



THE HANS INDIA

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WINDOWS



Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu releasing the book 'Netaji's India's Independence and British Archives' along with its Hindi version, at Upa-Rashtrapati Bhavan in new Delhi, on Wednesday

'Drishyam' director Nishikant Kamat's condition 'stable'

Hyderabad: Director Nishikant Kamat, best known for his films "Drishyam" and "Madaari", has been admitted to the intensive care unit of AIG Hospitals here for the treatment of chronic liver disease, the hospital said in a statement on Wednesday. His condition is "stable but critical", the medical facility said. Fifty-year-old Kamat was admitted on July 31 to the hospital in Gachibowli with "jaundice and abdominal distention". The director is also suffering from "secondary infections" and is currently under the supervision of senior doctors.

WOMENIA



SAIL THROUGH THE MONSOON

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NATION



REFUNDS MORE THAN TICKET SALES FOR RLYS

P3

CORONA



WON'T USE RUSSIAN VACCINE: SCIENTISTS

P7



FUND CRUNCH HITS DELHI

Govt not to give school uniforms to children this year

PURNA SINGH

New Delhi: The Delhi government, which has been facing severe financial crisis due to fall in revenues following lockdown, has currently put all non-essential schemes on hold. In this, the most important decision by the government is not to provide uniforms to school children this year. This will save the government of Rs 350 crore. In such a situation, when the schools open, the children will be able to come to school without school uniform.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said due to corona epidemic, the government's revenue has been greatly affected. "In such a situation, our first priority is to continue the education of children and give timely salary to all government employees including teachers, doctors. The decision has been taken not to provide students with

school uniforms this year." He informed that about 300 crore dresses used to be distributed in government schools every year. Apart from this, more than Rs 50 crore is spent on students belonging to the economically weaker section who study in private schools.

According to the Deputy Chief Minister, we are taking every step so that people can get salary on time. The Delhi government has more than 1100 schools. It has more than 18 lakh children studying. The government bears all the expenses from their books to dress. The government says that schools are not opening yet. But after opening, one who has an old dress can come wearing it. Those who do not have it will come wearing their home clothes, even then they will not be stopped.

Government may not brake subsidized schemes due to financial constraints.

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BENGALURU ON EDGE

THREE KILLED AS POLICE OPEN FIRE ON RIOTERS

- Violence over alleged Facebook post ■ Magistrate to hold inquiry
- Violence a well planned act ■ Will do asset recovery like UP: Govt

Bengaluru: Three people were killed after police opened fire to quell a mob that went on a rampage in a city locality irked over a social media post allegedly put out by a Congress legislator's relative, with the government terming the violence as a "well-planned act." "Three people have died (in police firing)," Bengaluru Police Commissioner Kamal Pant said.

Scores, including around 50 policemen, were injured in the violence that erupted on Tuesday night and continued till the wee hours of Wednesday, apparently triggered by the online post.

Pulakeshi Nagar MLA Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy's residence and a police station at D J Halli were among those targeted by the angry mob. The house of the MLA, who was not at home at the time, was allegedly set on fire. "The manner in which the riots were perpetrated shows that it was a well planned act and was intended to spread to other parts of the city," the police said. Continued on Page 5



Police and residents walk past charred remains of vehicles vandalised by a mob over a social media post, allegedly by a relative of a Congress MLA, in Bengaluru, on Wednesday

IDENTIFICATION OF MINORITY GROUPS

PIL in SC wants bigger role for States



Ex-Prez Pranab remains critical

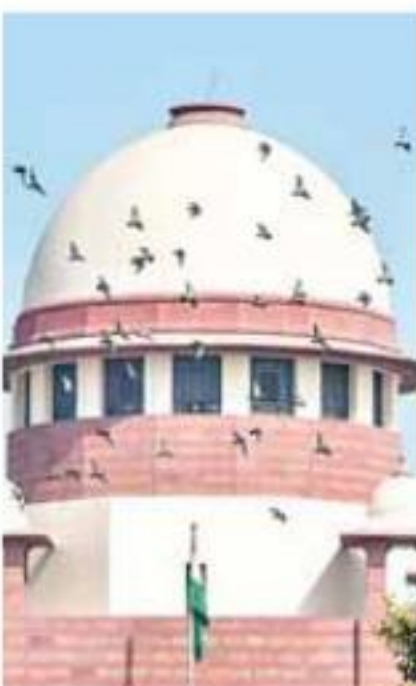
New Delhi: Former President Pranab Mukherjee continues to be critical at the Army Research and Referral Hospital in Delhi. He was admitted to the hospital a day before and underwent a major surgery for a large brain clot. He is also COVID-19 positive. A health bulletin said, "Pranab Mukherjee's health condition continues to remain critical. Presently he is haemodynamically stable and on ventilator." Mukherjee's daughter Sharmistha earlier said, "Last year August 8 was one of the happiest days for me as my dad received Bharat Ratna. Exactly a year later on August 10, he fell critically ill. May God do whatever is best for him. Give me strength to accept both joys and sorrows of life with equanimity. I sincerely thank all for their concerns."

New Delhi: A PIL has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking directions to the Centre to formulate guidelines for identifying minority groups at the state level to ensure they get the benefit of the schemes meant for them.

The PIL filed by BJP leader and advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay has also challenged the validity of Section 2(f) of the National Commission for Minority Education Institution Act 2004, for not only giving unbridled power to the Centre but also being manifestly arbitrary, irrational and offending.

The plea, filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey, said denial of benefits to the "real" minorities and arbitrary and unreasonable disbursements under schemes meant for them to the absolute majority, infringes upon the fundamental right under the Constitution.

"Direct and declare that followers of Judaism, Bahaism & Hinduism, who are minorities in Laddakh, Mizoram, Lakshdweep, Kashmir, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Punjab and Manipur, can establish & administer educational institutions of their choice in spirit of the TMA Pai Ruling," the plea said.



The apex court in TMA Pai Foundation case held that the state is well within its rights to introduce a regulatory regime in the "national interest" to provide minority educational institutions with well-qualified teachers in order for them to "achieve excellence in education."

Quoting Article 30 of the Constitution, the plea said that minorities whether based on religion or language shall have the right to establish-administer educational institutions of their choice. "Rational basis of declaring certain religions as minority by Central government as they have less population in the States is contravened when benefits of schemes for minority are acquired by those religious minorities in states where they are in majority and those religious communities who are actually minorities are not been given equal status," the plea said.

The petition said that denial of minority rights to actual religious and linguistic minorities is a violation of right of minority enshrined under Articles 14 (equality before the law) and 21 (No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law).

Modi to launch new 'transparent taxation' platform

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch a new tax scheme - "Transparent Taxation - Honoring the Honest" on Thursday to benefit the honest taxpayers. Modi will launch this scheme through video conferencing. The event will be attended by a number of trade associates, Chambers of Commerce, Chartered Accountants Association and large taxpayers.

Apart from these, the officials of the Income Tax Department, Finance and Corporate Affairs will be present. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Anurag Singh Thakur will also be present, it said.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has carried out several major tax reforms in direct taxes in the recent years, the statement pointed out.

Last year, corporate tax rates were reduced from 30 per cent to 22 per cent, and for new manufacturing units, the rates were reduced to 15 per cent, it said.



Bus fire kills 5 in Karnataka

Chitradurga: Five people were burnt alive and over 30 passengers were injured when a moving bus caught fire on National Highway-4 at Kasturi Rangappanahalli Gate in Hiriyur taluk of Chitradurga district in Karnataka on Wednesday morning.

The mishap occurred when a private bus was plying from Vijayapura to Bengaluru. Preliminary reports said that bus was carrying over 35 passengers. The injured were sent to government hospitals in Hiriyur and Chitradurga.

The dead were identified as Sheela (33), Spar-

sha (8), Samrudha (5), Kavitha (29) and Nischitha (3).

A survivor said that as the fire started near the engine, the driver of the bus along with the cleaner stopped the bus and jumped out. "As I saw the fire engulfing the bus, I jumped out of the bus by breaking the glass and survived. I was also able to pull out the rear-seat occupant and saved him," the survivor said.

Hearing the screams of fellow passengers, many jumped off the bus. Some of them suffered minor injuries in the process and are being treated at nearby hospitals.

Indian-American Kamala Harris is Joe Biden's running mate

Washington: Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has zeroed in on Indian-American Senator Kamala Harris as his running mate for the US elections in an apparent bid to reach out to the Black voters who could prove to be an instrumental factor in the upcoming elections.

With the announcement, Kamala Harris has made history by becoming the first Black woman to run for a presidential post as a nominee of a major party in the United States. Kamala Harris is known for many firsts and if



elected to the presidential post, she will make history with many more. Kamala

Harris' father, Donald Harris, was from Jamaica, and her mother, Shyamala Gopalan, a

cancer researcher and civil rights activist hailed from Chennai. If elected, Kamala Harris would become the first-ever woman to be the vice president of the United States and the first-ever Indian-American and African vice president of the country.

Kamala Harris is a 55-year-old senator representing California. The lawyer-politician was once described as a trail-blazer by former US president Barack Obama.

She had launched her presidential campaign for the US elections in January 2019. However, her campaign could

not take off and by the end of the year she withdrew from the presidential race.

Early this year, Kamala Harris endorsed Joe Biden for presidency and during the primaries and pre-primary season, she did not share a good relationship with Biden. They once again became allies in the last few months.

Kamala Harris has been a county district attorney, the district attorney for San Francisco and also the first woman and first African-American and Indian-origin to be elected to the position.

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'Nasty, mean, horrible' Trump unloads on Harris

Washington: US President Donald Trump led the Republican and rightwing attack on Democratic vice-presidential nominee Kamala Harris, calling her "nasty", "mean," "horrible" and "disrespectful," as the US Presidential election was electrified by the choice of the first black and Asian Indian woman on a major political party ticket. In an all out attack on Harris, Trump said she was "very very nasty" to Democratic Presidential nominee Joe Biden during the debates, and she was the "meanest, most horrible, most disrespectful of anyone in the US Senate."

Womenia

TWEET PATROL



SHILPA SHETTY KUNDRA
@THESHILPASHETTY

Loving #BandishBandits, such a musical escape from the harsh realities around us. A beautiful story that's an amalgamation of old and new, stellar performances, a phenomenal soundtrack by @Shankar_Live @EhsaanSEL...



Sail Through The Monsoon

I have spent a considerable amount of the last week dealing with a flooded garage and a floating car and nothing was more comforting in these rains than my masala chai which boosts this seasons demanding robust immunity. Just as you use a raincoat or an umbrella to safe guard yourself from the rain, I'll show you how to safeguard your health this monsoon.

You do not need a magic shield to protect you. All you need is a balanced, well-seasoned meal of Indian whole-grains, daals and pulses, vegetables and healthy fat. Unbalanced meals stress the body thus weakening the body's infection fighting power, resulting in lowered immunity.

B vitamins and fiber

present in whole-grains like wheat and rice, millets like ragi, jowar, bajra are a must so don't skip them! The humble corn becomes a nutritious golden snack with chopped

onion and tomatoes. These nutrients satiated you, energize the body and keep the digestive system fighting fit.

Pulses

I advocate combining this with grains to get a complete protein. The enzymes and chemicals present are required to win the immunity battle. Sip on a hot piping rasam, daals and sambhars this season.

Seasonal vegetables

I always say 50 per cent of your plate needs to be full of seasonal vegetables. In the monsoon it is the gourd family, pumpkin, sword beans. Avoid cabbage, lettuce and leafy greens as they are germ infested. Cooked vegetables are better than raw in this season.

Fermented foods

In my clients diets I include buttermilk, dosa, idli, yoghurt and pickles that provide healthy probiotic microbes which protect the gut and fight water based infections.

Zinc

supports white blood cells in your body which are your immunity protectors. These are found in whole-grains, legumes, dairy, nuts and seeds. My go-to snack is a few roasted pumpkin seeds daily.

Anti-oxidant

I say cook in desi cow's ghee, garnish food with fresh

grated coconut, snack on nuts and seeds as they are all rich in antioxidant Vitamin E that enhances immunity.

Vitamin C

A talk on immunity is incomplete without mentioning the mighty Vitamin C. Present in monsoon foods like tomatoes, lemons, bell peppers, papayas, mango, tamarind and garcinia cambodia keep you secure by suppressing damaging free radicals.

Spices

There is no comparison to the power of Indian spices. We are fortunate that our recipes have a way of blending in these miracle healers with ease. Ginger, turmeric, chilli, black pepper and cinnamon are just a few spices that keep your body safe from microbial infections. Sulphur containing garlic and fresh tulsi keep coughs and colds at bay.

Beverages: Our masala chai, filter coffee, kahwa, rasams, herbal concoctions of Tulsi, turmeric and ginger, keep your respiratory tract clean.

Listen to me ladies and include these foods in yours and your family's diet. Rest assured that you can enjoy this monsoon healthy, fit and fabulous.



Naini Setalvad

Keep your wardrobe fashion staple for WFH

Let's face it, none of us know how long this quarantine will last, but a wardrobe with a reliable foundation of clothes will make it easier for you to maintain your new work-from-home routine or help you get back up to speed once the coronavirus has passed. Whether your newest home project is cleaning out your closet and starting from scratch, or you just want something other than pajamas to wear right now.

Here is a list of three wardrobe essentials that you should own for your work from home and zoom sessions making you look presentable staying at home:

White shirt

The great thing about a white shirt is that it is the perfect blank canvas upon which you can draw your unique style statement. For a simple look, a white shirt and a well-fitting pair of trousers or a skirt make for the perfect chic professional look. You can jazz it up with a scarf or a light jacket for a playful look for informal occasions, or maybe even a solid necklace that garners attention at a party. Don't be afraid to experiment with everything a white shirt has to offer.



Blazer

If you need to pull together an office look then invest in a great blazer. A blazer doesn't just have to exist in the office. It can be used as a great fall outerwear substitute when it's not quite cold enough for a heavy coat. Blazer's can also transition into great date-wear by throwing them over a nice cocktail dress.

Denim jacket

Perfect for relatively casual occasions, a denim jacket is extremely utilitarian and thus essential to a woman's wardrobe. It is also an androgynous outfit piece which lends a large helping of effortless chic to



Fresh skin this season

The monsoons bring plenty of water and what a great relief that is, especially after a really hot summer spell. That takes care of what people who don't have oily skin think. As for those with oily skin, the monsoon isn't as wonderful. As we all know, oil and water don't mix and their contrasting natures is what can make monsoon a mess for you. But don't fear, with these 3 skin care tips, you can ensure that your oily skin doesn't face the brunt of the monsoons:

Hot water wins over oil

As opposed to dry skin which does well with warm water, oily skin could do with a hot water rinse. Hot water is effective in dissolving all the excess oil on your skin, leaving it supple and soft like when you were a baby.

Facial scrubs score

If your skin sometimes feels like an oil well (metaphorically of course), then regular facial scrubbing will dry it up considerably and effectively. This happens because facial scrubs help unclog your pores and also assist greatly for exfoliation.

However, it is advisable to use natural scrubs instead of those with a chemical base.

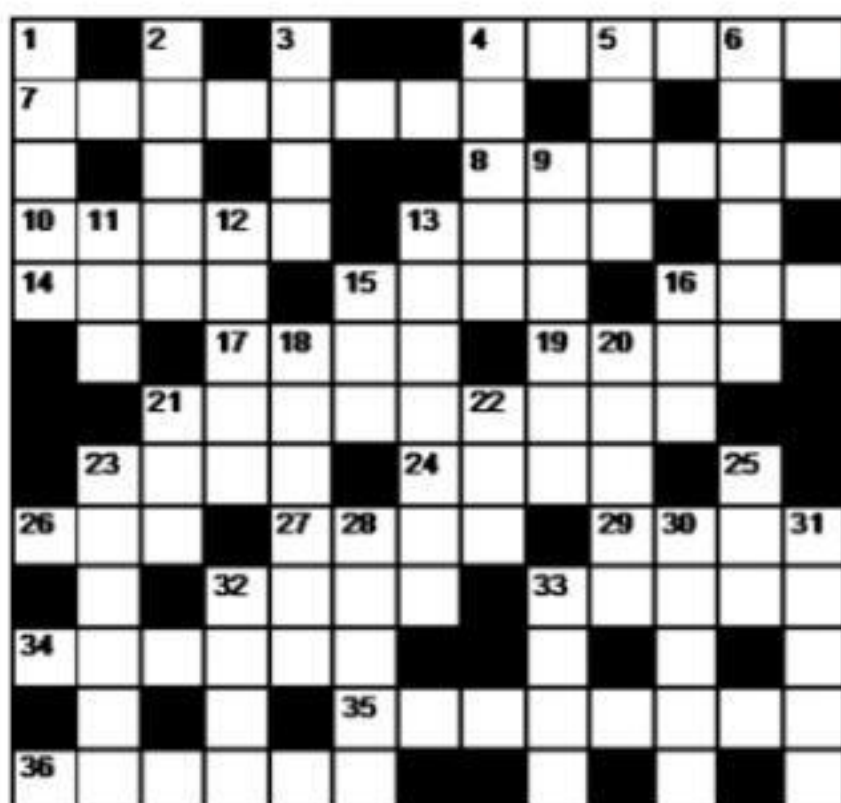
You never know how a particular chemical reacts to your skin. You know, one woman's poison is another's nectar.

Natural or nothing

Another oily skin care tip is to make a paste using besan, milk,

In the monsoon, when humidity is at its peak, sweat mixes with oil deposits on the skin

lemon and honey. Apply that paste to your skin and rest assured, the oiliness will be history and your skin, rejuvenated. Natural pastes are healthy, safe and economical; what other attributes could you possibly want! Ok, now you've learnt that there's nothing that can't be taken care of with a little help and knowledge. The best part is, you don't need to let your oily skin stop you from relishing the rains.



SOLUTION TO AUGUST 12

CROSSWORD

Across

- 4 Pries (6)
- 7 Relating to ruling families (8)
- 8 Vast seas (6)
- 10 Unfolds (5)
- 13 Equestrian sport (4)
- 14 Very large, prefix (4)
- 15 Ballet skirt (4)
- 16 Maximum for a batsman! (3)
- 17 At the home of, in French (4)
- 19 A contest (4)
- 21 Satan (9)
- 23 Mend socks (4)
- 24 Puts down (4)
- 26 Each (3)
- 27 In ___ of : in place of ? (4)
- 29 Labels (4)
- 32 Belonging to that girl ? (4)
- 33 Customary (5)
- 34 Dry gully (6)
- 35 Relating to the newly born (8)
- 36 A liquor made from fermented mash of grain (6)

Down

- 1 Form of speech (5)
- 2 Book reference (5)
- 3 Any distinctive doctrines or practices (4)
- 4 Move rapidly (5)
- 5 Bread spread ? (4)
- 6 Learned man in India (6)
- 9 Cliquish (6)
- 11 Step in ballet (3)
- 12 More agreeable (5)
- 13 Conundrums, enigmas or riddles (7)
- 15 ___ Aviv (3)
- 16 Prefix for "beneath " (3)
- 18 The Eagles' Don ___ (6)
- 20 Expels or evicts (5)
- 21 Ingot (3)
- 22 Water in France (3)
- 23 Scarcity (6)
- 25 Turkish title (3)
- 28 Satirical dialogue (5)
- 30 Female relatives (5)
- 31 Cunningly (5)
- 32 Jumps on one leg (4)
- 33 Forearm bone (4)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO AUGUST 12

NEWS ROUNDUP

Priyanka Chopra to Kamala Harris: Look how far we have come!

Priyanka congratulates 'India decent' Kamala Harris to compete on US Party's presidential ticket

Indian actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas has congratulated US Democratic vice-presidential candidate Kamala Harris on becoming the first person of Indian descent to achieve that honour.

Priyanka took to Instagram and posted a picture of Harris in a purple suit, waving her hand.

"This is a historical, transformational, and proud moment for all women. All women of colour, all Black women, and all South Asian women. Congratulations @kamalaharris on becoming the first Black woman and FIRST PERSON of Indian descent to compete on a major U.S. party's presidential ticket. #representationmatters ?PS: To my younger self - look how far we have come!" Priyanka wrote alongside the image.

Harris is born in the US to immigrants, cancer researcher Shyamala Gopalan from India and economics professor Donald Harris from Jamaica.



IAF writes to Censor Board over ‘negative portrayal’ in Gunjan Saxena

New Delhi: The Indian Air Force (IAF) has written to the Central Board of Film Certification complaining against its “undue negative portrayal” in the movie “Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl”.

The Air Force in its letter to the censor board, and sent to Netflix and Dharma Productions, has stated that as per initial understanding, “Dharma Productions had agreed to represent Indian Air Force (IAF) with authenticity and make all efforts to ensure that the film helps to inspire the next generation of IAF officers.”

However, when the trailer of the movie was released recently, it was observed that “certain scenes and dialogues in the movie and its trailer, which was forwarded to this office for viewing, have been found to portray the IAF in an undue negative light.”

The letter written by the IAF and accessed by ANI, read, “In the aim to glorify the screen character of “Ex-Flt Lt Gunjan Saxena”, M/s Dharma Productions presented some situations that are misleading and portray an inappropriate work culture especially



against women in the IAF.” The story of the Dharma Productions movie is based on the first Indian Air Force woman pilot who was

part of the 1999 Kargil war. Ms Saxena, who is one of the first female pilots to fly in combat, played an important role in res-

cuing injured soldiers during the Kargil War and was awarded the gallantry Shaurya Vir Award for displaying courage during the war. In the communication, the Air Force said that as a service, it has ensured “that the organisation is gender neutral and has always provided an equal opportunity to both male and women personnel.”

IAF has also annexed the summary of the scenes and dialogues of the script, which are considered objectionable due to the presentation of incorrect gender

bias with the letter.

It also stated in the letter that the Karan Johar-owned Dharma Productions was “informed about the objectionable portion of the movie and was advised to delete/modify the same. However, the production house has not deleted the scenes but it proposed a media plan in the run-up to the release and insert a disclaimer in the movie.”

The Air Force stated that it feels that a mere media plan and disclaimer would not be adequate to prevent the presentation of in-

correct facts about the IAF.

“In view of the above, the issue of grant of NOC for the release of the movie will be considered after deleting or suitably modifying the scenes in order to cater to the observations mentioned,” the Air Force stated.

Indian Air Force is first amongst the three services to grant commission to women officers in branches other than the medical branch and now all branches of IAF are open for both genders including the Fighter stream of Flying Branch.

3 scribes assaulted in Northeast Delhi

New Delhi (PTD): The police on Wednesday said it has received a complaint from a news magazine that three of its journalists, including a woman, were assaulted by a mob in Northeast Delhi, where they had gone to report on the riots that had taken place in February this year.

The Caravan magazine alleged that the incident took place on Tuesday afternoon.

“We have received complaints from both the sides (magazine and locals) and are looking into them,” Joint Commissioner of Police (eastern range) Alok Kumar said.

The magazine, in a series of tweets on Tuesday, said, “Today afternoon, in the Subhash Mohalla locality in north-east Delhi, a group of men and women assaulted three staffers of @thecaravanindia @Prabhtalks

@shahidtantray and a third staff member—to stop them from reporting.”

The magazine alleged that the mob physically assaulted the



staffers, threatened to kill them and also used communal slurs. It added that the woman staffer was “sexually harassed and physically assaulted.”

The three journalists were later rescued by the police and taken to the nearby Bhajanpura police station, the magazine said.

Communal violence had broken out in Northeast Delhi on February 24 after clashes between citizenship law supporters and protesters spiralled, leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured.

Tutor held for showing porn clips to 10-yr-old

Kanpur (IANS): The Kanpur police have arrested a private tutor on Tuesday for allegedly showing porn video clips on his mobile to a 10-year-old student.

The parents of the boy lodged a complaint at Barra police station against his tuition teacher Sunil that the latter was showing the child obscene videos on his mobile during tuition classes.

The cell phone has been recovered from the accused and mobile data along with objectionable material loaded in the phone will be examined.

Inspector Barra, Harmeet Singh, said, “The accused teacher has been arrested and a case has been registered against him under relevant sections of IPC besides POCSO Act, following a complaint from the parents. Further investigations are continuing.”

Refunds more than ticket sales for Rlys



New Delhi: Perhaps for the first time in its 167-year-long history, the Indian Railways has refunded more than it has earned from ticket bookings, registering a negative passenger segment revenue of Rs 1,066 crore in the COVID-19-hit first quarter of 2020-21, an RTI query has found. The freight earnings, however, during the period managed to hold ground, according to the RTI reply provided by the Railways to Chandra Shekhar Gaur, a Madhya Pradesh-based activist.

The first three months of this financial year, when the Railways had to suspend all its regular passenger services due to the coronavirus travel restrictions, the national transporter’s revenue was in the negative -- Rs 531.12 crore in April, Rs 145.24 crore in May and Rs 390.6 in June (all in negative), the RTI reply said.

“The minus figures are being shown due to the fact that the value of refunds is more than the value of tickets booked, said Railway spokesperson DJ Narain. An official explained that due to the suspension of services, tickets booked for travel in April, May

and June were offered refunds, while fewer tickets were booked during these three months due to the restrictions.

The Railways has cancelled all regular passenger services indefinitely. In the first quarter of the 2019-20 fiscal, the Railways had

earned Rs 4,345 crore in April, Rs 4,463 crore in May and Rs 4,589 crore in June. The Railways has said that due to the pandemic, it is envisaging a loss of around Rs 40,000 crore this financial year. Passenger revenues of Railways are naturally expected to be low this year due to suspension of most of the services due to COVID-19 pandemic, Narain said.

However, freight traffic seems to have recovered somewhat since the Railways has been the preferred mode of transportation for ferrying essential during these months. In April 2020, the freight earning was Rs 5,744 crore, in May it was 7,289 crore and in June the number stood at Rs 8,706 crore. In the first quarter of last fiscal year, it earned Rs 9,331 crore in April, Rs 10,032 crore in May and Rs 9,702 crore in June.

ASI dies as under construction floor of house collapses

New Delhi (IANS): A Delhi police ASI succumbed to the injuries he sustained after the under construction third floor of a building in the Bara Hindu Rao area of North Delhi collapsed on Wednesday morning.

The 49-year-old Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police Zakir Hussain was rushed to a hospital but was declared brought dead. A constable also suffered minor injuries in the accident.

The police said that the two policemen were on a tenant verification drive in the area in view of Independence Day on August 15 when the accident took place.

“At about 10.20 a.m., they reached Gupta Building on Ram Bagh Road and while verifying the tenant, they noticed that illegal construction was underway on the third floor of the building.

OVERVIEW OF DISABILITY AND REFERRAL SERVICES IN INDIA

Sanskriti School organises webinar

Dehradun: Sanskriti School of rehabilitation organised a webinar on Overview of Disability and Referral Services in India. During the webinar, Dr. Himanshu Das (NIEPVD) Divyangjan, Dehradun was present as a chief Guest and Priyadarshi Mishra Rehabilitation Officer (CRCSD) and Daya Rani Lecturer in Special Education-MR Mandi (HP) were the key speakers of the day. Dr. Himanshu Das said that “no one is born to be perfect but the term “disability” spoils the vision of Society to see the ability of the person with a disability.” In Indian Referral Services there are various opportunities available and



National Institutes are engaged in the field of providing disability rehabilitation services to the persons with disability as also in undertaking research and development efforts. NIs also provides Vocational Skill training for placement and

distribution of assistive aids.

Addressing the audience in his keynote address, Priyadarshi Mishra said “Government is focusing on vocational skills training and persons with disability are no different.

has been served to the pharmacist Ashish Verma to explain the wrong medication. Jail sources said that the jail doctor N.K. Verma had prescribed Cetirizine for allergic problems to the inmates but the pharmacist gave them the wrong medicines. DIG (Jail) Sanjeev Tripathi has also issued a show cause notice to the Lucknow jail superintendent on the issue.

100 in Lucknow jail fall sick after getting schizophrenia pills

Lucknow (IANS): Over 100 inmates of Lucknow jail fell ill after they were administered a wrong medicine. The condition of 22 prisoners is said to be serious and they have been admitted to the jail hospital. According to the DG (Pris-

ons), Anand Kumar, the pharmacist, instead of Cetirizine, gave the inmates Haloperidol, an antipsychotic medication that is used in the treatment of schizophrenia. The inmates started complaining of lethargy and sleepiness. A notice

Saif, Kareena announce arrival of second baby

Mumbai: Bollywood star couple Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor Khan on Wednesday said they are expecting their second child. The duo announced the pregnancy in an official statement, thanking well wishers for their support. “We are very pleased to announce that we are expecting an addition to our family! Thank you to all our well wishers for all their love and support,” they said in a joint statement.

Kareena, 39, delivered their first child, son Taimur on December 20, 2016. The toddler has been an Internet sensation ever since his birth and is followed by the paparazzi round-the-clock. Back then, soon after the baby boy was named Taimur, people on social media had started questioning the origins of the name.

Saif, 49, tied the knot with Kareena in October 2012 after a five-year courtship. He was previously married to actor Amrita Singh, with whom he shares actor-daughter Sara and son Ibrahim.

School girl does high-risk catwalk on 23rd floor’s ledge

Chennai: A Chennai school girl, bored by the long confinement at home, played an extremely risky ‘challenge’ game with her elder brother. She walked a narrow ledge along the outer wall on the 23rd floor of her apartment complex to prove she was braver than her brother. She did this ‘ledge’ walk at least three times.

A viral video shows a girl alighting on to the narrow ledge through a window on the 23rd floor and walking on the ledge for about 30 seconds, during which she also had to make three turns.

After the video of the incident, shot by one of the apartment residents, went viral the police identified the building and started making enquiries.

Mamallapuram ASP Sundaravathanam, who visited the Hirandani apartment complex in Kelambakkam, a Chennai suburb, found that the 14-year-old girl, studying in ninth class, had undertaken the risky cat walk on August 6 after challeng-

ing her elder brother.

The girl and her brother were let off with a warning while the residents’ association was instructed to seal off access to the ledge to prevent future misadventures. While many had mistaken the video to have been shot in Gurugram, Haryana, it was later discovered that the incident had happened in Chennai.



American who wanted to become LeT executioner sentenced to 15 yrs

New York (IANS): An American who wanted to go to Pakistan to become an executioner for the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist organisation has been sentenced in a US federal court here to 15 years in prison.

Federal Judge Ronnie Abrams sentenced on Tuesday Jesus Wilfredo Encarnacion, who had admitted before the judge in January to “attempting to provide material support” to the LeT, which carried out the 2008 Mumbai attacks that killed more than 170 people.

“Encarnacion plotted to travel abroad, to join and train with Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, infamous worldwide for the jihadist murder of innocent civilians, and to carry out shootings, bombings, and beheadings in behalf of that terrorist the organisation,” said Audrey Strauss, the acting federal prosecutor in New York, after the sentencing.

Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C Demers said, “The National Security Division remains com-



mitted to identifying and holding accountable those who seek to join and support designated foreign terrorist organisations.

Encarnacion, 30, was arrested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) at New York’s JFK Airport in February last year when he tried to take a flight to Europe on his way to Pakistan to join the LeT.

He and his LeT recruiter Michael Kyle Sewell had been tracked by undercover FBI agents or informants, who recorded their interactions, which were introduced in court

filings obtained by IANS.

Sewell was only 18 years at that time and has been sentenced in September to 20 years in prison for his role in the conspiracy.

In the filings in the Encarnacion case, Sewell is not identified by name, but by comparing those with documents in his case in a Texas federal court IANS was able to connect them.

Court documents show that Encarnacion is a new convert to Islam.

A chilling portrait of Encarnacion, who used the identities

“Jihadistsoldgier,” “Jihadinhear,” “Jihadinheart” and “Lionofthegood,” emerges from the transcripts of interactions between him, Sewell and undercover federal agents.

Encarnacion said, “I want to fight. I want to execute. I want to behead,” and pleaded, “Please. I want to kill on video. Terrify our enemies.”

Encarnacion wrote to an undercover government employee: “You guys are against India.

I read up on ya. You are beefing with India over Muslim land. I (expletive) hate Hindus. They can go to hell and I’m going to help you.”

“Will I live in Pakistan? I want to fight. I want to execute. I want to behead,” he wrote.

In a transcript Encarnacion said: “Kuffar treat me bad,” but does not further identify the “Kuffar” or what they did.

He initially wanted to join the Islamic State terrorist organization, but Sewell directed him to the LeT, presciently predicting the doom of IS.

Gehlot performed operation on ‘Operation Lotus’: Sena

Sometimes we have to be tolerant: Ashok Gehlot to MLAs

Mumbai: The Shiv Sena said failure of “Operation Lotus” in Rajasthan was the defeat of “political perversity”, days after a meeting between Congress leaders Sachin Pilot and Rahul Gandhi signalled an amicable resolution of the Rajasthan political crisis. An editorial in Shiv Sena mouthpiece ‘Saamana’ said “Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot performed an operation on ‘Operation Lotus’ and taught the BJP a lesson”.

Gehlot on Wednesday said resentment among the Congress MLAs lodged in hotels for a month since the crisis broke out was natural but he has exhorted the legislators to “bear it” to save democracy.

The term “Operation Lotus”, used by some political parties, refers to the alleged attempts by the BJP to engineer defections from other parties.

“Even in Maharashtra, the early morning operation had failed. At least now, the BJP should learn a lesson. The new



date of operation in Maharashtra by some fake doctors is September,” the Sena said in sarcastic comments.

News agency PTI said the Shiv Sena was apparently referring to the hush-hush early morning ceremony held last year at the Raj Bhavan where BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis was sworn in as Chief Minister after his party and the Shiv Sena fell out over the issue of sharing the chief ministerial post.

The Shiv Sena later tied-up

with the NCP and Congress to form government in Maharashtra.

The Shiv Sena alleged that the BJP is busy trying to destabilise governments in states not run by the party, as if all other issues being faced the country do not exist.

“The coronavirus pandemic is showing no sign of going away, unemployment is growing and the economy is in shambles. Instead of reviving it, the BJP is busy toppling opposition governments. Isn’t this a sign of political mental illness?” it sought to know.

“Like Gabbar Singh of (film) ‘Sholay’, a terror of ‘Operation Lotus’ has been created. But with the operation failing in Rajasthan, it is the defeat of political perversity,” the Uddhav Thackeray-led party said.

“Gehlot did everything to save his government, he used all methods like the BJP when it works to topple other governments,” the Marathi daily said.

Venkaiah Naidu: Three years in august office

When the name of Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu was announced as the Vice President of India, it came as a surprise not only for many of his friends, but he himself was taken aback a little since he has always been at the forefront of all issues and was an active participant in party's key decisions. There were speculations that in the name of elevation, he has been side-lined by giving a gubernatorial post. But then he accepted the position being a disciplined party soldier and in the last three years of being in office, carved niche for himself and proved that one can leave his mark if he is focussed in his work. He refused to accept the old protocol practices and remained connected with people. One of his great qualities has been that he would remember anyone whom he met in his long political journey by name. Naidu is known for his unparalleled oratory skills. He is also a man who can enjoy a joke and take it in a positive manner unlike the present genre of leaders. During

the government of Atal Behari Vajpayee, he was addressing a press conference at Lake View Guest House. He was the Union Minister for Rural Development. A scribe was late by five minutes for the press conference. Naidu, who is known for his punctuality and speaking in three languages, English, Telugu and Hindi, looked at the scribe and said 'for the first time you are late for my press conference'. The scribe said, "Yes Sir," I have no escort to clear the traffic, but I am sure I will not miss anything since you speak in three languages and I can easily catch up with you." Naidu laughed and enjoyed the comment. Today's generation of reporters can neither comment like that nor will the leaders take it in a positive sense. The Vice President of India continues to display this positive attitude even today and that has been the secret of his success in bringing reforms in Rajya Sabha as its Chairman. It is not a joke to rise from being a member of RSS Shaka which he entered by accident to become the national president of the party, Union Minister and now the Vice President. He first hogged limelight during his 1972 Jai Andhra movement. He cut his political teeth during the "Emergency" of 1975-77 when he went underground

against the government of Indira Gandhi and eventually got jailed. He was accused of disturbing a meeting of Sanjay Gandhi and handcuffed during transit from one jail to the other. In his initial days in politics, Naidu championed the cause of the farmers and the development of backward areas and he went on to become the one of the most popular BJP leaders in Andhra Pradesh. He was first elected as an MLA to the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly twice from Udayagiri constituency in Nellore district in 1978. He again served as an MLA in 1983. Naidu hit the national scene when he was one of the prominent opposition spokespersons along with S Jaipal Reddy, who was then in Janata Party, during the campaign by NT Rama Rao after his dismissal as the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister by Indira Gandhi in the 1980s. Even though the Bharatiya Janata Party was on a weak wicket in southern India, Naidu embraced it tightly. For years, he was the BJP's best-known leader from southern India. Unlike the present-day politicians who cross over to the ruling party the minute elections are over and the party on which they contested loses polls, he remained a loyal party worker.



Ram temple in Ayodhya and the question of faith

JAYANTA GHOSAL

Let's go to Ayodhya again. On August 5, Prime Minister Narendra Modi went to Ayodhya, the birthplace of Ram, in connection with the Bhoomi Pujan for the Ram temple. There was nothing unlawful about it. Following the Supreme Court verdict on the issue, the head of the government was participating in the ceremony for the construction of the temple organised by the Sri Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust. The event was telecast live on Door Darshan and other channels took live footage from Door Darshan.

This happened even as people are still corona stricken! At a time of crisis, the Prime Minister sought refuge in Sri Ram for the welfare of the people of the entire country. On the one side, when under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the call of 'Jai Shri Ram' from BJP reverberated across the country, Leftist liberals, the public intellectuals began to say, "This is the BJP's communal politics. Vote centric, the politics of religious polarisation! In the course of the corona pandemic, initially the Tablighi Jamaat international conference was made the reason for targeting Muslims, and now has begun the politics of Ram temple construction. The temple will be constructed ahead of the next Lok Sabha election. Therefore, the abolition of Section 370 in Kashmir, going ahead with the triple talaq legislation and proceeding towards a uniform civil code and amending the citizenship Act are part of the implementation of BJP's party manifesto."

I have been in Delhi for a long time now. For more than three decades, I've seen developments in India's Hindi belt. Quite frequently, I visit cities like Varanasi, Allahabad, Patna and Indore. I go to cities on the banks of the river Ganges and Narmada and I see how people there are moved by chants of 'Jai Sri Ram'. Sitting in Bengal, it is very difficult to understand the 'vibrating soul' of the Hindi belt. You might say the people of these states are not as educated as Bengalis, or that the reformation that took place in Hindu religion did not take place in these states. You can move a step ahead and ask why would I even compare Bengalis with people from Bihar and Gujarat? But why does the narrow priestly system still prevail in those areas of India? Why are people from the lower strata of society not merely fond of them but are also strict followers of the system?

There are quite a few TV channels like Sanskar and Astha. Crores of people watch these religious channels - in just the same way that Bengalis nowadays have started listening to clairvoyants or astrologers on television and YouTube. On one such religious channel I saw a spiritual leader who, while repeatedly praising Modi, said, "This Ram Mandir construction is such a colossal event. Satisfied by the splendid task of the construction of the temple, the Lord will remove corona from this country."

I feel that in the Hindi belt - and, surprisingly, even in Bengal - the number of believers in "Jai Sri Ram" is growing. I would like to point the finger of blame at the so-called modernists, atheists, trans-nationalists, liberals, socialists and Marxists in this country. Why did we give the opportunity to turn the Shastras, or the study of Sanskrit into subjects connected with Hindutva?

A book titled, "Unsettling the Past" edited by DD Kosambi's daughter was published in 2013. Apart from the old essays and letters by Kosambi, the publication included various essays of Romila Thapar, Ranajit Guha and Kunal Chakrabarti. These theorists, while evaluating Kosambi on many issues, also criticised him. But they were all agreed that: (a) Sanskrit is a strong and scientific language, the transition from Prakrit to Sanskrit is a historical event. But, he showed in terms of Marxist classification how Sanskrit got transformed into an elitist language of the ruling classes; (b) the upper castes, especially the Vedic Brahmin priestly system, limited Sanskrit and education to a small group; and (c) Kosambi, while reviewing the Indus Valley Civilization of Mohenjodaro to the Aryan culture, then the history of Ashoka and the Mauryan dynasty showed how the study of Puranas and religion had always been linked to Indianness.

Today, what if I raise the question that even after independence why did the rulers withdraw from the priestly system of Indian religion - Sanskrit, Ramayana, Mahabharata and failed to attach and spread it amongst the masses? Sanskrit was declared a 'dead language'. I am not saying that after Nehru became the Prime Minister, he was wrong to call heavy industry like the steel industry a 'temple'. At that time, Bhakra Nangal or the steel plants at Bhilai and Rourkela were more necessary than Gandhi's rainbow. But for that reason, by saying the practice of Hinduism of the past meant superstition, the attempt to establish a socialist philosophy of life influenced by Soviet atheism was gravely unjust. And Modi-Amit Shah's Ayodhya project, which actually is the property of no single party, has become the counter-image to that. This wealth belongs to all the people of India.

Now, it is like if I narrate to you the story of Greek goddess Athena then I am progressive but if I tell you the story of how, under the curse of sage Vishwamitra, king Harishchandra donated everything and became an outcast in Kashi, I will become a superstitious Hindutva fanatic and so on. At Harvard University, scholars like Diana L Eck are now doing research on Indian religion. Bihani Sarkar researched the greatness of the Indian Shakti cult or Goddess Chandi at the Oriental Institute of Oxford and the University of Hamburg, Germany. Abroad, there is increasing research on Indian religion and philosophy. But we ended up forgetting Kosambi. Marxists think that he was not an ideal Marxist, he was anti-Stalin. However, the Sangh Parivar considers him to be a Marxist.

I will end this article by relating a true story from my college days. We stayed in Howrah, Shihpur and our senior, Asim Chattopadhyay (not uncle), known as our foremost leftist, lived in Sankrail at that time. A man of honesty, he lived among the poor people of the village and quietly served society. Once, he said that, "Even today in villages people call for a shaman when there is a snake bite. They perform exorcism."

We were then active workers in science and scientific organisations. We would call a meeting against superstition at Curzon Park, organise a march on Hiroshima Day. For the first time, I learnt the difference between superstition and so-called superstition from Asimda. The people for whom you've failed to provide an alternative medicine, if the poor man takes refuge in the shaman to regain his will power, and in some cases lives are saved as a result, do I have the right to take that faith away from them?

Marx described religion as the opium of the masses, but he also said that it is the sigh of the oppressed - but that we have forgotten. Karl Marx's son-in-law Paul Lafargue had an interest in research in religion and superstitions. He had written a book as well about that - he showed how religion and superstition were still working among people to overcome the lack of security in tribal and rural society.

To become modernists we, instead of fighting against a rigid priestly system, created our own atheistic fantasy, which the majority of the people of India failed to accept. We ended up stealing from the house of thoughts. Narandra Modi went to Ayodhya, and from Hindi Belt to even Bengal cries of 'Jai Sri Ram' are being heard. And where are we? We've got it all upside down.

(Jayanta Ghosal is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal)

Act of compassion can beget rich dividends



TALKING OF MANY THINGS
Dr Mohan Kanda

The government of Telangana, a few days ago, offered, on a compassionate basis, employment to Santoshi, widow of Santosh Babu, Colonel in the Indian Army who was killed in the Galvan Valley clash with Chinese troops in the Ladakh area. Apart from State and Central governments, all large organisations have their own way of dealing with the question of providing employment on compassionate grounds to the members of the families of employees who have lost their lives during the course of performing their jobs. In such cases, the normal requirements in relation to qualifications, such as age, education and experience etc., are usually relaxed, sometimes even substantially. Such relaxations are necessary because the persons to be appointed cannot be expected to fulfill the standard requirements, given the circumstances. Usually, however, such appointments are offered at the lower levels in the hierarchies of the organisations concerned. In the Central and the State governments, for instance, such persons are appointed as attenders or clerical staff. For example, when an officer of the Reserve Bank of India in Hyderabad died in a road accident while travelling on duty in the then Jammu and Kashmir, his wife was appointed as a messenger in the Bank's Jaipur office on her choice. Little wonder, then, that the appointment made by the Telangana government should have caused some surprise. Not, mind you, that anyone grudges the lady the generosity of the gesture. Viewed purely from the point of view of compassion, it was a fully justified gesture on the part of the State government. But whether the appointed person can rise to the expectations, in terms of functions and responsibilities, of the position of

a Deputy Collector accorded to her is the point being raised. My own response is a loud and clear 'yes!'

My point is that even persons who possess all the requisite educational qualifications, have the essential physical and mental capacities and are able to impress interview boards with their personalities do, after all, require extensive and intensive training before they are entrusted with functions and responsibilities in public offices. So, why should it matter if a given person is somewhat short in some of these parameters? At the best, he or she may require that much more of preparation and training. This is particularly so in a position such as that of a Deputy Collector in which no technical expertise is required in their work. Surely, one is not expecting governments to appoint such persons as doctors or engineers while expressing their compassion! And, in any case, it is not as though such instances occur in large numbers. I therefore feel that the reservations entertained in certain quarters about such appointments are totally unjustified.

And it is not as though such extraordinary appointments are made only in cases where employees die in service. They are done in recognition of achievements in fields such as sports, culture etc. For instance, P V Sindhu, the badminton player has recently been appointed by the Andhra Pradesh government. Ajit Wadekar, formerly the Captain of the India cricket team, was appointed as an officer by the SBI! Such appointments are primarily a token of appreciation of their accomplishments. Similarly, appointments made on compassionate grounds are essentially to be seen as a gesture of sympathy and consideration for the persons who have suffered a tragic loss of a parent, the bread winner.

So far as the manner in which such persons discharge their duties is concerned, there is no reason at all why they should not perform as well as their colleagues, given requisite training and guidance. In fact, experience has shown that they bring much greater devotion and dedication to their work on account of the feeling of gratitude they nurture that they need to prove their mettle in view of the unusual circumstances in which their appointment was made.



My point is that even persons who possess all the requisite educational qualifications, have the essential physical and mental capacities and are able to impress interview boards with their personalities do, after all, require extensive and intensive training before they are entrusted with functions and responsibilities in public offices. So, why should it matter if a given person is somewhat short in some of these parameters? At the best, he or she may require that much more of preparation and training. This is particularly so in a position such as that of a Deputy Collector in which no technical expertise is required in their work. Surely, one is not expecting governments to appoint such persons as doctors or engineers while expressing their compassion! And, in any case, it is not as though such instances occur in large numbers. I therefore feel that the reservations entertained in certain quarters about such appointments are totally unjustified

At this stage, it must be pointed out that there are those who are not quite in agreement with this approach to the issue under discussion. Their argument is that acts of valour or sacrifice, or for outstanding accomplishments in sports, culture etc., can be recognised and rewarded, in fact, even generously, but not necessarily through the route of offering appointments. They argue for that that there are already reservations for categories such as those belonging to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, the physically and mentally challenged and sports persons in public service as well as in academic institutions. Encroaching further upon the limited space available through making extraordinary appointments of the type being dis-

cussed, will, according to them, only serve to discourage those from the open competition categories who have to compete within that space. If the surviving family of a diseased employee is otherwise well to do, a compassionate appointment may not be necessary. An alternative method of expressing sympathy to the family can be thought of either in monetary terms or otherwise. The "some other form" assistance (instead of an actual appointment) in the case of compassionate appointments, can also be in the shape of giving the family the salary of the diseased employee, together with the increments, until the date on which that employee would have superannuated.

Similarly, appointments being presently made in recognition of

outstanding achievements in arts, culture etc., can be substituted with "honorary" appointments where the social status (and, perhaps, some perks), can be attached but without actually filling up a post that can be occupied by a deserving person in the normal circumstances. For instance, MS Dhoni, formerly the captain of the India cricket team has been made a Colonel in the Indian Army. Such persons can also be used in some committees etc., thereafter. Presently compassionate appointments are made to supernumerary posts created for that purpose, not to substantive vacancies in the cadre of any type of post.

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

LETTERS



Cong should allow young leaders to perform

This refers to the report 'Pilot returns to cockpit' (Aug 12). In all likelihood, the estranged young Congress leader Sachin Pilot will move to national politics for now withdrawing his claim to the CM's chair till next Assembly election. However, Ashok Gehlot got a breather as the Gandhis prevailed over Sachin Pilot in dropping his demand for his removal as a pre-condition for a return. Ashok Gehlot has got a sort of assurance of completing his five-year term. The rapprochement also meant that

the court's decision on the merger of six BSP MLAs with the Congress would not impact the health of the Gehlot government even if the ruling is adverse. Incidentally, the compromise between Sachin Pilot and the Congress came at a time when BJP leader Vasundhara Raje dashed off to Delhi for the first time since the political crisis began in Rajasthan for a meeting with the Central leadership of the party. It comes as a pleasant surprise that Sachin Pilot softened his rebellious position and dropped his demand for a change of leadership in Jaipur. Hope the Congress will bring young Turks like Sachin Pilot to the national leadership so that it can bounce back to its old glory. After all, country needs a strong political party to save democracy!

Avinash Kulkarni, Hyderabad

AP wants only its fair share of water

The Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme is going to be the lifeline of farmers in the region. Any attempt to stall the project is not justified as the project is not going to affect the water needs of Telangana in any way. The Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme is not a new project taken up by the State government. Andhra Pradesh is drawing only the share allocated to the State in Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal I (KWDT). Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) is going to hit six districts hard. The project will only supplement the existing projects through the same existing canal system, and no additional ayacut or canal or storage is added. Telangana does not need to panic as Andhra Pradesh is not drawing even its legitimate share of water from Krishna river. At

the same time, the projects taken up by Telangana will adversely cut into Andhra's share of water.

P V Prasad, Anantapur, AP

Who will fund to implement NEP?

Volumes have been written about the Centre's new National Education Policy. Some States have openly come out against some of the provisions of the policy. Though they are making tall claims about how the new policy will change the face of education in the country, it is doubtful whether the States have the capacity to honour the commitment for greater investment in education made on their behalf by the Centre. They can be persuaded to adopt the policy only if the Centre supports a sizeable chunk of the additional outlay that they have to arrange for. But, has the Centre the ability and the willingness to do this? The Centre's own record of spending on education has been dismal. The current public spending on education by the Centre and the States is around 4.43% of the GDP, of which the Centre's share has been only about 1%. Further, the Centre's spending on education has shown a steady decline during 2014-20, as a proportion of the total government spending as well as of the GDP. The education cess is no solution since it has already been meeting about 70% of the expenditure on education since 2015. So, where are the additional resources going to come from? The policy gives us no clue. Let us not count our chickens before they hatch.

Nandini Rao K L, Visakhapatnam

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POOR FACILITIES IN AP HOSPITAL

Covid patients block traffic

- Patients of Vishwabharati Hospital block traffic for an hour on Kurnool-Kodumur highway causing severe disruption to traffic
- They allege that there are no doctors or nurses available in hospital, no drinking water and nutritious food is supplied
- There have been frequent protests by patients in the designated Covid hospitals in Kurnool district despite govt claiming it is spending huge amount for them

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Kurnool: Patients at Vishwabharati Covid Hospital at Penchikalapadu village near here staged a protest on Kurnool-Kodumur highway on Wednesday over lack of medical services nor basic facilities in the hospital

The patients alleged that they are not being supplied medicine, water for even drinking and no nutritious food is being served. They said there was no one to complain about their suffering. "Either it is morning or evening, no doctors or nurses would be available to look after us. We are being treated like lepers. What sin we have committed? Why are we being treated in such a pathetic manner?" said the patients.

The patients alleged that the



Police officials trying to persuade patients blocking traffic to call off their protest on Kurnool-Kodumur highway at Penchikalapadu village near Kurnool on Wednesday

state government is making a huge publicity that it was spending Rs.500 on every patient to serve nutritious food. But the ground reality is completely different to what the government is claiming.

Around 50 to 60 patients are lodged in a big room with no doctors or nurses available round-the-clock.

The condition of diehard prisoners might be better than ours, lamented the patients. They have been demanding authorities to ensure their welfare besides timely treatment, supply of adequate drinking water and nutritious food. If

they are ignored then they would be forced to stage relay hunger strike, they said.

With the patients staging protest on the Kurnool-Kodumur national highway, traffic stranded for a few kilometres on both sides. The Nagalapuram police on learning of the incident rushed to the spot and took stock of the situation. After an hour of protest, the patients called off and returned to their wards.

This is the second time the patients at the hospitals came onto roads to protest on the same complaints of neglect by hospital authorities. On July 28,

the patients in large numbers staged a protest alleging that doctors or nurses were not attending them. They also complained of insipid food in place of nutritious food.

Not only at Vishwabharati Covid Hospital, similar incidents have also taken place at Santhiram Covid hospital recently.

The patients at the hospital alleged that they were being threatened that they would be handed over to police if they question about food and other facilities. The patients there also staged protests on July 21 on the premises of the hospital.

- Koyya Prasad Reddy is facing allegations of misusing name of MP Vijayasai Reddy and Visakhapatnam District Collector in settling some land disputes
- Opposition parties are accusing ruling party leaders of resorting to land encroachments in and around the port city
- Party central office warns leaders that it will not tolerate misuse of power and resorting to land grabbing

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati: YSRCP senior leader and former chairman of AP Technology Services Koyya Prasad Reddy was on Wednesday suspended from the party on the charges of land grabbing.



Koyya Prasad Reddy

He is the first leader to be acted upon for misuse of power by the ruling party. Charges abound against some more leaders in the party.

The disciplinary committee of the YSRCP, which had gone into a large number of complaints against Prasad Reddy, announced his suspension after due inquiry. The opposition has been accusing the YSRCP leadership of misuse of power, particularly in and around Visakhapatnam.

An official statement to this

effect was released by the party stating that Prasad Reddy, who hailed from Visakhapatnam, was suspended from the party with immediate effect.

Apparently, Prasad Reddy had misused the name of YSRCP general secretary and Rajya Sabha member V Vijayasai Reddy and also that of Visakhapatnam collector in settling some land deals in the port city.

The party central office gave a strict warning to all the party leaders against indulging in land dealings and grabbing by misusing the names of the party, parliament members and senior leaders.

"Stringent action would be taken against such leaders," the statement said.

It is said that the disciplinary committee is also looking into other complaints levelled against some more leaders which range from land grab and corruption in listing beneficiaries of various programmes.

ECI takes up revision of electoral rolls

The process that has begun on Aug 10 will continue till Oct 31

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati: The Election Commission of India (ECI) announced on Wednesday the special summary revision of photo electoral rolls with January 1, 2021 as the qualifying date and fixed the schedule for the same.

State Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) K Vijayanand in a statement here stated that rationalisation and rearrangements of polling stations, removal of discrepancies in the demographic similar entries and electoral photo identity cards (EPIC) and recasting and finalisation of proposed restructuring of boundaries and location of polling stations began from August 10 and would be completed by October 31.

Likewise, the preparation of supplements and integrated draft rolls would be completed by November 15 and the claims and objections would be entertained between November 16 and December 15.

After disposing of the claims and objections, the final publication of rolls would be on January 15, 2021.

The CEO said that special campaign for receiving claims and objections would be attended by the booth level officers of each polling station.

Vijayanand appealed to the electors and eligible citizens who will attain 18 years of age as on January 1, 2021 and those who missed to enrol themselves to file their applications from November 16 to December 15.

TDP leader demands details of Covid funds

- Says the Centre provided Rs 8,000 cr to the State for tackling the pandemic
- Apart from this, individuals and organisations too chipped in with donations
- Blames CM's casual attitude towards Covid-19 for the situation reaching to alarming levels in the state



number of cases. The TDP leader said this is high time for united efforts to control the disease irrespective of party affiliations and save lives.

"The Chief Minister is young, and he can visit the hospitals, care centres for providing proper guidance to the official machinery. But, unfortunately, he is not doing that. Covid warriors like doctors, nurses, police and journalists are now serving the state disregarding their own safety. The state government also has not made any statement on their welfare," said Chandramohan Reddy.

He said the state government had announced Rs 1 crore to the victims of Vizag LG Polymers gas leak incident, and Rs. 50 lakh to the Vijayawada hotel fire mishap victims. But there has been no relief to the families of people who died in government hospitals due to lack of amenities. He demanded ex gratia of Rs 10 lakh each to the families of such people.

He said the state government should learn from Kerala government which is extending financial support the kin of deceased patients besides making arrangements for funeral of the dead instead of transporting them on garbage vehicles or JCBs.

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Nellore: TDP senior leader Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy questioned the state government about Rs 8,000 crore provided by the Centre and hundreds of crores of rupees donated by various individuals and organisations for the Covid relief activities in the state.

Addressing the media here on Wednesday, the former minister asked the government to reveal the details of spending of those funds. He charged that the number of Covid cases in the state has significantly increased only due to the callousness attitude of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Around 2.80 lakh of people are now victims of virus, he said.

He accused Jagan of sending a wrong message in the initial days of the pandemic by playing down its seriousness with comments like it can be cured with simply paracetamol. Now the state was facing the consequences of that laxity by competing with bigger states like Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu in

HC dismisses Adinarayana Reddy plea on security

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati: In a setback to former minister and BJP leader Ch Adinarayana Reddy, the Andhra Pradesh High Court refused to stay a single judge order over the removal of 1+1 security cover.

The High Court on Tuesday heard a writ petition filed by Adinarayana Reddy who sought reinstatement of earlier security cover. Earlier, a single judge justified the removal of 1+1 security to the former minister. The HC refused to intervene in the orders of the single judge.

The HC upheld the single judge verdict that there was no need to provide 1+1 security to the former minister, when he did not have any threat or danger to his life. The bench struck down the writ appeal filed by Adinarayana Reddy challenging the order of the single judge of the HC. The bench comprising Chief Justice Jitendra Kumar Maheshwari and Justice Kanneganti Lalitha passed the order on Tuesday.

REVIEW ON IRRIGATION PROJECTS IN AP

CM for focus on speed, R&R works

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati: Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy reviewed progress of various irrigation projects, including Polavaram, here on Wednesday.

Works at Polavaram were going on despite Covid and monsoon, and the spillway gates' height was increased to 51 metre while it was 28 metre when they took over and the works will be completed by September 15, the officials said.

In the same manner, works on the left canal are also going on in a fast pace. The Chief Minister said that focus should be laid on Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) as well.

The projects which are to be completed this year, the Owk tunnel 2, Pula Subbaiah Velligonda tunnel 1, Nellore and Sangam barrages, linking of Vamsadhara and Nagavali stage II were discussed during the meeting in which the officials said that the Owk tunnel 2 work would be completed by October as mud was piled up in the tunnel during the recent rains and steps are being taken as per the experts' advice and there is possibility of an extra flow of 10 cusecs of water.

- Officials inform the CM that spillway gates' height of Polavaram project has been increased from 28 metre when the latest phase work started to 51 metre
- CM directs officials to speed up Vamsadhara-Nagavali linking and ongoing projects in Vizianagaram district

The officials said that water will be released in the first week of December from Pula Subbaiah Velligonda project Tunnel 1 and in one year 2.2 km tunnel was dug. The Chief Minister asked the officials to continue the work for the second tunnel as well.

The civil works on the Nellore barrage have nearly completed to which the officials said that gates are being fixed and nearly 86.35 per cent works were completed and the project will be rounded off by November along with Sangam barrage.

The Chief Minister instructed the officials to complete the projects in Vizianagaram. With an estimate of

Rs 500 crore the remaining work on the Thotapalli barrage and other projects will be completed.

The officials said that the work on Vamsadhara-Nagavali linking would be completed by December. When the Chief Minister enquired about the Vamsadhara Stage II, Phase II works, the officials said that they will be completed by March.

Neredi Barrage and Janjhavati project issues should be looked into. Gandikota reservoir should be able to store 26.85 tmc ft water and the R & R works should be completed, the Chief Minister said along with Chitravathi with 10 tmc ft water.

He has also instructed the officials to complete the upgradation works on Gandikota-Paidipalem Lift along with Rajoli- Joladarasi projects. The tender process has been sent for judicial preview in this regard, the officials said.

The Chief Minister also instructed the officials to speed up the GNSS-HNSS linkage lift works and Pulivendula micro irrigation projects.

Minister for water resources Anil Kumar Yadav, irrigation special chief secretary Adityanath Das and other officials took part in the meeting.

3 killed as police open fire on rioters

Continued from P1

As many as 110 people have been arrested in connection with the rioting at Pulakeshi Nagar here, the police said.

"These are traitors," Revenue Minister Ashoka told reporters after meeting Congress MLA in his office at Vidhana Soudha. The minister said the MLA's house was completely damaged, belongings, including sarees and jewels, were looted and rest was set on fire, including vehicles. "It is clear from the intensity of vandalism that the intention was to attack and finish off Srinivasa Murthy.

"It has to be investigated whether any corporator or anti-social elements from within the state and outside were involved," Ashoka said. Tourism Minister C T Ravi said: "It is clear and evident that the violent attack was carried out by a mob in a pre-planned manner." The state government on Wednesday announced that a district magistrate would conduct an inquiry into the violence.

The government also decided to recover losses caused to public property during the violence from the rioters.

BJP MP Shobha Karandlaje, who visited Pulikeshinagar, in a tweet said, "FFI-SDPI conspired this violence, they targeted only Hindu houses & burnt public properties. "I strongly condemn this behaviour of a communal elements & urge @CMofKarnataka to take stringent actions against the culprits," she tweeted.

Pant said that Naveen, said to be a nephew of the legislator, who allegedly put out the social media post, has been arrested.

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa said the "attack on the residence of the MLA, the police station and rioting are condemnable."Already given directions to initiate stringent action against the criminals (and) the government has initiated all the measures to contain violence," he said.

Indian-American Kamala Harris is Joe Biden's running mate

Continued from P1

After her parents divorced, Kamala Harris was raised by her Indian mother. She has said that her mother adopted the Black culture and immersed Kamala and her younger sister Maya in the culture. Kamala Harris grew up embracing her Indian culture, but has lived an African-American life with pride. She has also often joined her mother on visits to India.

State reports 9,597 new cases

Amaravati: Adding 9,597 to its tally of Covid-19 cases, the state on Wednesday crossed the 2.50 lakh mark as the infection positivity rate continued to spiral, reaching 9.59 per cent, overtaking Tamil Nadu.

The state recorded 93 fresh coronavirus casualties while another 6,676 patients recovered and got discharged from hospitals across the state in the last 24 hours, the latest government bulletin said.

The states cumulative Covid-19 tally touched 2,54,146 and now has 90,425 active cases after 1,61,425 patients recovered and 2,296 succumbed. The cumulative number of coronavirus tests stood at 26,49,767 after 57,148 were done in the last 24 hours, according to the bulletin. East Godavari district surged further, adding 1,332 fresh cases and reaching a gross of 35,642 while Kurnool also crossed the 30,000 mark with the addition of 781 new cases.

Chittoor reported 1,235 cases, West Godavari 929, Visakhapatnam 797, Anantapuramu 781, Guntur 762 and SPS Nellore 723 cases in the last 24 hours, the bulletin said. Health department officials said 80 per cent of the coronavirus cases being reported were asymptomatic.

Guntur reported 13 deaths, Prakasam 11, Chittoor and Nellore 10 each, Srikakulam nine, Anantapur and Kadapa seven each and Visakhapatnam five fresh Covid-19 fatalities.

Govt not to give school uniforms to children this year

Continued from P1

But now the government will not start work on new schemes related to development. This includes the second phase of installation of CCTV cameras, flyover connecting the DND at the ashram and other schemes. According to the government, apart from completing the already running schemes, the government will not hand over other new schemes till the economic situation improves.

TS Covid-19 tally nearing 85,000

Hyderabad: Telangana reported 1,897 fresh cases and nine deaths as on Tuesday evening. GHMC accounted for 479 of the fresh cases followed by Medchal-Malkajgiri 172, Ranga Reddy 162, Sangareddy 107, and Warangal Urban 87 cases.

Village sectt exams from Sept 20

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati: The state government will conduct the exam from September 20 and conclude the process within a week for the vacancies in the village/ward secretariats which was postponed due to Covid-19. This was revealed during a review meeting held by municipal administration minister Botcha Satyanarayana and panchayat raj minister Peddireddy

Ramachandra Reddy at Panchayat Raj Minister's camp office at the Secretariat here on Wednesday.

The ministers directed the officials to ensure all the precautionary measures for Covid-19 and physical distancing should be maintained in the course of exams.

It is estimated that in all, 10,63,168 candidates would attend the exam. On the first day, 4.5 lakh candidates are expected to attend the exam.

At least 5,000 exam centres have been arranged for the purpose. The ministers directed the officials to focus on filling vacancies of animal husbandry assistant posts.

Panchayat Raj Principal Secretary Gopalkrishna Dwivedi, Commissioner Girija Shankar, Village and ward secretariats Commissioner Naveen Kumar and other officials were present.

Minor girl raped at orphanage dies

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: A 14-year-old girl who was continuously raped by a donor of an orphanage died here on Wednesday while undergoing treatment at Niloufer hospital.

The allegations of raping a minor girl were made on the donor Venu Gopal and a case under sections of the POCSO Act was also booked against him by Bowenpally PS on July 31 and later on it was transferred to Ameenpur PS based on the jurisdiction.

According to police, the girl was admitted to Maruthi orphanage in 2015 at Miyapur by her uncle after her parents died. However, the accused donor who used to frequently visit the orphanage to make donations saw the girl and paid money to the warden and caretaker of the home to let him share a private room with the girl.

However, due to the lockdown which began in March the girl was sent to her uncle's home by the caretaker. The girl usually kept to herself and never spoke anything about the incident, as a result her silent attitude was troubling her relatives and they

scolded her for not talking with them. Then the relatives moved her to another cousin Preethi's residence, where Preethi noticed the minor girl having difficulty in walking and suspected that there could be serious issues with her, said the inspector, C. Anjaiah.

He noted, "Preethi then took her to a hospital and it was revealed that she was raped continuously. Then Preethi informed her relatives about it and they all filed a complaint against the orphanage. As the investigations began it was revealed that the accused Venu Gopal had committed the crime. The owner, caretaker and other persons who helped the accused were arrested on August 7th."

The investigation was conducted by Ameenpur police station along with the Women Safety Wing and the Child Welfare Committee of the Telangana government.

During investigation by the women officers, the minor girl revealed that the donor used to sexually violate her after making her drink juice, which was laced with enough sedatives to make her unconscious.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Telecom firms evolving into digital networks

“Pure-play telecom companies evolving into large digital networks offering full stack of services is a 'positive development' that augurs well for the new normal of work-from-home, distant education, telemedicine and other virtual applications. Telecom has become more important and necessary now


- Trai Chairman **R S Sharma**



ACQUISITION

LinkedIn sells SlideShare to Scribd

Microsoft-owned LinkedIn announced to sell SlideShare, the hosting platform for presentations and other professional content to US-based e-book subscription service Scribd for an undisclosed sum. LinkedIn acquired SlideShare in 2012, and Microsoft bought LinkedIn in 2016. On Sept 24, Scribd will begin operating Slideshare business.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	79.32	South	
Euro	92.32	African Rand4.92	
UAE Dirham	22.41	Hong Kong Dollar11.1	
Thai Baht	2.76	Japanese Yen0.81	
British Pound	101.58	New Zealand Dollar51.43	
Australian Dollar	56.02	Saudi Riyal21.95	
Canadian Dollar	59.04	Swedish Krona9.86	
Swiss Franc	84.96	Singapore Dollar57.2	

DELHI THURSDAY 13 AUGUST 2020

BIZ BRIEFS

Plea against Tata arm dismissed

Mumbai: The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has upheld the NCLT's order to set aside the plea for initiating Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) against Tata Chemicals. Operational creditor Allied Silica Ltd had moved the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), claiming a debt of Rs 68.44 crore. Tata Chemicals entered into a Business Transfer Agreement with Allied Silica Ltd in April 2018 to acquire the latter's business of precipitated silica for a consideration of Rs 123 crore, on a slump sale. According to Allied Silica, Tata Chemicals, the corporate debtor, had only transferred a sum of Rs 65 crore, out of Rs 123 crore and the balance amount of Rs 58 crore has not been paid. On account of default, the interest amounts to Rs 10.44 crore.

Lockdowns hit GDP recovery

New Delhi: The flurry of lockdowns across the country in many major cities and states interrupted the recovery in the second half of July, according to Rakesh Sharma, Executive Director, Bajaj Auto. "As a result the outcome in July was a bit lower than June retail," he added. Sharma said the demand for motorcycles saw smart recovery to previous year's levels by end June. On the target for sales, he said "At the start of the quarter, our plan was to achieve cumulative sales of 1 million vehicles between domestic and export, including motorcycles and 3 wheelers. So far, we have achieved sales of just over 2,50,000 vehicles, including three-wheelers in July," Sharma added.

Renault opens service outlet

Hyderabad: Renault India has expanded its network presence in Andhra Pradesh with the inauguration of a new state-of-the-art workshop facility, Renault Tirupati Service (MDH Wheels Pvt Ltd). The new workshop will offer Renault India's best-in-class products and services to the discerning customers in Tirupati and adjoining areas. This is part of Renault's aggressive network expansion plan across the country which saw an addition of 17 new sales and service touch points, which include 14 showrooms and three workshops across India. With the inauguration of the new dealerships, Renault's network has expanded to more than 390 sales and over 470 service touchpoints, which include over 200 workshop on wheels locations across the country. "India is an important market for Renault's global growth plans, and we have a thorough business strategy for this dynamic automotive market," Venkatram Mamillapalle, Country CEO, Renault India Operations.

W-GDP in pact with RIL Foundation

New Delhi: Under the Womens Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative, a new partnership between the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and Reliance Foundation will bridge the gender and digital divide in India. The partnership was announced at a W-GDP event on Tuesday, hosted by US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun along with special guest, Ivanka Trump, Advisor to the US President, and Deputy USAID Administrator Bonnie Glick. Ivanka Trump said: "The W-GDP Fund was created to source and scale the most innovative programs to advance women's economic empowerment. We are leveraging the resources and expertise of the US government and the private sector so that activities have enduring, deep effects on the communities they reach."

ATTRACTING FDI

India needs to improve ease of doing business

Mumbai: India can thrive economically in the post-Covid world if it brings changes in policies to welcome global investments, including doing away with the large number of approval requirements for foreign direct investment (FDI), say experts.

During a webinar on 'Investments into India and the USA' organised by the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC) and Invest India, experts discussed strategies to ease international business making way to India, boost Indo-American economic cooperation and look at two-way measures to benefit both the economies.

According to them, India needs to act now to allow ease of doing business, reduce tax and regulation bottlenecks and aid foreign companies who are exiting their bases in China.

"India needs to develop the art of visualisation... It's not easy to uproot all of the current investment from China to India overnight," said Nishith Desai, Founder and Partner at Nishith Desai Associates.

The current anti-China sentiment is fuelling many international businesses to rethink their Chinese bases. However, Desai was of the view that someone who has invested a lot in infrastructure, land use and technology will need a haven that welcomes international businesses.

Anti-China sentiment fuelling many global cos to rethink on their Chinese bases: Experts



"It is not very easy to migrate from China to India. For manufacturing, we need to be careful about environmental issues, especially around pollution," he added.

Dave Springsteen, Partner at public accounting firm Withum, said that foreign businesses who seek to develop roots in India have to face a committee of secretaries from 35 Central ministries or departments, besides an overall regime of 767 pre-operational licenses.

"That's beyond all inspections, approvals and renewals you need after the work begins, he said, adding that for the Indian side, the barrier stems from the lack of single-window clearance for investors. Sunil Kaul, Managing

Director & Head, Southeast Director Asia for the Carlyle Group, noted that India will compete with a lot of southeast Asian countries, like Vietnam, which are very welcoming to foreign companies.

"We need to keep simplifying our tax systems and provide ease and predictability in tax systems and regulatory systems so that people who want to invest are aware of what they're getting into," he said.

Timothy R. Lavender, Partner at Kelley Drye, said that many Indian businesses who decide to set up base in the US, face similar issues, such as "the lack of proper paperwork, according to different states and the federal departments".

Profit booking, global cues dent stock mkts

Mumbai: The Indian equity market closed marginally lower on Wednesday after six consecutive sessions of gains. Analysts opined that profit booking, along with negative global cues, depressed the market. Index-wise, the NSE Nifty50 closed at 11,308.40, down by 14.10 points, or 0.12 per cent, from its previous close.

The Sensex closed at 38,369.63, lower by 37.38 points, or 0.10 per cent, from the previous close of 38,407.01. It had opened at 38,321.13 and touched an intra-day high of 38,414.37 and a low of 38,125.81 points. Sector-wise, the top gainers included BSE Auto, Power and IT indices, whereas BSE Healthcare, CD, Metal and Realty indices lost ground. Globally, major Asian markets have closed on a mixed note. However, European indices like the FTSE and CAC ended higher. "Techni-



cally, while the Nifty has ended lower, the underlying short term trend remains up. The uptrend could accelerate once the immediate highs of 11,322 are cleared," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities.

Crucial supports to watch for any trend reversal are at 11,130, he added. According to Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services: "Indian benchmark indices closed out a volatile day, flat, with a negative bias. Global cues added to the uncertainty with doubts emerging about the expected US stimulus measures and continuing US-China tensions."

Natco Pharma reports 14.5% dip in Q1 net

HANS BUSINESS

Hyderabad: Drug firm Natco Pharma on Wednesday reported a 14.49 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit to Rs 122.1 crore for the quarter ended June mainly on account of margin pressure on formulations.

The company had posted a net profit of Rs 142.8 crore for the corresponding period of the previous fiscal, Natco Pharma said.

Total income of the company stood at Rs 582.1 crore for the quarter under consideration as against Rs 513.3 crore for the same period year ago, it added. During the quarter, the company faced margin pressure on both domestic and international formulations, Natco Pharma said.

NMDC hikes iron ore prices by ₹300 to ₹2,950/ tn



New Delhi: The country's largest iron ore miner NMDC on Wednesday hiked rates of the mineral by Rs 300 to Rs 2,950 a tonne with immediate effect. Iron ore is the key raw material used in steel making. Any change in its prices has a direct impact on the rates of steel.

In a filing to BSE, NMDC said it has increased the price of lumps or high-grade iron ore by Rs 300 to Rs 2,950 per tonne, and that of iron ore fines or inferior grade ore by Rs 300 to Rs 2,660 a tonne. The revised prices exclude royalty, District Mineral Fund (DMF), National Mineral Exploration Trust (DMET), cess, forest permit fee, and other taxes, the company said.

It added that the new rates are effective from August 12, 2020. The last revision, effective July 31, was announced on August 3, when NMDC had fixed the price of lumps at Rs 2,650 per tonne and of fines at Rs 2,360 a tonne.

NMDC, previously known as National Mineral Development Corporation, is also involved in the exploration of a wide range of minerals like copper, rock phosphate, lime stone, dolomite and gypsum

Gold plunges to ₹1,228, silver tanks ₹5,172

New Delhi: Gold prices tanked Rs 1,228 to Rs 52,946 per 10 gram in the national capital on Wednesday, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal had closed at Rs 54,174 per 10 gram. Silver prices also plunged Rs 5,172 to Rs 67,584 per kg from Rs 72,756 per kg in the previous trade.

"Spot gold prices for 24 carat in Delhi were down by Rs 1,228," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said. In the international market, gold was trading with gains at \$1,930 per ounce, while silver was quoting at \$25.70 per ounce.

"Gold prices witnessed recovery on Wednesday after falling below \$1,900 in morning trade," he added.

Patel further said that coronavirus vaccine announcement by Russia had triggered sell-off

Governor exhorts industry to support fight against Covid



Telangana Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan speaking at a video conference organised by FTCCI on Wednesday

Hyderabad: Telangana Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan on Wednesday exhorted the commerce and industry leaders to intensify their efforts in mitigating the crisis caused by Covid-19 pandemic and support the government.

She said that the commerce and industry sector was showing lot of resilience in overcoming the crisis and has been sustaining the livelihoods of the millions of people. The Governor was participating as the chief guest in the video conference organised by Federation of Telangana Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FTCCD) from Raj Bhavan, on the topic of 'Strategic interventions of Central and State governments for the mitigation of Covid-19 Crisis'. Referring to the strategic interventions by the Central government, the Governor pointed out that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has

taken 'right decisions at the right time' to contain the spread of Covid-19 and thus saved many precious lives. The Governor said that the India, which faced the shortage of PPE kits and other equipment, is now exporting PPE kits, N95 masks, ventilators and other life saving medicines to various other countries through the sustained efforts of the government.

"India is conducting around 7 lakh Covid-19 tests a day and it will soon achieve the target of carrying out at least 10 lakh tests a day. The governments are implementing three-pronged strategy of aggressive testing, comprehensive tracing and efficient treatment," she added.

Suggesting the new mantra of testing, testing and more testing, Dr Soundararajan said that early detection; contact tracing and isolation would reduce the risk of Covid-19 spread.

Discoms dues to renewable generators rise

New Delhi: Not only in the conventional sector, discoms dues have also risen sharply in the renewable space adding further pressure in the power sector to continue generation without being paid. The state discoms owe Rs 10,111 crore to renewable generators, Rs 101.11 billion (\$1.3 billion) in overdue payments (excluding dues under dispute) at the end of June 2020, a whopping jump of close to 50 per cent over dues at the end of March 2020. Distribution companies (discoms) owed renewable energy generators Rs 6837 crore in outstandings at the end of March 2020. According to data from the Ministry of Power's (MoP) payment ratification and analysis portal (PRAAPT), the outstanding dues to the renewable generators stood at Rs 84 billion (\$11.9 million) while an amount of Rs 12.33 crore (\$1.6 million) was under dispute.



in safe-haven assets. Gold prices had earlier fallen on strong dollar recovery, HDFC Securities said.

Meanwhile, Futures of gold and silver which were touching new highs every other day lately have started to falter in line with international markets and traders booking profits. The fall in gold prices, which is considered as a safe haven asset, has also been induced post Russia's announcement that it has developed the first vaccine for novel coronavirus. Gold futures slumped for the second straight day on Wednesday.

Covid pushes down pharma sector growth

Pharma market grew by 0.2%, overall volumes down 6.5% in July: Report

New Delhi: The Covid-19 pandemic is having a mixed bag for the Indian Pharmaceutical Market (IPM) that registered a muted growth in July on the back of a sharper decline in volumes and higher offtake of trade generic medicines.

The IPM grew by 0.2 per cent YoY in July (higher 2.4 per cent growth in June) but overall volumes declined by a sharper 6.5 per cent, an analysis done by Motilal Oswal said. According to the brokerage report on the healthcare sector, lower growth and volumes in July was offset to some extent by price growth of 4.6 per cent YoY and growth in new launches of 2.2 per cent YoY.

The pandemic has brought about major changes in the medication needs of the masses impacting the operation of the pharmaceutical companies with those dealing in respiratory, anti-diabetic, cardiac therapies performing much better than others having anti-infective, gastro, vitamin or pain therapies in their portfolio. The sudden change in preferred



The pandemic has brought about major changes in the medication needs of the masses impacting the operation of the pharmaceutical companies

therapies by masses has just taken a sharp turn from the pre-Covid period when gastric, vitamin therapies were most widely used. Probably, the concern that coronavirus impacts adversely chronic heart, lung and diabetics severely had turned people into buying more medicines for these ailments.

In the month of July, cardiac/anti-diabetic/VMN (vitamins, minerals and nutrients) therapies exhibited positive growth of 13.1 per cent YoY/5.9 per cent YoY/5.5 per cent YoY respectively, while anti-infective was down 10.2 per cent YoY (v/s -9.7 per cent YoY in June 2020) while gastro sales dipped 2.4 per cent

YoY (v/s flat YoY in June 2020). Pain/analgesics also declined further by 6.7 per cent YoY (v/s -1.9 per cent YoY in June 2020).

In value terms, secondary sales grew one per cent YoY for National list of Essential Medicines or NLEM (16 per cent of IPM) while it remained muted for non-NLEM (84 per cent of IPM) in July. While price growth for the non-NLEM products stood at 4.7 per cent YoY, volumes declined 7.2 per cent YoY.

The brokerage report said that in July, Glenmark (+30.3 per cent YoY), JB Chemicals (+12.8 per cent YoY) and Ipca (+11.5 per cent YoY) delivered the highest growth. Glenmark's anti-infective seg-

ment increased 1.7x YoY, mainly on account of Flabiflu (Covid drug) sales. JB Chemicals grew on the back of robust uptake in its cardiac therapy sales (50.8 per cent of therapy mix), which grew 24.6 per cent YoY.

Ipca witnessed good traction in pain/analgesics (+23.4 per cent YoY; 29 per cent of therapy mix) and anti-malaria (+17.8 per cent YoY; 16 per cent of therapy mix) segments. Sun Pharma's sales dipped 3.2 per cent YoY (v/s flat YoY growth in June 2020), dragged by decline in anti-infective (-23.8 per cent YoY) and gastro (-10.3 per cent YoY).

Glaxo, Natco and Wockhardt exhibited weakest sales at -10.8 per cent/-11.1 per cent/-26.8 per cent YoY respectively in July.

Cardiac, anti-malaria and respiratory therapies exhibited the highest growth of 11.1 per cent YoY, 10.5 per cent YoY and 10 per cent YoY on MAT basis in July 2020. However, gynecology (-0.8 per cent YoY) and anti-neoplastic (-2.1 per cent YoY) therapies remained dim.

NCC reports ₹15.68 cr net profit in Q1FY21

HANS BUSINESS

Hyderabad: City-based infrastructure major NCC Ltd on Wednesday posted Rs 15.68 crore net profit for the first quarter ended on June 30 this year, down from Rs 74.70 crore in the same period a year ago. The company's Ebitda margins were also down to Rs 124.82 crore against Rs 279.36 crore a year ago. It has reported a turnover of Rs 1,328.71 crore during the period under review as against Rs 2,371.51 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

On standalone basis, the infra major achieved a turnover of Rs 12,11.41 crore (including other income) in the first quarter as against Rs 2,212.70 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous year, a decrease of 45 per cent. The company has reported Ebitda of Rs 115.63 crore and a net profit of Rs 16.93 crore as against Rs 266.59 crore and Rs 81.32 crore reported respectively in the corresponding



quarter of the previous year. "The operating results of this quarter are not comparable with the corresponding quarter of the previous year, since Covid-19 has impacted the operations significantly. The lockdown and also the supply & manpower disruptions impacted the construction industry significantly and our company was also affected," NCC said in a statement.

For our company, the impact on the top line has been about 45 per cent. The gross margins of the company have not been affected much but the EBITDA & PAT margins are significantly affected due to non-absorption of fixed cost with lower volume of turnover. The situation is expected to improve in the remaining quarters, it added.



A boy dressed as Krishna wears a mask as a precaution against the coronavirus during Janmashtami festival celebrations in Mumbai on Wednesday

14 women prisoners found +ve

Shahdol (PTI): Days after they were shifted to Shahdol jail from a prison in Singrauli district in Madhya Pradesh, 14 women inmates have been found to be coronavirus positive, a senior official said on Wednesday. They were shifted to Shahdol Medical College on Tuesday evening, said Shahdol district jail superintendent GK Neti. The women inmates, including 13 undertrials and a convict, were shifted from Baidhan jail on August 9 as it was overcrowded, he said. He said one of the infected prisoners has a 18-month-old child with her, whose samples were taken and report is awaited. "A total of 25 women prisoners are currently lodged in Shahdol Jail but none of them had coronavirus symptoms," the jail superintendent said.

3 more cops die in Maha, toll 121

Mumbai (PTI): At least three Maharashtra police personnel died of COVID-19 and 294 tested positive for the deadly infection in the last 24 hours, an official said on Wednesday. A total of 121 police personnel, including 11 officers, have succumbed to coronavirus infection in the state so far, the official said. With the addition of 294 fresh COVID-19 cases, the tally of infections in the police force has reached 11,392, of which 9,187 personnel have recovered and 2,084 are undergoing treatment, he said. Moreover, 2,26,460 cases of violation of prohibitory orders have been registered across the state since the imposition of the coronavirus-induced lockdown in March, the official said. The police have arrested 33,173 people for these violations, he added. Apart from this, 332 incidents of assault on police were reported, in which 89 personnel were injured and 66 health workers were attacked, the official said.

EU agrees MoU with 8 partners

Brussels (IANS) The European Union (EU) has agreed Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with eight non-EU partners to help their businesses limit the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, the European Commission said. As of Tuesday, MoU have already been agreed with Albania, Georgia, Jordan, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Ukraine, the Commission said in a press release. Four of them, namely Kosovo, Moldova, North Macedonia and Ukraine, have formally signed the documents, Xinhua news agency reported. The money for each partner is linked to specific actions, such as strengthening public finance and the resilience of the financial sector, improving governance and fighting corruption, enhancing social protection and addressing youth unemployment.

Patient jumps off AIIMS building, dies

Raipur: A 65-year-old COVID-19 patient undergoing treatment at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences allegedly committed suicide by jumping off the second floor of the building in Chhattisgarh's capital Raipur, police said on Wednesday. The incident took place in the C-block of the institute located under Amanaka police station area on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday, said Bharat Bareth, station house officer of Amanaka police station. A resident of the city's Lalpur locality, the sexagenarian was admitted to AIIMS on August 7 and on finding some behavioural abnormalities, the patient was sent for psychiatric consultancy, he said. The patient allegedly jumped from the window of a bathroom on the second floor of the building and was rushed for emergency treatment, following which he succumbed to his injuries at around 2 am, the SHO said.

Goa's 2nd hospital operational

Panaj (IANS): Amid a sustained spike in the coronavirus cases, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Wednesday said that the state's second designated Covid-19 hospital was now operational. Sawant said that fake news was circulating which said that the state government was being funded to the extent of Rs 1.5 lakh for every Covid-19 positive patient by the Central government. "The state's second Covid hospital has started. 27 patients have been admitted there today. Currently, four private hospitals have also agreed to admit Covid patients in the state," Sawant said. The new facility is an existing sub district hospital located in Ponda in South Goa and has a capacity of more than 400 beds.

£300 mn funding for UK hospitals

London (IANS): British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a 300-million-pound (US \$392-million) fund for hospitals across England to help them prepare for winter and the risk from further outbreaks of coronavirus. Around 117 National Health Service (NHS) trusts in the area will share the cash, Xinhua news agency reported. Hospitals can use the new fund to expand waiting areas and increase the number of treatment cubicles, helping them boost Accident and Emergency Departments (A&E) capacity by providing additional space, reducing overcrowding and improving infection control measures. Projects will be completed by the start of next year so hospitals could benefit from the upgrades during the peak winter months, traditionally the busiest time of the year for A&E departments.

Nursing student jumps off building

Shahjahanpur (IANS) A nursing student was critically injured after she allegedly jumped off the first floor of a medical college here in Uttar Pradesh, police said on Wednesday. Superintendent of Police S Anand told reporters that the incident took place at Varun Arjun Medical College on Tuesday after which the victim was admitted to a hospital. The victim's family, however, alleged that the student was being mentally harassed for refusing duty in a COVID-19 hospital. An FIR has been lodged on the basis of the family members complaint, the SP said.

Pasteurising human milk inactivates virus: Study

Sydney (IANS): New research adds to the growing body of evidence that pasteurising human milk inactivates the virus that causes Covid-19. "While there is no evidence that the virus can be transmitted through breast milk, there is always a theoretical risk," said study lead author Greg Walker from the University of New South Wales in Australia. According to the study published in the 'Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health', there are five human milk banks in Australia. As the Covid-19 pandemic evolves, these milk banks continue to provide donated breast milk to pre-term babies who lack access to their mother's

own milk. Donors are screened for diseases and the milk is tested and pasteurised to ensure that it is safe for medically fragile babies. "We've seen in previous pandemics that pasteurised donor human milk (PDHM) supplies may be interrupted because of safety considerations so that's why we wanted to show that PDHM remains safe," Walker said. For this study, the team worked in the Kirby Institute's PC-3 lab to experimentally infect small amounts of frozen and freshly expressed breast milk from healthy Lifeblood Milk donors. They then heated the milk samples -- now infected with SARS-CoV-2 to 63 degree Celsius for

30 minutes to simulate the pasteurisation process that occurs in milk banks. The study found that after this process, they did not contain any infectious, live virus. "Our findings demonstrate that the SARS-CoV-2 virus can be effectively inactivated by pasteurisation." The researchers say their experiments simulated a theoretical worst-case scenario. "The amount of virus we use in the lab is a lot higher than what would be found in breast milk from women who have Covid-19 -- so we can be really confident of these findings," Walker said.



Won't use Russian vaccine: Scientists

London: Responding with scepticism to Russia's approval of a COVID-19 vaccine, several scientists around the world, including in India, suggest it hasn't been tested properly given the time constraint and there may not be enough evidence to prove its efficacy. Announcing the breakthrough on Tuesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin vouched for the safety and efficacy of the vaccine, named Sputnik V, and said one of his daughters has already received a shot. While the country hopes to start mass-producing the vaccine by October and plans to offer the first doses to essential workers, many in the science community seem unimpressed.

The announcement should be taken with a pinch of salt, said Indian immunologist Vineeta Bal. Unless some data are out in the open for people to see, including clinical trial phases and numbers, it is hard to believe that vaccine efficacy studies are successfully conducted between June 2020 and August 2020, Bal, an immunologist from the Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research in Pune, told PTI. "Are they talking about controlled human challenge studies? If yes, that evidence is also useful to examine protective efficacy," she noted. AIIMS Director Randeep Gu-



An employee works with a coronavirus vaccine at the Nikolai Gamaleya National Centre of Epidemiology and Microbiology in Moscow, Russia on Wednesday

leria, however, advised caution with regards to the Russian vaccine, being touted as the world's first coronavirus vaccine. Elaborating on the safety aspect, he said that the issue would be just to make sure that the vaccine is "safe and efficacious". "Any vaccine that is tried in a large number of people who are elderly or have comorbidities, safety is the most important thing and should of course be efficacious in terms of what degree of protection does it give and how long the protection lasts," the AIIMS Director said. Florian Kramer, a professor at the US-based Mount Sinai's Icahn School of Medicine, ques-

tioned the safety of the vaccine. "Not sure what Russia is up to, but I certainly would not take a vaccine that hasn't been tested in phase 3. Nobody knows if it's safe or if it works. They are putting HCWs (health care workers) and their population at risk," Kramer said on Twitter. Indian immunologist Satyajit Rath agreed with Kramer. "Russian authorities seem to be depending on the generation of 'neutralising' antibodies in Phase 2 clinical trials for deciding that the vaccine candidate works, he said. A neutralising antibody defends a cell from an infectious particle by neutralising any effect it has biologically.

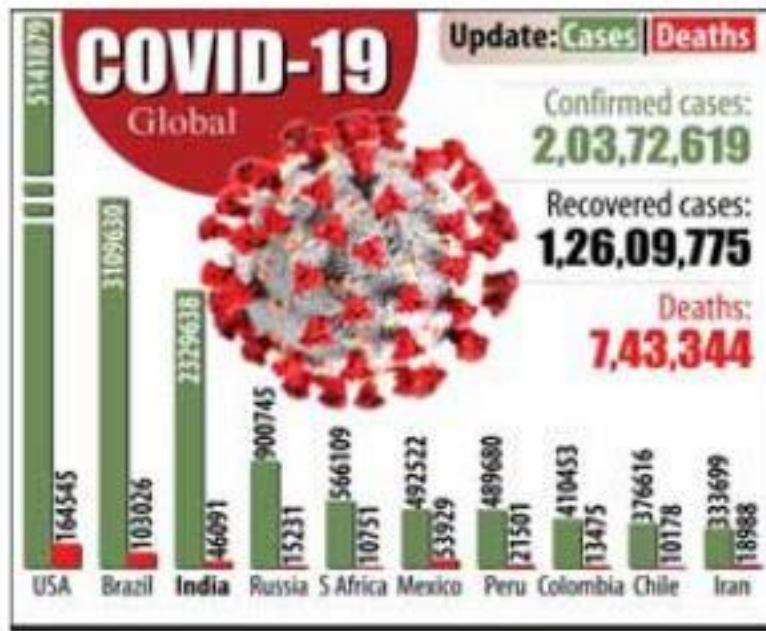
UPSRTC to sell reusable masks to passengers

Lucknow (IANS) The Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC), in view of the increasing number of Coronavirus cases, has initiated the selling of reusable protective face masks at its major bus stands across the state.

UPSRTC Managing Director Raj Shekhar said: "The masks will be available at Covid help desks and enquiry counters at 100 prominent bus stations of the corporation. The move is aimed at ensuring that passengers travelling in roadways buses strictly adhere to the Covid-19 guidelines and wear masks for their safety as well as that of the co-passengers."

Shekhar said that the staff deployed in the roadways' buses have been directed to sensitise passengers on the importance of face masks while in public to combat the spread of the virus that has so far infected nearly 1,32,000 people in the state.

"The masks, which are made of washable quality fabric, are available at a cost of Rs 6 per piece. The roadways passengers will be informed about the newly-introduced service through announcements at the bus stations," the official said.



SC may start physical courts from next week

New Delhi: A Committee of seven judges, constituted by the Chief Justice of India, convened a meeting, and discussed several issues, including whether physical courts can start or not, the Supreme Court Advocates On Records Association (SCAORA) said. "The judges' Committee is seriously considering to start at least 2-3 physical courts from the next week and in the meantime, the Registry would take necessary steps to prepare the courts for physical functioning," the SCAORA said in a statement. SCAORA President Shivaji M Jadhav, and SCBA President and senior Supreme Court lawyer Dushyant Dave urged the judges to start physical courts at the earliest, after taking required measures suggested by medical experts, keeping in view the COVID-19 pandemic.

50% world's youth in Covid-induced depression



Berlin: Half of the world's youth population are subject to anxiety or depression-causing circumstances and more than a third are uncertain of their future career prospects due to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a survey by the International Labour Organisation. The ILO's 'Youth and COVID-19: impacts on jobs, education, rights and mental well-being' survey found that if urgent action is not taken, youths are at the risk of suffering severe and long-lasting adverse impacts from the pandemic.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted every aspect of our lives. Even before the onset of the crisis, the social and economic integration of young people was an ongoing challenge. Now, unless urgent action is taken, young people are likely to suffer severe and long-lasting impacts from the pandemic, the report said on Tuesday. The ILO survey aimed to capture the immediate effects of the pandemic on the lives of youths (aged 18 to 29 years) with regard to employment, education, mental health, rights

and social activism. Over 12,000 responses were received from 112 countries, with a large proportion coming from educated youths with access to the Internet. The survey found that one in two (i.e., 50 per cent) young people across the world are possibly subject to anxiety or depression, while 17 per cent are probably affected by it. "Severe disruption to learning and working, compounded by the health crisis, has seen a deterioration in young people's mental well-being," the survey said.

No action for Indian football team this year as Asian 2022 Fifa world cup qualifiers postponed

New Delhi: The Indian football team will not see any action this year with the Asian qualifying matches for the 2022 FIFA World Cup on Wednesday getting postponed to 2021 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Asian Football Confederation postponed all men's qualifiers scheduled in October and November for the 2022 World Cup and the 2023 Asian Cup. India's last international match was the joint qualifying round match against Oman in Muscat in November last year, which they had lost 0-1.

Though out of contention for a place in the next round of World Cup qualifiers, India are still in the reckoning for a spot in the 2023 Asian Cup. They were scheduled to play Qatar at home on October 8 followed by matches against Afghanistan (home) and Bangladesh (away) in November.

A third-place finish in the group will help India get a di-

rect berth in the third round of the qualifiers for the 2023 Asian Cup. "In light of the current COVID-19 situation in many countries, FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation have jointly decided that the upcoming qualifying matches for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023, originally scheduled to take place during the international match windows in October and November 2020, will be rescheduled to 2021," read a joint statement of the FIFA and the AFC.

Both FIFA and AFC stated that the decision was taken keeping in mind the safety of all participants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The games will be rescheduled in 2021.

"With the aim of protecting the health and safety of all participants, FIFA and the AFC will continue to work together to closely monitor the situation in the region and to iden-

tify new dates for the respective qualifying matches.

"Further details on the new dates for the next round of qualifying matches for the World Cup 2022 and the AFC Asian Cup 2023 will be announced in due course," the statement said.

The AFC had previously scheduled the qualifiers in October and November and considered staging them at a centralised venue for each group.

India are currently fourth in Group E with three points from five games. Qatar top the table with 13 points with Oman a point behind them in second.

Eight group winners and four best runners-up will progress to the continent's 12-team final qualifying stage for the World Cup.

There are 40 national teams involved in the second round of World Cup Asian qualifying, which had already been delayed in March and June due to the pandemic.



ENG vs PAK 2ND TEST

STOKES-LESS HOSTS LOOK TO CLINCH SERIES

Southampton (IANS): England will be eager to register back-to-back series wins on home soil when they take on Pakistan in the second Test of the ongoing three-match series at the Ageas Bowl starting Thursday.

The hosts lead the series 1-0 following their thrilling three-wicket win in the first Test in Manchester. The stunning comeback victory has firmly put the momentum in their corner going into the Southampton Test.

For England, the one concern will be the absence of talismanic all-rounder Ben Stokes, who has flown to New Zealand for family reasons. Although, he didn't have the best of games in Manchester, his mere presence lifts the whole squad and that would be surely missed by Joe Root and his troops.

"We now have to complete the job without Ben Stokes. He is someone we would miss even if he was unable to bowl or hit a ball. He has such an impact in the changing room beyond what he does in the middle," England pacer Jofra Archer wrote in his column for Daily Mail.

"If you are going into battle, Stokes is the person you want right next to you. He would never run



away from a challenge, but family is so important and he has to be in New Zealand right now," he added.

Stokes' absence means veteran fast-bowler James Anderson might get another crack in the series, who recently had to dismiss retirement rumours following an indifferent outing in the first Test.

"It's been a frustrating week for me personally," Anderson told reporters via videoconference. "I've not bowled very well and felt out of rhythm. For the first time in probably 10 years I got a little bit emotional on the field.

"I got a bit frustrated and let it get to me a little bit. It reminded me of when I first started playing, when you get frustrated and a little

bit angry, you try and bowl quicker and quicker and it doesn't help," he added.

Pakistan, meanwhile, will have to shake off the disappointment of losing the first match from winning position when they take to the field in Southampton.

While former greats have called for Pakistan to tinker with their squad, head coach cum chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq pointed towards the fact they controlled most of the match in Manchester and lost following just one bad day.

"We are feeling frustrated, just as the fans are, after the Old Trafford Test match but this is how cricket is. There are very small margins between victory and de-

feat and it's easy to curse yourself when you've lost," Misbah wrote in his blog for PCB's official website. "But, we should remember that we were right on top until pretty much the last session of the game and we played very good cricket. Sure, we need to improve 10 to 15 per cent and deal with pressure situations a little better but we shouldn't be mentally down. "There is disappointment, of course, but we must not keep that feeling in our minds otherwise it will be difficult to come back but the team believes we can fight back," he added.

Squads:

England: Joe Root (C), James Anderson, Jofra Archer, Dominic Bess, Stuart Broad, Rory Burns, Jos Buttler, Zak Crawley, Sam Curran, Ollie Pope, Dom Sibley, Chris Woakes, Mark Wood, James Bracey, Ben Foakes, Jack Leach

Pakistan: Azhar Ali (C), Babar Azam, Abid Ali, AsadShafiq, Faheem Ashraf, FawadAlam, Imam ulhaq, Imran Khan, KashifBhatti, Mohammad Abbas, Mohammad Rizwan, Naseem Shah, Sarfraz Ahmed, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shan Masood, Sohail Khan, UsmanShinwari, WahabRiaz, Yasir Shah.



FC Barcelona player tests positive for Covid-19

Barcelona (IANS): An FC Barcelona player has tested positive for coronavirus after reporting back for pre-season training, the LaLiga side said in a statement on Wednesday.

The Catalan club, without revealing the identity of the player, said that he was isolating in his home and was asymptomatic. They also said that he had not been in contact with any of the players who are to travel to Lisbon for the Champions League tournament.

Meanwhile, Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski recently emphasised that he is fully focused on the clash against Barcelona after the German champions thrashed Chelsea 4-1 last Saturday to advance into the Champions League quarterfinals.

Lewandowski needed just 10 minutes to break the deadlock against Chelsea as he converted a penalty, while in the closing stages he made it 4-1 through a stunning header after receiving a cross from Alvaro Odriozola' from the right wing. Bayern crushed Chelsea 7-1 on aggregate to secure their place in the Champions League quarterfinals.

Women's int'l cricket returns for first time since 2020 T20 WC final

Dubai (IANS): Womens international cricket returned on Wednesday for the first time since the final of the T20 World Cup as Austria host Germany in the first of five T20Is.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all women's T20I cricket had been postponed, but on Wednesday, it returned after seven months when Australia defeated India in front of 86,174 fans at the Melbourne Cricket Ground(MCG) on March 8.

Germany - known as the Golden Eagles and ranked 27th in the ICC T20I Rankings - will be looking to gain points as they face 50th placed Austria in the battle to move up the rankings.

The Golden Eagles last played a T20I against Oman in February as part of a 4-0 series clean sweep. Austria will be playing for the first time since their quad-

regular series a year ago which included France, Jersey and Norway.

With just under 10,000 women and girls participating in cricket in Germany in 2019 the women's game is growing with overall female participation increasing 155 per cent since 2016, as per an ICC media release.

AnuradhaDoddaballapur, Germany captain said: "First up I'd like to thank everyone at Austria cricket for hosting us despite the current circumstances. We are excited to take the field again after a seemingly long break."

"The girls have worked hard in the last few months to stay fit and to up their skills, so I am confident we will put on a good show. We look forward to some exciting games against Austria whom we haven't faced in T20 cricket in a long time."



Hockey teams to resume activities at SAI Bengaluru from Aug 19

All 6 Covid-19 positive players shifted to hospital

New Delhi (IANS): The men's and women's hockey teams at the Sports Authority of India's National Centre of Excellence (NCOE) in Bengaluru will resume sporting activities from August 19, SAI said in a statement on Wednesday. The players had been asked to assemble at the campus on August 4.

SAI said that the decision was made after having "detailed discussions with all stakeholders, including the chief coaches and core probabilities of both the teams and after giving the utmost priority to the safety and well-being of all the athletes".

The schedule hence remains as was planned before despite six players from the men's team testing positive for COVID-19. Striker Mandeep Singh, captain Manpreet Singh, Jaskaran Singh, Surrender Kumar, Varun Kumar and Krishnan B Pathak, who have tested positive for coronavirus, have all been shifted to a multi-speciality hospital.

The players had been quarantined and undergoing treatment at the campus itself previously. The six players will rejoin the camp after completing their re-



covery and quarantine period.

Women's coach SjoerdMarjine said that the team is happy and "feeling safe".

"Having spoken to all the players about the resumption, I have received a positive response from each of them. We look forward to working hard on the team's fitness in this protected environment," said the Dutchman.

"It is good to know that everyone is eager while making sure their health and wellbeing is our collective priority. We are also in constant touch with the six players who have tested positive for COVID19. They are in good spirits, and are looking forward to a quick recovery. Once recovered and after following protocol of quarantine, we look forward to having them back with us," said men's coach Graham Reid.

'Sevilla can beat 'biggest team in the world' Man Utd'

Cologne (IANS): Sevilla manager JulienLopetegui has termed Manchester United as the biggest club in the world after his team set-up a semi-final clash against Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's troops in the Europa League.

Sevilla edged past Premier League side Wolves 1-0 in the quarter-final, courtesy of a Lucas Ocampos winner in the 88th minute on Tuesday night. The match also saw Raul Jimenez missing a first-half penalty for Wolves.



Sevilla's Lucas Ocampos(second from left) scores his side's opening goal during the Europa League quarterfinal soccer match between Wolves and Sevilla at the MSV Arena in Duisburg, Germany

The LaLiga side will now face Manchester United in the final four clash on Sunday for a place in the championship clash. The winner of this match will face the winner between Inter Milan and Shakhtar Donetsk.

"We are going to play against Manchester United in the next match - they're the biggest team in the world but we're going to be prepared for them," Lopetegui told reporters as per Daily Mail.

"We're focused on the next

game, against a top, historic side, one of the best in the history of the sport who are in great form.

"We will give our best as we always do. To play against them will be really tough, but we'll go into it believing we can beat them," he added. Sevilla will take confidence from the fact that they are the most successful team in the history of the competition. The Spanish side has won the Europa League record five times - 2006, 2007, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Club-level cricketer found dead at home

New Delhi (IANS): A club-level Mumbai cricketer has allegedly committed suicide after not being able to break into the Indian Premier League (IPL). 27-year-old Karan Tiwari was found hanging from the ceiling fan of his Malad (East) flat on Monday night and a friend reportedly said that he committed suicide. According to a report in Mid-Day, the friend said that Tiwari was depressed after not being able to make it to the lucrative IPL. Police said that an accidental death report has been filed and investigations are on. Tiwari had earlier bowled in the nets to a few IPL teams at the Wankhede Stadium. He was looking to get into a state-level team. However, according to the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) rules, a cricketer is eligible to get selected in the IPL auction only if he has represented his state at any age group. The Mid-Day report further said that Tiwari had informed his friend of his decision to commit suicide after which the latter called Tiwari's sister. She later informed her mother but by then it was too late.

Rajasthan Royals fielding coach tests corona positive

New Delhi (IANS): Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Rajasthan Royals on Wednesday announced that their fielding coach DishantYagnik has tested positive for coronavirus. The test was undertaken keeping in mind that the team members need to assemble in Mumbai next week for their flight to the UAE where the 13th IPL edition is set to be played from September 19 till November 10. Yagnik is currently in his hometown Udaipur and has been advised to get admitted to hospital for his 14-day quarantine, informed the franchise.

"Post 14 days, Dishant will be undergoing two tests as per the protocols of BCCI. On return of two negative reports, he will be allowed to join the team after self isolating for 6 days and receiving 3 further negative tests upon his arrival in the UAE," said Royals in a statement. The franchise further requested everyone, who has been in close proximity to the fielding coach in the past 10 days, to self isolate and get tested for COVID-19.



2022 CWG village plan scrapped due to pandemic

London (IANS): Organisers of the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games have decided to scrap the single athletes' village after a review of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic found it could not be completed in time. Instead, athletes will now be housed in multiple sites with 1,600 set to be housed at the NEC Hotel Campus and 1,900 at the University of Warwick. "The decision to move away from the single site athletes' village in the Perry Barr area of the city has been made by the Games Partnership with just under two years to go, after reviewing the impact of the global health pandemic," said the organisers in a statement.