to the hospitals, the Minister said.

She further added that Remdesivir injections, oxygen

cylinders and other medicines are being monitored to ensure that there was a buffer stock. The Minister appealed to the people to strictly adhere to lockdown norms for protecting the lives. Local officials and leaders accompanied the Minister.

Free meals facility for Covid patients, caregivers set up

HANS NEWS SERVICE
SHADNAGAR

THE Telangana Rashtra Samithi leader and son of a local MLA, Murali Krishna Yadav, along with Shadnagar ACP Kushalkar on Monday inaugurated a free meal facility for Covid patients and their caregivers at a government hospital in Shadnagar town of the district.

Later, the ACP Kushalkar appreciated Murali Yadav for his gesture. Speaking on the occasion, Murali Krishna Yadav said that no one should go hungry at such a critical time and reminded that the TRS government was there for all. He said

that many people were coming to Shadnagar town for Covid treatment and medical check-ups and were facing difficulties in getting food. Against, with instructions from MLA Anjaiah Yadav free meals facility was set up, he added. Municipal Chair-



man Narender, Government Hospital Superintendent Srinivas, ZPTC Venkat Ram Reddy, former Municipal Chairman Agganur Vishwam, Laxman Nayak, Councillor Bachali Narasimha and others were present.

YSRCP MP shifted to Army hosp in TS after Supreme Court orders

- Directs that medical examination should be conducted at Army hospital in Secunderabad in the presence of a judicial officer appointed by Telangana HC and videographed
- Also asks the AP govt to file its reply on the appeals by May 19, posts the matter for further hearing on May 21
- During the hearing, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Raju sought two things, interim bail and his medical examination by a neutral hospital

NEW DELHI

In a relief to jailed and rebel YSR Congress MP K Raghu Ramakrishna Raju, the Supreme Court on Monday ordered his immediate transfer to the Army hospital at Secunderabad in neighbouring Telangana for medical examination and hospitalization till further orders in a sedition case filed by Andhra Pradesh police against him.

Following the orders, the MP was shifted from Guntur district jail to Army hospital in Secunderabad by road.

Raju, who is the Lok Sabha MP from Narsapuram parliamentary constituency in Andhra Pradesh, alleged that the sedition case has been lodged against him by state police "because of political vendetta" as he has been criticising "the action of his own party". A vacation bench comprising Justices Vineet Saran and B R Gavai heard two appeals of the rebel YSRCP MP and ordered the chief secretary of Andhra Pradesh to ensure his transfer to Secunderabad Army hospital during the day itself under Y-category security cover where he would be examined by a team of three doctors to be appointed by the head of the hospital.



Guntur district officials shift arrested YSRCP MP K Raghu Ramakrishna Raju from district jail to Secunderabad following the Supreme Court direction, on Monday
Photo: Srinivasarao Bodi

The entire medical examination process would be video graphed and supervised by a judicial officer to be nominated by the Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court, the apex court said. The top court, in its order, considered the facts and circumstances that Raju has undergone heart "by-pass surgery very recently" and his injuries were noticed in the medical report and passed a slew of directions to the state police.

"The petitioner...shall forthwith be taken to the Army Hospital Secunderabad for medical examination. The Y category security, provided under orders of the Delhi High Court, shall escort him only till the Army Hospital and need not be present at the time of medical examination," the bench said in the order.

The medical examination of Raju shall be conducted by the medical board of three doctors of the hospital to be constituted by

the head of the Army hospital, it said, adding, "Raju be medically examined in the presence of a Judicial Officer, who may be nominated by the Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court."

"The proceedings of medical examination of Raju shall be videographed and be submitted to the Registrar General of the Telangana High Court in a sealed cover for being transmitted to this Court," the order said.

The bench was hearing two appeals, including one by Raju, against the AP High Court order dismissing his bail and asking him to go to appropriate forum for the relief. In the second appeal, his son K Bharath has sought Raju's medical examination by a private hospital. The top court asked the state government to file its reply on the appeals by May 19 and posted the matter for further hearing on May 21. The bench directed the registry that the order be sent through email to the chief secretary of Andhra Pradesh, the High Courts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana besides asking the top bureaucrat of the state (AP)

to ensure compliance of the order. During the hearing, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for the YSRCP MP, said that he was seeking two things, ad-interim bail and his medical examination by a neutral hospital. Rohatgi said it is a matter of "some extraordinary proportion" as the sitting MP is critical of the party leadership and the state government for some time. "The MP is critical of the Chief Minister," he said, adding that last year he had to move the Delhi High Court for security as there was threat to his life.

At the outset, senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for the state, requested the matter be kept for hearing on Friday so that he can file a short reply. Rohatgi argued there are no allegations that the MP had incited any rebellion.

"The MP is critical of the state government's handling of Covid. Along with him, FIR also names two TV media channels," he argued, adding that section of sedition has been added in the FIR so that the accused cannot get bail. Rohatgi claimed that the MP was "beaten and tortured" by the police and when he was produced before the trial court, the magistrate had found some injuries on his feet and ordered that he be examined in hospital. "Today, he should be examined by a private or a neutral hospital or at Army hospital," he said.

Dave said he has no problem if the MP is examined by a medical board.

"Let him be examined at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Mangalagiri," Dave said, adding, "It may not be appropriate to use Army hospital. AIIMS is there". The bench observed, "Army hospital is not under either the state or the Central government. Army hospital will be a neutral hospital".

COVID HOSPITALS

PCB comes up with app to manage of bio waste



AMARAVATI

The Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board (APPCB) has developed a mobile app for effective management and scientific disposal of biomedical waste from Covid-19 hospitals and quarantine centres. Over 600 notified Covid-19 hospitals in the state are now generating about 38 tonnes of biomedical waste per day and scientific disposal of this has posed the biggest challenge for APPCB, according to its chairman A K Parida.

Chittoor district, which has a higher caseload of coronavirus, is generating 5.70 tonnes of biomedical waste on an average per day, followed by East Godavari 5.13 tonnes. Kadapa district is generating the lowest of 0.24 tonnes per day.

"We have prescribed detailed guidelines for treatment and scientific disposal of Covid-19 waste at hospitals, quarantine centres and even at homes. We are closely monitoring the collection, transportation and treatment of the COVID-19 medical waste and a

- Pollution Control Board chairman Parida says more than 600 notified Covid-19 hospitals in the State are generating about 38 tonnes of biomedical waste a day

- All hospitals, quarantine centres and testing labs have to register on the app, update the waste generation and segregation details
- 12 Common Bio Medical Waste Treatment and Disposal Facilities are connected to the notified Covid hospitals for scientific disposal of the medical waste

mobile App has been developed for this purpose," Parida said.

All hospitals, quarantine centres and testing laboratories in the state have to mandatorily register on the app and update the biomedical waste generation and segregation details. "Biomedical waste generated during Covid-19 patient isolation, testing and care needs special consideration.

There are 12 Common Bio Medical Waste Treatment and Disposal Facilities (CBMWTF) connected to the notified Covid-19 hospitals for scientific disposal of the medical waste. We are tracking the transportation to the CBMWTF through GPS," the APPCB chairman said.

Parida said Continuous Ambient Air Quality (CAAQ) was also being monitored at the CBMWTFs to ensure that the emission standards were within the permissible limits. "The APPCB has prescribed detailed guidelines for handling, treatment and disposal of Covid-19 waste at healthcare facilities, quarantine centres, home care, sample collection centres and laboratories. Patients in home isolation are required to hand over the domestic hazardous waste in a separate yellow bag to the respective civic bodies, which in turn will be handed over to the nearest CBMWTFs for disposal as bio-medical waste," Parida said. rrr

Drink cow urine to be safe from corona: BJP MP Pragya Thakur

Two years ago, she had claimed that a mix of cow urine and other cow products had cured her cancer

BHOPAL

Cow urine can cure lung infection caused by Covid, BJP MP Pragya Thakur has said, once again shooting her mouth off as the country fights to keep the pandemic in check. She also reveals that she takes cow urine every day and it has protected her from the coronavirus.

"If we have desi gau mutra (urine from an indigenous cow) every day, then it cures lung infection from Covid. I was in deep pain but I take cow urine every day. So now, I don't have to take any medicine against corona and I don't have corona," Pragya Thakur is heard telling a party gathering.

Two years ago, she had claimed that a mix of cow urine and other cow products had cured her cancer.

Pragya Thakur was admitted to Delhi's AIIMS hospital in December 2020 over Covid-19-induced symptoms.

Doctors have repeatedly warned against unproven alternative cures offered for Covid.

The Indian Medical Association has said there is no scientific evidence that cow dung or urine helps with the treatment or prevention of Covid. "There is no concrete scientific evidence that cow dung or urine boosts immunity against COVID-19," Dr JA Jayalal, the head of the medical body, told Reuters.

Earlier this month, a BJP MLA in Uttar Pradesh, Surendra Singh, had claimed that drinking cow urine had protected him from the coronavirus. He also recommended "cow urine with a glass of cold water".



‘Virus can spread through the air’

London: A quiet revolution has permeated global health circles. Authorities have come to accept what many researchers have argued for over a year: The coronavirus can spread through the air.

That new acceptance, by the World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, comes with concrete implications: Scientists are calling for ventilation systems to be overhauled like public water supplies were in the 1800s after fetid pipes were found to harbor cholera.

Cleaner indoor air won't just fight the pandemic, it will minimize the risk of catching flu and other respiratory infections that cost the U.S. more than \$50 billion a year, researchers said in a study in the journal Science on Friday. Avoiding these germs and their associated sickness and productivity losses would, therefore, offset the cost of upgrading ventilation and filtration in buildings.

"We are used to the fact that we have clean water coming from our taps," said Lidia Morawska, a distinguished professor in the school of earth and atmospheric sciences at the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia, who led the study. Likewise, "we should expect clean, pollutant- and pathogen-free air" from indoor spaces, she said over Zoom.

WINDOWS Naxals attack CRPF camp, 3 villagers killed

Sukma : At least three villagers were killed in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district after Naxalites attacked a CRPF camp on Monday, leading to a shootout, said police. Senior police officers including IG Bastar Sundar Raj and DIG CRPF Komal Singh are on their way to the spot. According to police, villagers had been protesting against the Mokur Camp in Tarrem on the Sukma-Bijapur border since last three days. However, they had gone back on Sunday night only to return the next day. "They had hone back last night after protesting for two days but on Monday they came back. The state police tried to control the law and order situation," a senior officer at the CRPF headquarters said.



A medical officer carries Asaram brought for endoscopy at Mathuradas Mathur hospital in Jodhpur on Monday

2 militants killed

Srinagar: Two militants were killed in a gunfight at Khanmoh area on the outskirts of Srinagar. The police said the gunfight started after a team of the police and army's 50 RR was fired upon during a cordon-and-search operation launched in the area after receiving specific information about the presence of the militants.

The police said the two unidentified militants were killed during the encounter.

Children hit by new strains in Singapore

Lot common in PM and PM CARES ventilators: Rahul; not Bihar's culture: Min on floating bodies

NEW DELHI/Singapore

SINGAPORE will close schools from Wednesday as authorities warned new coronavirus strains like the one first detected in India were affecting more children in the country.

The government has been tightening restrictions following a recent rise in local transmissions after months of near-zero cases.

At a virtual news conference late Sunday, authorities announced that primary and secondary schools as well as junior colleges would shift to full home-based learning from Wednesday until the end of the school term on May 28.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying ventilators provided by PM CARES don't work and there is a lot common between him and these ventilators.

"There's a lot common between PM CARES ventilators and the PM himself: too much false PR, don't do their respective jobs and nowhere in sight when needed," he said in a tweet.

His remarks came two days after Modi ordered an "immediate" audit of installation and operation of ventilators provided by the central government. This comes against the backdrop of reports about ventilators supplied under Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) Fund lying unutilised in some States, even as Covid-19 patients are gasping for breath due to medical oxygen shortage.

India has recorded 2,81,386 fresh Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours along with 4,106 deaths. Top five states which have registered the maximum cases are Maharashtra with 34,389 cases, followed by Tamil Nadu with 33,181 cases, Karnataka with 31,531 cases, Kerala with 29,704 cases and Andhra Pradesh with 24,171 cases. 54.37% of the new cases are reported from these five states, with Maharashtra alone responsible for 12.22% of the new cases. 4,106 deaths have been reported in India in the last 24 hours.

Three persons were charged under the stringent National Security Act (NSA) for alleged black marketing of Remdesivir injections in Bhopal. The Madhya Pradesh government will ensure strict punishment for those indulging in black marketing of Remdesivir injections and other essential medicines for the treatment of Covid-19 infections.

More than 300 bodies were found buried near the Ganga in Shivrajpur, Kanpur,

Bihar Water Resources Development Minister Sanjay Kumar Jha on Monday said that the bodies found floating in the river Ganga were not from the state and added that it is 'not our culture'.



A young boy along with family members perform the last rites of his father, who died due to Covid-19, in Srinagar on Monday

India sees 2.81L new Covid cases, 4,106 deaths 3 booked under NSA for selling Remdesivir in black

‘Sedition charge’ worries BJP MLA

LUCKNOW: Rakesh Rathore, a BJP MLA from Sitapur district, has hit out at his own government in Uttar Pradesh, saying that lawmakers like him do not have any freedom to speak the truth. "This may lead to a sedition charge against me," he said while talking to reporters. "I have taken many steps, but what is the stature of legislators? If I speak too much, then sedition charges may be invoked against me," he said when asked about getting trauma centre opened in the Sitapur. When asked to clarify his statement, he said, "Do you think MLAs can speak their mind? You know I have raised questions in the past." Rakesh Rathore, a first-time MLA, had joined the BJP before the 2017 Assembly elections in the state.

‘Class 10, 12 exams’ will be conducted’

BENGALURU: Putting an end to speculation about cancellation of class 10 and class 12 examinations conducted by state boards, Karnataka Education Minister, S. Suresh Kumar on Monday said that the state government has not decided yet to cancel examinations of Class 10 (Secondary School Leaving Certificate - SSLC) and Class 12 (II year pre-university) examinations. Kumar has appealed students who are appearing for SSLC (Class 10) and II year PU (Class 12) must not fall prey to any rumours or mischievous statements quoting him on any social media sites. "I appeal to students preparing for these examinations SSLC and PU II year to continue to study and prepare well for their examinations," he said.

Inhaling steam: People warned

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu Health Minister Ma Subramanian on Monday warned the people of the state not to inhale steam without following proper medical advice. The Minister said here that people in large numbers were inhaling steam as a preventive measure against Covid-19 infection, adding that inhaling steam without proper advice would damage the lungs. There were several messages spread on the social media, saying that inhaling steam would help prevent the spread of the infection. Subramanian said if people have Covid-19 symptoms they must consult a doctor rather than taking medication on their own.

Five Delhi varsity professors die in last six days

NEW DELHI

As many as five working professors of the Delhi University (DU), including a department head and a 33-year-old ad-hoc teacher have succumbed to Covid and Covid-like symptoms in the last six days.

Another 24-year-old research scholar at the university, who has recently submitted his MPhil thesis, also died of coronavirus, the Hindustan Times reported.

According to the DU Teachers' Association (DUTA), 33 working faculty members have died of Covid-19 since March. This includes two professors associated with Deshbandhu College and two with Daulat Ram College. Professor Veena Kukreja, 64, head of the Department of Political Science also died of Covid-19. Deshbandhu College principal Rajiv Agarwal told HT, "We have lost two assistant professors and a library attendant in the last few days to Covid-19. We are still in a shock"

Two teachers died in Daulat Ram College between May 11 and May 13. Principal Savita Roy said, "The loss of these two faculty members is an irreplaceable loss to academia," she said. One of the two teachers, Chaudhary, 33, was the only earning member in his family.

Earlier, 34 working professors of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) have succumbed to Covid. All the deceased professors lived in different areas of Aligarh city. The AMU has set up a help desk to assist the families of AMU's teaching and non-teaching employees, who lost their lives in the Covid pandemic. In an official notice, AMU Registrar, Abdul Hamid said that the help desk will assist in processing the papers and documents for retirement benefits/family pension issues and appointment of dependent family members under the Compassionate Appointment Scheme in accordance with AMU rules with immediate effect. "For retirement benefits/family pension issues, the dependent family members of the deceased employees are requested to contact the officer of the Registrar and also for appointments under the Compassionate Appointment Scheme," the notice said.

MISS MEXICO WINS UNIVERSE CROWN



After a tough competition with 73 other candidates, Mexico's Andrea Meza was crowned the 69th Miss Universe at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Hollywood in Florida. Former Miss Universe Zozibini Tunzi of South Africa crowned the Mexican beauty at the event. Miss India Adline Castellino was declared the third runner-up. Andrea's win makes her the third Miss Universe from the country, the other two being Lupita Jones (1991) and Kimena Navarrete (2010).

CBI arrests 2 TMC Ministers, MLA

KOLKATA

TWO Trinamul Congress ministers, a legislator and a former first citizen of Calcutta were arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation on Monday morning, hours after they were brought to the agency's office at Nizam Palace here in connection with a 2016 television sting featuring a purported video showing several politicians accepting bribes in exchange of promised favours.

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee held a dharna at Nizam Palace for over six hours, during the CBI to arrest her too, her stand indicating that the current situation was likely to snowball into a major political controversy weeks after results of the Bengal Assembly gave the Trinamul a runaway majority to govern the state for the third consecutive time.

The arrests were made five years after the Narada News portal tapes went public in which

2016 NARADA BRIBERY CASE



several Bengal politicians including ministers, MPs and other functionaries and senior police officers, were caught on camera purportedly accepting bribes from a fictitious company.

Ministers Firhad Hakim, Subrata Mukherjee, MLA Madan Mitra and ex-mayor Sovan Chatterjee have been arrested. Later all 4 got bail.

The arrests were made five years after the

Narada News portal tapes went public in which several Bengal politicians including ministers, MPs and other functionaries and senior police officers, were caught on camera purportedly accepting bribes from a fictitious company.

Mathew Samuel, a senior journalist and the complainant in the 2016 Narada Tapes case, expressed happiness at some politicians being arrested by the CBI based on the sting operation he conducted. However, he also remains dissatisfied because there's been no action against others like BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari despite the evidence against them in the same case.

"I had gone and given the money to Suwendu Adhikari in his office. His name is not on the list. What happened? A forensic was conducted and it was proven...the CBI took a statement from me too," he said. "I even go to know that Suwendu Adhikari admitted that he received the money from me."

‘Bleeding, clotting after vaccination minuscule in India’

NEW DELHI

Incidents of bleeding or clotting following Covid-19 vaccination in India are minuscule and in line with the expected number of diagnoses of these conditions in the country, according to a report submitted by the National AEFI (Adverse Event Following Immunization) Committee to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).

Alerts were raised in some countries on post-vaccination "embolic and thrombotic events" on March 11 this year, particularly with the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine (Covishield in India), said the report.

A decision was taken to conduct an urgent in-depth analysis of the adverse events (AE) in India in the light of the global concerns.

The National AEFI Committee noted that as of April

3 this year, 75,435,381 vaccine doses had been administered (Covishield-68,650,819; Covaxin-6,784,562). Of these, 65,944,106 were first doses and 9,491,275 second doses.

Since the Covid-19 vaccination drive was initiated, more than 23,000 adverse events were reported through the CoWIN platform from 684 of the 753 districts of the country.

Of these, the AEFI Committee said, only 700 cases (9.3 cases per million doses administered) were reported to be serious and of severe nature.

The AEFI Committee has completed an in-depth case review of 498 serious and severe events, of which 26 cases have been reported to be potential thromboembolic (formation of a clot in a blood vessel that might also break loose and get carried by the blood stream to plug another vessel) events -- following



ing the administration of Covishield vaccine -- with a reporting rate of 0.61 cases per million doses.

"There were no potential thromboembolic events reported following the administration of Covaxin vaccine," the report said.

AEFI data in India showed that there is "very minuscule but definitive risk of thromboembolic events".

The reporting rate of these events in India is around 0.61 per million doses, which is much lower than the four cases per million reported by the UK's regulator Medical and Health Regulatory Authority (MHRA). Germany has reported 10 events per million doses.

Thromboembolic events keep occurring in general population as background and scientific literature suggests that this risk is almost 70 per cent less in persons of South and South East Asian descent in

comparison to those from Europe.

The Union Health Ministry is separately issuing advisories to healthcare workers and vaccine beneficiaries to encourage people to be aware of suspected thromboembolic symptoms occurring within 20 days after receiving any Covid-19 vaccine (particularly Covishield) and report preferably to the health facility where the vaccine was administered.

Covishield continues to have a definite positive benefit risk profile with tremendous potential to prevent infections and reduce deaths due to the pandemic across the world and in India.

Over 13.4 crore doses of Covishield were administered as on April 27 this year in India. The Health Ministry is continuously monitoring the safety of all Covid-19 vaccines and is promoting reporting of suspected adverse events.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Jio will build undersea cable network

“

Jio is at the forefront of India's explosive growth in digital services and data consumption. To meet the demands of Streaming Video, Remote Workforce, 5G, IoT, and beyond, Jio is taking a leadership role in the construction of the first of its kind, India-centric IAX and IEX subsea systems

- Mathew Oommen, President, Reliance Jio



GLITTER

Gems, jewellery exports surge in April

The demand for gem and jewellery is back in major export markets, as the overall shipments of gems and jewellery surged to Rs 25,226.11 crore year-on-year in April 2021, according to Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJPEC). The exports stood at Rs 273.41 crore in April 2020

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)

US Dollar	73.95	South	
Euro	89.89	African Rand	5.95
UAE Dirham	20.53	Hong Kong Dollar	10.84
Thai Baht	2.56	Japanese Yen	0.77
British Pound	104.3	New Zealand Dollar	53.33
Australian Dollar	57.38	Saudi Riyal	21.46
Canadian Dollar	61.07	Swedish Krona	10.09
Swiss Franc	82.1	Singapore Dollar	55.92

DELHI TUESDAY 18 MAY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Walkaroo's e-tailer

Footwear brand Walkaroo has launched mobile-first e-commerce platform, walkaroo.in, as part of its digital transformation mission that aims to make the online and in-store shopping experience simpler, faster and more convenient for the youth. With this, e-commerce platform, the company looks to further establish a strong foundation to provide excellent omnichannel customer service and unmatched online shopping experience. In addition to this, the platform also provides youth an opportunity to access their wide range of products. VKC Noushad, MD, Walkaroo International, said, "With over 12 crore pairs sold in the last year and considering the fact that 65 per cent of the retailer's online traffic in India is via smartphones, the launch of mobile-first e-commerce platform is a natural step towards our mission to provide multiple access points for customers".

Max Bupa unveils plan

Standalone health insurer Max Bupa launched 'Senior First'—a tailor-made plan for senior citizens. It has been designed to provide unconditional support and care to seniors in their golden years. Senior First plan includes coverage options of up to 25 lakh with no sub limits on common health conditions like cataract, knee replacement, etc. To help customers overcome the current challenges faced while purchasing health insurance for senior citizens and to provide them ease of policy issuance, the new plan comes with several attractive features including no mandatory pre-issuance medical tests and health checkups. It also offers hassle-free claims process and more. Krishnan Ramachandran, MD and CEO, Max Bupa Health Insurance, said, "Our product has been designed to address the current gaps in providing quality healthcare services to senior citizens".

Laava offers better yield

East-West Seed India said Laava, its high-performing chili hybrid seed, has helped small-holder farmers in Telangana catch the market early in these times of the pandemic. The seed is reducing production costs due to its virus-tolerance and easy picking qualities. Laava belongs to the red, short segment with field tolerance to Leaf Curl Virus and has excellent consistency of fruit size across several pickings that ensure farmers can save on plant protection and labor expenses. Sanjay Gahlot, Director, Marketing of East-West Seed India: "East-West Seed has over 25 years of breeding expertise in hot peppers. More than 11,000 farmers in Telangana cultivate Laava. This hybrid has a good pungency and hence aptly named, and we believe farmers will realize a better return on their investment."

Moglix raises \$120 mn

Moglix on Monday said it has raised \$120 million (about Rs 878.8 crore) in funding from Falcon Edge Capital, Harvard Management Company (HMC) and others, placing the industrial B2B e-commerce platform in the unicorn club. The series E round also saw participation from existing investors, Tiger Global, Sequoia Capital India and Venture Highway. "We started six years ago. We had the trust of stalwarts like Ratan Tata, and a mission to enable the creation of a USD 1 trillion manufacturing economy in India," Moglix Founder and CEO Rahul Garg said.

Wholesale inflation at record high of 10.49%

Costlier food items, crude push inflation up

NEW DELHI

THE wholesale price-based inflation shot up to an all-time high of 10.49 per cent in April, on rising prices of food items, crude oil and manufactured goods. Experts believe that the uptrend is likely to continue. This is the fourth straight month of uptick seen in the wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation. In March, 2021, it was 7.39 per cent. The low base in April last year, when WPI inflation was (-) 1.57 per cent, also contributed to the spike in April 2021.

"The annual rate of inflation in April 2021, is high primarily because of rise in prices of crude petroleum, mineral oils viz petrol, diesel etc, and manufactured products as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year," the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said.

Inflation in food articles in April was 4.92 per cent as prices of protein-rich items like egg, meat and fish hardened. Inflation in this basket was 3.24 per cent in March 2021. This was led by 10.88 per cent inflation in 'egg, meat and fish' basket during April, 10.74 per cent in pulses and 27.43 per cent in fruits. In vegetables, the rate of price rise was (-) 9.03 per cent, against (-) 5.19 per cent in the previous month. Inflation in the fuel and power basket was 20.94 per cent in April, while in manufactured products it was 9.01 per cent.

ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said at 4.9 per cent inflation in food articles was at a six-month high and

WHAT'S SPURRING INFLATION

- In March, 2021, it was 7.39 per cent
- In April 2021, is high because of rise in prices of petrol, diesel and manufactured products
- 4.9 per cent inflation in food articles was at a six-month high
- Rising inflation show a persistence of input price pressure



We expect the headline WPI inflation to rise further to 13-13.5 per cent in the current month before commencing a downtrend, whereas the core-WPI inflation may continue to rise over the next three prints to a peak of around 10.5 per cent

— Aditi Nayar, ICRA Chief Economist

data shows a greater impact of supply chain disruptions at the wholesale level. "We expect the headline WPI inflation to rise further to 13-13.5 per cent in the current month before commencing a downtrend, whereas the core-WPI inflation may continue to rise over the next three prints to a peak of around 10.5 per cent." "The likely trajectory of the WPI inflation supports our view that there is no space for rate cuts to support the fal-

tering growth momentum, even as we expect the monetary stance to remain accommodative," Nayar added. India Ratings and Research Principal Economist Sunil Kumar Sinha said the impetus to April 2021 inflation came from all the three major groups namely primary articles, fuel and power and manufactured products which recorded an inflation of 10.2 per cent, 20.9 per cent and 9 per cent respectively in April 2021.

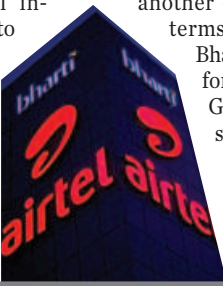
Airtel's net at ₹759 cr

NEW DELHI

TELECOM operator Bharti Airtel on Monday reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 759 crore for the fourth quarter of financial year ended on March 31, 2021, and an annual turnover of more than Rs 1 lakh crore for the first time. The company had posted a loss of Rs 5,237 crore in the same period a year ago. The consolidated revenue of Bharti Airtel increased by 11.9 per cent to Rs 25,747 crore during the reported quarter compared to Rs 23,019 crore in the corresponding quarter of 2019-20. India revenue of Bharti Airtel increased by 10 per cent during the quarter to Rs 18,337.8 crore from Rs 16,734.3 crore a year ago. Mobile services business of Bharti Airtel grew by 9 per cent to Rs 14,079.7 crore during the period under review.

"Our services are the digital oxygen that the country needs in this challenging time as we experience a vicious second wave of

Revenue rises by 11.9% to ₹25,747 crore during the fourth quarter of FY 21



Covid-19. I am grateful to our people who are doing all they can to strengthen our network experience and serve our customers braving massive odds. It is this relentless focus on customer obsession that has allowed us to deliver another consistent quarter in terms of performance," Bharti Airtel MD and CEO for India and South Asia Gopal Vittal said in a statement.

He said that the enterprise segment delivered double digit growth during the quarter. The company's capital expenditure in mobile network halved to Rs 3,739.3 crore in the quarter.

However, the work-from-home trend driving data demand led to the increase of company's investment in the fixed line services which includes broadband connection.

Apollo Hospitals, Dr Reddy's tie up for Sputnik V vax drive

HYDERABAD

APOLLO Hospitals and Dr Reddy's Laboratories on Monday said they are collaborating to initiate a Covid-19 vaccination programme in the country with Sputnik V. The first phase of the programme will kick off with vaccinations in Hyderabad on Monday and in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday at Apollo facilities. The vaccinations would follow the SOPs as recommended by the government including registration on CoWIN.

Apollo Hospitals' Joint Managing Director Sangita Reddy said the healthcare major would receive 10 lakh doses of the Covid-19 vaccine over a period of one month. "De-lighted to share @HospitalsApollo has Ptnr with @drreddys 2 admin #SputnikV the 1st foreign-made #vaccine to be used in #India to all DRL staff. Additionally, we will be receiving 1 Mn doses (over 1 month period) 4 our public #vaccination-drive as #IndiaFightsCovid19," she tweeted.



Shilpa Medicare arm inks pact

HYDERABAD

DRUG firm Shilpa Medicare on Monday said its arm has entered into a definitive agreement with Dr Reddy's Laboratories for manufacturing of Russian Covid-19 vaccine Sputnik V. "The company, via its wholly owned subsidiary Shilpa Biologicals Pvt Ltd (SBPL), has entered into a three year definitive agreement with Dr Reddy's Laboratories for production-supply of the Sputnik V vaccine

from its integrated biologics R&D cum manufacturing center at Dharwad, Karnataka," Shilpa Medicare said in a regulatory filing. The targeted production of the dual vector Sputnik V for the first 12 months is 50 million doses (50 million of component 1 and 50 million of component 2), from the date of start of commercial production, the company added. Shilpa Medicare said Dr Reddy's will facilitate the transfer of the sputnik technology to SBPL.

2,000 more to join Synechron India

NEW DELHI

DIGITAL transformation consulting firm Synechron on Monday announced plans to hire up to 2,000 professionals to boost its India operations in Pune, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Chennai. Additionally, the company said it will also look at fulfilling open positions across the US, Europe, Middle East and the APAC regions.

"We are witnessing huge growth in India this year specifically in digital transformation initiatives across various BFSI clients. Although our focus is to hire people with strong domain knowledge, we will still be looking at dedicated professionals in the range of 4 to 10 years of relevant experience," informed Hareesha Pattaje, Managing Director and Delivery Head India, Synechron. The key skills the company is currently looking at include Java full stack, angular/react, Cloud and DevOps, data engineers, UI/UX specialists, automation engineers, agile coaches and business analysts.

Covid surge dents economy in April, May

The impact of the second wave on the real economy seems to be limited so far in comparison with the first wave, says an article authored by RBI Deputy Governor M D Patra and other officials

MUMBAI

THE resurgence of Covid-19 has dented but not debilitated economic activities in the first half of Q1 of the current fiscal even though caseload of infections is much higher than before, according to an RBI article. The ferocity of the second Covid-19 wave has overwhelmed India and the world, the article said, adding that war efforts have been mounted to stop the surge in its tracks.

"The impact of the second wave on the real economy seems to be limited so far in comparison with the first wave. Evidently, the localised nature of lockdowns, better adaptation of people to work from home protocols, online delivery models, e-commerce and digital payments are at work," the article on the state of economy authored by RBI Deputy Governor M D Patra and other officials



said. The RBI made it clear that views expressed in the article are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent that of the central bank. As per the article, real economy indicators moderated in April and May, as many states imposed restrictions to arrest the renewed surge in infections. The second wave has intensified in metros/ cities, and

relative to the first wave, it has spread rapidly across states, regions, and into rural pockets.

The resurgence of covid-19, the article said "has dented but not debilitated economic activity in the first half of Q1:2021-22". Aggregate demand conditions have been impacted, albeit not on the scale of the first wave, it pointed out. "Although extremely tenta-

tive at this stage, the central tendency of available diagnosis is not as severe as at this time a year ago.

"The biggest toll of the second wave is in terms of a demand shock - loss of mobility, discretionary spending and employment, besides inventory accumulation, while the aggregate supply is less impacted," the article said. It also said that Google mobility indicators exhibited a dip across all major cities in April and May as compared to the baseline.

The Apple mobility index also corroborated this declining mobility across cities. E-way bills - an indicator of domestic trade - recorded a double-digit contraction at 17.5 per cent month-on-month (m-o-m) in April 2021. Preliminary data on petrol and diesel sales point to a decline in fuel demand in April, attributable to mobility restrictions.

Natco to make Covid drug in pact with Eli Lilly

NEW DELHI

DRUG firm Eli Lilly on Monday said it has signed a voluntary licensing agreement with Hyderabad-based company Natco Pharma to further expedite the availability of baricitinib for Covid-19 patients in India.

The company has issued an additional royalty-free, non-exclusive voluntary license to Natco Pharma and the company will be collaborating with Eli Lilly to further accelerate and expand the availability of baricitinib in India during this pandemic.

The move will improve the local treatment options available and will positively impact the lives of people who are currently battling Covid-19 in India, Eli Lilly said in a statement. Earlier, the company had announced signing of six voluntary license agreements with Cipla, Lupin, Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, Dr

Reddy's, MSN Laboratories and Torrent Pharmaceuticals. Eli Lilly and Company has received permission for restricted emergency use by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), for baricitinib to be used in combination with remdesivir for the treatment of suspected or laboratory confirmed Covid-19 in hospitalised adults requiring supplemental oxygen, invasive mechanical ventilation, or extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, the statement said.

Meanwhile, Eli Lilly and Company said it continues to engage in active dialogue with the regulatory authorities and government in India to deliver baricitinib donations through the humanitarian aid organisation, Direct Relief, and to donate its anti-Covid-19 treatments, including Lilly's neutralising antibodies.



