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Khandan in no mood to quit

CWC asks Sonia to continue as interim chief, effects changes

HANS NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi: The sevenhour long Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting, called to discuss the turmoil within the Congress not only turned fiery but also witnessed day-long orchestrated protests and demands that Sonia Gandhi should continue as the party president.

The day of drama and denials ended with CWC passing a resolution asking Sonia Gandhi to continue as party president till the next session of the AICC was convened, may be six months from now indicating that the 'Khandaan' was in no mood to quit. The dissenters feel that CWC lost a chance of starting the process of revamping the organisation.

The CWC in its resolu-

The Dissenters

Veterans -- Ghulam Nabi Azad and Anand

Singh Hooda, Prithviraj Chavan, Rajinder Kaur

Bhattal, former Minister Mukul Wasnik, Kapil

Sibal, M Veerappa Moily, Shashi Tharoor, MP

Manish Tiwari, former MP Milind Deora, Jitin

signed the former heads of party units Raj Bab-

bar, Arvinder Singh Lovely, Kaul Singh Thakur,

Akhilesh Prasad Singh and Kuldeep Sharma.

Prasad and Sandeep Dixit. The letter also

Sharma, former Chief Minister's Bhupendra

Peek into past

1969

Dissent and split in Congress is not new. It has been through such turmoil in the past too. In 1969, the tussle between then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the old guard known as the 'Syndicate' reached a tipping point as Indira backed independent candidate VV Giri in the Presidential election. The party's official candidate, Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, lost and the party split and the then Congress president S Nijalingappaexpelled Indira Gandhi.

tion called the party cadre to strengthen the hands of the Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi and fight against divisive politics. It also said that inner party

1990

When a non-Gandhi, PV Narasimha Rao had to be made the Prime Minister in 1990, a rebellion took place and ND Tiwari and Arjun Singh left the party and launched a new party.

1998

There was a rebellion in Congress against Sitaram Kesari as the party president in 1998. tT was well orchestrated to install Sonia Gandhi as the presi-

issues cannot be raised at public forum. It authorised Congress president to organisational changes if she feels need **Continued on Page 5** for it.

CWC Durbaris

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder

Singh, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister

Bhupesh Baghel, Rajasthan Chief

Minister Ashok Gehlot, Puducherry

Chief Minister V Narayanasamy, Con-

gress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ran-

jan Chowdhury and former ministers

Ashwani Kumar, Salman Khurshid

and KK Tewary, among others

backed Gandhis.

A day in Congress Party

- Sonia offers to step down (no letter given) ► Former Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh and a few other leaders urge her to continue
- ► Rahul raises questions on timing of letter by dissenters. Attacks them for making party-related issues public. Says their acts are helping BJP Ruckus over collusion with BJP
- ► Ghulam Nabi Azad explains why he wrote
- the letter and offers to resign for being accused of colluding with BJP
- Kapil Sibal also offers to quit if charge of colluding with BJP proved
- Party spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala clarifies that Rahul Gandhi had not said any such thing
- Sibal withdraws tweets
- Ghulam Nabi Azad also made it clear that Rahul Gandhi has not made such an allega-
- CWC starts drumming up support for Rahul to take up responsibility
- ▶ Robert Vadra's "chela" Jagdish Sharma with his handful of followers stages a show demanding that Sonia continue as presi-

► Finally CWC decides that Sonia Gandhi will continue as party president till AICC session was called

Drama @ 24 Akbar Road

↑ hile the Congress Working Commit-**VV** tee meeting at 24 Akbar Road turned fiery and witnessed a massive di-

vide with wanting complete revamp of the party



organisational structure and others strongly supporting the continuation of the Gandhi family hegemony, a well-orchestrated move by one Jagdish Sharma, a close aide of Sonia Gandhi's son-in-law, Robert Vadra. Carrying placards like "Gandhi ke alawa adhyaksh manzoor nahi (nobody is acceptable as president except Gandhi)" and "Gandhi pariwar ke alawa koi adhyaksh bana, toh party toot hi jayegi (if anybody outside the Gandhi family becomes chief, the party will

U-turns of the day

The letter-writers in CWC were at receiving end. Man Mohan Singh and AK Antony had set the stage for isolation of letterwriters. Four of them, including Ghulam Nabi Azad are part of the CWC. Let's see who said what:



Ghulam Nabi Azad What I said was, yesterday some Congress person had said that we did it at behest of BJP & in that context I said, "It is most unfortunate that some colleagues (outside CWC) have accused us of collusion with BJP, and if those people can prove this allegation, I will resign."

Azad's U-turn

A section of media is wrongly attributing that in CWC I told Rahul Gandhi to prove that the letter written by us is in collusion with BJP-"let me make it very clear that Shri Rahul Gandhi has neither in CWC nor outside said that this letter was written at the behest of

Priyanka hits back Priyanka Gandhi hits back



saying you are opposite of what you have

written in the letter".

at Ghu-

Azad

lam Nabi



Kapil Sibal, who had fought many cases on behalf of Congress, including the latest one in Rajasthan High Court and had won, said Durbari's were backing Gandhis and allegations of his collusion with BJP was unfortu-

"Does not reflect well on you to react to hearsay"

■ Manickam Tagore, MP, on Sibal's tweet Kapil's U-Turn

Since Rahul Gandhi personally told me that he did not say that he (Sibal) had links with BJP, I am withdrawing my earlier tweet.

Poetic justice: Asad

After senior Ghulam Nabi Azad accused of "collusion with BJP" AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi said that Azad had accused him of the

same and called it "poetic justice". "Poetic Justice: GHULAM NABI Azad accused me of exactly this. Now you're accused of

Har Pal Aapke Saath

the same. 45 years of ghulami for this? Now it's proven that anyone opposing Janeudhari leadership will be branded B-Team. I hope Muslims now know the high cost of loyalty to Congress," Owaisi tweeted.

SC refuses to entertain plea for national policy on Covid compensation to victims

New Delhi (PTI): The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a plea seeking formulation of a national policy for uniform compensation for families of those who have died due the coronavirus disease.

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and R S Reddy dismissed the plea saying that every state has a different policy and gives compensation as

per its financial power. Advocate Deepak Prakash, appearing for petitioner Hashik Thayikandy, said that all he is asking for is a national policy to be formulated that would provide for uniform compensation throughout the country. So many people have died in India due to Covid-19 and the victims are not getting equal compensation, he said. Prakash said that in some

cases, the Delhi government has given Rs 1 crore as compensation, while some states are giving Rs 1 lakh. There is no uniform policy on compensation, he said. The bench said it is dismissing the plea, after which the counsel sought to withdraw it. The petitioner, has also sought a direction to the Centre as well as state governments to formulate an appropriate "compensation

plan" to provide ex-gratia monetary compensation to the kin of essential workers and healthcare workers who have succumbed to Covid -19.

It has urged the court to seek a status report from state governments on the total number of Covid -19-related causalities and measures taken by authorities for compensating for loss of life due to the coronavirus pandemic.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL I wanted to raise environmental concerns when he feeds me. But I also don't want to lose our national bird status!

62% parents not to send kids to school even if they reopen

New Delhi (IANS): A survey has found that 62 per cent of parents will not be sending their children to school even if they are reopened on government's orders on September 1.

According to the Local-Circles survey, only 6 per cent citizens are willing to visit multiplexes and theatres to watch movies in the next 60 days, even if they open on September 1.

Only 36 per cent citizens sav they will take metro or local trains in the next 60 days if they are restarted on September 1.

All this is when India's daily caseload for COVID-19 has now reached 70,000 cases and is now the highest in the world by a margin of over 40 per cent. With close to 400 districts with 1.000 total cases, Covid-19 is fast spreading into tier 3, 4 towns and rural India. In the LocalCircles survey in late July, 31 per cent citizens said that they had one or more Covid-19 positive cases in their social network.

Centre to expedite Warangal airport work

KTR urges Aviation Minister to speed up the project

HANS NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi: People of Warangal would soon have an airport facility as Union Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Monday gave his consent for a quick survey with an official team within 10 days.

This was informed by **Municipal Administration** Minister KT Rama Rao, who met the Aviation Minister in New Delhi on Monday. KTR had urged Hardeep Singh Puri to expedite the Warangal Airport work under the UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) scheme of the Central government. The



Vice-Chairman of Telangana State Planning Board B Vinod **Kumar meeting Union Minister for Housing and Urban** Affairs and Civil Aviation Hardeep Singh Puri at Nirman **Bhavan in New Delhi on Monday**

minister opined that there was scope for an airport in Warangal since it was under advanced stage. Warangal is the second biggest town in Telangana and it already has a runway facility at Mamanoor.

The minister said the Airport Authority of India had already taken up initial survey and had sought additional land for expansion of the runway in its meeting held on March 3 his year. The team was

but could not because of the lockdown. When this was brought to the notice of the Union minister, he had assured to send a team for survey within 10 days, said KTR, adding that the people of Warangal would soon get an airport. Replying to a question, the minister said that though there was a proposal for six airports, Warangal was under advanced stage.

supposed to visit the state

The Municipal minister explained about the development activities in municipalities and also the initiative of Pattana Pragathi. The minister sought release of Rs 2,537.81 crore dues to the municipal department from the Centre.

Continued on Page 5



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LAVANYA @ITSLAVANYA

Thank you nandureddyy for nominating me for this wonderful cause, and as they say "the more the merrier". I along with my brother asked these wonderful people to help us in this challenge and we together planted 50...



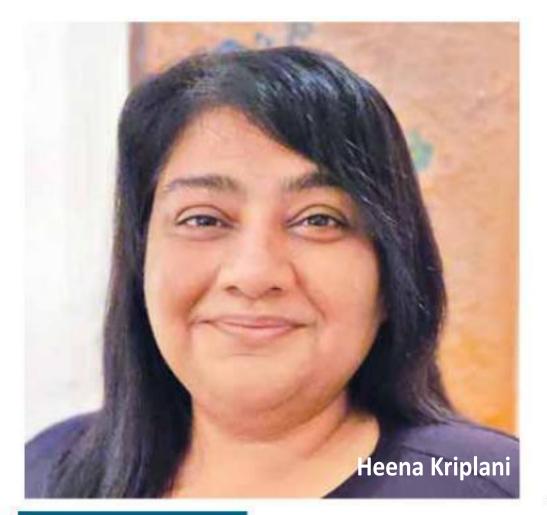
Providing global digital platform for local singers Indianness is

ASKARI JAFFER

unecore.in features local content that caters to the Indian independent artist community including guides written by local music industry veterans Achille Forler and Mae Thomas which provide practical steps, education and advice for Indian independent artists

With more than 18 years of experience in the music industry, Heena has built a strong relationship over the period, bringing together creators and experts while driving success stories. A firm believer in the music community, with artists being in the center, Heena is committed to enabling success for every Indian musician and believes that TuneCore offers them the tools to navigate their artistic careers.

Sharing about her experience till date in the music industry, Heena says, "I think the difference between now and then is really in the choices the artists have today. Because of the way the industry has evolved, the power to make their own decisions has come around to the artists. Services like TuneCore are part of



Having over 18 years of experience in the music industry, Heena Kriplani, now the **Country head at** TuneCore, believes that the music community with artists being in the centre, TuneCore offers them the tools to navigate their artistic careers

TuneCore, the leading digital music distribution service provider for independent artists belonging to parent company Believe, is excited to announce its continued international expansion with the launch of TuneCore in India. Tunecore.in allows Indian-based artists to collect revenue from streaming services, digital download stores, all in their local currency. With the new expansion, TuneCore India artists can distribute their music to TuneCore's extensive network of digital stores across the globe, including Spotify, iTunes/Apple Music, YouTube Music, Amazon Music, Deezer, as well as local India store, JioSaavn, with Gaana, Hungama and Wynk coming soon. TuneCore is partnered with over 150 digital stores and streaming services across 100+ countries worldwide providing independent artists with the opportunity to sell and share their music in important and growing global markets.

that evolution. The option to retain a 100per cent of your revenue while still having your music be available across the world was not something artists could even consider back when I started out."

She adds, "I'm a firm advocate of democracy in its most basic sense, where each person has a voice. It's the freedom to express yourself in the way of your choosing. I think every artist should evolve but stay authentic to their voice and message, language and genre."

At Believe and TuneCore, they are a firm believers and supporters of local, home-grown talent. TuneCore is for everyone, right from a first time musician, to someone who just wants to experiment with music, to the established artists. With a country like ours, the talent is immense, diverse and dispersed. Artists emerge from bustling cities, small towns and remote villages. They aim to provide this talent with the means to reach audiences and each artist's journey is different.

"With a pinch of salt and never losing sight of the bigger picture, I think it's necessary to take care of yourself, but it's equally important to widen your circle of concern and make sure you reach out and help as much as you possibly can. While we're all physically isolating, I think it's necessary to keep ourselves mentally and emotionally involved with our immediate and extended circles." concludes Heena.

deep red, and dark blue, are good choices for cold-weather wedding attire. Peach, mauve-pink, pale yellow, and light blue come together in beautiful harmony to set a lighthearted, happy mood for any spring wedding. Bright colours, like fuchsia, lime green, and pastels are more acceptable at beach weddings or outdoor weddings. For autumn, think velvet, satin, silks, and shimmering materials in colourful, jewel-

9 6



inclusiveness

ARUNDHUTI BANERJEE

habana Azmi cites the example of greats such as late shehnai legend Ustad Bismillah Khan and late sarod maestro Ustad Ali Akbar Khan to underline her point that true art is created when it is kept away from religious extremism. She notes that the very essence of Indianness is inclusiveness.

"We have to make redundant the questions that prevent the practice of art, and bring religious extremism in between. There are people who say music and art is prohibited in Islam, but look at how iconic artistes like Ustad Bismillah Khan, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan and so many other artistes have earned respect and success with their art and craft because they have made that question redundant thanks to their artistic excellence. If we want to build a progressive society, we have to get rid of such questions," said Shabana.

Shabana Azmi's thought process defines the theme of the film "Mee Raqsam", which released digitally this weekend. The actress has presented the film, which marks the directorial debut of her brother, veteran cinematographer Baba Azmi. The film is about a Muslim girl who desires to become a bharatnatyam dancer, but hardliners in her community react with intolerance to her dream and try to curtail her efforts because they have a problem with the fact that the dance form originates in Hindu

mythology. Baba Azmi and actor Danish Husain, who plays a central role in the film, agree with Shabana's viewpoint that the pursuit of a particular art can never be judged by one's religious identity or the origin of the art itself.

Danish shares, "If the origin of bharatnatyam lies in Hindu mythology, it is but obvious that the influences in the art form will come from Hindu gods and goddesses. The qawwali, for instance, is a form of music that emerged from Sufi tradition and Amir Khusrau, so it will have Islamic influences. Now, see how extremely talented Dhruv Sangari is as a qawwali singer. But qawwali doesn't come from Hindu mythology. That does not mean that one can question why Dhruv sings the qawwali. That is the barrier we have to break. Anyone, who is interested in an art form, can learn and practice

it, irrespective of the origin of



Veteran actress Shabana Azmi shuns the hardliner stance that music and art are prohibited in Islam

the art form."

Director Baba Azmi said that Art is a part of culture and Religion is a different topic.

He adds,"You are born into a religion. If you find any art form fascinating and are interested to learn it, it is your choice. How does it matter which art form originated from which religion? If a youngster, who is a Muslim, finds bharatnatyam as a beautiful dance form and wishes to learn it, why should religion and society stop her? Art is different from religion, art itself is a religion."

"Indianness is inclusiveness. That inclusiveness makes us celebrate our diversity. We are like a bouquet of flowers with different fragrances but when these come together they spread the beautiful fragrances," Shabana signed off.

Get picture perfect bridal look

s you can't wait indefinitely for the pandemic to be over and have decid-▲ed to get married in the COVID time by organizing a small scale ceremony that remains an intimate affair with a closeknit family, a priest or a pandit and a photographer and videographer.

Whether the wedding is happening at your home or at some outdoor location getting yourself photographed remains very important for you as you want to share these special and most important moments with all relatives, friends, and loved ones who couldn't make it to your wedding. Hence looking the best version of yourself remains very important and crucial.

Ace Fashion Designer and Styling Expert Rachel J Amrithraj shares insightful information with you to look picture perfect and make your wedding look Instagram worthy.

> **Colour coordinating** does the trick Coordinating your look is the key, don't copy

the colour and style of the dress of your spouse but just colour contrast the look. It is always a great photo-ops when families come together and dress up in sync. To create the same all you need is a bit of coordination and the right colour palette.

Avoid creating a contrasting effect by going for contrasting colours, stick to one colour as this creates an illusion from top to bottom, and helps in giving you a slimmer look.

Go for twirly outfits with a trail and frills, all this looks very fancy and captivating in pictures. Go for Maxi dresses for a flattering and feminine look in pictures due to the flowy material.

Pop of colours to brighten up the look

Cheerful colours always can look attractive on the camera hence you can pick happy colours that suit your skin type and accentuate the charm by going for neutral detailing done to strike a balance. If you have the challenging body shape you can opt for subdued hues like whites, beige, pastels. Bright colours tend to attract attention away from your face and toward your body in the pictures.

If you are on a shorter or heavier side opt for a drop waist which will complement your physique, jewel tones and darker colours, like emerald, plum, burgundy,



- Rule over (5) A collection of things (5)
- Rowdy (7)

Across

- 10 Sick and tired (3,2)
- 11 Magical symbol (5)
- 12 D-day beach (5) 13 Slow musical movements
- 15 Afternoon drink (3)
- 17 Land in the water (4)
- 18 Hero of Virgil's epic poem (6)
- 19 Grant (5)
- 20 Eluded (6)
- 22 Bay (4)
- 24 Decease (3) 25 Invoke evil upon (7)
- 26 Chapter heading (5)
- 27 A threshing tool ? (5) 28 Finger, toe (5)
- 29 Of the heart (7)
- 30 Conceal; put away in a
- safe place (5)
- 31 Green gemstone (5)

CROSSWORD

Down

- 2 Puts right (6)
- Feeling of ill-will (6)
- Bite or nibble at (3)
- 5 Tiny particles (5)
- 6 Kalahari inhabitants (7) 7 Our continent (4)
- 8 Black Sea peninsular (6)
- 12 Seeped (5)
- 13 Gave help (5)
- 14 Pond scum (5)
- 15 Male voice (5)
- 16 Awry (5)
- 18 Concur (5)
- 19 Samson's mistress (7) 21 Reddish blue colour (6)
- 22 Selection (6)
- 23 In truth (6)
- 25 Cutter's edge, sword or knife (5)

26 Spasms affecting facial

muscles (4) 28 Light stroke (3)

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	6	9	7	3	5	4	1	8	2

Sara Ali Khan's combo to beat Monday blues: Pool, pink bikini, blue kohl

wimming pool Dhot pink bikini and bright blue kohl comprise the formula of Sara Ali Khan to beat Monday blues.

In her new Instagram picture, Sara hits the pool in hot pink bikini. She has no make-up but bright blue kohl.

"Monday Blues, Blue Hues, Kaajal or Cactus couldn't choose, So posing with both while my coffee brews," Sara captioned the image, habitually as she does

from time to time with a dash of rhyme. Recently, Sara had posted two pictures

in a neon bikini, sitting in the pool on a unicorn float.

In the professional front, Sara will be seen opposite Varun Dhawan in the remake of the 1995 hit film "Coolie No. 1". The new version is directed by David Dhawan, who also helmed the original film of the same name, starring Govinda and Karisma Kapoor.

The actress also stars with Akshay Kumar and Dhanush in "Atrangi Re". Shooting for the film is set to commence in Oc-

BP drugs may improve Covid survival rates, says study

London: Medication for high blood pressure may improve Covid-19 survival rates, and reduce the severity of novel coronavirus infection, particularly in patients with hypertension, according to a study. Researchers from the University of East Anglia in the UK studied 28,000 patients taking antihypertensives -- a class of drugs that are used to treat hypertension or high blood pres-

The study, published in the journal Current Atherosclerosis Reports, found that the risk of severe Covid-19 illness and death was reduced for patients with high blood pressure who were taking Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme inhibitors (ACEi) or Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARB).

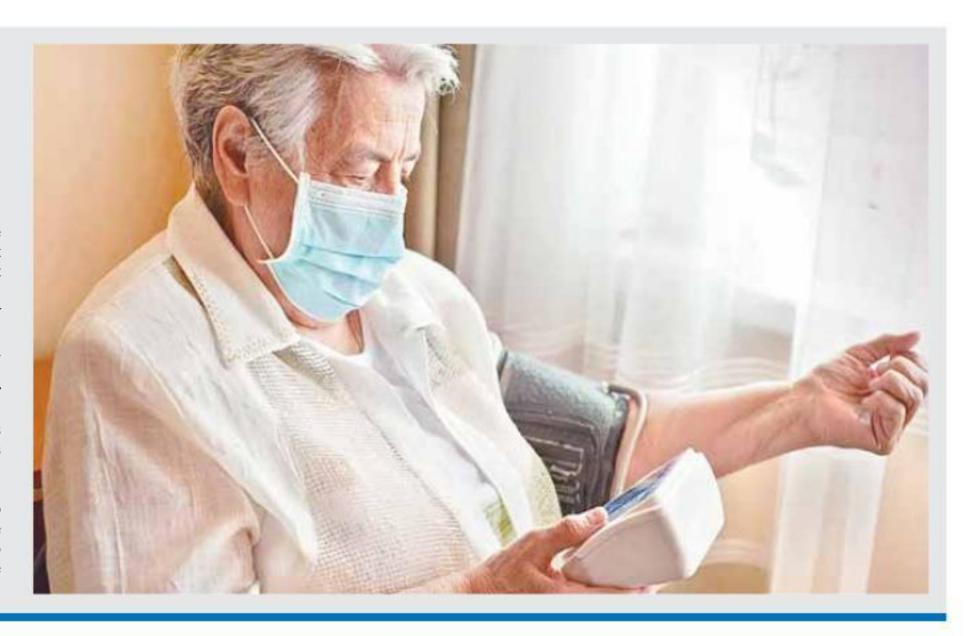
"We know that patients with cardiovascular diseases are at particular risk of severe Covid-19 infection," said lead researcher Vassilios Vassiliou, from UEA's Norwich Medical School.

"But at the start of the pandemic, there was concern that specific medications for high blood pressure could be linked with worse outcomes for COVID-19 patients," Vassiliou said.

The researchers, including those from Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, analysed what the impact of these medications is for people with COVID-19. They studied the outcomes for patients taking antihypertensives, looking particularly at what is called 'critical' outcomes such as being admitted to intensive care or being put on a

ventilator, and death. Meanwhile, the UK government has announced that tougher measures targeting the most serious breaches of social distancing restrictions will come into effect on Friday ahead of the bank holiday weekend.

In a statement, the Home Office said that those facilitating or organising illegal raves, unlicensed music events, or any other unlawful gathering of 30 people or more may face a 10,000-pounds (\$13,087) fine, reports Xinhua news agency. Fines of 100 pounds will continue to be issued to those who participate in illegal gatherings and those who have already received a fine will see the amount of doubled on each offence, up to a maximum of 3,200 pounds, said the statement.



Fly overseas NEET candidates in Vande Bharat flights: SC

New Delhi: Students from abroad who wish to sit for the national eligibility test for medical and dental courses should be accommodated in the Vande Bharat flights, the Supreme Court told the government . The court also suggested to the Medical Council of India -- which conducts NEET -- that from next year, the exam can be held online to bypass the accessibility issues, according to NDTV report.

Earlier this month, the court had dismissed a petition to postpone the crucial Joint Entrance main exam and the NEET -scheduled for September --- in view of the coronavirus outbreak. A number of political leaders have asked the government to reconsider the issue.

The judgment from the court, which came on August 17, have created difficulty for the parents and students living abroad as international flight services remain suspended due to the pandemic.

The students had gone to the top court, asking that the government set up overseas centres for the exam. "Like JEE, which has exam centres abroad, NEET should also have centres as the students cannot come to India to write the examinations," argued Harris Beeran, who was representing the petitioners.



Aaditya asks PM to adopt January as academic year

Mumbai: Maharashtra Environment and Tourism Minister Aaditya Thackeray writes to PM Narendra Modi asking for exams to be postponed in the wake of the ongoing Covid pandemic. "I have written to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri@narendramodi ji on the health risk that the proposed exams of various streams, and entrance exams, would have for students and families across India and for his personal intervention," he tweeted. He suggested that all exams be postponed since it would pose a risk to students appearing for exams at centres as well as their families apart from invigilators and examiners. He suggested that for non-professional courses, students be passed. He urged the PM to consider starting the academic year from January 2021 instead of the present June/July 2020.

"If the Joint Entrance Exam can be held online then you should consider NEET also to be held in an online form from next year," the court suggested to the

Medical Council of India. For this year, the three-judge bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao, Hemant Gupta and S. Ravindra Bhat said the Centre should

MAMATA OPPOSES CENTRE'S DECISION

Kolkata (IANS): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday urged the Centre for the second time to postpone NEET, JEE 2020. She said that the exams should not be held until the situation is conducive again.

The West Bengal CM said if the exams are conducted as scheduled, it would put students' lives at risk from the Covid-19 pandemic. "In our last video conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modiji, I had been vocal against the UGC guidelines mandating completion of terminal examinations in universities and colleges by the end of September 2020, which had a huge potential to put student lives at risk," Banerjee tweeted.

pitch in and ensure that the overseas students reach on time to take the exam.

ISI blackmailed Gorakhpur man using sex worker in Karachi

New Delhi/Lucknow (IANS): Pakistan's ISI spy agency blackmailed a middle-aged Indian Muslim widower visiting his relatives in Karachi, using a sex worker to honey trap him so that he would work for them.

The ISI, notorious for sponsoring cross-border terrorism, used the services of a young sex worker in Karachi to blackmail 51-year-old Mohammed Arif, a resident of Gorakhpur in UP.

These facts have come to light under 'Op Gorakhdhanda' that was initiated by Military Intelligence (MI) and Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terror Squad (ATS) to unearth a Karachibased ISI unit aimed at recruiting spies in India.

ATS Additional Director General of Police D.K. Thakur confirmed that Arif was detained.

Officials told IANS that in June, Lucknow-based MI unit received an intel input from its counterpart in Jammu & Kashmir, regarding suspicious activity on a Gorakhpur-based mobile number. The Lucknow MI unit sprung into action and monitored the suspect in Gorakhpur, the eastern UP town near the Indo-Nepal border. The MI codenamed the operation 'Op Gorakhdhanda'.

During the investigation, the input was corroborated electronically and the suspect was identified as Mohammed Arif who



had suspicious connections with Pakistan. The MI unit shared all the findings with UP ATS in the first week of July, following which a joint team was formed to investigate the case.

After sufficient evidence was gathered, a team of UP ATS on Friday brought the suspect Mohammed Arif for questioning at ATS headquarters in Lucknow. Arif was questioned by MI and UP ATS officials on Friday and Saturday.

Sources said the suspect during the questioning revealed the details of how he had been recruited by the ISI in Pakistan.

Arif, who runs a tea snacks stall in Gorakhpur, became a widower in 2014. He has several relatives in Karachi, Pakistan including two of his paternal aunts and their families and a close cousin Hazara and her husband Hashim Ansari. Arif also got his sister Zarina married to a Karachi resident named Shahid.

The widower visited Pakistan four times - 2014, 2016, 2017 and December, 2018. On his last visit, Arif entered Pakistan through Jodhpur via Thar Express. In Karachi, two Pakistani officials who called themselves Fahad and Rana Aqeel paid a visit to his sister Zarina's house and introduced themselves as visa officials who had come for verification.

Sources said the two were part of Pakistani intelligence agency ISI and were operating under fake names. After the said verification was done, they visited again a few days later. Their visits became regular and more informal. The two agents pretended to be good friends and started taking Arif around the city of Karachi. The three would roam in the malls, sea beaches, restaurants, would have food and return home.



Is Souray joining BJP? BCCI chief returns land to Mamata

Kolkota: With the West Bengal Assembly elections due next year, BJP's quest for a credible face as the state's chief ministerial candidate received an unexpected boost when Sourav Ganguly reportedly returned a piece of land that was given to him to build a school in Kolkata's rapidly developing eastern metropolis, New Town.

The former Indian cricket captain, now serving as the president of the high-profile Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), recently met West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee at her office to return a two-acre land that was provided to him by the Trinamool Congress govern-

Ganguly had earlier received land from the erstwhile Left Front government to build a school but the cricket star never got hold of that piece of real estate in Salt Lake due to legal problems, said a senior bureaucrat in former urban development and municipal affairs minister and CPM stalwart Ashok Bhattacharya's office.

It is learnt that the West Bengal Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation, at the behest of the TMC government, had allocated land to Ganguly for building an up to Class XII (ICSE) school. Ganguly soon ran into legal issues here as well.

13,716 Maha police tested +ve so far

Mumbai: At least 120 more police personnel have been found to be Covid positive. One

policeman has died in the last 24 hours in Maharashtra. The total number of Corona positive



police personnel in Maharashtra reaches 13,716 including 2,528 active cases, 11,049 recoveries & 139 deaths till date.

Haryana Speaker tests positive

Chandigarh IANS): Two days ahead of the Haryana Assembly's Monsoon Session, Speaker Gian Chand Gupta has tested

positive for coronavirus.Deputy Speaker Ranbir Gangwar will preside over the Assembly session starting on August 26

in Gupta's absence. Two legislators too have tested corona positive. A day earlier, Gupta's Political Secretary and his nephew were among the six Assembly staff who tested positive for the virus.

Lockdown in Auckland

Auckland: The COVID-19 restrictions in New Zealand's largest city, Auckland, will continue at the current Alert Level 3 until Sunday night, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced on Monday. Wearing masks are also mandatory from Monday on public transport, the Prime Minister said. The rest of the country other than Auckland will remain at Alert Level 2, Ardern said while announcing the government decision after a Cabinet meeting.

6 more US soldiers infected

Seoul(IANS): Six more American soldiers stationed in South Korea have tested positive for Covid-19 amid the recent surge in

locally transmitted cases in the country, the US Forces Korea (USFK) said on Monday. It said in a state-

ment that the six USFK service members were infected after arriving in South Korea between August 10-21, reports Xinhua news agency. Four service members arrived at the Osan Air Base aboard US government-chartered flights from on August 10

Sonu Sood offers accommodation

Mumbai: Actor Sonu Sood who had earlier launched a job portal 'Pravasi Rojgar' to help migrant labourers, on Monday said he will also be offering accommodation to the 20,000 workers who have been employed in a garment unit in Noida through the application. 'Dabangg' actor who is being hailed as the 'messiah' for his philanthropy work, took to Twitter to share about his new initiative aimed at providing accommodation to the migrant workers.

23-lakh patients recover

India records 61K new corona cases, tally crosses 31L

New Delhi(IANS): With 61,407 fresh Coronavirus infections in 24 hours, India's tally mounted to 31,06,348 on Monday, while the death toll climbed to 57,542 with 836 more fatalities, said the Health Ministry.

Recoveries have crossed the 23-lakh mark and surged to 23,38,035 with 57,469 more people recuperating in the past 24 hours, taking the recovery rate to 74.90 per cent. The actual caseload of the country is the active cases, which currently stands at 7,10,771.

India's journey to the 31-lakh mark Covid cases took 208 days since the emergence of the first case on January 30. On July 17, the country logged 10 lakh cases, which then doubled to 20 lakh in 20 days on August 7 and added over 10 lakh cases in just 16 days.

The case fatality rate, which is the proportion of people who die from the disease among individuals diagnosed, has dropped to 1.86 per cent, the Ministry said. As many as 6,09,917 samples were tested on Sunday.



Maharashtra remained the worst-hit state with a total of 6,82,383 cases and 22,253 deaths; followed by Tamil Nadu with 3,79,385 cases and 6,517 deaths. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi,

West Bengal and Bihar come next. On the global front, India continues to be the third worsthit after the US with 57,01,557 cases and 1,76,797 deaths, followed by Brazil with 36,05,783 infections and 1,14,744 deaths.

Another plane crash passenger succumbs

Kochi: A 37-year-old woman, injured in the Air India Express plane crash at the nearby Karipur airport on August 7, died at a hospital in Kozhikode, taking the death toll in the accident to 21, government sources said on Monday. Manjula Kumari died on Sunday night, the sources said. The woman had been to the United Arab Emirates to meet her husband early this year, but had to extend her stay due to the Covid pandemic. Eighteen people, including the pilot and co-pilot, were killed and several others injured when the flight from Dubai with 190 people onboard overshot the tabletop runway and fell into a valley. It had broken into pieces in the impact. While a 53-yearold passenger succumbed to his injuries on August 22, a 68-yearold man, undergoing treatment for leg injuries, died of heart attack on August 17.



SRM Chancellor inaugurates new campus for Agri Science

Kattankulathur: Founder Chancellor of SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST), Dr. T. R. Paarivendhar, MP., on Monday inaugurated the new campus for the College of Agricultural Science and the Paarivendhar Telemedicine Centre on the occasion of his birthday.

The new campus of the College of Agricultural Science will function from Vendhar Nagar, Baburayanpettai, Chengalpattu district and the Paarivendhar Telemedicine Centre is to function from SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre (SRM MCHRC) in Kattankulathur.

The event was presided over by SRMIST's Pro Chancellor (Academics) Dr. P. Sathyanarayanan, Vice Chancellor Dr. Sandeep Sancheti, Pro Vice Chancellor (S&H) Dr. R Balasubramanian, Pro Vice Chancellor Dr. C. Muthamizhselvan, Registrar Dr. N Sethuraman, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Medical) of SRM MCHRC Lt. Col. Dr. A. Ravi Kumar.

Speaking at the event which was held virtually, Dr. T. R. Paarivendhar said, "The agriculture school was started a few years back in SRMIST in a small way, now they have a place of their own with all facilities."

UP's jungle raj continues unabated

The India Executive Board of the Commonwealth **▲** Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) had recently called on the Allahabad High Court to institute and monitor an investigation into the encounter killing of Vikas Dubey and his associates, in line with the requirements laid down by the Supreme Court in the 2014 landmark judgment (PUCL v. State of Maharashtra and Ors). Meanwhile, the Apex Court decided on an enquiry. However, nothing seems to have changed in the State to indicate an attitudinal change in the police or the government. Even diehard fans of Yogi Adityanath, the Chief Minister of UP, would not deny that the law and order has worsened in the State in recent times. Though, the Chief Minister claims that he will rid the State of the criminal elements, the rapes and brutal killings of girls do not

prove the point. What is more worrying is the fact that the Opposition is tight-lipped in most cases. Girls and women of the marginalised sections in the State are still as insecure as they were in the past. In addition, we have the ominous silence of the Opposition. According to the annual report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), a case of rape is registered with the Uttar Pradesh police every two hours while crime against a child is reported every 90 minutes in the State. The NCRB report, released recently, claims that 4,322 cases of rape were reported in 2018, with almost 12 taking place daily. The State also recorded 59,445 crimes against women with 162 being reported everyday which indicates a surge of 7 per cent in 2017, when 56,011 crimes - 153 crimes per day - were registered. In case of children, 144 girls were reportedly raped in 2018 against 139 in 2017. According to the NCRB report, Lucknow topped in 19 cities in crime against women with 2,736 being reported in 2018. Similarly, 19,936 crimes were reported against children with 55 reported per day in the State. In 2017, 19,145 such cases were reported with an average of

52 being reported per day. Uttar Pradesh also recorded the highest number of 2,444 dowry deaths in 2018 but witnessed a decrease of 3 per cent in comparison to 2017 when 2,524 cases were reported. Crimes against senior citizens also recorded an increase, according to the NCRB report. As many as 454 offences were reported in 2018, which is more than 12 per cent in 2017. Nearly 131 elderly people were murdered in 2018, compared to 129 killed in 2017. Cases of robbery reported by senior citizens also registered a slight increase with 15 incidents in 2018 and 14 in 2017. The State also saw an increase in cases of cybercrimes in 2018. Nearly 6,280 cybercrime cases were reported in 2018, an increase of 26 per cent as compared to 2017. The DGP had yet another defence too when he said that the crimes must be seen in the context of the population of the State. The CHRI should have asked for an investigation into the crumbling law and order situation itself. UP has turned into a jungle raj. The Centre is not bothered because of its compulsions and the State has its own agenda. May 'Lord Ram' save the people of UP!

SC order on PM CARES, blow to accountability



he judgment the ■ Supreme Court regarding 'PM CARES Fund' inflicts a serious blow to the accountability of institutions carrying out public activities. The public nature of the charitable trust and enormous

tax reliefs granted to it was ignored by the apex court. It is unfortunate. It might embolden every State government also come up with such funds which are not accountable.

BJP executive president Nadda commented that this judgment was a blow to Rahul Gandhi and his Congress party. The Union government has totally ignored the statute-provided trust - National Disaster Response Fund, (NDRF) under National Disaster Management Act, 2005, with sufficient provisions of accountability and auditing. It has created another 'fund' without any strict provision for 'accountability'. This fund has the validation by the Supreme Court which surely not conducive for good governance.

The Bench of SC has completely agreed with the stand of the government that (a) PM-CARES was a "public charitable trust" to which "anyone can contribute", that (b) it is a "misconception" that contributions received by a public trust such as PM-CARES could be transferred to a statutory fund such as the NDRF, (c) the existence of PM-CARES fund to receive "voluntary donations" as an entity separate and distinct from the NDRF.

The SC appears to have adopted technical interpretation keeping aside the duties of 'trust' and trustee of PM CARES fund, i.e., the PMO, to which thousands of crores of rupees are pouring in.

Because the PM CARES Fund is not officially a Union government fund, though it really is, the CAG does not have any constitutional obligation to audit this 'fund'. It is obvious that by adopting this route, carefully the 'hurdle' of compulsory auditing is avoided.

Three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court on 18th August 2020 also felt that funds received into the PM-CARES Fund need not be credited to the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF). But Covid-19 pandemic is a disaster, whole law is set to deal with the disaster. The governments are using this law to assume powers and impose penalties for defiance of guidelines or instructions to tackle the disaster, but when it comes to accountability, it is not considered. Creating another Fund devoid of accountability, when a comprehensive law is already in place to manage such fund, comes under severe criticism.

Incidentally, this PIL was also filed by Centre for Public Interest Litigation represented by Prashant Bhushan who is facing sentence for his tweet about how the SC judgments were silent when the executive was destroying the democratic institutions. Compared to NDRF, the PM CARES Fund is free from accountability, presence of member from Opposition



Section 4(1)(c) of RTI Act mandates PMO to "publish all relevant facts while formulating important policies or announcing the decisions which affect public". People including petitioner can legitimately expect that PMO could have been directed to disclose these details periodically on its own on the official website. It was disappointing that it was not done. Both the 'PM Cares Fund' the 'PMO', which manages, controls, and allocates from that fund are the 'public authorities' as per RTI Act. It is not disputed that PMO is already under the purview of RTI Act. The PMO has complete control over the PM CARES Fund. It cannot escape saying it is not public authority

party and by its practice 'transparency' also. The SC ignored the points raised by two senior advocates. One - Dushyant Dave pointed out that PM-CARES was not subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General. It was not under "public scrutiny" and contributions to it were "100 % tax free". Two - Kapil Sibal argued that corporate contributors were lured to donate to PM-CARES because they could avail of corporate social responsibility benefits, which was not possible in the case of donations to States'

The SC is right, there is no statutory prohibition on individuals to make voluntary contributions to NDRF under Section 46(1)(b) of the Disaster Management Act of 2005. Question is not about presence or absence of prohibition; it is about statutory norms of accountability. If PM CARES within itself should have provisions for audit, accountability, and transparency. Simply because of name being different, the fund should remain unaccountable or what? Shyamlal Yadav, an RTI activist journalist of The Indian Express has sent RTI queries to 55 PSUs and received, and until August 13, responses from 38, which showed that they contributed a total of Rs 2,105.38 crore over the past five months from budget allocations in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. Many organisations donated huge amounts even before the budget is finalised. Some gave more than what was allocated under Corporate Social Responsibility funds.

This fund had a corpus of Rs 3,076.62 crore on March 31, 2020, of which Rs 3,075.85 crore was listed as "voluntary contributions", according to its official

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Perhaps realising this, the PMO responded to Lokesh Batra (retd Commodore) differently. It said the information sought would disproportionately divert the resources, without claiming that it was not public authority. Lokesh Batra asked for the total number of RTI applications and appeals received and disposed of in the PMO each month since April 2020, as well as the number of such applications and appeals related to PM-CARES and the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund. The CPIO of Prime Minister's Office (PMO) denied saying: "The information sought by you is not maintained in this office in compiled form. Its collection and compilation would disproportionately divert the resources of this office from the efficient discharge of its normal functions, thereby attracting the provisions under Section 7(9) of the Act". Section 7(9), on the other hand, only says, "An information shall ordinarily be provided in the form in which it is sought unless it would disproportionately divert the resources of the public authority or would be detrimental to the safety or preservation of the record in question."

If it is difficult to give information in the form sought, the public authority could give it in available form. But information cannot be denied. Kerala High Court clarified in 2010 that this provision, does not even confer any discretion on a public authority to withhold information, let alone any exemption from disclosure, it only gives discretion to the public authority to provide the information in a form other than the form in which the information is sought for." Thus, this is a clear case of abuse and factually a false statement.

If some individual or an Indian corporate or Chinese corporate that has donated thousands of crores of rupees to this PM CARES Fund, why it should not be known to the people, who are supposed to be ultimate beneficiaries during this pandemic? Why a citizen cannot ask under RTI, "Who are the donors who gave Rs 3,076 crore in the first five days in March 2020? Do they include Chinese firms? What is the amount received since April 1, 2020 and who are the donors? How these funds are allocated? Who will allocate? If a proposal requires funding immediately from PM CARES Fund is rejected, why it is rejected? How the amount is spent so far for Covid-19 pandemic and what is the relief they could achieve? The accountability mechanism and access to information system legally incorporated under RTI are democratic requirements, should not be weakened if rulers are sincere about giving corruption-free government.

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

How safe is unlock 3.0 phase for schools and colleges?

FATIMA HASAN

66 T ducation should be opened up. Covid-19 may continue for La year more. Are you going to wait for another year? Do you know what the loss for the country is and the career peril for the students?" Justice Arun Mishra observed while rejecting the plea for postponement of NEET. The situation now is very unpredictable, and procrastination simply means hoping for good normal days which are not likely to come soon.

When a virus develops into a health hazard of pandemic proportions, with no proper medical treatment, then the only way out is to start to learn to live with it. Self-resistance and immunity boost can work best. In March 2020, when the lockdown was first announced for 11 days, the schools and colleges were closed for the period but as the situation continued to worsen, educational institutions were closed sine die.

Around the world, the

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Since June onwards, the unlock 1.0 started with the standard operating procedure (SOP) and preventive measures in place for shopping malls, restaurants, shops, religious places, workplaces etc, safety measures in some while the containment zone areas were to observe lockdown with several restrictions. Again, the unlock 2.0 rolled out rules easing the movement and other restrictions with continued night curfew. However, it did not permit opening of schools and colleges.

Subsequently in unlock 3.0, the gyms and yoga centres were opened, and the night curfew was revoked but the educational institutions remain closed. As of today, the number of Covid-19 cases recorded across the country is almost 30 lakhs. Amid the rising cases, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy has announced the decision to reopen schools and colleges from September 5 and October 15 respectively.

There are different views on this issue in various States. Now the question is, how far this idea of reopening educational institutions is going to work out? And, if the reopening is further postponed, till when this situation is going to last? What safety measures are to be taken for students if the educational institutions are

Around the world, the schools and colleges started opening with safety measures in some places, and to everyone's surprise, a high school in Indiana (USA) had to shift to online learning after just two days. And students in Mississippi (USA) were forced to quarantine after classmates tested positive for coronavirus during the first week of classes. This signals that opening up educational institutions and gathering of students in mass numbers is still dangerous and the Covid-19 pandemic may affect all despite the measures taken.

Considering the seriousness of the problem, the UPSC Civil Services Prelims examination, which was scheduled to be held on May 31, was postponed to October 4. Other important examinations like NEET, JEE and other common entrance tests are scheduled in September and the Union government has decided to conduct these by providing transportation and other required measures for safety purposes. The government is firm on its decision of conducting these exams.

However, with the rising Covid-19 cases, it is a wait and watch show to see if this really happens and how successful will the government be in taking the precautions. Apart from this, the government departments and administrative wings were holding virtual meetings. The government has even tried the online classes, but it also did not prove to be of good with numerous complaints.

On the other hand, when we take the opinion of parents on opening of institutions, they seem reluctant to send their wards to schools and colleges anytime this year. This could in one way be taken as the result of all-pervasive fear of Covid-19 that has gripped their minds. But this fear has to go. People need to be calm and they have to understand that once the vaccine is out, then the pandemic can be controlled and there will not be fatalities anymore due to the virus.

Considering all pros and cons, some of the steps for reopening educational institutes are – firstly, the government has to allow the States to conduct the entrance tests (EAMCET, PG Entrance Tests, UGC NET, IGNOU OPENMAT, Delhi University entrance test etc) scheduled in September with the safety measures. Then, after observing the situation, the schools and colleges can be reopened in the last week of September.

For a few days, for ensuring containment of Covid-19, schools and colleges should function only for thrice in week. The government will have to take steps for public transportation and for ensuring sanitisation. The government should also set up a committee to look into how the academic schedule can be continued and will it be possible to implement the new National Education Policy.

Accordingly, the government should also run awareness programme for parents to make them ready to send their wards to schools and colleges. Regular check-ups of school and college goers should be done periodically to ensure their safety. Thereafter, gradually, things will get back on track and the educational institutions can be opened full-fledged.

(The writer is an independent journalist based in Hyderabad. Views expresses are personal)

Work from home: The new normal

ike the rest of the globe, Hyderabad is also slowly Lalearning to live with Covid-19. Reports suggest that all the pandemic related restrictions would be withdrawn soon. One thing is certain, Covid-19 pandemic will ever be remembered for many wrong reasons, even if an 'all clear' is sounded. But not all is negative about the pandemic at workplaces. The pandemic has set the tone for many new normal among establishments across the sectors, government offices included. In a first, offices have widely welcomed work from home model. Work from home was originally implemented to save the employees from getting exposed to the infection prone environments. This also saved many from the hassles of getting to travel when public transport is shut, and cabs and

auto rickshaws fail to keep up the booking. Soon the work from home gained wide acceptance from the employees and employers. Even today in the city, when all the offices are allowed to work with full capacity, many of them continue to operate with lesser numbers. Half or even the whole of the workforce are working remotely. Yes, the work from home is here to stay. Google and Facebook have extended its work-fromhome policy for the remainder of 2020 and we will start to see other companies follow.

The reasons are much more than just the employees' convenience. Work from home has definitely contributed improvement in productivity and saving costs, if media



LETTERS

reports are to be believed. As this option was offered for a limited number of days earlier, companies might not have examined this angle before. It is said that even public sector companies are likely to take a cue from the benefits of remote working. However, the attributes of a lockdown situation and a normal one might differ. For example, lockdown is sans social activities for the employees and their productive time gets stretched. This

may not happen when the situation normalises. Work from home had a low rate of adoption till now because of customers' apprehensions on security issues. But when the Covid-19 made work from home a compulsion, the companies acted proactively. Logistics and infrastructure, customers' consent, security protocols, connectivity issues, just to name a few, were all addressed in a record time. Hence the extending work from home now has less hassles. However, there are other challenges too when work from home becomes a routine. The disposal of extra space on the campuses of technology companies is a major task that too at a time when everyone is cash strapped. This may not be a happy news for builders, realtors, caterers and other ancillaries. Certain tax related issues might also come

Work from home makes the employees time rich. In these pandemic times it enables one to stay safe. It adds

to flexibility too. Commuting to work is always stressful. Work from home eliminates this dread. When the deadlines get close and you ought to log in early or log out late, it is at ease to work from home rather than getting spooked by the shuttling blues. Some people say work from home helps them focus more on work during crises as routine distractions use up your time in offices. But the success of remote working largely depends on setting up the right workspace and enforcing the personal boundaries. The lure of a live cricket match on television set at home is to be overcome. At the same time, you need not curtail your family time in the afterhours. Work and life have to be balanced well.

Space constraint could be a worry when you work from home. A separate workroom is the best fit, but impractical many times; say when both husband and wife are working, or the accommodation is a shared one. The concept of a workroom at home is fast catching up. Work rooms are a must-have now in the residential interiors. Another aspect to be looked into is the network issues at homes. Employee-lite offices, with the majority of employees working from home is the trend setter of the post Covid-19 world. How the scenario would fare? Only time will tell us.

> K V Murali Mohan, Vijayanagar Colony, Hyderabad

thehansreader@gmail.com

TDP alleges ₹3,000 cr land scams, demands CBI probe

- Former MLA Bonda **Umamaheswara Rao** alleges that YSRCP Ministers, MLAs and leaders are involved in a big way in this 'daylight' loot of public money in the name of house sites for the poor
- Urges CM to at least order vigilance or CID probe and check the accounts of people who sold lands to the govt where the money has been transferred from their bank accounts
- Warns of taking up legal fight against YSRCP corruption in house sites

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati: TDP former MLA Bonda Umamaheswara Rao on Monday accused the ruling YS-RCP MLAs, ministers and leaders of looting Rs 3000 crore public money by committing massive land scams in acquisition of over 14,000 acre in all parts of the state in the past 15 months.

He demanded a probe by the CBI to bring out the real culprits behind the daylight robbery of the state in the name of distri-



bution of housing sites for the poor. He challenged the Jagan Mohan Reddy government to at least order an inquiry by the vigilance or the CID which were the ruling party's pocket departments.

Addressing a press conference here, the TDP leader said that their party went to the court appealing against the YS-RCP's illegal activities in respect of the Amaravati capital city lands. The TDP has not filed any court cases in any house sites related issue anywhere else in the state. Whereas, the YSRCP leaders were saying they were not able to give house sites to the poor because of hurdles created by the TDP. This was nothing but a lame excuse and the ruling party leaders were interested only in making huge money from house sites and land scams but not in giving inhabitable sites to the poor. If the government does not take action against the land mafia, the TDP would launch a legal fight against the YSRCP excesses, Umamaheswara Rao warned.

The former MLA asserted that the CBI should investigate the money transfers from the accounts of the farmers to whom the government sent thousands of crore after purchasing their lands. These farmers got just Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh per acre while their lands were sold to the government by the local YSRCP leaders at Rs 70 lakh to Rs. 90 lakh per acre. The huge margins were pocketed by the ruling party MLAs and their henchmen. Evidence was available against the YSRCP leaders and the MLAs in Vinukonda, Tenali, Tanuku and other places, Umamaheswara Rao said.

He deplored that in Krishna district Rs. 600 crore worth land scams took place. One ruling party leader sold to the government a parcel of land that was under mortgage with a bank and got the money. The bank officials were left surprised at the way the government itself was committing such irregularities in an unforeseen way, he said. Another Rs 700 crore worth land scams were committed in West Godavari district in the name of house sites to the poor. About 1,300 acre mining lands were being given as house sites in Prakasam district and 1,500 acre uninhabitable lands in Kurnool district. Umamaheswara Rao alleged.

8,601 new cases up tally to 3,61,712

Amaravati: One district crossed the 50.000 mark and three more the 30,000 mark in the overall number of coronavirus cases, pushing state's total infection count to 3,61,712 on Monday.

The state that till recently boasted a "record low" infection positivity rate has now touched 10.99 per cent, higher than the national average of 8.65 per cent, growing on a daily basis as 8,601 fresh cases were added in 24 hours ending 9 am on Monday, a bulletin said.

Though the recovery rate was showing signs of improving moderately, it remained lower at 74.32 per cent compared to the national average of 75.27 per cent. In 24 hours, 8,741 more Covid-19 patients had recovered, taking the total to 2,68,828.

Also, 86 fresh casualties were reported, increasing the overall toll to 3,368, with a mortality rate of 0.93 per cent.

East Godavari district crossed the 50,000 cases mark with the addition of 1,441 and touching 50,686, the highest in the state. Visakhapatnam added 911 and reached 30,715, Chittoor added 495 and touched 30,325, West Godavari reported 466 more and increased its tally to 30,326. Kurnool (39,319), Anantapur (35,726) and Guntur (30,859) are the other districts with a score of more than 30,000 cases each. Krishna, which once was the number two in the state, now slid to the bottom (13th place) with the lowest number of 14,029 cases, including 2,024 active.

YSRCP dismisses stir in Amaravati as 'hype'

- Party senior leader and Sattenapalli MLA **Ambati Rambau** describes agitators are not farmers but realtors backed by TDP chief
- Alleges that Naidu and these real estate owners are concerned only about fall of prices to their lands
- Asserts that Jagan will go ahead with his plans for decentralisation of development through 3 capitals

Amaravati: The agitation for re-

taining Amaravati as the sole

capital is nothing but a hype cre-

ated by opposition leader N

Chandrababu Naidu and vested

interests who fear that their real

estate business would be lost, al-

leged YSRCP Sattenapalli MLA

Speaking to the media here on

Monday, Rambabu said there

was no agitation at Amaravati

but Naidu was fooling people by

claiming in Zoom app sitting in

Hyderabad that some 85 people

had died in the agitation and that

farmers would be losers if Ama-

ravati was not retained as the

sole capital of the state. "People

in Amaravati know who the agi-

tators are as they are real estate

Ambati Rambabu.



owners backed by Naidu and supported by their favoured media houses," he said.

Ambati Rambabu addressing media at

Amaravati on Monday

There is no agitation in Amaravati as such, he said and added that it was a vicious campaign started by the TDP chief to help his supporters get a good price for their land which was jacked up due to the hype created by him which was a big scam. Naidu and his benamis had bought hundreds of acre land here and were expecting a windfall through it. Assigned lands belonging to the Dalits were snatched by Naidu and his benamis which were given for land pooling, he said.

An inquiry is being conducted into the whole episode and the accused would be brought to book soon, the YSRCP leader said and added that all the accused in the scam were now agitating for Amaravati just to get away from being arrested.

In this connection, Rambabu said Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy was bent upon decentralisation of administration as we had seen what had happened with Hyderabad being the sole capital previously. The people of Andhra Pradesh lost everything after bifurcation.

He also lashed out at the CPI for supporting Chandrababu Naidu on the Amaravati issue and said the communists were siding with capitalist who was opposing distribution of land sites to Dalits and other weaker sections.

With reference to the fire mishap at Swarna Palace Hotel in Vijayawada where Ramesh Hospitals was conducting a Covid-19 camp, he asked why Naidu was supporting Dr Ramesh who went into hiding out of fear of arrest.

Party MLC Dokka Manikya Vara Prasad said it was unfortunate that CPI leader K Narayana was backing the agitation for Amaravati as the sole capital as it was an agitation by the capitalists. He said it was not a Dalit agitation at all and only by capitalists backed by Naidu and his benamis. He said it would be in the fitness of things that Narayana withdraws from the agitation as it was against the

principles he stood for.

TDP leader gets bail in murder case

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Vijayawada: District court in Machilipatnam granted bail to former minister and TDP leader Kollu Ravindra on Monday. Ravindra was arrested in the murder case of Moka Bhaskara Rao, a YSRCP leader and former market yard chairman in Machilipanam on June 29. Ravindra was accused No 4 in the case and was arrested and sent to central jail Rajamahendravaram in July first week.

The district court granted bail after the hearing of bail petition. He earlier applied or the bail but his plea was turned

down on July 30. Moka Bhaskara Rao was a close aide of transport minister Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani). He washacked to death on June 29 in Machilipatnam.

Task force to coordinate between govt, **private doctors**

Vijayawada: The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has constituted a task force to achieve coordination between the government and the private doctors. Dr Prasad Reddy, president of IMA told the media through Zoom app from Dharmvaram in Anantapur district that the IMA doctors were also in the forefront to tackle Covid-19 effectively along with the govern-

Stating that everyone was praising the state government for undertaking tracing, testing and treating in tackling the covid19, Dr Prasad Reddy said that in spite of the efforts of the government covid19 went out of control after the lockdown was lifted.

He said in an effort to achieve better coordination between the government officials and the private doctors, a task force was formed with a state-level coordinator and coordinators in all the 13 districts.

Dr Prasad Reddy said that health special chief secretary Dr K S Jawahar Reddy and the Vaidya Vidhana Parishad commissioner Bhaskar are clearing the doubts of the doctors whenever necessary.

The IMA president urged the government to provide good treatment to the medical personnel if they are afflicted by the virus. There are at least 5,000 doctors who are below 60 years age in the state and 90 per cent of them are in Covid duty providing health care

to people. They are in addition to the 4,000 government doctors and 2,000 medical faculty doctors who are also affiliated to the IMA. If necessary there are 7,000 doctors who are senior citizens ready to extend covid19 services.

SI suspended for inviting accused woman to his house

 The woman is an accused in illegal liquor sales case • The victim recorded the conversation with the

with the SP DIG issues orders suspending the police official, orders detailed probe

Pondur SI, lodges complaint

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Srikakulam: Ponduru sub-inspector (SI) Kolli Ramakrishna was suspended on Monday for asking a woman to meet at his house. The woman belonging to Tungapeta village in Ponduru

mandal is an accused in illegal storage of liquor case. Taking advantage of her situation, Ramakrishna allegedly called her up on her cellphone and asked her to meet him privately at his house in Ponduru mandal headquarters.

The woman recorded the entire conversation and complained to the senior police officials. District SP Amit Bardhar conducted a preliminary inquiry into the allegation and submitted a report to Visakhapatnam range deputy inspector general (DIG) L K V Ranga Rao, following which the DIG



ordered the suspension of the SI. He also directed the SP to continue

the inquiry into the incident. This is the not for the first time Ramakrishna getting suspended. Earlier, he was suspsnded for colluding with 'gift coin' gang while he was working at Donubhai police station. The 'gift coin' gang belonging to Visakhapatnam district cheated people of agency areas in Srikakulam by assuring non-existing benefits from gift coins.

After revocation of suspension, the SI was sent to vacancy reserve (VR) for some time and later was posted to marine police station at Atchuthapuram in Visakhapatnam district. After 2019 elections, the SI got the posting in law and order wing again and has been performing duties at Ponduru police station.

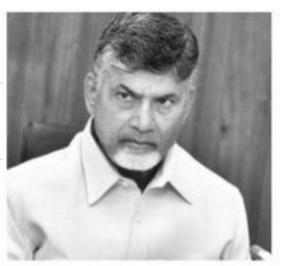
Jagan turning State into burial ground, slams Naidu

- Says vendetta and conspiracy are destroying **Amaravati** capital
- TDP launches website for obtaining public opinion on capital
- Strongly denies YSRCP's allegations that he had worked in favour of one caste

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati: TDP supremo and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday accused the Jagan Mohan Reddy government of implementing its "politically motivated" and "evil" plans to destroy not only Amaravati capital city but all regions of Andhra Pradesh put together.

Naidu criticised Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy for going ahead with his destructive and conspiratorial strategies to virtually reduce the entire state into a burial ground. In the past 15 months of his rule, Jagan has not ushered any development in any region with not a single new road



laid and not a single construction taken up anywhere.

Addressing a press conference here, the TDP chief asserted that the AP government had no legal or moral right to shift the capital out of Amaravati considering the fact that the agreements reached with the farmers were unbreachable. There were conditions laid down that the farmers would have no right to question the government on developmental works in Amaravati. At the same time, the government should to fully honour capital construction and development commitments without fail. They gave lands only for one capital but not three capitals, he observed.

Naidu asked whether the Jagan

administration could give suitable compensation to the farmers as the commercial rates of their lands would go up to as high as Rs 10 crore to Rs 12 crore per acre in one single project like HappyNest housing complex.

Naidu refuted the allegations of caste levelled by the YSRCP against the TDP, saying that in his long political career, he had never worked for the benefit of one particular community. The ruling party was incapable of bringing any development and spent 15 months without showing any progress. It was busy with misinformation and smear campaigns against Amaravati and the Opposition TDP. Amaravati would by now have emerged as a potential city with a capacity to create Rs 1 lakh crore to Rs 2 lakh crore wealth, he added.

The TDP announced that a new website www.apwithamaravati.com was launched to gather opinion from various parts of Andhra Pradesh. Apart from ticking yes or no for Amaravati as the only capital of the state, the respondents can also leave their testimonials.

Deputy Chief Minister Amzath Basha conducting review meeting with officials in

Dy CM orders speedy completion of works

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Kadapa: Deputy Chief Minister Amzath Basha has directed the officials to ensure completion of all pending works on a war foot. Conducting a review meeting over ongoing works in Kadapa municipal corporation at his camp office here on Monday, he said there was no problem in releasing funds for pending works as chief minister is keen on releasing them in the interest of public. He said government has issued works un-

der the 14th Finance Commission for various works like drainage, roads in the corporation. He said that as many as 20 schools were selected under Naadu-Nedu in the first phase and directed the officials to complete the works by Augustend. He also directed the officials to take steps for eradicating mosquito problem and intensify fogging operations to curb the menace.

Corporation commissioner Lavanna, former Mayor Suresh babu and others were present.

APCC wants **Sonia to** continue as party chief

- If she has made up her mind to quit the post, the State party prefers Rahul at the helm
- In a letter to party interim president, PCC president Sailajanath says there is no other leader than her in the party to give a 'strong leadership'

Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) on Monday requested Sonia Gandhi to continue as the AICC president as "there is no other leader in the Congress to give a strong leadership."

In case Sonia Gandhi made up her mind otherwise, the APCC wanted Rahul Gandhi to come forward and take up the responsibility as Congress president. "The APCC unanimously resolved and holds a strong belief that you should continue to lead the party as Congress president at this crucial juncture," PCC president Sake Sailajanath said.

"But if you have made up your mind otherwise and a change is inevitable, I believe that Rahul Gandhi ji should come forward and take up the responsibility of Congress president since the party needs him to lead the struggle from the front as the country faces the biggest challenge ever to its secular democracy and the Constitution," he added.

He wrote a letter to Sonia Gandhi in this regard, referring to media reports of her possible resignation and "controversial letter" purportedly written by some senior Congress leaders. "I wish to strongly reiterate the fact that currently no other leader in the Congress can give the party a strong leadership and any move to deprive the party of an able, visionary and courageous leadership would give advantage to the divisive and dictatorial forces," Sailaianath said. Rahul Gandhi has already proved that he "had guts and the commitment" to take on the treacherous enemy with courage and conviction. "He is fully competent to lead the party to success," Sailajanath added.

Centre to expedite Warangal airport work

Continued from P1

The dues from the Centre include Rs 217 crore under Swachh Bharat Mission, Rs 351.77 crore under Amrut, Rs 783 crore grant under 15th Finance Commission since Hyderabad was a million plus city, Rs 1,184 crore for 1.40 lakh double bedroom houses. The Union minister asked the state minister to come to New Delhi with a report in October.

The minister informed about various projects taken up by the state government to provide basic amenities (public toilets, dump yard, sewage treatment plant) in urban bodies which were in completion stage.

Govindaraja Swamy Pavitrotsavams from Aug 28

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Tirupati: The annual three-day Pavitrotsavams in Sri Govindaraja Swamy Temple in Tirupati will be held from August 28 to 30 with Ankurarpanam on August 27. On first day of Pavitrotsavam on August 28, Pavitra Pratista will be performed, on the second day, Pavitra Malas will be decked to Mulavirat, utsava deities, Vimanam, Dhwajasthambham, Sri Matham Anjaneya located in four mada streets while on August 30 Pavitra Purnahuti will be performed. While on these three days, there will be snapana thirumanjanam to the utsava deities. In view of Covid restrictions, this festival will be performed in Ekantham.

CWC asks Sonia to continue as interim chief, effects changes

Continued from P1

It said no one will be allowed to weaken the party structure. However, no action is likely to be taken against the 23 leaders whose letter stirred a storm in the party. It may be mentioned here that Sonia Gandhi had not resigned officially as Congress president on Monday. She only made a one-line statement that she was willing to step down. This led to massive divide in the party. While all her supporters, including former Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh and A K Antony and others urged her to continue, Rahul Gandhi and host

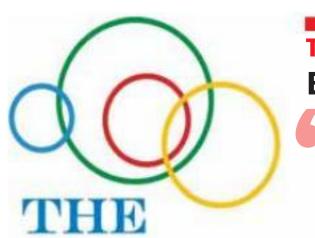
of other leaders took on 23 senior Congress leaders who wrote a letter seeking overhauling of the party structure.

Man Mohan Singh and AK Antony set the stage for isolation of letter-writers, four of whom, including Ghulam Nabi Azad are part of the CWC. Ahmed Patel also joined the chorus.

Rahul Gandhi questioned the timing of the letter by a section of the party and attacked them for going public against the leadership, saying differences need to be discussed in party platforms and not in the media. He also insinuated that the letter seeking

leadership changes was written in cahoots with the BJP, as it came at a time when Sonia Gandhi was hospitalised and the party was fighting with the BJP in Rajasthan to save its government, sources said. The charge invited sharp re-

buttals from Azad and Sibal at the meeting. They said they would resign if any such link with the BJP was established, the sources said. At this point, the Congress got into damage control and clarified that Rahul never said anything like that. Later Both Sibal and Azad withdrew their tweets.



TODAY'S QUOTE

Banking sector growth key for \$5-tn economy

HANS BUSINESS

For the size of its economy, banking sector in India is very small. In order for India to be a \$5 trillion dollar economy, the banking sector needs to be proportionate. At least proportionate to the size of its economy if not bigger than the proportionality - Chief Economic Adviser KV Subramanian



STOCKS Mkts cement gains amid global tailwinds

Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty closed near sixmonth highs on Monday as investors scooped up banking and financial stocks. The BSE Sensex opened in the green and finally closed at 38,799.08, up 364.36 points or 0.95 per cent. Similarly, NSE Nifty jumped 94.85 points or 0.83 per cent to finish at 11,466.45.

FOREX (bu	n र)	W-	
US Dollar	80.26	South	שרען.
Euro	94.06	African Rand	5.33
UAE Dirham	24.28	Hong Kong Dollar	11.7
Thai Baht	3.07	Japanese Yen	0.91
British Pound	103.23	New Zealand Dollar	52.96
Australian Dollar	57.67	Saudi Riyal	22.78
Canadian Dollar	60.42	Swedish Krona	10.19
Swiss Franc	89.08	Singapore Dollar	59.7

BIZ BRIEFS

Kalyan Jewellers plans IPO

New Delhi: Kalyan Jewellers India on Monday filed draft papers with markets watchdog Sebi for an initial public offer worth Rs 1,750 crore. The leading jewellery group would be issuing fresh equity aggregating up to Rs 1,000 crore and an Offer for Sale (OFS) worth Rs 750 crore, according to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP). The proceeds from the fresh issue of shares would be utilised for working capital requirements and general corporate purpose. Kalyan Jewellers' promoter T S Kalyanaraman would be offloading shares worth up to Rs 250 crore while Highdell Investment Ltd would sell up to Rs 500 crore-worth shares through the OFS route. At the end of June this year, the company had 107 showrooms across 21 states and Union Territories in India, and 30 showrooms in the Middle East.

New fund from Union AMC

Hyderabad: Union Asset Management Company, a subsidiary of Union Bank of India and Daiichi Life Holdings, Inc, launched Union Medium Duration Fund, an open-ended medium-term debt scheme. The new fund offer has opened on August 24 and will close on September 7. The allotment will happen on September 14 and it will re-open for continuous sale and repurchase on September 21.The scheme is benchmarked against CRISIL medium term debt index. The minimum investment required is Rs 5,000 and in multiples of Rs 1 thereafter. G Pradeep Kumar, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Union Asset Management Company, said "The portfolio construction of the new fund will be a prudent combination of strategic allocation to PSU/corporate bonds of high credit quality and a tactical allocation to securities

Cardless cash withdrawal

of the Indian Government".

Mumbai: In yet another innovation during Covid-19 times, Kotak Mahindra Bank (Kotak) on Monday launched the Cardless Cash Withdrawal Facility through ATMs.Under this unique facility, Kotak account holders can make cash withdrawals as well as remit money to beneficiaries across India without using a physical debit card. Using their registered mobile number with the bank, Kotak customers can initiate the transaction through the Kotak Net Banking or Mobile Banking platform. The beneficiary need not be a Kotak customer and need not even have an account with any bank. The cash can be withdrawn by the beneficiary from any Kotak ATM in India.To withdraw cash, all that a registered beneficiary would need to do is to enter his/her mobile number, sender and SMS codes and the exact cash amount.

Maruti XL6 sales cross 25k mark

New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Monday said its multipurpose vehicle (MPV) XL6 has crossed the 25,000-unit sales milestone in a year of its launch and helped the company take a leadership position in the segment.The six-seater model, which comes with 1.5-litre petrol engine, has gone on to capture 14 per cent market share in the domestic MPV segment, MSI said. "There is a significant increase in demand for premium MPVs owing to the ever-evolving customer needs. XL6 stands strong with its feature-rich package of style, space, comfort, performance and safety," MSI Executive Director marketing and sales Shashank Srivastava said.

Adani to buy out GVK in Mumbai Airport

DEVELOPMENT COMES DAYS AFTER GVK LANDED IN CBI CASE FOR ALLEGED MISUSE OF AIRPORT FUNDS

THE MIAL DEAL

Adani to buy GVK's 50.5% stake in MIAL

GVK will use proceeds to retire its debt

Adani to be biggest pvt airport operator

New Delhi: Billionaire Gautam Adani's Adani Group is in talks to buy out GVK and some of its partners in the Mumbai Airport as it aims to become the country's biggest private airport operator.

Adani Group is in talks to acquire a 50.5 per cent stake held by GVK Group in Mumbai International Airport (MIAL) and another 23.5 per cent of minority partners, Airports Company South Africa (ACSA), and Bidvest Group, two sources with knowledge of the matter said.

The spokesperson of both Adani and GVK refused to comment. Adani Group had in March 2019 agreed to acquire 13.5 per cent stake of South African company, Bidvest for Rs 1,248 crore. However, GVK Group blocked the deal claiming the right of first refusal. But GVK couldn't bring money to the table to buy Bid Services Division Mauritius' (Bidvest) stake and the matter went to court.

With GVK Group's finances under strain, it has now come around to the idea of selling the stake to Adani Group, they said. After seaports, Adani Group is betting big on the airports sector and has won the bids to run six



Thiruvananthapuram, and Man-

It now wants to enter the country's second busiest airport by buying out Bidvest from MIAL, which was stalled after GVK chose to exercise its first right of refusal and matched the offer that the Adanis made to Bidvest. Sources said preliminary discussions have taken place between Adani and GVK which may lead to the Hyderabad-based group exiting the prestigious Mumbai airport venture. ACSA owns 10 per cent in MIAL and the balance 26 per cent stake is held by the Airports Authority of India (AAI). In October, debt-laden GVK

Group entered into an agreement to sell 79 per cent of its stake in GVK Airport Holdings for Rs 7,614 crore to the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), Canada's Public Sector Pension (PSP) Investments, and stateowned National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF).

Proceeds from this transaction were to be used by GVK to primarily retire the debt obligations of its holding companies. It is not known if GVK got all the funds from the deal. Sources said the investor consortium of NIIF, ADIA, and PSP Investments has agreed to give a 'carve-out' to the promoters of GVK, the Reddy family, so as to allow them to sell stake in MIAL.

GVK Reddy,

Chairman, GVK Group

Multiple teams are working on

the Adani-GVK transaction, one of the sources said adding a preliminary announcement could come within weeks. The development comes after the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) last week charged the GVK Group with siphoning off funds totaling Rs 705 crore. It is charged with causing a loss of Rs 310 crore to the exchequer by entering into fake work contracts on the land given by the government to MIAL. With the six non-metro airports and MIAL, Adani Group will become the largest operator of airports other than state-run AAI, which runs most of the airports. Adani Enterprises in its annual report unveiled its ambition to be the largest private airport developer in the country by developing world-class infrastructure at airports, both at airside and landside, enhancing the passenger experience, creating entertainment destinations (airport village, hotels, and malls). To achieve the aim, it also plans to increase domestic airline connectivity to new and under-served destinations, and also raise the number of flights to long-haul destinations in the West and also to South-East Asia.

PNB expects to recast loans worth ₹40k cr

RBI recently allowed one-time restructuring of corporate, personal loans

New Delhi: The country's seclargest lender Punjab National Bank on Monday said it expects to restructure loans worth about Rs 40,000 crore as per RBI-approved guide-

The Reserve Bank of India

(RBI) had earlier this month al-

lowed one-time restructuring of

corporate and personal loans to

help entities amid the Covid-19

crisis. "Our total loan book is Rs

7.21 lakh crore at June end.

MSME loan book stands at Rs

1.27 lakh crore. Out of this, 14

per cent is under NPA. Now with

respect to the book that we are

looking at for loan restructuring,

a rough estimate what we are

seeing is that anything around

5-6 per cent of the credit book

may be eligible under the re-

structuring profile. This 5-6 per

cent comes to about Rs 40,000



loan book is ₹7.21 lakh crore at June end. MSME loan book stands at ₹1.27 lakh crore - PNB MD& CEO S S

Mallikarjuna Rao

Our total

crore. Major composition of this, of about 50 per cent, would be corporate books," PNB Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer S S Mallikarjuna Rao told reporters at a virtual news conference.

The corporate loans will be restructured based on the recommendations of the K V Kamath committee. "With respect to larger credit books above Rs 100 crore, RBI has appointed a committee headed by K V Kamath. Now they are going to give us the details...whether it would be sector specific or category specific, that we will come to know in next few days," the PNB chief said.

'GST reduced tax rates, doubled taxpayer base'

Finance Ministry says tax rate on large number of items came down post GST; Tax base now at 1.24 cr

New Delhi: The Finance Ministry on Monday said the GST regime has reduced the rate at which people have to pay tax, helped increase compliance and doubled the taxpayer base to 1.24 crore.

In a series of tweets on Monday, also the first death anniversary of former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, the ministry said before goods and services tax (GST) was introduced, the combination of valueadded tax (VAT), excise, sales tax and their cascading effect resulted in high standard tax rate of up to 31 per cent. "It is now widely acknowl-

edged that GST is both consumer and taxpayer-friendly. While the high tax rates of the pre-GST era acted as a disincentive to paying tax, the lower rates under GST helped to increase tax compliance," the ministry said. The number of assessees covered by the GST at the time of its inception was about 65 lakh. Now the assessee base exceeds 1.24 crore. GST, which subsumed 17 local levies and 13 cesses, was rolled out on July 1, 2017. Jaitley held the finance portfolio in the first term of the Modi government since 2014 and was the finance minister when

the GST regime came into force. "As we remember Arun Jaitley today, let us acknowledge the key role he played in the implementation of GST, which will go down in history as one of the most fundamental landmark reforms in Indian taxation," the Ministry tweeted. The multiple markets across India, with each state charging a different rate of tax, led to huge inefficiencies and costs of compliance. "GST has reduced the rate at which people have to pay tax. The revenue neutral rate as per the RNR (Revenue Neutral Rate) Committee was 15.3 per cent.

Airtel chief Mittal hints at mobile services rate hike

New Delhi: Bharti Airtel chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal on Monday hinted at an increase in mobile services prices in the next six months, saying that data at low rates is not sustainable for the telecom industry.

He said that 16 GB data consumption a month for Rs 160 is a tragedy.

"You either consume 1.6 GB of capacity per month either at this price point or you may prepare to pay a lot more. We are not wanting \$50-60 like the US or Europe but certainly \$2 for 16 GB a month is not sustainable," Mittal said at an event.

Mittal also said that the average revenue per user (ARPU) is expected to cross Rs 200 in six months on digital content consumption. ARPU is the measure of revenue generated per user for a telco. "We need a Rs 300 ARPU in which you will still have lower end at Rs 100 a month with decent amount of data.

But if your consumption is largely around watching TV, movies, entertainment and depriving other vital special services networks, then you need to pay for that," Mittal said at the launch of a book written by **Bharti Enterprises executive Akhil** Gupta.

Airtel reported an increase in the ARPU to Rs 157 in the first quarter ended June 30, 2020. The rise in ARPU came after the tariff hike by Bharti Airtel in December 2019.

Covid hits salary increments this fiscal

New Delhi: Companies doled out an average salary increment of 3.6 per cent in the current fiscal compared to 8.6 per cent in the previous financial year amid the coronavirus pandemic, according to a survey.

The survey by leading con-

sultancy Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP showed that timing and potential impact of Covid-19 were the two most important factors that affected increments in 2020-21.

"Organisations that had already decided their increments before the start of the lockdown in March 2020 have given a higher increment compared with others. Moreover, organisations expecting a decline of more than 20 per cent in revenue in FY2020-21 due to Covid-19 have given much lower increments," the survey released on Monday said.

Pharma cos likely to lose pricing power

Mumbai: Pharma companies are unlikely to sustain the healthy operating performance reported in the first quarter as they

> We do not expect domestic pharma companies to sustain the healthy operating performance reported in Q1 because with global unlocking, both operational expenses and API prices will normalise, leading to lower margins in Q2

- India Ratings

will lose the margins booked during the global lockdowns, says a report. The pharma companies cumulatively saw their pre-tax margins rising by 306 basis points (bps) on an annualised basis and 551 bps sequentially in the first quarter due to better prices and lower expenses both due to the lockdowns, accord-

The US is the single largest market for the domestic companies

ing to a report by India Ratings on



with 36 per cent of the revenue share followed by the domestic market at 31 per cent. While 16 per cent of their revenue comes from active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs). "We do not expect domestic pharma companies to sustain the healthy operating performance reported in Q1 because with global unlocking, both operational expenses and active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) prices will normalise, leading to lower margins, the report said.

The healthy performance in Q1 is due to the strong revenue growth in the API business and lower operating expenses. The API business revenue grew 31 per cent annually and 18 per cent sequentially in Q1, as demand from global and domestic formulation players remained robust, which helped their pricing power, the report noted. The restricted movement of medical representatives and other cost savings due to the lockdown saw operating expenses declining 8 per cent y-o-

y and 19 per cent q-o-q in the quarter, which boosted bottomline. Strong numbers are in spite of the export-led domestic players seeing muted performance in their key markets of the US and other Western market wherein their q-o-q revenue declined in Q1.

The US business was hit by channel filling in Q4 of FY20 and patients staying away from hospitals and clinics due to the pandemic resulting in q-o-q decline in revenue. Also, their domestic business was hit due to a sharp decline in the acute therapy portfolio while the chronic segment continued to see moderate growth, led by a continued demand for cardiac and antidiabetic products.

The report sees a likely moderation in API business growth rates, which was high in Q1 because of exports. Domestic API players benefited from the focus on supply chain continuity for customers and better inventory management in view of supply disruptions from China and the run up in the prices. There was an element of channel stocking as well, supporting growth, the report noted.

FHPL to take up PMJAY's insurance pilot initiatives

Upasana Konidela

Hyderabad: Family Health Plan Insurance TPA Limited (FHPL) on Monday announced its support for Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) scheme, as part of an initiative to reach health coverage to an additional 50 crore Indians who are currently exposed, with

no health coverage. To address the needs of the 'missing middle' - the population yet to be covered by health insurance, National Health Authority (NHA) floated an 'Expression of Interest' for insurance companies to participate in insurance pilots.

The NHA will extend support as outlined in the PMJAY framework for insurance companies to rate the risk and determine actuarial premium levels. IT systems and anonymized actuarial data for

HANS BUSINESS the relevant State/territory will be curated for the insurance company that intends to carry out pi-

lots. Under insurance pilots, it is proposed that the insurance company shall offer coverage to the uncovered population on a selfpay basis, having the liberty to innovate, to attract and service the needs and aspirations of the profile of customers in this segment.

"This is a superb and timely move by the Government that we wholeheartedly support dur-

> There is no one model that can be adopted; referrals to several existing models, upgradation of technology and innovation are crucial in order for a final product to evolve," said Upasana Kamineni Konidela,

ing these tough times.

MD, Family Health Plan Insurance TPA Ltd.

epaper.thehansindia.com

Beleagured hotel industry seeks bailout balm from TS govt

- The worried industry is still in doldrums, despite gradual easing of restrictions from June end
- Revenues of the hotel industry have been badly affected almost for five and a half months from March last week till now
- Despite following all precautions, public still wary of walking in into hotels for their favourite food
- Support being sought by the industry body from the State government in terms of sops, subsidies and incentive-related benefits

MAHESH AVADHUTHA

Hyderabad: In Unlock 1.0 soon after lifting of lockdown, the hotel industry expected to bounce back as their business was affected for nearly two and a half months starting from March third week till the first week of June. However, the last three months has been a tough going for them.

Despite the hotel industry taking all necessary precautions and

HRATS APPEAL TO THE STATE GOVERNMENT

■ Municipal Trade licence Fee: Extension of the license period by the number of days of closure due to lockdown and to put in abeyance, the proposed removal of Rs. 2.5 lakh cap per annum, which has led to an increase by five to six times for certain hotels and also request for deferment of payment deadline date by six months without penalty



Representatives of HRATS holding discussions with the Tourisim Minister V Srinivas Goud in Hyderabad (File picture)

is in this backdrop, the national association representing all states has reached out to the Centre to offer a stimulus package. Even Union Minister of State for Tourism Prahlad Singh Patel and Tourism Secretary wrote letters to Chief Secretaries of all States to take required steps to bail out

The Hotels and Restaurants Association for Telangana State (HRATS) that has all-star hotels in the State as its members took following SoPs to ensure safety of from March last week till now. It up this issue here. According to tax, and electricity charges, which

the hotel industry.

Ashok Hemrajani, HRATS president, the plight of star hotels in Telangana has been brought to the notice of Ministers KT Rama Rao, V Srinivas Goud and Tourism Secretary KS Sreenivasa Raju in the past few weeks.

He said that they sought support from the government in terms of sops, subsidies, incentive related benefits, and relief from the State government. They put forward four issues relating to bar and trade license fees, property he said were very reasonable. "We are trying to meet Chief Secretary on this issue in the next few days. Hopefully, the State government will come to the rescue of the hotel industry here," Ashok Hemrajani said. Further, he stated that the hotel industry is hoping for further relaxations to be announced in Unlock 4.0 from September 1 like allowing the opening of bars, lifting of restrictions on functions in banquet halls which

is now limited to under 50 guests

and that too only for weddings.

Property Tax: Request for extension of the

■ Relief on Electricity Charges: Request for a

subsidy by way of reduction of the

electricity tariff for 2020-21 and for

mand Charges, for the lockdown

period with a deferment of the

■ Bar Licence Tax Fee: Request for refund of

of closure of our bars due to

the excise year of 2019-20,

which has already been pre-

paid by all hotels or request to

number of days of closure of the bar

lockdown on pro-rata basis for

the bar license fee for the number of days

extend bar license period of 2019-20 by the

scheduled respective payout dates for

waiver of contracted minimum De-

validity of property tax payment

period by the number of days of

lockdown and deferment of

payment scheduled payment

date from June 30 to Sept.30

without any interest or penalty

Health staff set 48-hr deadline to govt



 Doctors issue a deadline to State govt to release a GO on ex-gratia to Health dept corona warriors who succumb to the disease while on duty

Candlelight march on tomorrow at 7 pm all over Telangana in solidarity to corona warriors

TS reports 1,842 new cases as total tests to touch 10 lakh mark in the State

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: Telangana government doctors have issued a 48hour deadline to the State government to release a GO on ex-gratia to corona warriors from the Health department who succumb to the disease during the course of their duty. They also wanted free treatment to health care workers and their families in hospitals of their choice. Government doctors, nurses, paramedical staff and fourth-class employees from the Health department have urged the government to consider their jus-

tified demands. The Health department staff stated that they rallied behind CM K Chandrashekar Rao during the statehood movement and wanted him to give an appointment for doctors so that they could bring all issues concerning the Health department to his notice.

The health staff decided to mourn for 2 minutes at Tuesday 11 am in all State hospitals of Telangana with black badges. Also, a decision was taken to organise a candlelight march on August 26 at 7 pm all over Telangana in solidarity to corona warriors.

Meanwhile, Telangana reported 1,842 new cases as the total tests are on the verge of 1 million or 10 lakh mark in the State. The total cases rose to 1.06 lakh while recovered patients stood at 82,411. GHMC limits reported 373 cases among fresh cases while Nizamabad accounted 158, Karimnagar 134, Suryapet 113 and Ranga Reddy 109 cases. Despite Sunday being holiday over 32,200 tests were conducted across the State which was a higher compared to previous Sundays when the testing numbers fell down by half compared to tests on weekdays. With six deaths the total deceased count rose to 761.

Active cases figure stood at 22.919 out of which 16.482 are in home isolation.

Telangana Jagruthi to celebrate PV's legacy

customers and its staff, people are

still yet to come out of fear of Co-

rona, and hence the footfall is very

limited. Also, the government's re-

strictions on functioning of bars

in these star hotels and permis-

sion to only hold weddings with

guests number not exceeding 50

and no other meetings to be al-

lowed have not helped the situa-

Hence, revenues to the hotel in-

dustry have been badly affected

almost for five and a half months

tion either.

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: Former MP Kalvakuntla Kavitha's Telangana Jagruthi would celebrate the centenary birth celebrations of former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao 'Telangana Pride - Our PV' on August 26 in the city.

The programme is said to be

a part of the year-long birth centenary celebrations of former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao by the Telangana government. Telangana Jagruthi will be celebrating his legacy with a programme named Telangana Pride - Our PV, in his honour at 10 am on

August 26 in the city. The event would be attended

and addressed by TRS parliamentary party leader K Keshava Rao, Vani Dayakar Rao, PV Prabhakar Rao, renowned Poet Ampasayya Naveen, author Kalluri Bhaskaram (Translator of Insider book) and other esteemed guests. The venue of the programme would be informed on Tuesday, said a press release issued here.

Buddha Murali appointed as CIC

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: Telangana Information Commissioner Buddha Murali has been placed in full additional charge of the Chief Information Com-

missioner. Incumbent Chief Information Commissioner Raja Sadaram demitted the office on expiry of his term

of office on Monday. Murali was the journalist before appointed as Information Commissioner three years ago.

Several Munnuru Kapu associations join hands

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: Several Munnuru Kapu associations in the State have decided to join hands and come under one umbrella. Key leaders of Telangana Munnuru Kapu Sabha and Telangana Munnuru Kapu Sangham Patels conducted a meeting in this regard in the presence of BC Welfare Minister Gangula Kamalakar. The meeting decided to dissolve all existing committees and appoint an ad-hoc committee with the approval of all. Vaddiraju Ravichandra, V Prakash, and Routhu Kanakaiah will be the three-member of this ad-hoc panel. A mobile app (MKS-TS) was also launched on the occasion and membership drive was launched. MKS State committee will be constituted after the conclusion of the membership drive.

Come Sept 1, schools in State to reopen for AY 2020-21 in online mode

- Schools to reopen for academic year (AY) 2020-21 from September 1
- Teachers directed to attend regular duties **August 27 onwards**
- Physical reopening only after Centre's guidelines
- DSE to issue operational guidelines soon



HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: Bringing down the curtains at the prolonged issue of reopening of schools, the State government on Monday issued notification for commencing classes from September 1. A government order on Monday directed the classes to commence the academic year 2020-21 through the online mode on digital platforms using the e-learning and distance learning modes.

The physical reopening of schools to conduct regular classes, however, will be announced separately based on the guidelines of the Centre, it added. Directing teachers of all the schools to attend their duties regularly from August 27, the State government order said that the teachers should prepare lesson plans and e-content for conducting online classes from September 1.

According to the School Education Department (SED) officials, the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) has prepared an alternate calendar taking a cue from the similar calendar released by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

Speaking to The Hans India, a senior SED sources added

official said that several schools are already on the job figuring out suitable technological platforms for the students studying in the schools besides trying to figure ways to reach those who do not have internet and TV access. The new alternate calendar uses beaming of lessons via T-SAT, besides using the DD Yadagiri to reach out a maximum number of students. The SCERT has already prepared the e-content, recordings of lessons for various subjects of different classes.

"Wherever there is an additional need or shortcoming regarding the content, the SCERT will address the same, roping in teachers to produce new content," he added.

Following the State government giving a green signal for online commencement of classes the Director of School Education (DSE) is preparing to issue operational guidelines in the next couple of days. The guidelines include the class wise number of periods and hours that the students will be asked to attend.

However, confusion continues among the schools as to whether they are allowed to commence classes for the primary classes. The guidelines are expected to clarify the same, the



TSTRANSCO and GENCO Chairman and Managing Director D Prabhakar Rao consoling the families of victims who died in the recent fire mishap at Srisailam Left Bank Hydel Electric Project, in Hyderabad on Monday

CHILDREN'S BRIGADE JOINS GREEN DRIVE



Orphan children are taking part in Green Challenge launched by TRS MP J Santosh Kumar. The children planted saplings in their orphanage home with the help of Dr Anjaneyulu at Nagole in Hyderabad on Monday.

INTER-STATE BUS SERVICE

TSRTC wants to have km-based pact with APSRTC

- According to official sources, as per the earlier agreement entered during bifurcation, the APSRTC buses can travel upto 3.5 lakh km in Telangana whereas TSRTC buses can travel only 90,000 km
- The officials said that the permits should be given based on the number of kilometres the buses would travel from the border of a particular State

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: The officials of Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) have urged their Andhra Pradesh counterparts to have interstate buses agreement based on kilometres and also urged them to decrease the kilometres, the APSRTC bus travels in Telan-

A meeting of the officials of AP-SRTC and TSRTC was held here on



to the APSRTC officials that the agreement on operation of interstate would be purely based on kilometres. The Telangana officials have also urged their Andhra Pradesh counterparts to decrease the number of kilometres of their buses citing the indiscriminate allocation of bus services during the bifurcation of the Corporation. It is learnt that the Telangana officials have told

kilometres are decreased.

The meeting attains significance with the Centre giving guidelines removing restrictions on interstate movement of people and asking the states to follow the guidelines strictly. The bus services have stopped since the lockdown was implemented in the country. Though the APSRTC started inter-state buses, TSRTC did not. Telangana

Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao wanted the officials to operate buses only after entering fresh agreement with the neighbouring States and based on kilometres. According to official sources, as per the earlier agreement entered during bifurcation, the APSRTC buses can travel up to 3.5 lakh km in Telangana whereas TSRTC buses can travel only 90,000 km.

The officials said that the permits should be given based on the number of kilometres the buses would travel from the border of a particular State. For example, if a bus of TSRTC travels to Shirdi from Hyderabad, the permit starts from Zaheerabad, which is the border of AP, Karnataka and Maharashtra. The permits to Maharashtra buses should be given to the same extent of kilometres from Zaheerabad to the number of kilometres the bus travels in Telangana.

Sources said that the APSRTC officials have told them that they would take their suggestion to their higher officials. Another round of meetings is slated to be held during this week, said sources.

epaper.thehansindia.com

"I think we deserved to win es-

from the PSG academy, in place

of the second half with an accu-

rate header after Joshua Kim-

Before that, the game started

a lot studied in the first minutes,

with the two teamsanalysing the

opponent, looking for the attack

with great care, without taking

risks until the first 15 minutes of

From there, what was seen was

Bayern with greater possession

of the ball and total control of the

midfield against a PSG depend-

mich cross.

the game.

It's a pity for PSG & I feel for them: Match-winner Coman

Bayern Munich beat PSG to win 6th Champions League title

Lisbon (IANS): Bayern Munich striker Kingsley Coman, scorer of the goal that gave his team their sixth UEFA Champions League title, has revealed that he wanted to give his 100 per cent in the game but he feels for Paris Saint-Germain.

Coman was a starter against PSG, and the Bayern coach's decision was vindicated when the Paris-born winger scored the match-winner after 58 minutes, his goal sealing the second treble in club history on Sunday.

From the very first minute, the 24-year-old demonstrated exactly the kind of "extra motivation" Hansi Flick had mentioned before the game. Coman turned on the burners for the first time after just 13 minutes, but was just about stopped on the edge of the penalty area. The wideman was unstoppable in the 59th minute however when he headed a Joshua Kimmich cross past KeylorNavas in the PSG goal to give Bayern the lead.

"I'm very, very happy, of course. I really must emphasise that. It was an incredible evening, not only for the club, but

"I don't know

beat PSG but we also won all the matches in this

this team, of the football we played. My dreams

came true. I've worked for that for a long time. I

hardest. I have no words. The emotion is huge so

- Robert Lewandowski, Bayern Munich striker

I cried after the final whistle. Such success will

dreamed about raising the cup since I was a

child. It's known that the first time is the

edition of the Champions League. I'm proud of

what to say.

We have

worked very hard for

success, we have

been trying for so

many years. We

made history. We



for all the fans. I wanted to play well," Coman said after the match as per the official Bayern Munich website.

"But that's nothing against PSG, I'm just 100 per cent FC Bayern now and I wanted to win so badly. And I just had to be professional, I couldn't think about that during the game.

"Of course it's a pity for Paris and I feel for them because I come from the city," he added.

Meanwhile, Flick said that he was proud of the team and has

not given any curfew to the players as they have earned to celebrate "properly".

"The development over the last ten months has just been sensational. I haven't given the team a curfew. We should celebrate properly, we've earned it. A big thank you to the whole team," Flick said.

"The team resolutely went down this path today. We saw Paris have a lot of quality up front but we defended bravely from the front.

pecially because of the second fensive sector to exploit any mistake by Bayern through the indihalf. We have players who are devidual talent of their three front termined to win and that's what you need as a coach," he added. men: NeymarJr, KylianMbappe, On the pitch on Sunday, the and Angel Di Maria. two coaches made changes in re-The Frenchmen's best chance was in the 17th-minute of the lation to the last game, with the Bavarian Hansi Flick going first half, with Neymar receiving against expectations and selectthe ball from Mbappe on the left ing Kingsley Coman, who came side and hitting twice for the

of Ivan Perisic, reports Xinhua keeper Manuel Neuer. news agency. And as in a script The Bavarian response came worthy of the best films, it was strong after 21 minutes when precisely the French striker who Robert Lewandowski received was the executioner of the team his back inside the area, spun on that formed him for football with his own body and sent the ball the title goal in the 14th minute over KeylorNavas' crossbar.

> From there, the two teams alternated attacks without real danger to the opposing goal and the first half ended with the Bayern players trying to influence the referee for a penalty, however, unlike the 1975 final, the referee refused to be swayed by the Bavarians.Bayern's dominance intensified at the start of the second half until, on 14 minutes, ex-PSG Kingsley Coman headed in, defining the final

ing on long balls raised to the of-

goal, for two great saves by goal-

Ashwin suggests the 'mankad' alternative

New Delhi (IANS): Veteran off-spinner RavichandranAshwin has come out with an alternative for the much-debated and heavily criticised 'mankading' mode of dismissal.

According to Ashwin, if a batsman at the non-striker's end is found getting out of the crease before the ball is delivered, the umpire can make it a free ball for the bowler. "Make it a free ball for the bowler.

If the batsmen (batsman) gets out of that ball, the batting team will be docked 5 runs. Free hit adds to the drama for a batter, let's give a chance to the bowlers too," Ashwin said in a tweet. "As of now everyone watches the game hoping that 'the bowlers will get smacked today'," he added. England batsman Buttler was 'mankaded' by Ashwin at a crucial moment in last year's season of the Indian Premier League during a match between Kings XI Punjab and Rajasthan Royals. The manner of the dismissal had created ripples across



the cricketing fraternity and beyond, with many former greats of the game lambasting the Indian off-spinner for breaching the 'spirit of the game'. Recently, Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting once again raised the issue by saying that he will have a conversation with Ashwin -- who will be playing for the Delhi-based franchise this season -- about 'mankading'. Ashwin had earlier defended his decision to run out Buttler, saying his "conscience was clear". The IPL 2020 is slated to be played from September 19 to November 10 in the UAE.

ENG VS PAK 3RD TEST DAY 4

Openers help Pak reach 41/0 in 2nd innings

Southampton (IANS): Pakistan openers Shan Masood and Abid Ali dug deep and helped their team reach 41/0 before rain forced early Lunch on Day 4 of the rain-affected third Test against England at the Ageas Bowl on Monday. Abid Ali and Shan Masood were unbeaten on 22 and 13 respectively before umpires were forced to call on early lunch due to rain and bad light. Pakistan still trail England by 269 runs.



James Anderson, who returned best figures of 5/56 in the first innings, and could have had atleast three more had catches not been dropped off his bowling on Day 3, saw wicketkeeper Jos Buttler drop yet another catch off his bowling on the fourth day.

Earlier, England asked Pakistan to follow on after the tourists managed 273 in reply to host's mammoth 583/8d in the first essay, riding on a maidon double hundred from Zak Crawley and a brilliant hundred from Jos Buttler. Skipper Azhar Ali scored a gritty unbeaten 141 for Pakistan but that was not enough as England asked them to bat again as they looked to win the three-match series 2-0.

Brief scores: England 583/8d vs Pakistan 273 & 41/0 (Abid Ali 22*, Shan Masood 13*)

Messi is Mr Barcelona, says PSG boss

Lisbon (IANS): Paris-Saint Germain (PSG) head coach Thomas Tuchel has said that Lionel Messi is "very welcome" at the club, however adding that he expects the talismanic striker to remain at Barcelona.

PSG lost 0-1 to Bayern Munich in a tightly-contested Champions League final on Sunday. "What coach says no to Messi?" Tuchel was quoted as telling to BT Sport by BBC Sport. "I think Messi finishes his career in Barcelona. He is Mr Barcelona," he added. Barcelona's

season had ended in a humiliating 2-8 Champions League quarter-final defeat to Bayern Munich. Following which, questions have been raised over Messi's future at Camp Nou. PSG are among the few football clubs in the world with the financial capacity to meet his buyout clause of 700million euros.

Speaking on PSG's plans for the summer transfer window, Tuchel said: "We decided not to talk about transfers in this period.

"We will sit together in the next days. We have many things to do to keep the level of the squad. "We need to use

the transfer window now to make the squad wider. The campaign will be very demanding without any breaks. We need to build a strong, strong squad," he added. PSG will play their first game of the new Ligue 1 season against Lens on Saturday, after the French top flight made its return last Friday after the 2019-20 campaign ended early because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Verma writes to BCCI, expresses concern over **Patna stadium**

drive me to further work,"

New Delhi (IANS): Aditya Verma, Secretary of Cricket Association of Bihar (CAB), has written to the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) raising concerns over the present condition of the Moin-ul-Haq Stadium in Patna.

The multi-purpose stadium in the state capital has so far hosted three ODI matches, including one from the 1996 ICC World Cup.

In the letter accessed by IANS, Verma wrote to BCCI President SouravGanguly and other board officials: "I am writing this letter with a lot of pain, especially to our legendary cricketer of the country, who is currently the respected President of Indian cricket board. "Once a witness of the 1996 World Cup match between Kenya and Zimbabwe, the stadium has hosted a lot of Ranji Trophy, Deodhar Trophy, Duleep Trophy matches as well.

"The current president of the BCCI had also played at the stadium...," he added.

Verma further said that before leaving the BCCI office, the Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA) had granted a sum of Rs 10.80 crore to the Bihar Cricket Association (BCA), an affiliated body of the BCCI, for the development of infrastructure in Bihar. "After getting huge money from the BCCI, the newly elected body of BCA started making illegal expenses in the name of cricket," he said, alleging that the BCA has not been using the money allotted to them for development of infrastructure and other cricket activities in the state.

The CAB Secretary concluded the letter saying: "Players have failed to get their match fees, TA and DA by the BCA. Look at the current status of Moin-ul-Haq Stadium, Patna. I want to know from respected officials of the BCCI, when will you people give justice to the talented cricketers of Bihar?"

Along with the letter, he also attached some recent photos of the stadium.

Dream of again playing for India 'very much alive', says Uthappa

New Delhi (IANS): Veteran batsman Robin Uthappa has stated that his dream of again playing for Team India is "very much alive", adding that a good season in the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) could pave way for his return to the national

Uthappa, who last played for India in an ODI against Zimbabwe in 2015, will be playing for the Rajasthan Royals in IPL 13 slated to be played across three venues in the UAE from September 19.

"I certainly believe that if we have a great season in the IPL, wonderful things could happen to me and even bring me back into the reckoning for the Indian team," Uthappa said while answering a question from a fan in a



video uploaded on the franchise's official Twitter handle.

"I am someone who is always positive as a human being and I look for silver linings even in negative situations. So my conviction is really strong that God willing, that I will be able to represent my country again and bring laurels to it. I hope that happens.

"Anyone who plays competitive cricket hopes to play for the country and bring laurels to the country. So the dream is very much alive," he added.

VAR set for AFC Champions League debut

Kuala Lumpur (IANS): The Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system will be used from the quarter-final stage of the 2020 AFC Champions League, Asia's football governing body said on Monday.

"The Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) commitment to ensure Asian refereeing continues to set new benchmarks was further underlined after it confirmed the implementation of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system from the quarter-final stage of the 2020 AFC Champions League - the first time that VAR will be introduced in the AFC's club competitions,"

a statement on AFC's official website said. Having organised



numerous VAR courses and seminars since March 2017, the AFC has a proven track record in the implementation of the VAR system which has been endorsed by both FIFA and the IFAB. Additionally, to further strengthen the AFC's capabilities in the VAR system application in the AFC Champions League, a virtual AFC VAR Information Officer (VIO) Workshop 2020 will be organised on Wednesday to ensure VIOs are well informed on the latest VAR developments.

The VAR system, which aims to provide minimum interference with maximum benefit, is limited to four game-changing decisions or incidents, specifically - goal or no goal, penaltykicks, direct red cards and mistaken identity decisions, the statement further read.

Bopanna, Shapovalov crash out of Western & Southern Open

New York (IANS): Indian tennis player RohanBopanna and his Canadian partner Denis Shapovalov made an early exit at the ongoing Western and Southern Open men's doubles event after losing their openinground match against Marcel Granollers and HoracioZeballos. Bopanna and Shapovalov came out with a tough fight but eventually lost 4-6, 6-7(1) to last year's US Open runners-ups in the first round match of the hard-court tournament on Sunday. This was Bopanna's first competitive match this year since the Davis Cup tie against Croatia in March, in which he had played along side Leander Paes. The ongoing Western and Southern Open is considered to be a warm-up event for the US Open, which will be played behind closed doors this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, from August 31 to September 13.

Stadium named after Bhutia to be inaugurated soon in Namchi

Kolkata (IANS): A football stadium named after legendary BhaichungBhutia will be inaugurated in Namchi -- 25 kilometres away from the former India captain's birthplace, Tinkitam in the district of South Sikkim.

"It's our tribute to one of the best Indian footballers. Even after hanging his boots, BhaichungBhutia has been a role model to many and he will continue to inspire young footballers of India, let alone Sikkim. We can't repay him for what he has done for Indian football. But a stadium named after him might be a small homage towards the great footballer," MenlaEthenpa, President, Sikkim Football Association told www.theaiff.com. Barring the Dr. Karni Singh shooting range in New Delhi and the stadiums named after iconic hockey duo --

Dhyan Chand and Roop Singh



-- this is going to be the firstever stadium in India to be named after any footballer.

Meanwhile, Bhaichung, the first Indian footballer to play 100 international matches stated he is "honoured" as it's going to be the first-ever football stadium in India named after a footballer.

"I'm very much honoured and excited. If you look at the larger picture I'm happier be-

cause the budding footballers will get another top-class facility and infrastructure to play football. This stadium has produced many footballers including me. I have so many memories of playing there," Bhutia said. Groundwork of the stadium started in the 2010s before it faced many roadblocks owing to financial difficulties. After Prem Singh Tamang, current Chief Minister of Sikkim, assumed his office, the construction work resumed once again. "Our Chief Minister is an avid football supporter and he himself took interest to fast-track the construction work. Had the COVID-19 pandemic situation not disturbed the entire scenario, the stadium could have been inaugurated already," Ethenpa informed further. The artificial turf has already been laid besides setting up the 15,000-capacity stands. Ethenpa further said that the plan of installing floodlights is already in the pipeline and it'll be covered in the second phase of work.

"After resuming the work, it took less than 14 months to finish. The Chief Minister himself was monitoring the progress. The capacity of the stadium is 15,000 and we've already planned to install floodlights in the second phase."

CPL 2020: Zouks, Knight Riders extend winning run

Trinidad (IANS): It was a game that went down to the wire, but ultimately debutant Chemar Holder kept his nerve to help St Lucia Zouks defend 13 runs of the final over to win their third consecutive match in the ongoing

Caribbean Premier League (CPL). Nicholas Pooran and Sherfane Rutherford threatened to win the match for the Guyana Amazon Warriors at times, but ultimately the Zouks prevailed in a low-scoring thriller at the Brian Lara Cricket Stadium in Tarouba on Sunday. Opting to bat, Zouks rode on a brilliant half century from Roston Chase (66 off 51 balls), followed by some handy contributions from Mohammad Nabi (27 off 24) and Javelle Green (19 off 17) as they posted a respectable total of 144/7 in their stipulated 20

However, Warriors struggled in the chase right from the start and it was only Pooran who could hold the ground as he fought a lone battle by contributing 68 runs. But his efforts went in vain as his team could manage 134 runs for the loss of eight wickets in their allotted overs and went on to lose the match by

Brief scores: St Lucia Zouks 144/7 (Chase 66; Tahir 3/22) beat Guyana Amazon Warriors 134/8 (Pooran 68; Kuggeleijn 3/24) by 10 runs

Brief scores:Trinbago Knight Riders 185/3 (DM Bravo 54; Nurse 1/20) beat Barbados Tridents 166/6 (Charles 52; Fawad 1/14) by 19 runs.

'No spectators at Argentine football matches at least till 2021'

Buenos Aires (IANS): Football

matches in Argentina are likely to be held without spectators at the stadiums at least until early 2021 country's Minister of Tourism and Sports MatiasLammens has said.Matches have been suspended since March 17, three days before President Alberto Fernandez declared mandatory lockdown measures to contain the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, reports Xinhua news agency.On August 10, officials authorised the restart of training, though they are yet to announce when national championship matches will begin.In an interview published on Sunday by the regional daily La Capital in Mar del Plata, a city in Buenos Aires province, Lammens was asked if summer tournament matches will take place "with or without spectators"."With spectators, I don't think so. If you look at what's happening in Europe, where football resumed more than a month ago, they aren't even assessing the possibility of playing with spectators," Lammens said

Printed and Published by K. Hanumanta Rao, on behalf of Hyderabad Media House Pvt. Limited, Flat.No.609, 6th Floor, Kirti Shikhar Building, Plot.No.11, Dist.Center, Janakpuri, New Delhi- 110058. and Printed at M/s. Marutinandan Printers & Publishers, A-15, Bara Bagh, G.T Karnal Road, Industrial Area, New Delhi - 110033. Editor: V Ramu Sarma. RNI No: DELENG/2017/74095