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COVID 3RD WAVE Delhi govt to set up genome sequencing labs

NEW DELHI: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday announced the setting up of a paediatric task-force and two genome sequencing labs as well as a plan to ramp up oxygen capacity to prepare for a possible third Covid wave that could peak at 37,000 cases a day. The government will also create a buffer stock of important medicines, Kejriwal said at an online briefing. The two genome sequencing labs to identify variants of the virus attacking the city will come up at the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Hospital and the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS), the chief minister said. The genome sequencing lab will be made functional in the Lok Nayak hospital in two to three months' time, a government statement said. "Genome sequencing labs are being created... so that we also know about the variant that comes to Delhi, whether it is an old one or a new variant has emerged and then we can ask experts what precautions we need to take," he said. Kejriwal said he chaired two different meetings with experts as well as officers who were working during the coronavirus situation. The government had formulated two committees on May 27 and carried out detailed discussions with them on Friday. "Experts are saying that a third wave is bound to emerge, but nobody has any information on when such a wave will arrive and how dangerous it can be. It is our duty to be prepared so that if a third wave does arrive and turns out to be extremely dangerous, the government should be prepared," he said. At the peak of the second wave, Delhi recorded 28,000 cases on April 20. "On basis of this figure, we estimated how high the next peak might be.



Widespread rains in Maharashtra, AP, TS

Conditions favourable for advancement of monsoon

MUMBAI

THE southwest monsoon arrived in Maharashtra on Saturday, bringing showers in some coastal parts of the state, an India Meteorological Department (IMD) official said. "The progress of the monsoon is as per our expectations," said Shubhangi Bhute, director of the IMD's regional centre. "The southwest monsoon has arrived in Maharashtra. It has officially reached up to Harnai port in coastal Ratnagiri district and its actual line is spread till Solapur and



some parts of Marathwada, followed by some parts of Telangana and Andhra

Pradesh," she said. It is expected to bring showers to these regions, she added.

"Conditions are favourable for further advancement of the monsoon," she said. Meanwhile, heavy rainfall reported in Anantapur and other parts of Rayalaseema region on Friday. Under the influence of the southwest monsoon, widespread rains were reported in several parts of coastal districts. According to the IMD forecast, monsoon advanced further into remaining parts of south Arabian Sea, some parts of central Arabian Sea, remaining parts of Lakshadweep and Kerala, most parts of

coastal & south interior Karnataka and some more parts of Tamil Nadu. A few days back, the IMD had predicted that monsoon is likely to be normal in north and south India, above-normal in central India and below-normal in east and north-east India. Quantitatively, the monsoon seasonal (June to September) rainfall over the country as a whole is likely to be 101 per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA) with a model error of plus or minus four per cent, it had said.

DELHI BEGINS TO UNLOCK

Markets, malls open on odd-even basis ■ Metro to run at 50% capacity, announces CM

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

GIVING impetus to the Delhi 'unlocking' plan, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday announced that markets and shopping malls in the city will be allowed to open on an odd-even basis, similar to the strategy employed to beat air pollution in the national capital, as the city finds its way out of the devastating second wave of coronavirus. The stand-alone shops, however, will be allowed to open daily from 10am to 8 pm. Home delivery through e-commerce platforms has also been okayed. The Delhi Metro too will begin its run again, but only at 50 per cent seating capacity, announced CM Kejriwal. Private offices, said the Chief Minister, can be opened



with 50 per cent manpower with staggered work hours. The work-from-home mode should still be used widely, he said.

For public sector offices, Category A employees can work on all days, but all categories under them should work at 50 per cent capacity, said the state government.

Gymnasiums, swimming pools, water parks, salons, educational and coaching institutes, cinema halls, the-

atres, weekly markets will remain shut. "As and when the situation keeps improving, more relaxations will be announced. This is what is being done currently," said Mr Kejriwal. The Chief Minister said the government is making provisions for children and



is setting up a panel, as well as a task force to track the next wave of infections. "We are preparing for third wave of COVID-19 keeping in mind that 37,000 cases may be reported at its peak," he said.

Detailing his plan, Kejriwal said the government is setting up a 64 oxygen plants - the city faced an

acute shortage of oxygen supplies in the last few weeks with several hospitals sending out SOS saying they were left with supplies to last a few hours. He also said that the government will set up two genome tracking facilities so that they can actively track what strains of the virus are entering the capital city. This will help us a lot in understanding the virus and its variants better, he added.

Centre blocks Delhi's ration home delivery

NEW DELHI: The Central government has blocked plans to launch the doorstep delivery of rations from next week, sources in the Arvind Kejriwal administration said on Saturday, in the latest episode in the tussle between the two sides that share responsibilities in the capital. "The Delhi government had an ambitious plan to deliver rations to every household in Delhi at their doorstep. It would have helped 72 lakh people and was set to be implemented next week. But the central government said it can't go ahead since its clearance wasn't taken," sources said.



Jagan likely to take up vax procurement with PM

CMO awaits confirmation for Jagan's meet on Monday with PM & HM

HANS NEWS SERVICE

AMARAVATI: Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is likely to visit Delhi on Monday.

According to CMO, Chief Minister would discuss the issue of poor response from global tenders for importing vaccine, pending issues pertaining to Polavaram Project among other issues with the Central leadership. He is likely to meet the Prime Minister and the Union Home Minister Amit Shah and other ministers.

It may be mentioned here that Jagan had recently written letters to all Chief Ministers seeking their coordination in vaccine procurement. The Chief Minister stressed the need for all Chief Ministers to speak in one voice to get more number vaccine doses through any source to protect the lives of people at this critical juncture.

In a letter written to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday, the Chief Minister said as the situation was now getting transformed into States Vs Union and the approving authority is the Government of India, the Centre should take responsibility of the vaccination drive the way it had happened in the early part of the year.

The possibility of the Chief Minister discussing the recent developments related to the arrest of YSRCP MP Raghurama Krishnam Raju may also figure during his meeting with Amit Shah, sources feel.

However, a final decision on his visit to Delhi would be taken on Sunday after the CMO gets confirmation about the appointment of the Prime Minister and Home Minister.

Maha to relax lockdown

Govt okays five-level plan for state ■ Don't take Covid lightly, warn experts

MUMBAI

AS the number of daily coronavirus cases and deaths in Maharashtra has decreased, the state government has approved a five-level unlock plan for the state. Despite the fact that this unlock programme is based on the positivity rate and occupancy of oxygen beds in each district, medical experts warn that citizens should not let their guard down.

Maharashtra still has 1,96,894 active cases, with a 1.7 per cent case fatality rate. The state reported around 15,000 new Covid-19 cases and 300 deaths daily during the past few days.

In response to the news of unlocking, Dr Lancelot Pinto, consultant pulmonologist, PD Hinduja Hospital and MRC, said that it is necessary from an economic standpoint, but that the danger is far from over. "With the knowledge that we've gained over the last year and a half, we need to



do this (unlock)," said Dr Lancelot Pinto.

Dr Pinto emphasised that as the state begins to unlock, allowing people to gather together, allowing crowding in halls, restaurants, and gyms, lowering one's guard when it comes to masks should not be considered, even in the most liberal unlocking scenarios, until the majority of the population is vaccinated.

"A graded unlock, with work from home incentivised and encouraged, and non-essential businesses encouraged to go online, should continue to be the aim, whenever feasible. With the knowledge that we've gained over the last year and a half, we need to

With the knowledge, we now have about the virus's airborne nature, we also need to reconsider air conditioning and ventilation," Dr Pinto said.

According to the state's newly announced unlocking plan, districts in Level 1 will have the fewest restrictions, while those in Level 5 will have maximum or near-lockdown-like curbs.

Dr Tushau Prasad, Consultant Emergency Medicine, Wockhardt Hospital, Mira Road reminded that the state is still dealing with the repercussions of the second wave. He acknowledges that

many people have lost their jobs and are struggling financially as a result of the lockdown restrictions, but he cautions the state as it prepares to lift them.

"At this point, it is risky for a large number of people to leave their homes without taking the necessary precautions. As the threat of a third wave remains, and monsoon season is approaching, it is critical that people stay safe at home, get vaccinated when eligible, and take the best care of themselves and their families. Furthermore, there is Covid, as well as the burden of monsoon-related diseases. It is a difficult situation for the entire country, and everyone must be aware of the threat," he said.

Dr Tushau Prasad warned citizens not to take Covid-19 lightly, saying, "Once the restrictions are eased, people move out of their houses, go on vacations, don't wear masks, and fail to maintain a social distance, which leads to an increase in Covid-19 cases."

Comply or face consequences, Centre warns Twitter

NEW DELHI

THE Union government on Saturday issued a notice to Twitter giving it one last chance to "immediately" comply with the new IT rules and warned that failure to adhere to the norms will lead to the platform losing exemption from liability under the IT Act.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information



Technology (MeitY) said that Twitter's refusal to comply with the rules demonstrated the microblogging site's "lack of

commitment and efforts towards providing a safe experience for the people of India on its platform". "Despite being opera-

TWITTER RESTORES BLUE TICK OF VENKAIAH, BHAGWAT
Twitter on Saturday restored the 'blue tick' verification of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, hours after taking it down.

FULL REPORT

P7

will enable the people of India to resolve their issues on the platform in a timely and transparent manner and through fair processes, by India based, clearly identified resources," the IT ministry said. The ministry said that though with effect from May 26, 2021, "consequences follow" given Twitter's non-compliance with rules.

Continued on Page 4

US WOMEN'S OPEN

PIO MEGHA GANNE ENTERS SPOTLIGHT

SAN FRANCISCO

MEGHA Ganne, a 17-year-old American amateur with Indian parentage, shocked the big names in women's golf by taking the lead in the first round of the US Women's Open here. The high school student is the first amateur in 15 years to do so since Jane Park achieved the feat in Newport Country Club in 2006, two years after Megha was born. She was in sole lead at 5-under before she dropped a shot at the 18th to fall into a share of the lead. Megha shared the lead with English professional Mel Reid at the The Olympic Club's Lake Course where the women are playing a Major for the first time. Lurking a shot behind the leaders were Angel Yin, Megan

Khang and past KPMG Women's PGA champion Brooke Henderson. Major champions Lexi Thompson, Shanshan Feng and Yuka Saso were sitting two strokes back. Ten other players were at even par, including 2018 champion Ariya Jutanugarn and Lydia Ko, as only 15 players man-

aged to shoot under par at the Par-71 course. The New Jersey girl, Megha, had come into her second US Open the hard way as she won a three-way play-off to gain one spot last month. She had earlier played the US Open in 2019 and missed the cut. She is hoping to go to Stanford for college after finishing high school.

Continued on Page 4



SHE FINISHES WITH A SHARE OF THIRD PLACE AFTER THE LAST PUTT OF SECOND ROUND AT THE US WOMEN'S OPEN

Why no vax jab for us? ask crematorium workers

VRC PHANIHARAN
HYDERABAD

WHILE they perform the most respectable job of giving a final adieu to the dead, the cremation workers are left out of the vaccination race even as the State launched a separate vaccination drive for super-spreaders and people who fall under the high risk categories.

In Hyderabad alone, there are about 250-300 small and big crematoriums with many workers working here.

Jagadish, a postgraduate in Commerce and with an additional degree in Journalism, working as a crematorium worker (Kati Kapari) in one of the crematoriums in the city until recently witnessed the arrival of dead bodies of people who succumbed to Covid.

Speaking to The Hans India, Jagadish said, the crematorium workers have been urging every official and politician visiting to inspect their place to treat them as frontline warriors and give priority when it comes to vaccination.

“We have been living under constant fear since the time of

- They allege though they are involved in performing the final rites of those died due to Covid and others, they are given a raw deal when it comes to vaccination
- Demand the State government to identify them under high risk groups and vaccinate them at the earliest

the second wave. Normally, only three to five dead bodies come for cremation in a day. But, from the middle of April till May, as many as 10 dead bodies were brought for cremation. These were patients who died due to Covid among others,” Jagadish said.

Officials from the medical and health, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) and even local MLAs visited to inspect the place.

“We urged them for two things, firstly, sanitisation of the place and second priority



in vaccination. But, all this had fell on deaf ears,” he said.

“But, for the reasons best known for the State government, medical and health and GHMC officials, they could run a special vaccination programme for the fruit, flower, meat, vegetable and other petty vendors. But, completely left out the crematorium workers and the priests who perform the last rights,” noted Viswa Hindu Parishad leader Ravinuthala Sashidar, adding that even the priests going and returning after performing the

last rights have to face the wrath of police at several places as they were not issued the curfew passes.

Expressing a similar view, Sridhar, keeper of Saidabad graveyard said, “None is bothered about us. The GHMC staff comes to carryout sanitation whenever we make a request to the local corporator,” he said.

It may be mentioned here that Saheb Nagar, LB Nagar, Amberpet, Puranapool, Bansilalpet and Erragadda crematoriums have been conducting

the last rites of those who are dying of Covid.

“In some cases, people just bring the dead bodies packed in bed sheets and we don’t know whether it was a normal death or Covid death. It takes 400 kg of wood and 10 litres of diesel and a minimum of two-and-a-half hours for a body to completely turn into ashes. Secondly, wait of an hour or so takes to take out and fill the urns to collect ashes to be preserved in a locker room to handover to the kin and kith of the deceased,” said Jagadish.

Neither the crematorium workers, graveyard keepers or priests who conduct last rights have any health cards or covered under any health programme. Earlier, a top leader and Minister from the State government assured to health cards and education to the children of these workers.

Former president of Telangana Kati Kaparla Association, Dasar Satyanarayana said, “The officials asked us for the report of Covid death count, but never asked about whether we got vaccinated or not.”

Stop shooting from my shoulder, Harish tells Eatala

- The Finance Minister makes it clear that he will remain with TRS and abide by KCR
- Says comments made by Eatala are unwarranted and uncalled for

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

FINANCE Minister T Harish Rao called upon the former Minister Eatala Rajender not to fire his guns over his shoulder.

Reacting to the comments made by Eatala on Friday that even Harish Rao had to face many insults, Harish said, “Eatala was free to quit the party if he so desires, but he has no business to fire his guns over my shoulder.” He said he would continue to be in TRS and abide by what Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao instructs him.

KCR, he said, was not just Chief Minister to him, but also a father figure. He

added that he has been a disciplined soldier of TRS since 2001 and would continue to do so. The comments made by Eatala, he said, were unwarranted and uncalled for.

Harish further said that Eatala was making a politi-



cal mockery in Telangana. The former minister has been promoted and given big posts in the party as well as in the State cabinet. He said Rajendar was behaving ‘like a monkey which destroys the entire forest’.

CS visits vaccination centre in Shamshabad

HANS NEWS SERVICE
SHAMSHABAD

CHIEF Secretary Somesh Kumar on Saturday visited the vaccination centre set up for high exposure groups at Shamshabad Zilla Parishad High School.

He said that 12 categories of persons were identified for vaccination under the special drive as per the directions of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao.

The Chief Secretary said that as part of the High Exposure category, vaccinations for those working in grocery stores, street vendors and saloon workers were launched on Saturday in all municipali-

ties across the State through a special drive.

The municipal department has specially designed an app for these workers to register their names.

Those who register and receive a message on their mobile would be only allowed to vaccinate, while those who come directly would not be given the vaccine shot, he added.

The Chief Secretary congratulated the municipal officials for making elaborate arrangements for conducting the special vaccination drive.

Rajendranagar MLA Prakash Goud, CDMA Satyanarayana and other officials were present.

Sabitha opens vaccine centre for high risk groups

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MAHESHWARAM

EDUCATION Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy on Saturday inaugurated the Covid-19 vaccination centre set up for people in high risk categories at Zilla Parishad High School in Meerpet Municipal Corporation, ZP High School in Badangpet Corporation and at Premier Function Hall at Jalpally in Maheshwaram constituency.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that Covid cases in the State have seen a fall with the steps taken by Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao. She said the country has been alerted about black fungus in advance so special arrangements have been made for its treatment at ENT hospital and beds were being increased in all government hospitals along with Gandhi hospital



and TIMS to provide Covid treatment.

She added that Chief Minister had decided to give priority vaccination to high risk groups in Telangana and people who have regular contact with people should get the jab without fail. The Minister later said that the government was all set to face the

third wave and requested people to cooperate with the government during the lockdown. Local TRS leaders, activists, medical authorities and others were also present.

Reviews road works

The Minister held a meeting with officials and reviewed road



Ex-TRS State secretary cuts ties with party

HANS NEWS SERVICE
SHADNAGAR

FORMER TRS party State secretary Ande Babaiah, during a press conference on Saturday, clarified over his exit from Telangana Rashtra Samithi in support of ex-Minister Eatala Rajender. Speaking on the occasion, Babaiah said that TRS had unjustly expelled Eatala Rajender from the cabinet who had contributed immensely for the party growth.



Babaiah said he was handed over responsibilities for parliamentary elections in Kodangal and Maktal constituency, and he worked hard for the party in Mahbubnagar, Jadcherla, Nagarkurnool and other areas in connection with the municipal elections.

Babaiah alleged that he had sold his four acre farm for the party development and also spent about Rs 30 lakh for the Pragathi Nivedana Sabha.

Adding that MLA Anjaiah Yadav had not invited him to any event in the constituency, Babaiah said he had personally met Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao in Delhi in 2018 and request MLA ticket, but was later denied. He said he even could not get a nominated post promised by the party leadership, and dejected, he left the party.

OFFICIALS PULLED UP FOR SHORTAGE OF GUNNY BAGS

HANS NEWS SERVICE
SHADNAGAR

TELUGU Desam Party national general secretary and Shadnagar ex-MLA Bakkani Narsimhulu inspected the paddy procurement centre in Shadnagar market yard on Saturday. Narsimhulu on the occasion interacted with the farmers and enquired about the issues being

faced by them. Speaking on the occasion, Narsimhulu said that the officials and public representatives were not aware of paddy stocks that had been piling up in the market for months which were even germinating in the market due to rains. He also questioned officials about shortage of gunny bags to store the grains. He alleged that paddy purchasers were deducting three-and-

a-half kg per 40 kg bag and were reducing the weight from seven to eight kilos per quintal. The TDP leader demanded the officials to take immediate steps to solve the issues of farmers and warned of laying siege to the market yard if farmers issues were not solved. Local TDP leaders, activists, market yard officials, farmers and others were present.

Why can't we have 'YAROVAYA' like law in India!

DR HC UPADHYAY

BEING the world's largest democracy, we also have to bear the burden of all sorts of junk, such as innocent outbreaks of some film moghuls who say they feel insecure in India, gangs of Aligarh Muslim University who observe no restraint in their declaration: Bharat Tere Tukde Honge, Insha Allah, Insha Allah; congregation of dadas and dadis with avowed resolve that they would not show any proof of their identity as Indians, coterie of self-styled intellectuals who shamelessly returned coveted awards conferred by the nation, hordes of farmers who with liberal help from their foreign-based well-wishers not only attempted to capture the Red Fort, but shamelessly connived with the Jihadi, anti-national, terrorist and extremist forces in West Bengal for the return of Mamata Banerjee as the secular Chief Minister etc.

The list is, indeed, very lengthy. All the above-mentioned activities have gone scot-free just because we are a secular democracy wedded to the sacred fundamental rights. True, theoretically speaking our countrymen have been assured of several freedoms, including the freedom of expres-

sion and freedom to practice and promote any faith. Notably, all these come with a rider; and the rider is: the State can impose reasonable restrictions. The advocates and practitioners of the constitutionally-guaranteed freedoms conveniently forget this rider. And when the authorities haul them up for crossing the Lakshman Rekha drawn by the elected bodies, they raise a hue and cry and their supporters, spread throughout the world, too join the chorus.

In order to tackle such divisive forces, perhaps the harshest legal provision is found in the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The anti-India lobby has been chest-beating against this provision contained in Section 124-A of IPC, called, Sedition. The wording of this section, undoubtedly, is ‘rubber-like’. The words such as hatred, contempt, excite, disaffection etc; are left to be interpreted by courts and all through these years, the courts have done their job quite well. But just because there is an element of elasticity in the language of the Section and just because the law itself was enacted during British Raj in 1860, it need not be discarded.

Now, let's turn our attention to Russia. On June 2, Russia's upper



house of parliament, the Federation Council, approved a bill that would ban supporters and members of the organisations designated as ‘extremist’ from being elected to any post for five years. It will become the law after President Putin signs it.

The law also known as Yarovaya Law has been decried as a draconian law by the extremist groups, particularly those supporting the opposition leader Aleksei Navalny. Our concern in mentioning this development here is that if a country like Russia with iron-gate policy feels the necessity to enact a stringent law to curb growing virus of extrem-

ism, why not in India with too liberal approach. Can't we have a similar law?

The first step in this direction should be to make the Chapter on Fundamental Duties of citizens, mandatory and enforceable by law. Then, amend the existing Section 124-A with more clarity and doing away with ambiguity, so that the accused persons are not able to escape from the clutches of law. To save India and the people the country, such urgent legal measures must be initiated.

Clarity on sentence, a must: SC

A division bench of the Apex court comprising Justice Dinesh

Maheshwari and Justice Anirudha Bose has observed that the trial courts while awarding multiple punishments of imprisonment have to specify in clear terms as to whether the sentences would run concurrently or consecutively. Further observing that any omission to carry out this obligation would cause unnecessary and avoidable prejudice to the parties, the bench reiterated that the omission to state in the order of sentence whether the sentences would run concurrently or consecutively cannot ipso facto lead to concurrent running of sentences.

The above observations were made in the judgment titled, Sunil Kumar alias Sudhir Kumar vs State of UP (LL 2021 SC 267).

Journalist Vinod Dua gets reprieve

Noted journalist Vinod Dua after about a year of getting involved in the sedition case got reprieve on June 3. Quashing the FIR under Section 124-A and other provisions of Indian Penal Code, filed at Kumarsain police station in Shimla district on May 6, 2020 at the behest of one Shyam, a political leader, the Supreme Court bench held that every journalist was entitled to

protection in terms of Kedar Nath Singh judgment.

The bench comprising Justice UU Lalit and Justice Vineet Saran added that every prosecution under Section 124-A and Section 505 of the IPC must be in strict conformity with the scope and ambit of said Sections. In the same breath, the Apex court also rejected Dua's prayer for a direction that henceforth FIRs against persons belonging to media with at least 10 years standing be not registered unless cleared by a committee, to include the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court or a Judge designated by him, the leader of the Opposition and the Home Minister of the concerned State.

The court observed that the prayer for the committee was completely outside the scope of the statutory framework.

Kerala HC rubbishes allotment of scholarships

On May 28, accepting the plea filed by Advocate Justin Pallivathukkal, a division bench of the Kerala High Court comprising Chief Justice S Manikumar and Justice Shaji P Chaly junked a 2015 government order providing merit-cum-means scholarships at 80 per cent to the Muslim community and 20 per cent to Latin

Catholic Christians, including the converted Christians.

Terming such allocation as legally unsustainable, the court held that the allocation of scholarships should be proportion to the population of various minorities.

Don't humiliate advocates: TS HC to cops

While allowing a petition in two writ petitions Nos. 12485/21 and 12487/21 filed in the Telangana High Court by two lawyers seeking direction to the police and revenue authorities to exempt advocates, their clerks and other office staff from the movement restrictions during lockdown period, the single judge bench of Justice K Laxman cautioned the concerned enforcement authorities during lockdown not to humiliate advocates who are out with proper identity documents and also warned them that if the authorities violate this direction, the court will take the matter seriously.

The High Court issued several directions to the police, revenue and civic authorities as well as to advocates to facilitate their hindrance-free movements in the discharge of legal obligation to the litigant public.

Pak continues to sponsor terror activities in J&K

SUMIT KUMAR SINGH

NEW Delhi, June 5 (IANS) Even though not a single incident of ceasefire violation has taken place along Line of Control (LoC) ever since an agreement was reached in February between Indian and Pakistani forces, incidents of terror activities in Jammu and Kashmir do not seem to stop.

The security agencies said that as many as 48 terrorists were killed in the Valley this year till June 1. Last year till June 1, a total 60 terrorists were neutralised in the Valley.

"The incidents of terrorists killed so far this year compared to last year is due to the heightened security apparatus," said a senior government official.

The figures with the security agencies state that in 2020, a total of 221 terrorists were killed, while 158 militants were gunned down in 2019 by the forces.

The security establishments pointed out that despite Pakistan



agreeing to maintain peace along the LoC, it has not stopped sponsoring terror activities in the Valley.

Further, the intelligence agencies have alerted security establishments about a flurry of terrorist activities in their hideouts close to the LoC in areas under the control of the Pakistan Army.

Sources said that terrorist training camps have been active in Pakistan and groups have gath-

ered across the LoC, possibly for infiltration attempts.

According to intelligence agencies, on June 1, different groups of terrorists gathered in the Lipa Valley opposite Keran, Naugam and Rampur sectors.

The agencies further pointed that last month, 24 terrorists had begun training in Nikial -- four from Jaishe-e-Mohammed, 10 from AI Badr and 10 from Laskhar-e-Taiba -- preparing for

infiltration.

"All the terrorists are being trained by a retired SSG commando colloquially named Abu Tala, and Major Umar of 15 SIND (Nikial)," intelligence agencies stated.

Sources said that inputs are very clear that terror groups still have all the support of the Pakistan Army even though there has been a decision to restore ceasefire and no violations have taken place since February 25.

Similarly, frequent gatherings of a group of terrorists have been reported over the last month.

On May 24, simultaneous gatherings of groups ranging from 5-8 terrorists were reported from Tanagdhara, Naugam and Poonch.

Again on May 25, a group of four Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists divided into two groups concentrated opposite Uri.

The pattern has been similar over the last one month, official said, based on reliable inputs that have been coming in.

REJIG IN TRINAMOO

Abhishek given more responsibility in party

KOLKATA

AFTER successfully leading the Trinamool Congress through the Assembly elections in West Bengal, its MP Abhishek Banerjee has been given more responsibility in the party set up on expected lines.

Accordingly, Abhishek, the nephew of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, has been appointed as the all-India General Secretary of the Trinamool, replacing Subrata Bakshi. The decision was taken at the party's core committee meeting held on Saturday. In a surprise development, actor-turned-politician Sayoni Ghosh, who recently lost in the Assembly elections, has been appointed as the president of Trinamool Youth Congress, in place of Abhishek.

Meanwhile, Bakshi retained his post as the state president of the party following the new 'one-person-one-post' theory which has been implemented in the party from Saturday.



Veteran leader and known to be close to Chief Minister Banerjee, Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, has been given the responsibility of Trinamool women's wing in place of Chandrima Bhat-tacharya, while Dola Sen has been made the national chief of the Trinamool Congress trade union. Interestingly enough, Ritabrata Bhattacharya, who joined the Trinamool from the CPI-M, has been made the state secretary of the Trinamool Congress trade union. Speaking at a press conference after the meeting, Trinamool General Secretary Partha Chatterjee said, "We thank everybody who voted us to

power and we are committed to work for the development of the people and the state. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has also thanked everybody who stood beside the party during its hard times."

When asked about the leaders who are willing to return to the party, Chatterjee said, "There has been no discussion regarding the turncoats. It will be decided at an appropriate time." Several former Trinamool leaders, including the former aide of Banerjee, Sonali Guha, and other turncoats like Sarala Murmu and Amal Acharya, who had joined the BJP before the Assembly elections, have expressed their desire to return to the ruling party.

Guha had on May 23 written to Banerjee, apologising to her for leaving the party. "I seek your forgiveness and if you don't forgive me, I won't be able to live. Please allow me to come back, and spend the rest of my life in your affection," Guha had said in the letter. (ANS)

Railways delivered over 25K MT of LMO to 15 states so far

NEW DELHI

THE Railway Ministry said on Saturday that it has transported more than 25,000 MT of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) to several states in over 1,500 tankers.

A ministry official said that the Oxygen Express trains have crossed the milestone of 25,000 MT of LMO delivery.

He said that so far, the Railways has delivered more than 25,629 MT of LMO in more than 1,503 tankers to various states across the country. The official said that 368 Oxygen Express trains have completed their journey so far and brought relief to various states.

The official further said that seven loaded Oxygen Express trains are on the run with more than 482 MT of LMO in 30 tankers. He said that Assam received its fifth Oxygen Express with 80 MT LMO in four tankers from Jharkhand.

The official further said that more than 3,000 MT LMO has

been offloaded in Karnataka by Oxygen Expresses.

The Indian Railways started Oxygen Express trains 42 days back on April 24 from Maharashtra with a load of 126 MT.

The official said that Railways provided oxygen relief by Oxygen Express trains to 15 states, namely Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Telangana, Punjab, Kerala, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Assam.

Till now, 614 MT of oxygen has been offloaded in Maharashtra, nearly 3,797 MT in Uttar Pradesh, 656 MT in Madhya Pradesh, 5,790 MT in Delhi, 2,212 MT in Haryana, 98 MT in Rajasthan, 3,097 MT in Karnataka, 320 MT in Uttarakhand, 2,787 MT in Tamil Nadu, 2,602 MT in Andhra Pradesh, 225 MT in Punjab, 513 MT in Kerala, 2,474 MT in Telangana, 38 MT in Jharkhand and 400 MT in Assam. (ANS)

Himachal using plastic waste to build roads

SHIMLA

AS part of Himachal Pradesh's initiative to use plastic waste to build roads, every year, about 60 tonnes of plastic waste are being collected to melt 190 km of roads, an official said on Saturday.

Speaking at the state-level virtual World Environment Day function, Principal Secretary (Environment, Science and Technology), K.K. Pant, said the state has taken many steps for environment protection, pollution control and climate change adaptation.

"Himachal Pradesh has emerged as the leading state in environment protection," he said.

Pant said that plastic cups, plates, glasses etc. have been banned in the state since 2011. Items made of thermocol such as cups and plates were banned in 2018. Pant said that plastic waste is being collected through the 'Polythene Hatao, Paryavaran Bachao' (remove polythene, save environment) campaign and it is being used for road construction and as fuel in the cement indus-



try. He said the state has launched a buyback policy for procuring non-recyclable plastic waste at Rs 75 per kg to tackle the problem arising due to plastic packaging waste. Under the scheme, 135,600 kg plastic has been procured by spending Rs 87 lakh. He said works on many research projects are in progress for strengthening environment management.

Also, an early warning system for landslides has been developed with the help of IIT Mandi.

An air quality monitoring system has also been developed by the Environment, Science and Technology Department.

To mark the occasion, the Principal Secretary released the Climate Risk Assessment Report, a pilot study of Kullu district prepared by the department with technical support from GIZ.

A documentary film by Aarushi Thakur, who is working in the field of environment protection, was also screened on the occasion. (ANS)

Man killed for just a glass of water in Bihar

PATNA

A physically challenged person was killed in Bihar's Begusarai district just for a glass of water, a police official said on Saturday.

The deceased Chote Lal Sahani, 50, a native of Badepura village under Chauhari Police Station in Begusarai district, died during treatment in Patna Medical College and Hospital (PMCH).

The incident happened on Friday when Chote Lal Sahani went to a nearby pond in the village for fishing. While returning home, being thirsty, he took a glass of water from a water pot which belonged to Dinesh Sahani. "While Chote Lal was drinking the water, he was spotted by Dinesh Sahani and his son Dipak Sahani. They brutally beat

him up using batons. The victim somehow reached home with the help of other villagers," said Raghendra Kumar, in-charge of Chauhari police station.

"As his condition deteriorated, his wife Mithilesh Devi took him to Sadar hospital Begusarai for treatment on Friday. The doctors at the hospital referred him to PMCH as his condition continued to be critical," Kumar said.

The victim and his family are very poor. The villagers contributed money and sent them to PMCH where he died during the treatment. After his body reached the village, the villagers again contributed for his cremation. "We have arrested the main accused Dinesh Sahani. The other accused is at large," the officer said. (ANS)

Samyukt Kisan Morcha observes 'Total Revolution Day'



GURUGRAM

THE Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) here on Saturday observed the first anniversary of the introduction of the Centre's three contentious farm reform ordinances as "Sampurna Kranti Divas" or "Total Revolution Day", and also burnt copies of these laws near a BJP MLA's office.

SKM president Chaudhary Santokh Singh told IANS that a section of farmers had also assembled in the premises of the civil hospital and raised anti-government slogans.

"The BJP-JJP led Haryana government is fearing the farm-

ers agitation against these three black laws. Following the government's order, a large number of local police personnel were deployed to stop the farmer's reaching the BJP MLA's office in old Gurugram," Singh said.

"We were stopped by the police personnel just around 10-12 meters away from the MLA's office. The farmers had told the police that their protest was peaceful and the Constitution permits peaceful agitation. Even the Supreme Court had also said that farmers can protest peacefully but despite that the peasants were being stopped from reaching the legislator's office," he added. (ANS)

Mangroves can act as bio-shield in Kerala, as storm surge likely to increase

KOCHI

ON the occasion of World Environment Day on Saturday, marine experts warned that the coastal areas of Kerala will witness an increasing trend of storm surge in the coming years due to the rise in sea surface temperature. To combat this, the experts called for restoration of coastal vegetation, putting special emphasis on mangrove forestation, which, according to them, will act as a bio-shield to the coastal belt in protecting the lives of its people.

The views were expressed during a webinar organised by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) here, as part of the programmes being

held to observe World Environment Day.

It was highlighted in the webinar that the entire Kerala coast recently witnessed 'storm surge' during the two cyclones - 'Tauk-tae' and 'Yaas'.

The experts working on mangroves said that the frequency of such storm surges in the coastal belt is likely to increasingly in the coming years with the rapid warming of the waters in the Indian Ocean.

Alarming winds caused by the cyclones help form storm surge in the waters, which results in high waves, sea erosion and flooding in the coastal hamlets.

CMFRI Director A. Gopalakrishnan pointed out that Kerala's coastal region could be protected



from the wrath of the sea to a great extent through restoration of mangroves and other biodiversity works in the region.

"Conservation of coastal biodiversity, which is in deterioration owing to many reasons, including constructions, is the best long-term, natural option for protecting the lives of the coastal people from sea turbulence.

"Mangroves act as a model bio-shield to the coastal stretch. A recent study based on the observations in the coastal region of Mumbai revealed that mangroves protect coastal wave actions and severe surges. There are lots of ideal areas along the coastal stretch in Kerala which can be conserved for mangrove forestation," Gopalakrishnan said. (ANS)

COVID AND ITS IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

HANS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI

FIRST is the use of a PPE (Personal Protective Equipments) kit. The PPE kit includes a body suit, lower, head cover, boot cover, gloves and goggles made of polypropylene. . Now if a PPE is thrown somewhere after use, it will take 500 years to decompose. At the same time, if it is burnt in a closed furnace i.e. incinerated, then 3816 kg of carbon dioxide (CO2) will be released from it.

Corona has so far been considered an epidemic in the world, but there is also a truth that corona is also a big threat to our environ-

ment. The world engaged in dealing with this is raising such a high mountain of dangerous Bio Medical Waste (BMW) that it will be difficult to get over it soon. This can be understood with few examples. First is the use of a PPE (Personal Protective Equipments) kit.

The PPE kit includes a body suit, lower, head cover, boot cover, gloves and goggles made of polypropylene. . Now if a PPE is thrown somewhere after use, it will take 500 years to decompose. At the same time, if it is burnt in a closed furnace i.e. incinerated, then 3816 kg of carbon dioxide (CO2) will be released from it.

It would take 182 days for a sin-

gle tree to absorb this much CO2. In other words, 182 trees will be able to eliminate this much CO2 in a day. Another example is the use of sanitisers in day to day life. The chemicals used for making sanitizers have a harmful effect on bees, butterflies and small insects. The chemical used for fragrance in sanitizers affect the plants adversely. Masks, hand gloves and glasses have also been helpful in preventing covid, but they have a negative impact on the environment.

For example even if we dispose one per cent masks used by us in the open, on a cumulative level this becomes 10 crore and pollutes the environment. To tackle



the ongoing Covid situation the country needs a supply of around nine crore masks, 7.6 crore of gloves and 16 lac medical glasses in a month. Recently it has been found in Gurgaon that the bio

medical waste has been doubled. Similarly in Ahmedabad's Apollo Hospital the waste figures have increased to 1.5 times what it used to be.

The figures will help us to un-

derstand the intensity of impact on our environment. As on March 2021, Bio medical waste was 75 tonnes daily. In April this figure rose to 139 tonnes daily and till the figures of May 10th the BMW now stands at 203 tonnes a day. There has been a substantial rise in the waste and the same can't be ignored or overlooked at.

Researchers around the world are trying to find out that, whether the pollution spread in the environment has anything to do with the spread of corona, its seriousness or death due to it. It has also been established in some studies that pollution can also be a reason behind death due to corona. However, this relationship

has only been established by the analysis of data related to pollution and corona.

According to a paper published in the medical journal Cardiovascular Research, 15 per cent of the deaths in the world are directly related to long-term exposure to PM (particulate matter) i.e. fine dust and polluted particles created by mixing toxic chemicals. According to a policy research working paper of the World Bank, with every one per cent increase in the pollution of particulate matter 2.5 (PM 2.5) in India, the death toll from corona increases by 5.7 percentage points. This dusty pollution also increases the death rate from corona.

SSC, Inter exams soon after Covid eases: Suresh

- Reiterates that the State govt will take responsibility for the health and safety of students
- Claims parents and students are favouring examinations
- Criticises Oppn for ndulging in dirty politics on the issue without concern for students' future

HANS NEWS SERVICE
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM

EDUCATION minister Audimlapu Suresh asserted that SSC and Inter examinations will be conducted as soon as Covid-19 pandemic is brought under control in the state.

On the occasion of World Environment Day, the minister participated in the Harita -Youth programme along with Rajamahendravaram MP M Bharat Ram at Morampudi Junction in the city on Saturday.

Suresh said that the examinations will be conducted by strictly following Covid norms. He alleged that TDP leaders are creating unnecessary fears and politicising the issue of examinations,



Education Minister A Suresh along with MP M Bharat Ram plants a tree on the occasion of World Environment Day in Rajamahendravaram on Saturday

but parents are particular about sending their wards for examinations if Covid norms are followed. He stated that the many parents expressed their willingness for sending their children to examinations.

“Parents as well as the students don’t want the examinations be cancelled in the state. The opposition parties are indulging in murky politics in the matter without caring for the future of the students. Further decision will be taken on Class X and Intermediate

examinations after consulting with Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy,” he said.

The minister said the government will also start new junior colleges wherever they are required in the state and the task of monitoring the junior colleges would be entrusted to joint collectors.

Suresh reiterated that the government would take the responsibility for the health and wellbeing of students in conducting exams, which had to be postponed in view of severity of Covid.

ANANDIAIH MEDICINE

Somireddy accuses Kakani of planning to mint money

Alleges that Sarvepalli MLA is behind a website that launched online sale of medicine

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NELLORE

TDP politburo member and former minister Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy accused the Sarvepalli MLA Kakani Govardhan Reddy of planning to mint money from B Anandiah's medications online and had even put in place a fake website. Addressing the media along with party leaders at TDP office here on Saturday, Chandramohan Reddy said the legislator had siphoned off farmers' money during the first wave of coronavirus and has now set his eyes on Anandiah's products.

He alleged that Sesritha Technology India Private Limited owned by the followers of Govardhan Reddy, had purchased a website, www.childeal.in, from Godaddy.com on May 21 and was



planning to start the online sale of the medicine.

The TDP leaders said operators of Sesritha, close to the legislator and the ruling party leaders, started sale of concoction and others on the website from May 31.

The website has been visible since 11 am on June 2 and the home page has photographs of Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, ministers Mekapati, Alla Nani, Govardhan Reddy, Anandiah and ruling party emblem, he said.

He demanded the government to register a case against the portal suo motu and conduct a thorough probe through cybercrime wing.

TDP national secretary Beeda

Kakani denies charge

NELLORE

SARVEPALLI MLA Kakani Govardhan Reddy denied allegations of his long-time rival and TDP leader Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy that he was plotting to benefit financially through Anandiah medicine and dared him to prove his allegations. In a statement, Govardhan Reddy said he has nothing to do with Sesritha Technologies and its website and he was ready to be hanged in public if police or any agency proved that his followers were behind it. He asked Chandramohan Reddy to provide any evidence in support of his charges and he himself would lodge a police complaint for further investigation.

Ravichandra, party leaders Sk Abdul Aziz, K Ramakrishna, P Sunil Kumar, K Srinivasulu Reddy, P Srinivasulu Reddy, Dr Z Siva Prasad, A Venkata Ramana Reddy and others were present.



AMARAVATI

THE additional director general of police, AP CID, has been sent a legal notice by rebel YSRCP MP K Raghurama Krishna Raju's legal team. The notice has demanded that the articles seized from Raghurama Krishna Raju at the time of his arrest by the AP CID, be deposited with the magistrate.

The legal notice claimed that the CID police personnel had taken a mobile phone from the Narsapur Lok Sabha MP's resi-

Raghurama sends notice to CID ADG for his phone

- Demands in his notice that articles seized from him at the time of his arrest on May 4 should be deposited with magistrate

- Says the seized mobile contains valuable information
- The MP's advocate claims that Raghurama was subjected to custodial torture in effort to make him reveal the phone unlock code

dence when he was being arrested but is not mentioned in the records. Stating that the seized mobile phone contains valuable information, his lawyer claimed that Raghurama was subjected to custodial torture in effort to make him divulge the phone unlock code.

Stating that the missing phone is required to conduct his official duties, the Parliament member threatened to file civil and crimi-

nal charges if the phone is not returned to him. The legal notice was handed to the SHO at Mangalagiri CID office.

Disgruntled YSRCP Member of Parliament from Narsapur Lok Sabha constituency, Raju was arrested on May 14, by the Andhra Pradesh CID on sedition charges. Cases under sections 124A, 153A, and 505, were filed against him.

The rebel MP has been in the public eye for regularly baiting his

party supremo, and Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy.

The MP was accused of indulging in systematic, schematic effort, through his speeches, to cause tensions among the communities and by attacking various government dignitaries in a way that will cause loss of faith in the government which they represent.

The AP CID had arrested the rebel MP from his residence in Hyderabad on May 14, and transferred him to Guntur for interrogation. The MP claimed he was subjected to torture during his custody.

The Supreme Court had subsequently granted him conditional bail. (IANS)

Task Force unearths 10 red sanders dumps

- 101 red sanders logs recovered in Nagalapuram forest area
- Foils smugglers' plan to smuggle the logs to other Tamil Nadu

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUPATI

IN a major haul, Red Sanders Anti-smuggling Task Force (RSASTF) on Saturday unearthed 10 dumps where 101 red sanders logs were found hidden in Gangamma Kona gutta forest area of Jukumakeswaram forest range near Nagalapuram, near Tamil Nadu border.

Acting on credible information, task force teams led by RSIs Vasu and Suresh launched an intense combing in Jambukeswaram forest area leading to the force unearthing the dumps at Gangamma Kona Gutta.

In all 101 red sanders logs were recovered from the 10 dumps by the task force foiling the smugglers plan to transport them illegally to other states where international smugglers are based.

Task force DSP Muralidhar who reached the forest area where the logs were recovered, said that the huge recovery of 101 red sanders logs was the achievement of the task force and added that the smugglers due to the constant vigil

coupled with regular combing in Tirupati area shifted to the forest areas on the forest areas near state border to avoid the police and task force. It was also easy for the smugglers for the illegal transport of red sanders logs as the area is very near to Tamil Nadu.

Satyavedu CI Sreenivasulu and Nagalapuram SI Priyanka also inspected the forest area from where the smugglers dumps were unearthed.

Anantapur range DIG Kanti Rana Tata appreciated the task force team acting very tactfully to unearth the dumps and seizing huge quantities of red sanders logs.

Circle Inspector Venkata Ravi registered a case.



Task Force personnel with the red sanders logs recovered from dumps in the forest area near Nagalapuram, Chittoor district on Saturday

AP logs 10,373 new Covid infections

AMARAVATI

THE gross coronavirus recoveries in the state crossed 16 lakh as 15,958 more people got cured of the infection in 24 hours ending 9 am on Saturday.

The state added 10,373 fresh cases and saw 80 more fatalities in 24 hours, a health department bulletin said.

The state Covid-19 chart showed 17,49,363 total infections, 16,09,879 recoveries and 11,376 deaths so far.

The active caseload reduced further to 1,28,108 on Saturday, the bulletin added.

In the last seven days, the active coronavirus cases in AP fell by 37,687.

Only four districts in the state now have more than 10,000 active cases, while the remaining nine are in four digits each, with Vizianagaram having the lowest of 3,490. East Godavari district reported less than 2,000 fresh daily cases after a long gap, adding 1,880 to take its overall count to 2,37,033.

It has the highest number of 27,812 active cases now, a considerable drop from about 34,000 a fortnight ago.

Chittoor district stopped just short of the two lakh total cases mark as it registered 1,726 afresh in a day.

West Godavari reported 1,078 and Anantapur 1,002 while the remaining nine districts added less than 700 new cases each.

East Godavari (1,001) and Krishna (1,000) districts joined Chittoor (1,364) with total Covid-19 fatalities of over 1,000 each.

Burial grounds grapple with increasing influx

HANS NEWS SERVICE
ANANTAPUR

THE precarious conditions at the all religion burial grounds and crematoriums are getting worse as Covid deaths mount by day. The burial grounds are facing two problems, one they are running out of space and the other, anti-social elements are digging graves to find gold ornaments left on the dead bodies. This is for making easy money from the gold abandoned on the bodies. In the process, tombs are being desecrated and disturbed resulting in foul smell emanating from the damaged tombs.

Anantapur Hindu Smashana Vatika cemetery is struggling to find space to bury people dying of Covid-19. All the burial grounds, Hindu Smashana Vatika, Khabar and Christian cemetery were established 50 years back. There is no electric crematorium. Brahmins and Vysyas have a separate crematorium. Anantapur crematoriums and burial grounds are working overtime to cope with the surging number of deaths from the coronavirus outbreak. Earlier, 5 to 8 bodies use to come in a week and now around 8 to 10 bodies are coming daily. There would be at least 3 to 4 bodies in the same pit.

Moreover, miscreants are digging the pits for precious ornaments and leaving the bodies



A Christian burial ground in Anantapur

without burying. Foul smell is coming in most of the graveyards. All the graveyards are surrounded by houses. Several encroachers have built permanent buildings. All the unauthorised constructions got house and door numbers, and property tax identification number. Anantapur Municipal Corporation has not taken any action to vacate these lands. Crematoriums and burial grounds shrank and death toll rose. People say electric crematorium is the need of the hour. As there is great demand burial grounds are working 24 hours. Timing slots are given to the relatives, families and relatives have to wait 2 to 3 hours to cremate the bodies.

In Bramhin and Vysya grave yard bodies are piling up and smoke from continuously burn-

ing flesh is creating another health risk to locals. Several unclaimed bodies are reaching burial grounds in big number. Workers at Khabar located in drivers' colony said that they have buried more than 150 bodies in May. “We can't afford to have long queues of people at the crematorium, as that again increases the risk of spreading infection,” said Ganganna, a worker who digs pit at the burial grounds.

The situation is likely to worsen as hospitals across the city are filled to the capacity. Anantapur town with about three lakh population needs an electric crematorium to cope with the situation. Residents demand that the municipal corporation identify places and start eco-friendly crematoriums.

COMPLY OR FACE CONSEQUENCES, CENTRE WARNS TWITTER

Continued from P1

“However, as a gesture of goodwill, Twitter Inc is hereby given one last notice to immediately comply with the rules, failing which the exemption from liability available...shall stand withdrawn and Twitter shall be liable for consequences as per the IT Act and other penal laws of India”.

The notice, however, did not mention a specific date to comply with the rules. The IT ministry in its notice observed that the world's largest democracy had been among the first countries in the world, outside the parent country of Twitter Inc, to enthusiastically adopt the microblogging platform.

“Users who are abused on the platform or are harassed or are subject to defamation or sexual abuse or become victims or a whole range of other abusive content must get a redressal mechanism that the same people of India have created through a due process of law,” the IT ministry asserted. The people of India, who use Twitter, “deserve and demand” a fair mechanism to address their grievances and resolve their disputes, it said. “Leave alone proactively creating such a mechanism, Twitter Inc is in the inglorious bracket of refusing to do so even when mandated by law,” the ministry said in its notice to the company.

The notice has come on a day when political circles have been abuzz with brief removal of verified blue tick from the personal handle of Vice President Venkaiah Naidu, RSS leader Mohan Bhagwat and some other prominent faces of the Sangh.

Twitter had recently said it was committed to India as a vital market, but criticised the new IT rules and regulations, saying they “inhibit free, open public conversation”. In response, the government had said Twitter was levelling “baseless and false allegations” to defame India.

PIO Megha Ganne enters Spotlight

Continued from P1

Megha's resume includes starts at the 2017 US Women's Amateur, the 2018 US Women's Four-Ball Championship and the 2019 the US Women's Open in Charleston. She is also a four-time finalist at the Drive, Chip and Putt National Championship at Augusta National.

While Megha was clearly having her finest day at the US Open, co-leader Mel Reid was having her best round in a Major, as she had missed the cut in four of her last five US Opens. Megha, whose parents Sudha and Hari are first-generation migrants, backed her interest in golf and she also revealed that she had a couple of good conversations with Brooks Koepka, who has won the US Open for men twice.

Megha's father is an information-technology professional. Her mother is an endocrinologist and her younger sister, Sirina, 13, is an eighth grader, who also plays golf.

Her mother said her phone had vibrated in her jacket pocket for the entire second nine of her daughter's first round and well into Thursday night as texts arrived from friends and neighbours back in New Jersey. She awoke on Friday to more messages from family members in India. On Thursday, Sudha Ganne expressed a desire for Megha to remain “a regular kid and enjoy other things” besides golf.

Megha seems fine with the attention, but then, she always has gravitated to the spotlight. She has appeared in school plays, once as the Queen of Hearts after auditioning for the lead role of Alice in Wonderland. She threw herself into her portrayal as Alice's main protagonist. “She was the Queen of Hearts and she lived it,” her mother said with a laugh.

But Megha draws a line at social media. That kind of attention, she has decided, is unnecessary. Negativity that has been heaped on some of her friends on Twitter has soured Ganne on the platform.

After her Thursday round, Megha was interviewed by 15-year-old twins, Amelia and Adinah Dellegencia, who are student journalists. They lauded Ganne's “girl power” and described her as “pretty cool.” They asked for her Twitter handle, and their jaws dropped in unison when she said, “I'm social media-free, actually.” Amelia recovered from the shock and said, “She's so cool. She should be on social media.”

Twitter restores blue tick of Venkaiah, Bhagwat

NEW DELHI

TWITTER on Saturday restored the ‘blue tick’ verification of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, hours after taking it down. Earlier in the day, the microblogging platform had removed the blue badge of Vice President Venkaiah Naidu only to restore it later. It has also restored the verification badge of other RSS functionaries, including senior Sangh leader Krishna Gopal.

The move to drop the blue tick or badge — which indicates that the account is authentic — from the handles of two prominent leaders triggered a backlash, with the government sources and Sangh functionaries lashing out at the social media platform. It also comes in the backdrop of a standoff between the Centre and Twitter over the new digital rules which came into force last month.

Citing its verification policy, Twitter said the blue tick of VP Naidu was removed since the account had been inactive since July 2020. It explained that inactivity is based on logging in, adding that to keep the account active, the account holder must make sure to log in at least every six months. According to Sangh sources, Twitter has over the past several days removed the blue badge from the accounts of many RSS leaders whose accounts were verified by the social media platform back in 2019.

PM versus CMs: An undesirable trend in recent politics

THIS has reference to 'Modi, Didi should rise above petty politicking', by V Ramu Sarma. It is vital to know who is indulging in petty politics, when we try to discuss the issue, which is the hot topic in the media, and a handy tool for the Opposition, to come in support of Mamata Banerjee.

People know the tantrums and needless ego played out the Chief Minister of West Bengal on every occasion when is closeted with the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. It is clear that Mamata Banerjee is in no mood to have any one as her equal in WB, let alone an individual who is unquestionably superior and powerful in national terms as PM Modi.

Mamata Banerjee is embroiled in the pure politics of West Bengal, rather than viewing WB as one of the states of the country, and her relevant and legitimate status as CM. Didi is behaving like a queen of an independent kingdom, when the British were conquering in a phased manner, to gain foothold in the country.

This mentality on her part is fraught with several shortcomings. Her zeal and open support to the minority is a serious cause for concern. The killings of BJP workers by the TMC supporters are an unmissable demonstration in this regard. The recently established facts that Mamata Banerjee gave tickets to immigrants and Bangladesh and Rohingya, by faking their identities, and many of them having been elected in the Assembly elections in WB is a serious cause for concern.

There seems to be Didi's direct involvement in this case, in association with her trusted lieutenants, in arranging for birth certificate, Aadhaar and ration card to show them as Indian, while they are not.

The ego tantrums being enacted by Mamata Banerjee will bring her own ruin politically as this trend keeps on growing in the times to come; and more and more of trusted cronies will get disgusted with her style of functioning as happened in the last elections, when several leaders of TMC openly criticised the high-handed arrogance of Didi in running the party and the state, to



join BJP, and many such candidates won the election on BJP ticket.

The present trend of mentality by Mamata Banerjee will pose questions about loyalty to the country as her actions and comments are always in support of the anti-Indians elements, be it anti-CAA agitation, J&K issue, irrational farmers agitation. Didi must first learn to be inclusive in terms of the pan India scenario, to effectively assert her individual position as a reliable, true Indian.

S Lakshmi, Hyderabad

II

What is there in a name averred the bald, William Shakespeare and we have the classic case of rose smelling the same whatever name you call it. Intriguingly this does not hold good in the recent tussle between the PM and a CM of the Union of India. Look at the names..... Mamata (compassion) Banerjee has taken on Narendra (Ruler of humans) Modi figuratively as well as literally in the recent case of Yaas devastation. Lo and behold, the name in the news is Alanpan (musical scale) Bandyopadhyay. The name Alanpan or Alanpana in musicology is the beginning of a rendition giving an insight to the mood of the artiste.

Normally it begins with a slow raga and is taken to its crescendo by the end of the concert. Are we witnessing a long drawn concert to be played for next three years in the greatest and largest democratic play called Lok Sabha Elections 2024? The first salvo is

fired by West Bengal CM who has a record of auctioning her art works for ridiculous sums in the recent past. And her rival, our current PM - obviously is another dramatis personae who is a consummate artist of the masses. Let's sit back, watch the show and enjoy it, folks.

Yaddanapudi Srinivas, Secunderabad

III

The hot topic of this week "Modi, Didi should rise above politicking" by Ramu Sarma (June 5) must have heated the heads of those worrying on the ongoing prestigious problems between Modi Didi self-aggrandisement. Both are heads of state and central governments holding utmost responsibility and answerability to the people in a democratic set up like India.

The conspicuous absence by CM Mamata Banerjee from a prearranged meeting by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to get first hand direct information on Yaas cyclone havoc is premeditated plan and it certainly amounts to dereliction of her duty and disrespecting head of the Union Government. Later non desiderata can be applied and of course that did not take place. I remember that Modi as CM of Gujarat wantonly did not attend a meeting arranged by PM Manmohan Singh in 2013. Is it a retreat to Modi by Mamata? Upon transfer of CM's Chief Secretary to Centre, he defied the order and resigned. This is on advice of Mamata and she appointed him as Advisor as rules cannot

object for this act.

It is undoubtedly an indigestible fact for BJP to have lost in the assembly elections despite tremendous poll campaigns by most of top BJP cadre which was crushed under Mamata's wheel chair. In politics anything may happen. Did not BJP win against UPA led by Congress party in 2014 and steadily retain power in 2019 in the face of weakened Congress party and leadership? Till date Indian National Congress never tried to convalesce from its lost glory as unity and integrity is the biggest lapse in it. BJP and Modi cannot be replaced in near sight. Chandrababu Naidu moved earth and heaven to fight with BJP in 2019 and experienced a miserable defeat.

Many suggestions poured out from Modi's Mann-ki-baat and how many issues he touched in them is open to all. His air of regime is blowing strong waves in spite of falling rating number internationally and mismanagement in tackling Covid-19 pandemic.

Sarkaria commission's report on Centre-State relations is safely stored in library. The Union-State administrative relations are so organised in India to enable the Union to exercise considerable control over the administrative machinery of the state. At the same time states should not be ignored on the issues of genuine in nature. Centre is not a myth and parental care on states is a must.

Dr NSR Murthy, Secunderabad

Don't challenge the virus, conquer it with self-belief!

M PRADYU

A big salute to your paper for its fight against the pandemic and the page "Brave-hearts" is truly an inspirational one where those brave hearts who defeated the virus share their valuable experience boosting the confidence of those unfortunately getting infected by the virus. I and three of my family members got infected by the deadly virus last month and here I would like to share my experience about how we overcame the crisis.

As our house is located in the heart of the city of Kannur (Kerala), in a populated ward and that too on a busy main road having a lot of business establishments, the fear of getting infected was there right from the beginning this deadly virus set foot in our region. As I was the only one going out for work I took so much of care

and precautions so that my old parents will not be attacked by the virus through me. But in spite of all our pre cautions my octogenarian father started showing symptoms during the first week of May as the second wave was at its peak.

He had coughing, temperature and runny nose. Second day he fainted and then an explicable fear started creeping into our hearts. The very next day my old mother who is in her mid seventies had high fever and tiredness and following her I began experiencing severe chills, body pain and temperature going up and down. My old aunt too started showing similar symptoms. Then it was panic at home and we phoned up the nearest speciality hospital whose Covid team immediately came to check.

Upon checking all four of us were found positive. A sort of creepy sensation gripped me upon realising that the villainous virus is in our body and I couldn't even imagine a trip with it - a nightmarish, horrendous, ghastly and agonising trip with the most dreadful, ruthless, merciless, unsparing, cold blooded



virus which can be up to anything!.

Thanks to the medical team who gave us all necessary tips, medicines, care and treatment and advices too. The most amazing factor is that another

aunt of mine staying in the same household was negative and she was the one who prepared food and everything for us who isolated ourselves in our rooms. A pious and positive minded lady, a staunch devotee of Sai Baba and a yoga practitioner my aunt stuck to her daily routine without tension and even gave me mantras like the Danwantri and Mrityunjaya which I found very useful.

She remained uninfected by the virus. Though early few days I couldn't sleep due to overthinking later I calmed myself and on the advice given by my friends and relatives diverted my mind from Covid and got busy with my hobbies of cartooning, writing articles, reading and listening to music. I switched off the TV as news gave only tension and anguish.

One thing I could realise was the agony, the pain, the angst the world and the whole of mankind is going through. I was also a bit amazed at some who say it's just like a cold and a flu. Most of the Covid patients that include us also, experienced splitting headache, the chills, temperature going up and down and along with this anxiety and fear

as you are with a cold-blooded stranger (and he can be up to anything!) and at the same time we feel that the symptoms lessen when we tackle with it in a positive and optimistic manner.

Definitely the mind plays a very vital role in dealing with this virus and during the recovery phase. Those in isolation definitely need the support of their dear ones mentally and the more we are instilled with care, confidence and encouragement we feel very energetic and the mind gets ready to overcome this unnerving phase. After days of quarantine treatment we turned negative and the medical team advised us to have some more days of rest and relaxation. My old parents and aunt too recovered and are hale and happy. Thus we overcame the crisis.

A piece of advice to my reader friends - never challenge this virus and unfortunately if it creeps don't lose courage, be positive, stay calm, heed to your doctors advice and take regular medication, take good food and consume fruit juices (pomegranate is really nutritious and it helps to de-stress), make yourself busy with some light activity, never overthink, love yourself and love the world. Yes, better to be safe as this isn't just as cool as some think. Even if it is three or four masks the authorities tell us to wear let us wear them, follow norms, avoid crowds, let us get vaccinated, let's safeguard our elders and let us help the government help eliminate this most dreaded virus.

Modi – a super crisis manager? Not really...

KRISHNA Sagar Rao's article 'PM Modi: A reliable crisis leader' is a masterpiece in self-delusion and deception. It is good class room essay defining what a crisis is and about crisis management. But his futile attempt to attempt to present Modi as a super crisis manager is like rubbing salt on the wound in the face of his failure in combating the current Covid crisis. One fails to understand why the BJP leaders always try to evoke sympathy for Modi as if he had been facing crisis after crisis ever since his advent into politics.



As CM of Gujarat he had comfortable run for three terms with the dwindling Opposition. As PM, he has massive majority in the house and is virtually unopposed. Yes, he proved to be an expert in creating crisis after crisis. First, it was note-ban which failed to curb black money but resulted in deaths of people waiting in lines. The sudden announcement of lockdown last year created a crisis for lakhs of migrant labour as they were left in lurch.

The SC had to intervene and issue directives again and again to improve the situation. Again he created a vaccine crisis by exporting vaccines without bothering about initial domestic requirement, which made us a laughing stock in the international community. The apex court is appalled and wondered whether government is having any policy on vaccine and it asked the government to submit all relevant files in evolving the vaccine policy. Modi had not paid heed to the advice of the experts and the country is plunged into an economic crisis where

the GDP has touched an all time low. So much about the crisis management abilities of Modi that were unabashedly praised sky high by the author.

As is their wont, the author had belittled the earlier leaders to highlight Modi as if they never had to face any real crisis. The first crisis the country faces soon after independence was of hunger and poverty. Through successful and imaginative implementation of five-year plans, India could overcome the crisis and ushered in Green revolution. It is Nani Palkhiwala who made this observation with regard to buget of a particular year- "it can be termed a bad budget in a good year and worst in a bad year" Same is more or less applicable to Modi's abilities as a crisis manager. Rao is endowed with a fertile imagination and it will do good if gentlemen like him point out the real position to PM rather than constantly lionising and eulogising him.

Vinay Bhushan Bhagwati, Hyderabad

A sycophantic write-up

This refers to "PM Modi: A Reliable Crisis Leader" (THI 4 June). The BJP spokesperson has all the right to defend his leader who has been Chief Minister of Gujarat for 13 years and seven years as PM of India now. To call Modi a crisis leader is nothing but a height of sycophancy. One can even agree that at this moment there is no strong political opponent to PM Modi from within and outside, to call him a crisis leader by the author is beyond imagination but a height of hero-worship and sycophancy.

S Natarajan, New Delhi

COMMUNISM, A PECULIAR AND SHORT-SIGHTED PHILOSOPHY

THE two-part article by Mohan Kanda manages to give a highly sanitised version of Communism in India. No single ideology has been more damaging to the spirit of India and Sanatana Dharma than the imperialist ideology of Communism and Marxism. Sita Ram Goel and Arun Shourie have explored them deeply in their essays and books.

Communist societies (Soviet Russia, China) reduced Marxism to a severe monotheism by being the only doctrine and the only Saviour. They could not help becoming totalitarian enemies of human freedom. Communism was an instrument of Soviet foreign policy, particularly with Stalin, in its drive towards world domination. It inevitably comes into conflict with positive nationalism drawing inspiration from its own cultural heritage and socio-political traditions.

Communist Party of India, a section of the Communist International, started in far-off Tashkent in October, 1920. The British initially imposed a ban on the Communist party and made Communist literature easily available to revolutionaries to wean them away from this 'terrorist' path. Paradoxically, many patriots became convinced Communists and swelled the ranks of the party after discharge from the prison. In the public eye, these patriots retained their stature for their services. Communists became patriots in a reflected glory.

The dissonance between Communism and positive nationalism in India was starkly evident during the Second World War. The Communist Party of India had initially opposed British imperialism and the



Muslim League. In 1941, Hitler invaded the Soviet Union. Simultaneously, the Congress launched the Quit India Movement in August 1942. The Communists in the Congress opposed the Quit India resolution because now the 'imperialist war' became a 'people's war' simply because an enemy of Britain had invaded the Soviet Union. An enemy (British) of an enemy (Germany) invading a friend (Soviet Union) became a friend. British imperialism became British bureaucracy. The Communists had a significant contribution towards the creation of Pakistan, perhaps next only to that of the Muslim League.

Its intellectuals have remained intensely inimical to the cultural traditions and heritage of India. Communism targets Sanatana Dharma as superstition, obscurantism, and priest craft and denounces the Dharmastras as repositories of

primitive prescriptions, Machiavellian morality, caste oppression, untouchability, degradation of women, and so on. It condemns all Indic philosophies as Brahminical conspiracies to suppress Lokayata or atheism. However, as the most important exercise in Independent India, Communist historians, gaining great influential power in the academic universities under a political patronage, have ridiculed every hero, period, episode, and precedent in which Hindus can take pride. In a peculiar and short-sighted philosophy of associating today's Muslims with Islamic rulers of the past, they managed to completely whitewash the brutality of the Islamic invaders. This gross falsification of history is an injustice to all Indians, including Muslims.

In the intellectual sphere, Communism uses effectively a difficult language of doubles-

peak; it constantly discovers conspiracies against the working class and the minorities preventing harmony by pitching one against the other; and are adept at 'swearology.' Mahatma Gandhi (bourgeois scoundrel), Rabindranath (mageer dalal or pimp), Patel and Nehru (fascist duo) had some colourful names.

Unfortunately, India's political language describes 'Leftist', 'Rightist', 'Centrist', and 'Right or Left of Centre' positions without telling us what 'Centre' means. Certain groups appropriated one label- 'Leftist' for themselves and reserved 'Rightist' for opponents without permission or prior consultation. The political language of Communists has been rich in introducing new terms. The heavy influence of this philosophy in the dominant ruling party after independence, the academia, and the media made sure that we internalised many of these toxic discourses.

The peculiar political language evolved mainly by the Communists have not only misunderstood the Indian traditions but have gone a step further in maligning the Hindu traditions and culture.

Hindu society becomes a 'crowd of caste-ridden, cow-worshipping and practitioners of obnoxious obscurantism'. The Leftists-Communists-Marxist-Socialist rainbow spectrum laud themselves as progressive, revolutionary, socialist, secularist, and democratic. Simultaneous is the denunciation of 'Rightists' or any opponent as reactionary, revivalist, capitalist, and fascist. The intellectual elite are extremely good at using difficult to counter Communist catchphrases: bourgeois and proletarian; class struggle and class collaboration; revolution and counter-revolution; bourgeois nationalism and proletarian internationalism; fascist forces and the democratic front, and so on.

Nationalists led by Gandhi could not understand the nature and purpose of this obscure language. The Communists considered Gandhi as their greatest enemy because he could wean away the masses effectively, something which they hoped to do with their Indian leaders. Though the intellectuals and the academia soak themselves in a rich Communist language, it is fortunate that Indian population has thought it fit to reject them politically. Historically, Russia, China, and Bengal show clearly how Communism and Socialism can only cause physical and intellectual violence but not progress.

Dr Pingali Gopal, Warangal

Managing in difficult times

JYOTHI GOSALA

TOUGH times separate great leaders from the rest. What do leaders do to manage effectively in difficult times? It's as much about what they do to prepare as it is about how they react. Some important tools for you and the team that keeps you going are staying focused, inspired, and effective during times of change or crisis. By building self-awareness, one achieves clarity and focus, by innovating despite volatility and developing a committed team that is resilient in the face of change. Innovative strategies to cut costs, and reframe challenges as opportunities for teams are crucial too.

Changes at work can be emotionally intense. It often leads to stress and anxiety. At the organisational level, many changes are incorporated. These changes are very intense, giving rise to fear, anxiety, frustration. Emotions play a key role in understanding the situation or people responsible for a particular emotional experience. Being self-aware, one can make a self evaluation of their own behaviour. Mindfulness will help in understanding our feelings.

By being positive, one can adhere to changes which could be difficult at the start but opens up new vistas. Adapting to change is a big advantage for a leader especially at the psychological level which enhances and builds energy way up. So, indeed changes are good to be accepted.

Successfully implementing change requires effort and having support from across various sources can make a big difference with measurable results. The first



Skills

- ❖ Importance of communications
- ❖ Talent management
- ❖ Leading during change
- ❖ Self-awareness in difficult times
- ❖ Looking through employees' eyes
- ❖ Revisiting past performance
- ❖ Eliminating multi-tasking
- ❖ Adopting a growth mindset
- ❖ Eliminating crisis
- ❖ Staging for innovation

step for a successful transformation is effective communication for change. From timing to messaging, communicating with purpose is essential. Some steps of creating a change communication plan designed to increase stakeholder buy-in and promote successful transformation are important. Messaging that resonates with stakeholders is key

Strategies to develop a committed team

- ◆ Balanced scorecard
- ◆ Mapping strategy
- ◆ Group team-ups
- ◆ Addressing cost reductions
- ◆ Becoming a change agent
- ◆ Turning adversity into opportunity
- ◆ Messaging
- ◆ Communication during change
- ◆ Pathway for leaders

be it writing a communication plan, identifying and knowing stakeholders, and timing are a critical component.

Change communications is a crucial strategy. The way communication is conducted before a crisis speaks volumes of the contingency plans of an organisation. Before and after a crisis a

plan has to be devised to meet the demands of the audiences. Business transformation takes place because of effective communication flows and this brings about a change in the perceptions of the people. Change management addresses the unique demands that crop up and the way the key constituents incorporate the new modules is the essence of change.

Leadership communication is never more important than during times of change. Coming up with a communication strategy that helps make a change initiative successful regardless of whether they are the ones instigating the change or not. One has to address the who, why, when, how, and what of change. These elements together encapsulated makes leadership unique and strong with a connect across all platforms.

Whether an organisation or a professional, one has to be prepared for change at various stages. With a strong acceptance of change, one is able to navigate tough pathways and challenges. Evading change invites many problems. By accepting with least resistance, one can build greater momentum. This will make the way ahead more positive. Difficult paths are not permanent, it makes one stronger with a crystallized direction.

Let's accept change with all positivity. Difficulties, be it situations or experiences, don't last. It's a way of dealing more practically and intelligently by evading a crisis. By toning and bracing against all odds, lets redefine the pathway by accepting change. By being an agent of change, one has a better direction of the way ahead.

Pro-planet initiatives can help build a healthy future

PARAG KULKARNI

THE pandemic has given us a unique opportunity to pause, reflect and rethink how to balance our relationship with nature to ensure a harmonious relationship. The learnings are many; one of the key takeaways was the way nature has responded to the lockdown through cleaner skies, fresh air to breathe, and the often-unexpected return of wildlife in some parts of the world. Situations like these give us a moment to recognise the impact of our actions on mother Earth.

Isn't it time we all came together as responsible citizens to rejuvenate and restore her? Aptly, today, World Environment Day celebrated on June 5 is focused on just that -- restoring ecosystems. There are many ways to go about restoring our ecosystems including adopting green technologies, making sustainable consumption choices, incorporating conservation efforts, and developing environmental awareness. Individuals, communities, governments, and companies can contribute in their own ways to the protection of environment by taking effective measures to help reduce their carbon footprints.

Here are some possible ways in which we all can contribute:

Adopt efficient processes: Many processes businesses have in place today use more energy or power than necessary and protecting the environment can often be as simple as replacing these processes and machinery for more efficient options. Creating business models that integrate sustainable development goals



into the internal processes will help conserve energy and assist in identifying where waste can be reduced.

Need for greener products: Sustainability and environmental issues are emerging as important considerations when making strategic business, management, manufacturing, and product development decisions. There is a critical need for companies to produce more efficient products that contribute to a green economy. Companies can redesign products and adapt new technologies to aid greener consumption. In fact, going "green" should be a first priority as new products are conceived, developed and consumed.

Reducing carbon footprint: Creating and using products that are energy efficient will reduce our carbon footprint and working toward the goal of zero waste will help protect the environment and sustain our natural resources for current and future generations. Corporations can play a role in creating a culture of green consciousness by encouraging and educating employees to make positive changes or be involved in

an eco-friendly behaviour and developing habits that will save or conserve energy.

Focus on re-cycling and eliminate single-use plastics: Every year, thousands of seabirds, turtles, seals and other marine mammals are killed after ingesting plastic or getting tangled up in it. You can cut down on plastic waste by using reusable bags, eliminating single-use water bottles, and avoiding products made from or packaged in plastic whenever possible.

The reality is that global warming is underway and along with climate change, we are experiencing changes in weather patterns and our lifestyle. Developing environmentally friendly products and practices, while engaging in lifestyles that are more ecologically responsible is undoubtedly the vision by which we should live our lives and contribute in restoring our ecosystems. The power to safeguard our environment lies with us and we need to take collective action to ensure the future of our planet for generations to come.

(The author is Parag Kulkarni, Managing Director, A.O. Smith India.)

Fixing the skilling crisis is need of the hour



PROF. (DR.) RANA SINGH

ANOTHER Covid surge and constantly ongoing lockdown in various parts of the country, especially big cities further amplifies the problems in job opportunities and keeping up with the current jobs. The pandemic has triggered a recession that is the deepest since World War II, which resulted in a widespread unemployment crisis, which will last for a

long time and has dented most businesses as well. Many businesses and employers are facing critical challenges in the country's worst economic crisis.

With remote working, developing, improving or reskilling is the need of the hour, for survival one will have to develop new skills. To survive, in this ongoing pandemic acquisition of technical approach is required to electrify smooth functioning of work, and it has swayed everyone to re-skill for new and efficient working methods. The current situation has forced employers to look for additional skilling in candidates, which our educational system is not able to provide.

Re-skilling or fixing skilling is the answer to decrease unemployment and upward mobility.

Change in working methods: Work from home (WFH), is the biggest player in changing the scenario of the working model before and after COVID. Work from home has increased productivity; technology and digitalisa-

tion is the biggest contributor in this. To cut back the gap between the skills and the organisation's needs, individuals and companies are working towards reshaping and skilling for adopting new technologies. To ensure engagement, tracking productivity, mentoring, and creating opportunities, the organization will need to adopt this trend to remain competitive.

Multi-tasking: The pandemic is pushing people towards multi-tasking where leaders will have to focus on reskilling or re-shaping the skills of existing employees to match the requirement and to successfully implement a new model and reduce the layoff. For this, companies will be required to carry off a knowledge-sharing culture and employees will have to have various hats. The skill development program will be prepared according to the need of different employees; it can't be one size fit all.

New opportunities need new skills: With the change of tech-



nology and working methods, many new opportunities are generated which we could not think or imagine a couple of years back. To get through a new transformation, the workforce and individuals also need to constantly up-

grade, and reskill to stay in and beat the competition. New opportunities will also require a new set of skills such as IoT, 3D printing, AI etc.. The current time demands a change in mindset of students as well as in their par-

ents. Only getting a job and financial stability should not be the motive. There is a need for innovation for that innovative mind, and hunger for innovation is needed.

Fixing and upgrading skilling

is a continuous programme: It has been found that those companies which always launch and upgrade their reskilling program are also ones who can smoothly adopt the change and address the skill / technological gaps to stay relevant and competitive in the business.

The catch here is preparing and implementing a reskilling program timely. The organisations, which always prepare for the potential changes are likely to be successful. There is a need for continuous long term skill based programs which can help in polishing their workforce according to their talent.

Desperate time demands a desperate solution, and it is an urgent requirement for everyone to adopt new skills to deal with the change of time and to leverage the opportunities. The Covid working era can be the blueprint for the change in the working model.

(The author is Vice-Chancellor, Sanskriti University)

HANUMAN: EMBODIMENT OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS

VANAM JWALA
NARASIMHA RAO

HANUMAN, Hanumanth or Anjaneya, a mighty minister of monkeys' king Sugriva appears in Ramayana for the first time in Kishkindha Kanda- the fourth part of Ramayana. He is the leading character and hero in Sundara kanda. Lord Rama with his younger brother Lakshmana in search of his wife who was abducted by monsters' king Ravana enters the surroundings of Rushyamook mountain. There, in the nearby precincts of Kishkindha, King Sugriva was living in exile. Being afraid of his elder brother Vali, Sugriva thought that, perhaps, they came there at the instance of Vali to kill him.

Hanuman having understood the anxiety of Sugriva pacifies him with his typical communication dialogue, "if a king of your stature and calibre loses his reason, logic, wisdom, intellect and integrity then how can he save his people? Do not form opinions merely on the face value". The immediate reaction of Sugriva was to deploy Hanuman as his emissary to elicit information about Rama and Lakshmana.

Hanuman on reaching Rama, in his own typical style conversed with the brothers. "My lords! Who you are? Why did you come here? By looks you seem to be king sages or gods". His communication to Rama and Laksh-

mana was so interesting that they were spell bound all the time without interrupting. Hanuman, revealed his name and who he was and also mentioned about his king Sugriva including how Vali his elder brother driven away Sugriva from the kingdom.

Rama was pleased and told Lakshmana, "Hanuman appears to be an expert and exponent of grammar. Despite continuous communication there is no single aberration in his words. He did not utter even one single out of context word. Anyone who listens to him will automatically become his admirer. He is a true, devout and committed emissary".

On reaching Sugriva, introducing Rama to Sugriva, Hanuman used all his communication skills and put all information about Rama in right perspective. "He is personification of truth, bravery, courage, divinity and what not. Since his wife was abducted by Ravana, in search of her, soliciting your friendship he came here with his brother. You better go to him and worship him". Ultimately bond of friendship between Rama and Sugriva developed.

After Sugriva's elder brother King Vali was killed by Rama during a duel between the brothers, Vali's wife Tara fell into deep sorrow and was crying incessantly. Hanuman consoling her said, "Past is past. What you are supposed to do now is not crying but

plan for the future. Your son Angad who is still a boy needs to be taken care of and it's your responsibility totally". Later Lord Rama performed coronation ceremony of Sugriva making him as Monkey King of Kishkindha.

When Hanuman felt that Sugriva forgotten the responsibility of searching Sita, decided to caution him. Accordingly, he told Sugriva "Oh! King of Monkeys! You acquired prosperity, wealth and the kingdom. Your friend's work is yet to be accomplished. It's better that you immediately initiate efforts to do the work entrusted to you by your friend. You send monkeys to all directions to search for Sita. It's already delayed. Better you fulfil your promise".

On hearing Hanuman Sugriva jumped into action and sent monkey warriors to all directions. Towards southern side Hanuman with his team was asked to go. Rama took out his golden ring and passed on to Hanuman to show it to Sita as and when he would be able to see her. Hanuman shouldered the responsibility. Hanuman along with his monkey colleagues searched in nook and corners for Sita but in vain. At one stage Vali's son Angad, being desperate by not finding Sita anywhere decided to stay back with his supporters somewhere away from his uncle's kingdom Kishkindha apparently with an objective of revolting against Sugriva. Hanu-



man smelling this and the intentions of Angad to establish a separate monkey kingdom warned Angad in unequivocal terms explicitly cautioning of the consequences. One of the wonderful communications in Ramayana is perhaps this only.

On the advice of Sampathi, monkeys reached the Ocean side to cross it and go to Lanka. Hanuman plunges into action and burgeons his body multiple times as a show of strength to cross the Ocean. Hanuman moved towards the mountain Mahindraddri on

his way to Lanka in search of Sita. Here the communication of Hanuman to his fellow monkey heroes exhibits his confidence in him and entuses others.

On reaching Lanka, Hanuman plans to enter in to the city but is obstructed by Lankhini the chief sentry who questions his credentials. Unperturbed, Hanuman says to her that, he came to see the beautiful Lanka which is shining with its army, ramparts and domes as well as houses. When she did not accept, he outwits her with a big hit forcing her

to request him to save her. Later he is allowed to go in and wander as he liked to search Sita.

Hanuman searches in the whole of Lanka for Sita and sees her in Ashoka Garden. Hanuman decided to communicate to Sita all the details of Rama so that she would recognise and believe him. He moved on to the top of the branch of the tree and started speaking loudly so that Sita would be able to hear and receive the communication well.

Hanuman by starting with the name of Dasarath, attracts the attention of Sita. Having succeeded he proceeds further. Then Hanuman mentions about Dasharath's elder son Rama, his qualities, his valour, his omniscience, omnipotence, omnivorous characteristics etc. Having heard her husband's name, she becomes more interested. Then Hanuman starts mentioning from Rama's entering into forest till Sugriva entrusting the work of Sita's search. He concluded by saying that, "I am fortunate that I being one among those who are searching Sita could find her here".

After gaining confidence that Sita is steadily believing him, Hanuman gets down from the tree branch and conversed with her to confirm that she was Sita. This provokes Hanuman to reveal to Sita the purpose of his coming there. Here again Hanuman used all his communication skills by praising Rama and his

qualities. He said that Rama with such great qualities sent him as his emissary to find out where Sita was. In a bid to resolve doubt in her mind Sita questions Hanuman to explain in detail as to how he became a friend of Rama and also describe the body features of Rama and Lakshmana. This in fact was a typical question Sita put to Hanuman and his reply was again a great example of his communication skill.

On taking leave from Sita, Hanuman wanted to have a look at the whole of Lanka for which he decides to wage a war against Ravana's supporters. He does so and finally voluntarily surrenders in a bid to reach Ravana. Hanuman spoke few words, typical of his communication skills, to Ravana.

"At the behest of King Sugriva, I am here to see you and your Lanka. I saw Sita in your Lanka. (Hanuman did not tell Ravana that he abducted Sita, but categorically mentioned that she is illegally in his custody, which again is a communication skill). You, who literally studied all pious literature, should not indulge in troubling women like this. This will lead to annihilation of your kith and kin and entire kingdom. none can face Rama in the war. Handover Sita to Rama". On returning to Kishkindha the way he revealed the presence of Sita in Lanka to Rama is again an embodiment of communication skills.



SP Accure launches black fungus drug

HANS BUSINESS
HYDERABAD

CITY-BASED SP Accure Labs Pvt Ltd recently launched alternative drug Amphotericin-B-Emulsion for the effective treatment of mucormycosis, the fungal infection better known as black fungus, whose growing incidence is the latest health worry for the nation grappling with the second wave of Covid-19. This new drug will be available in the market in a week at Rs 5,400 per injection. “Pandemic is causing huge damage to human life and immense pressure on medical health facilities. We are witnessing the second wave, which is more virulent, destructive, and stressful. This is leading to many other life-threatening complications. One of them is mucormycosis,” the company said. Medihauxe pharma from Hyderabad has been exclusively authorised to distribute this newly-launched remedy in the market comprising hospitals and pa-

Pandemic is causing huge damage to human life and immense pressure on medical health facilities. We are witnessing the second wave, which is more virulent, destructive, and stressful. This is leading to many other life-threatening complications. One of them is mucormycosis

tients in Telangana. The company will strictly follow all the guidelines, discipline, and regulations laid down by the DMHS while performing their assigned service profile. P Girish Bhat, Managing Director, Medihauxe, said: “Currently, we have 10,000 vials of the medicine in stock, which is sufficient to treat around 1,000 patients.” Medihauxe is managed by Girish Bhat and financed by Manohar Bhat, who are legends in the field of pharma distribution service. They have been serving the nation for the past three decades now.

VACCINATION KEY FOR GDP TO BOUNCE BACK FASTER

Agriculture will beat Covid blues, perform well this fiscal too, says Assocham Secretary-General

ARCHANA RAO

Covid 2nd wave is taking heavy toll on the rural economy, how do you think agri sector will fare in this quarter and also this financial year?

When you broadly compare last wave and this wave- Last year, at the stroke of hammer everything was shut down. Yet there was enough procurement, there was sowing that took place. Therefore, enough business came up. Government took lot of steps to ensure rural economy continues. The rural economy is robust with financing schemes, inputs from central government, from fiscal and monetary side and also because of the avid sense of the agriculture. This time, the rural areas are hit but logistic chains have not stopped, supply chains have not broken, processed food, food industry, everything is in order. So, you may find a small dip during the first quarter, possibly because of the pandemic that has hit the rural areas. I think rural economy will catch up as we have enough time left in this fiscal year. Kharif and Rabi crop will be much more than what you had in the past. What will be more important is not just the cereals but horticulture, flowers and non-farm prospects that one has to look at.

Should the central government come out with a relief package for agriculture, fisheries and other related sectors?

Not just fisheries (farming), I think we can add dairy, poultry, fishers as well, when we talk about non-agri items. There should be enough and more schemes given to ensure that we are tuned to health standards, quality standards and investment in technologies are done in these areas so that output yield and productivity improves. This is the time to provide that so you are able to increase the

India's economic growth, in the current Financial Year 2021-22, may suffer a setback due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic but industry experts are optimistic that sectors such as agriculture will beat Covid blues and perform well in the Kharif and Rabi season. **Deepak Sood**, Secretary-General, The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham, India), spoke to **Bizz Buzz** on the challenges faced by the rural segment and unorganised sector for the current financial year



ones who need support. As the world opens up, we will have to get our industries opened and as that happens, you will see that we will catch up with our growth numbers.

Which sectors will need the government support?

The smaller ones would require help. Restaurants, traders, shopkeepers, small business keepers, consultants, independent people, professionals who were doing small jobs, serving the industries, these were ones who are badly affected. This is where I think packages should be targeted. There is a lot of liquidity, monetary support that RBI has given. Money isn't reaching to the right people because some don't have good financial tract record. But that doesn't mean you don't help them. You have to find a way to help them.

How long will it take for the Indian economy to come out of Covid crisis?

I think when 60-70 per cent of Indians get vaccinated, we will come out of the Covid crisis.

Despite being the pharmacy capital of the world, India suffered the shortage of medical oxygen and life-saving medicines. In this context, do you think India should increase its R&D spend on pharmaceutical sector?

The government has already announced a Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers to scale up domestic manufacturing. However, there is always a scope to scale up the R and D in India especially in the wake of health emergencies. We need to scale up expenditure on R&D (Research & Development) at all levels - in government labs, private sector enterprises and universities.

How Covid reshaping medicine, healthcare

Human resilience, creativity and solidarity have kept us afloat till date, and will carry us into a future where medicine and care shall assume transcendent availability



The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has ushered in a time of unpredictability and has simultaneously catalysed previously unimaginable responses of human agency and innovation. It has fundamentally altered the ways in which we envision society, work and collective action at large and the same stands true for paradigms of care, healing and public health. The ongoing battle with coronavirus has boosted investment in healthcare on a scale unwitnessed before. The new challenges it has created have led to buoyant and resilient efforts by all nations to combat the crisis and bolster health system capacities, risk management and medical technology and innovation. If the Co-Covid struggle is to be read as a marker, it certainly signals towards a future of enhanced security and better collective health. As Daniel Kraft notes in a popular Ted Talk, “We don't really practice health care. We practice sick care.” In the pre-Covid era, public healthcare regimes were dedicated to the treatment of the sick and those encountering medical emergencies. The coronavirus predicament has shown us the unsustainability of such an approach as prevention and self-protection and care became indispensable in the face of an uncontrollable viral spread. This crisis in general has led to a trans-



This crisis in general has led to a transformation in the way health has been imagined, as we have moved from a reactive approach that focussed on specific individuals to an aggregated idea of how we can sustain communal well-being

formation in the way health has been imagined, as we have moved from a reactive approach that focussed on specific individuals to an aggregated idea of how we can sustain communal well-being. This has led to several nations engaging in developing technologies, mechanisms and cures which are supposed to be instrumental in the long run. The advancement in medical technology has been in one word, extraordinary. In December 2020, researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health had created a Covid-19 mortality risk calculator to gauge the potential of severe outcomes for individuals and inform vaccine rollouts. Because of the necessity of maintaining physical distancing, medical examinations were re-oriented to work through virtual inspections and remote patient monitoring. Vital signs monitors such as oximeters and portable diagnostic kits for infection became popular at a massive scale. Researchers at KU Leuven in Belgium, led by Professor Rob Ameloot, developed a new 3D printing

technique that extends the possibilities of lateral flow testing, crucial in Covid-19 tests and a range of other medical examinations. Medical technology innovators came up with new devices and self-monitoring patterns— some, which simply involved our smartphones and watches - to keep the public afloat, as we traversed a daunting and unpredictable scenario. The “health race” has been as real as holistic as

there has not simply been nation-specific innovation but also collaboration in unprecedented ways. In the US, for instance, the government launched Operation Warp Speed, a project which aimed at developing an effective vaccine and manufacturing sufficient doses for all three hundred million Americans; it brought together several agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Defence. India became the largest manufacturer of Covid-19 vaccines and embarked on the largest immunisation drive in human history. Vietnam, through a mix of aggressive contact tracing, quick strategic testing, a robust communication campaign and development of testing kits, controlled the spread and mortality in the first wave itself. In as early as July 2020, as per the World Health Organisation, more than 150 countries were engaged in forging a Covid-19 vaccine global access facility to

guarantee rapid, fair and equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines for every country in the world. At a virtual summit in May 2020 hosted by the European Union, world leaders, organisations, and banks pledged \$8 billion for vaccine research. Public awareness and proactivity have skyrocketed as well, evidenced by an abundance of crowdsourced resources and awareness campaigns. Technology has enabled a knitting together of our communities as care and solidarity has assumed digital avatars. Volunteering and community support have paved the way for critical resource management, dealing with specific acute cases swiftly and spreading awareness across social, economic and cultural divides. To sum up, it can safely be said that our struggles in the co-Covid reality have enabled us to crucially re-pivot our approach towards medicine and health. With technological innovation, volunteer effort, international collaborations and national commitments to expanding the ambit of healthcare and ensuring accessibility to all, this dire time has in fact, heralded the arrival of a better, healthier world where health and well-being shall be more democratised and effective than ever. Human resilience, creativity and solidarity have kept us afloat till date, and will carry us into a future where medicine and care shall assume transcendent availability. The Covid age is a reminder of the durability and buoyancy of human endeavour and the future of medicine shall validate the same. (The author is Founder, Upsurge Global, and Senior Advisor, Telangana State Innovation Council)

QUIZ NO. 175

HANS BIZ QUIZ

‘World Environment Day’

1. Each year, a country or Nation hosts the World Environment Day to highlight, focus, address, and support the host country's environmental challenges. Environment Day 2019 and 2021 were hosted by China and Pakistan, respectively. When did India host?

- a) 2018
- b) 1999, 2011 and 2018
- c) 2011 and 2018
- d) 1999 and 2018

2. The theme for World Environment Day 2021 is “Ecosystem Restoration.” When World Environment Day was first celebrated?

- a) 1992
- b) 1986
- c) 1974
- d) 1968

3. One among the following was credited with discovering the greenhouse effect. Hence, is colloquially known as the father of climate change?

- a) Jean Baptiste Joseph Fourier
- b) Enrico Fermi
- c) Leonhard Euler
- d) Georg Friedrich Bernhard Riemann

4. One in eight deaths in India is attributable to air pollution, contributing to more disease burden than tobacco use. Which of the below is correct?

- a) 8 million premature deaths from air pollution exposure
- b) Breathing the air in most Indian cities is like smoking 40 cigarettes a day
- c) Exposure to outdoor Particulate Matter is the fifth leading risk factor for death worldwide
- d) All of the above

5. For someone living in a polluted city like New Delhi, 1.3 grams of Particulate Matter (hazardous particles and liquid droplets found in the air) are deposited in their lungs each day. Which Indian States recorded the most deaths attributable to air pollution?

- a) Delhi, Punjab
- b) Punjab, Haryana
- c) Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh
- d) Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra

6. Annually, there were seven lakh premature deaths due to outdoor particulate matter and five lakh premature deaths attributable to household air pollution in India. Which of the



below emitting pollutants are attributable to crop residue burning and fire in agricultural fields?

- a) Suspended particulate matter (SPM)
- b) Carbon monoxide (CO)
- c) Volatile organic compounds (VOC)
- d) All of the above

7. As per the international standards, highly polluted cities are those having more than 100 micrograms per cubic meter of air pollution dust (PM). What levels are considered moderate pollution?

- a) 100 to 140 micrograms per cubic meter of particulate matter
- b) 60 to 120 micrograms per cubic meter of particulate matter
- c) 35 to 100 micrograms per cubic meter of particulate matter
- d) 0 to 60 micrograms per cubic meter of particulate matter

8. 77 per cent of India's population is exposed to toxic outdoor air pollution levels. Which sector is the largest emitter of greenhouse gases in India?

- a) Agricultural
- b) Power generation
- c) Mining and quarrying
- d) Transport

9. Which radioactive gas originates from the rocks and soil under the house and accumulates inside the house to increase the risk of lung cancer?

- a) Methane
- b) Radon
- c) Formaldehyde
- d) Fluorine

10. Toxic indoor air pollution, such as cooking smoke and tobacco, has been estimated to be up to 60 per cent higher than outdoor pollution. What effect of air pollution is caused when sulfur dioxide gets high into the atmosphere?

- a) Acid rain
- b) Ball lightning
- c) Cloudburst
- d) Dense fog

The Hans Biz Quiz has been compiled by **Sunil Dhavala**, CEO, The Third Umpire Media. He had held senior management roles at Bertelsmann, NGC, Fox Broadcasting, Star TV and others. He is an alumnus of Indian Institute of Foreign Trade

KEY

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T20 WC set to be moved out of India, ICC intimated internally

NEW DELHI

THE marquee T20 World Cup in October-November is set to be shifted to the UAE and Oman with the BCCI having internally intimated the ICC to go ahead with its preparation due to a tricky COVID-19 situation in India.

While the UAE was always the first back-up option, Oman's capital Muscat has been added as the fourth venue, apart from Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah, for the tournament that will start in the last week of October.

"Yes, the BCCI, during the ICC board meeting, has formally asked for a four-week window to take a final call but, internally, they have said that they would like to keep the hosting rights and wouldn't mind the tournament being held in UAE and Oman," a senior board official, privy to ICC board developments, told PTI on the condition of anonymity.

He said that Muscat has been zeroed in specifically for the preliminary rounds of the 16-team competition, which will also allow the three UAE grounds to get sufficient time to freshen up after 31 IPL games.

"If IPL finishes by October 10, then the UAE leg of World T20 can start off in November which would give three weeks' time to the pitches to be spruced up for the global event. In the meanwhile, the first week can be held in Oman," he said.

A majority of the ICC board members believe that India is trying to bide time as they take stock of the situation at a time when it is very difficult to predict how things pan out in October-November.

"If you think about it practically, India is now reporting around 1,20,000 plus cases which is close to one third of what was being reported at the end of April and start of this month.

"But sitting on June 28, if you say "yes" to holding the World T20 in India, how can you predict the health situation in October if there is a third wave," the seasoned official asked.

The second question is if the BCCI is wary of resuming the eight-team IPL in September in India, how can

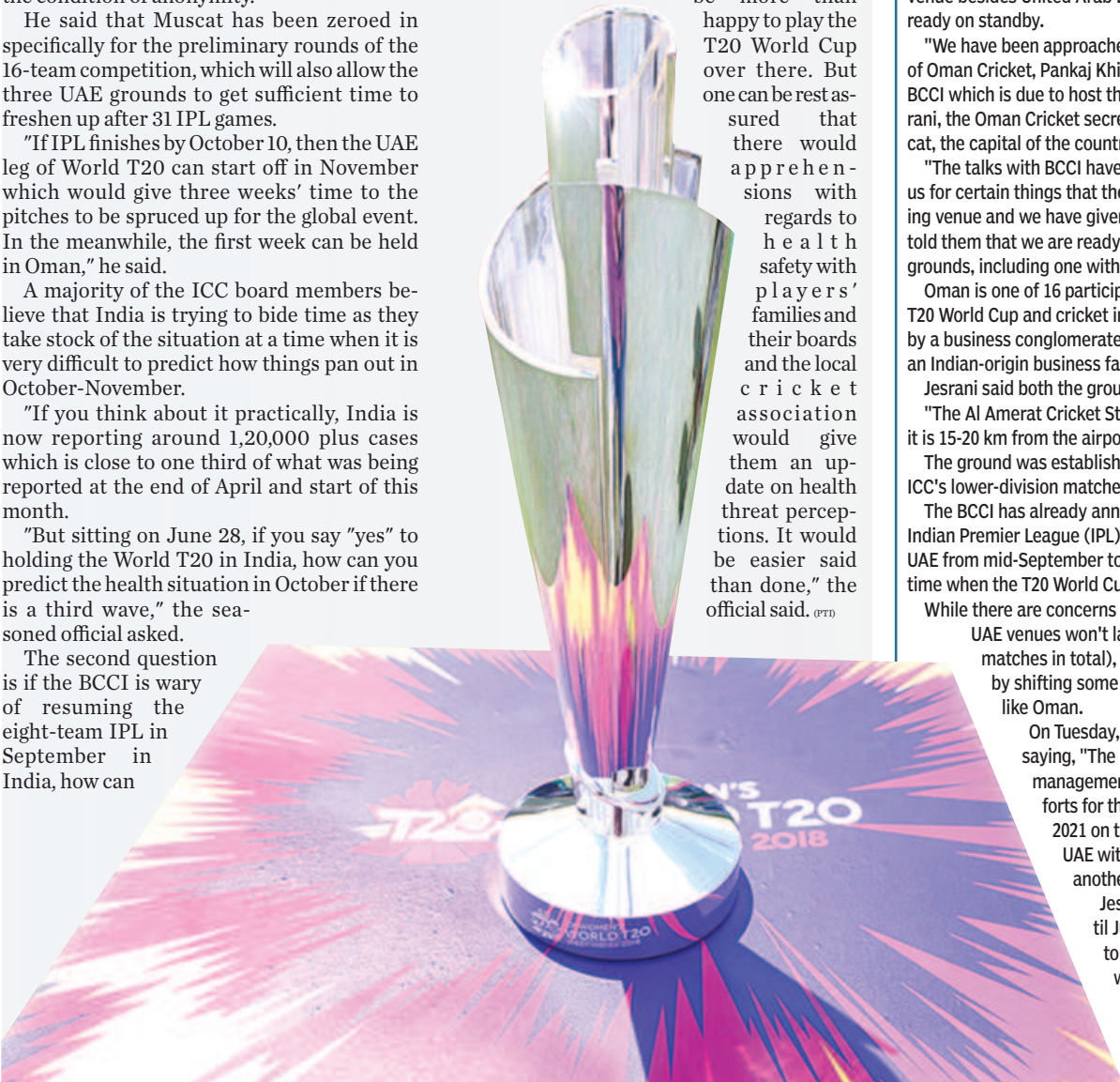
it hold a 16-team event in the country within a month's time.

"Look, everyone including BCCI brass knows that monsoon is not a good enough reason and it is COVID-19, with almost 2500 crore revenue riding on the tournament.

"In a 16-team event, if there is one team that gets affected in bubble with multiple cases, it won't be like IPL. For weaker national teams, you won't get ready replacements outside 14 or 15 men. There are teething issues," an official of an associate nation, which is a part of the tournament, said.

Another "elephant in the room" is how many overseas players would like to risk coming to India for the tournament if the situation doesn't improve drastically.

"They would certainly come and play the IPL in the UAE and would be more than happy to play the T20 World Cup over there. But one can be reassured that there would be apprehensions with regards to health safety with players' families and their boards and the local cricket association would give them an update on health threat perceptions. It would be easier said than done," the official said. (PTI)



Oman Cricket in talks with BCCI after ICC approaches for T20 WC

NEW DELHI

INTERNATIONAL Cricket Council (ICC) and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) are in talks with Oman Cricket over hosting of some of the T20 World Cup matches later this year in the gulf nation, a top Oman Cricket official has confirmed.

The ICC had, earlier this week, given BCCI a month's time to show its readiness to host the tournament in October-November. With India's chances to host it unlikely due to an expected third wave of Covid-19 pandemic, and things not improving drastically over the last few days, the world body has started to look at a venue besides United Arab Emirates (UAE) which is already on standby.

"We have been approached by ICC and the chairman of Oman Cricket, Pankaj Khimji, is in talks with the BCCI which is due to host the tournament," Madhu Jesrani, the Oman Cricket secretary, told IANS from Muscat, the capital of the country.

"The talks with BCCI have just started. The ICC asked us for certain things that they are looking at in a hosting venue and we have given them the details. We have told them that we are ready. We have two turf pitch grounds, including one with floodlights," added Jesrani.

Oman is one of 16 participating nations at this year's T20 World Cup and cricket in the country is run entirely by a business conglomerate, Khimji Ramdas, which is an Indian-origin business family.

Jesrani said both the grounds are inside Muscat.

"The Al Amerat Cricket Stadium has floodlights and it is 15-20 km from the airport," he added.

The ground was established in 2012 and has hosted ICC's lower-division matches.

The BCCI has already announced that the remaining Indian Premier League (IPL) matches will be held in the UAE from mid-September to mid-October, which is the time when the T20 World Cup will start.

While there are concerns the pitches at the three UAE venues won't last two tournaments (76 matches in total), the burden would be eased by shifting some games to another country like Oman.

On Tuesday, the ICC issued a statement saying, "The ICC Board has requested management [to] focus its planning efforts for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 on the event being staged in the UAE with the possibility of including another venue in the Middle East."

Jesrani says they will wait until June 28 when ICC's deadline to BCCI expires. "We are waiting till June 28 when the ICC deadline ends and a final decision will be made," he said. (IANS)

IPL 2021's resumption suffers first casualty as Cummins pulls out

NEW DELHI

INDIAN Premier League (IPL) 2021 suffered a setback months before its resumption in UAE in September when franchises' worst fears regarding availability of foreign players started to come true with pullout of Australia pacer Pat Cummins from Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR).

Cummins has told KKR's veteran India player Dinesh Karthik that he won't be able to make it for the second leg of the tournament. KKR may also miss England captain Eoin Morgan, who leads the franchise.

"Pat Cummins has himself said that he will not come. But when it comes to Eoin Morgan, there are still three months to go. A lot can change from now till September. But if I am asked to lead, I will be ready for it," Karthik told Times of India in an interview.

There has been no statement from Cricket Australia yet on the availability of its players for the remainder of IPL 2021 whereas England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has already clarified that its players won't skip international matches which coincide IPL.

ECB director of cricket Ashley Giles had last

month said England have a packed schedule.

"We are going to have to give some of these guys a break at some point. But the intention of giving guys a break for, say, Bangladesh, wouldn't be for them to go and play cricket elsewhere. We have to manage our schedule now, so we get our guys arriving in the best shape possible for the T20 World

Cup and the Ashes," Giles had said.

IPL 2021's remaining matches will begin immediately after India's tour of England in mid-September and till mid-October when the T20 World Cup is scheduled to start.



'We remain convinced that ECB is institutionally racist, have not withdrawn our claims'

LONDON

FORMER English umpire John Holder has hit out at England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) over the latter's statement that he and his colleague Ismail Dawood have withdrawn their claim of institutional racism.

Holder accused the ECB of being "disingenuous" and "misleading" following their racial discrimination claim. The duo had announced their intention to sue the ECB in December after alleging that their careers as umpires had been affected by institutional racism at the cricket body.

"Our case against the ECB has been beaten on a legal technicality. I haven't withdrawn any of the claims I made," Holder was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. "The tone of the ECB's statement would give the uninvolved reader the impression that we have accepted their version of events and backed down. This is not the case at all. We remain convinced that the ECB is institutionally racist."

Holder, 76, stood in 16 Tests between 1988 and 2001. In a statement issued on Friday, the ECB said, "We do not agree with the accusation that the ECB is institutionally racist, but we do recognise that the stories and insight, shared by many within cricket in the last 12 months, reflect that as a sport we need to do more to ensure that everyone feels welcome.

"We are in the process of undertaking an inde-

pendent review of officiating and are committed to acting on its findings to ensure that the game is open and accessible. We have invited John and Ismail to share their experiences as part of that process."

The remarks by English cricket's apex body did not go down well with both the umpires. "Having read that statement, I knew I couldn't work with these people any more. There is no trust. They aren't looking to learn from my experiences; they are looking to silence me and give the impression that things have been resolved. That is misleading and disingenuous."

Dawood was also not impressed with the ECB's statement. Dawood, 44, played for Yorkshire, Glamorgan and Worcestershire. He officiated in men's domestic cricket and two women's one-day internationals. "We were offered token roles to work with Neil Snowball at the ECB which were an insult to us and the many others that have suffered at the hands of the ECB," Dawood told the cricket portal. Last week, former England fast bowlers Dean Headley and Devon Malcolm were appointed to a supplementary panel of ECB match referees.

This comes just three days after debutant England seamer Ollie Robinson issued an apology after tweets he posted in 2012 and 2013 emerged during the opening Test against New Zealand, which he acknowledged were "racist and sexist" in nature.

Last year, ex-Yorkshire spinner Azeem Rafiq also alleged "institutional racism" at the county, which have been carrying out an investigation into the claims. (PTI)

38 SL cricketers refuse to sign tour contract, England tour in doubt

COLOMBO

AFTER 38 Sri Lankan cricketers refused to sign the contracts for the upcoming tour of England, serious doubt has been cast over team's scheduled departure for England on June 9.

Sri Lanka are scheduled to play the first of the three T20Is against England June 23. The three-match ODI series will begin on June 29. Besides, they are to play two tour matches, against Kent and Sussex.

"Because of the problems with

the transparency of the ratings system devised by SLC [Sri Lanka Cricket], the players will not sign the [tour contract]," a statement signed by 38 cricketers said.

"The players have decided they will not sign the contracts until players who have performed well in past years are looked after fairly," it said.

The list of cricketers not willing to sign on the dotted line has gone up from the previous 24, before the three-match ODI series against Bangladesh last month, to 38. (IANS)

Lara's shots were unpredictable unlike Tendulkar's: Lee

SYDNEY

TERMING Brian Lara and Sachin Tendulkar as greatest batsmen he ever bowled to, Australia pace bowler Brett Lee has called the West Indian unpredictable with his stroke-play unlike the Indian whose shots' direction could be predicted. "My favourite Test batters from the time that I was playing would be Sachin Tendulkar and Brian Lara. Brian Lara was simply so flamboyant," Lee has said.

"You could bowl six balls to him in the exact same area, let us say at the top of the off-stump, if I aimed at that spot for six consecutive deliveries, someone like a Brian Lara would hit me down the ground, he could work me behind square, he could cut me behind by a point, he could drive through the covers, he could hit me straight down the ground to the offside. He is so unpredictable," said Lee of Lara in an interview to International Cricket Council (ICC).

The former Australia pace bowler, who picked 310 Test wickets and 380 ODI wickets said Tendulkar had great technique but he could guess the direction of his shots.

"You look at a guy like Sachin Tendulkar, if I bowl a full outside off stump, then I knew he could hit me through extra cover, or if I bowled straight through the off stump, he would cut me down the ground through mid-off. If I bowl on leg stump, he would hit me through the wicket, if I bowled short, he would either cut or pull me. So, both were technically great batsmen I have played against. With Sachin, you knew where the ball was going to go, but you had to stop the ball," added Lee.

"He had an amazing cricket technique, a great temperament, and a brilliant cricket brain." (IANS)

Djokovic in fourth round in Paris for 12th year in row

PARIS: Novak Djokovic has reached the fourth round of the French Open for a record 12th consecutive year. The No. 1-seeded Djokovic has not been pushed yet in any match — or any set, really — in Week 1 at Roland Garros. His latest victory was by a 6-1, 6-4, 6-1 score against 93rd-ranked Ricardas Berankis. Djokovic's streak of appearances in the round of 16 in Paris is now one longer than the previous professional era mark for men of 11. That was shared by Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer, who both got that far every year from 2005-15. Djokovic is seeking a second French Open championship and 19th Grand Slam title overall. Nadal and Federer share that record with 20. Against Berankis, Djokovic never faced a break point and compiled 30 winners to just 18 unforced errors. Djokovic has dropped a total of 23 games across three matches so far. He will meet 19-year-old Lorenzo Musetti of Italy for a spot in the quarterfinals. (AP)

'Qatar is past', India shift focus to Bangladesh match

DOHA: The fighting loss to Qatar done and dusted with, Indian footballers are now looking forward to their next match against Bangladesh in the 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup qualifiers. Playing with 10 men for a major part of the match, India went down 0-1 to Asian champions and FIFA World Cup hosts Qatar in their previous outing in the joint preliminary qualification round on Thursday. Out of reckoning for next round of World Cup qualifiers but still hoping to make the continental showcase in China in two years' time, mid-fielder said Brandon Fernandes said the upcoming fixture is extremely crucial for the Blue Tigers, who are going through one of their longest winless streaks of all time. "We are moving as a team and we need to back each other. We are aware that we have specific roles in the team. The next match is extremely crucial as we need to sustain the momentum gained in the first match. The first match is history," Fernandes was quoted as saying by All India Football Federation. India are above Bangladesh in rankings but defender Subhashish Bose acknowledged their opponents' quality, having chosen to ignore the FIFA peking order. (PTI)


Former sports journalist Banerjee dead

KOLKATA

FORMER city-based sports journalist Chandan Banerjee, 64, on Saturday died of heart attack, family sources said.

He was the son of former president of Calcutta Sports Journalists' Club Bipul Banerjee. He primarily covered table tennis during late 80's and early 90's for various Kolkata based publications. (PTI)





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