MEDICAL DEVICE

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WINDOWS



Firefighters attempt to douse a blaze at a shoe factory at **Udyog Nagar in New Delhi**

Major fire breaks out at shoe factory

NEW DELHI: Five to six people are suspected to be trapped inside a shoe factory, where a major fire broke out on Monday morning, police said. The shoe factory is located in west Delhi's Udyog Nagar. "We got a PCR call about a fire in a shoe factory in Udyog Nagar at 8.56 am. Twenty-four fire tenders are at the spot and 15 more vehicles have been called even as efforts are underway to bring the blaze under

control." police said. Five to six people are suspected to be trapped inside the premises. No injuries have been reported in the incident so far, according to the police. Fire Service officials said fire-fighting operations are underway and two CATS ambulances are also at the spot to attend to any emergencies.

Delhi records 37.4 deg C max temp

NEW DELHI: The national capital registered a maximum temperature of 37.4 degrees Celsius as the southwest monsoon remained elusive for another day on Monday, the India Meteorological Department said. The weather department has forecast a partly cloudy sky on Tuesday as the further advance of the monsoon into Delhi is to remain

soon into remaining parts of Rajasthan, west UP, Haryana, Chandigarh & Delhi and Punjab to be slow as large scale features and the forecast wind pattern by the NWP (Numerical Weather Prediction) do not indicate any favorable condition for riod," the IMD said.

slow. "Further advance of SW mon-

Notorious gang member arrested

NEW DELHI: A member of a notorious gang has been arrested for allegedly robbing a man of gold ornaments by posing as Crime Branch officials, police said on Monday.Qasim Zafri alias Joju, a resident of Thane district in Maharashtra, was arrested by a Crime Branch team of the Delhi Police from Bhopal on Saturday, they said. He belongs to the Irani gang which is known to have a presence across India, the police said, adding that the gang members are also known for masquerading as police or senior government officers and conning people. In most of the cases, they operate in groups of two or four, the police said. The incident took place on June 10 when the victim, who works with a ieweller in Karol Bagh, was robbed allegedly by Zafri and his associates Habib, Shahjor and Sartaj, police said.

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OPTIONAL EXAMS FOR CBSE CLASS 12 FROM AUG 15

THE CBSE on Monday informed the Supreme Court that the optional examinations for Class 12 students, unsatisfied with its assessment criteria, would be held between August 15 to September 15. The exams would be conducted if the environment is conducive in the backdrop of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

The CBSE in an additional affidavit said: Regarding the date before which the optional examination for the candidates who are not satisfied with their assessment with the policy, the examinations for such

candidates shall be conducted any time between August 15, 2021, to September 15, 2021, subject to conducive situation." The board added that the examinations for private, patrachar and compartment would be conducted in such a manner so that they will fall within the assessment policy for the academic year 2019-2020.

The board said the policy for tabulation of marks for Class 12 Board Examination 2021 has been formulated by the CBSE to ensure standardisation of marks, as marks of Class 11 and 12 components will be awarded at school level. "Therefore, they will strictly not be comparable across



schools due to variations in the quality of question papers, the evaluation standard and processes, the mode of conduct of exams, etc.," added the affidavit.

The top court had suggested developing a dispute resolution mechanism, the CBSE said, disputes regarding computation of results will be referred to a committee constituted by the board.

"After declaration of result by July 31, if the candidates are not satisfied, CBSE will provide online facility for registration for the examination. Examination will be conducted by the board only in the main subjects as and when conditions are conducive for holding the examinations," said the affidavit. And added, the marks obtained by a candidate in this examination will be treated as final. The CBSE added that to ensure standardisation, each school will have to internally moderate the marks to account for the school level variations by using a reliable reference standard as provided in the policy. "This is necessary in the interest of fairness and to ensure that the marks allocated are comparable and there is no adverse impact or undue gain for any student because of the methodology/process of evaluation used by the individual school," added the affidavit.

A health administers a dose of Covid-19 vaccine, at a vaccination centre at Priyadarshani Mumbai, on

Record 80L vaccinated

 $M^{
m ORE}$ than 80 lakh vaccine doses, the highest in a single day, were administered across the country on Monday as the revised guidelines for COVID-19 vaccination came into effect, the Union Health Ministry said. India's cumulative COVID-19 vaccination coverage has reached 28.33 crore since January 16, it said. "Today's record-breaking vaccination numbers are gladdening. The vaccine remains our strongest weapon to fight COVID-19. Congratulations to those who got vaccinated and kudos to all the frontline warriors working hard to ensure so many citizens got the vaccine," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.

The previous single-day record was of over 48 lakh on April 1. In June so far, India saw an average vaccination of around 31 lakh per day. The average single-day vaccinations fell to as low as around 16 lakh in the first week of May when the country was at the peak of the second wave.

Earlier in the day, PM Modi said that central government is beginning the 'Free Vaccination For All campaign' for every Indian from today. "The biggest beneficiary of this phase of India's vaccination drive shall be the poor, the middle class and the youth of the country. All of us should pledge to get ourselves vaccinated. Together we will defeat COVID-19," he said. According to the revised guidelines, vaccine doses provided free of cost by the Centre will be allocated to states and UTs based on criteria such as population, disease burden and the progress of vaccination, and all above the age of 18 will be eligible for the free jabs. Any wastage of vaccine will affect the allocation negatively,

The Centre will now procure 75 percent of the vaccines being produced by the manufacturers in the country. It had earlier allowed states and private hospitals to procure 50 percent of the vaccines following demands for decentralisation of the process. However, after several states complained of problems including of funding, PMModi announced the revision of the vaccine

Delhi received 57 lakh vaccine doses against 2.94 crore: Sisodia

New Delhi

DEPUTY Chief Minister Manish Sisodia accused the Centre on Monday of pressuring officials in Delhi to publish advertisements in newspapers, thanking it for providing free Covid vaccines for all from June 21, while the city has got only 57 lakh doses so far against the 2.94 crore needed. He also said the Centre will supply only 15 lakh Covid vaccine doses to Delhi in July and at this rate, it will take around 16 more months to inoculate the entire population of the city. Sisodia said several BJPruled states such as Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Karnataka have published advertisements in newspapers, thanking the Centre for providing free Covid vaccines for all aged above 18 years from June 21. Had the Centre spent this money on procuring vaccines, the Covid crisis in the country could have been managed in a better way, he said. "They also asked officials in Delhi to publish advertisements in newspapers thanking (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi for the free vaccination. They sent this toolkit to Delhi government officials and pressured them to issue such advertisements," the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader told a virtual press conference.



Former Punjab police officer Kunwar Vijay Pratap joins AAP

CM face to be from the Sikh community: Kejriwal

AMRITSAR

FORMER IPS officer Kunwar Vijay Pratap Singh, who was part of the SIT probing the 2015 Kotkapura police firing incident in Punjab, on Monday joined the Aam Aadmi Party here.

Delhi Chief Minister and AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal travelled to Amritsar, where he inducted the former Punjab inspector general of police into the party ahead of the state assembly polls scheduled to be held early next year. The former police office joined the

party in the presence of state unit chief Bhagwant Mann and other senior leaders, including Raghav Chadha. Singh took premature retirement in April after the Punjab and Harvana High Court quashed a report filed by the earlier Punjab Police SIT into the Kotkapura firing incident in 2015 after the alleged desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib in Faridkot district.

He was part of the Special Investigation Team which was probing the 2015 Kotkapura and Behbal Kalan policing firing incidents. The court



had then directed the state government to set up a new SIT without Singh. Referring to the sacrilege issue and investigations led by the former police officer, Kejriwal said, "He investigated and found who were mastermind, but the entire system went against him... When he realized that. he resigned". "To resign from such a top post is not an ordinary thing," he said, adding one does not even leave a peon's job. "But he left the job for the people of Punjab to see that justice is done in the case," he said. Kejriwal said his party would deliver 'justice' in the sacrilege issue and subsequent

police firing case. Kejriwal announced that the party's CM face for the 2022 Punjab assembly polls will be from the Sikh community. When asked who will be the chief ministerial face of the party for the upcoming polls, Kejriwal said, "Discussions are going on in the party regarding this, when time comes, you will be informed."

Symbolic Amarnath Yatra this year

SRINAGAR

IN the wake of the Covid pandemic, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has decided that the annual Amarnath Yatra will be kept symbolic, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on Monday. The 56-day yatra to the 3,880-metre-high Himalayan cave shrine was proposed to start from the twin routes of Pahalgam and Baltal on June 28 and culminate on August 22.

The pilgrimage was cancelled last year too due to the pandemic. Sinha also directed officials to ensure devotees can virtually attend the morning and evening 'aartis' (prayers) at the shrine. This will allow them to pay their obeisance while also avoiding travel and exposure to the infection, the lieutenant governor (L-G) said. He said that at the shrine, all traditional and religious rituals shall be performed according to past practice. "It's important to save people's lives. So, it is not advisable to hold and conduct this year's pilgrimage in the larger public interest.

SC reserves verdict on ₹4L to kin of Covid deceased

NEW DELHI: The Centre told the Supreme Court on Monday that it would consider granting insurance cover on the lines of other frontline workers to those working in crematoriums and helping conduct last rites of COVID victims, terming the issue a "valid concern".

A special vacation bench comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan and MR Shah, which reserved verdict on two pleas seeking ex-gratia compensation of Rs 4 lakh to the dependents of those who died of COVID, was told by lawyer Gaurav Kumar Bansal that the people working in crematoriums have been left without any insurance cover. Bansal, who has filed one of the PILs on the issue, said the crematorium workers are getting infected and succumbing to the deadly disease. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, agreed to the enormity of the issue and said it was a "valid concern". "It is a

very valid concern. Crematorium members are not covered under the insurance scheme. I will take care of this aspect. Presently over 22 lakh healthcare workers are covered under the insurance scheme." Mehta told the bench during the hearing conducted through video conferencing. The government has already extended for one more year, starting from April 2021, the benefit of the 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalvan Insurance Scheme' of Rs 50 lakh to about 22 lakh healthcare professionals, he

The top court, which asked the Centre whether NDMA, headed by the Prime Minister, has taken a decision not to pay Rs 4 lakh ex-gratia to families of victims of COVID, said that a uniform compensation scheme should be put in place as different amount being paid by different states would create heart burn among beneficiar-

WHO M-Yoga app to help spread yoga all over the world: Modi

New Delhi

ermed as a 'great example' of the fusion of modern technology, the 'WHO M-Yoga' app launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the oaccasion of International Day of Yoga on Monday aims to help spread yoga around the world and contribute to the efforts of the 'One World, One Health'

The app will provide many videos of yoga training and practice based on common yoga protocols in different languages. It will help promote yoga and wellness among the people around the world, especially during the ongoing

Covid-19 pandemic. Modi launched the app while address-

ing the nation on the occasion of the 7th International Day of Yoga, saying the app will play an instrumental role in the rehabilitation of the health of Covid patients who have recovered from the dis-

"When India proposed the International Day of Yoga in the United Nations, the spirit behind it was to make the yoga science accessible to the entire world. Today India has taken another important step in this direction along with the United Nations and the WHO.

"Now the world is going to get the power of the M-Yoga app. In this app, many videos of yoga training will be available in different languages of the world, based on the common yoga protocol. It is also a great example of the fusion of



modern technology and ancient science. I am sure the app will play a big role in expanding yoga across the globe, making the efforts of 'One World, One Health' a

success," the Prime Minister said. The Ministry of AYUSH and the World Health Organization (WHO) had jointly undertaken a project in mid-2019, focusing on

mobile yoga. It envisaged the concept of 'Be Healthy, Be Mobile' (BHBM) under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to achieve Universal Health Coverage by 2030.

The BHBM initiative is a global partnership led by the WHO, which supports the scale up of mobile health (m-Health) technology within the scope of the national health system to combat non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

In order to achieve the above objectives, a memorandum of understanding was signed in July 2019 between the WHO and the Ministry of AYUSH.

The M-Yoga project focused on four areas: Common yoga protocol for general wellness; yoga for mental health and resilience; yoga for adolescents; and yoga for pre-diabetics. Building upon this, a requisite handbook and mobile applications were to be developed by the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MD-NIY) in consultation with technology partners from the WHO.

The work on the handbook is in the final stages and the currently launched app is available in two of the six official languages -- English and Hindi.

In a virtual first, a simultaneous Yoga and meditation session was organised across all parts of the United Kingdom to mark International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2021 on Monday. The Indian High Commission in London said it also made arrangements to display informative Yoga videos on digital screens at iconic locations across the UK.

SHILPA SHETTY KUNDRA @THESHILPASHETTY

BREATHE... it's THE most important function that the body performs. Breathing right helps provide oxygen to the organs to perform all the crucial processes, from cognition to digestion to strengthening the immune system. tps://fb.watch/6fQRp5fTF4/ #MondayMotivation #YogaDay



Pediatric healthcare and the third wave of Covid-19

SIDDHI JAIN

xperts are forewarning against the third wave of Covid-19 hitting India as early as September, with many fearing that it could hit children disproportionately. According to Rekha Mittal, Neurologist at Rainbow Hospitals, since many adults would have had the disease or the Covid vaccine, in comparison children would be a susceptible population.

"Third wave and more waves can always occur in a pandemic till it burns out or there is herd immunity. So far in our experience, the majority of children who have had Covid infection have either been asymptomatic or had mild symptoms. Therefore we hope the next wave will not be a serious threat to children," says Mittal.

"The treatment of children who get serious manifestations of Covid requires specialists who are trained in intensive care of children, and the appropriate equipment and support staff. We should definitely plan and be prepared for a crisis situation if it does occur. We should not be complacent," Mittal adds.

How can a surge in cases be avoided? The expert suggests not letting our guard down, by maintaining Covid-appropriate behaviour such as social distancing, use of masks, and hand sanitisation measures. "We need to avoid

Since many adults would have had the disease or the **Covid vaccine, in comparison children would be a** susceptible population- Rekha Mittal



crowded places such as malls, markets, gatherings etc. Also, the children will get protected indirectly, if the adults around them receive the Covid vaccine."

Asked how critical can it be to administer the expensive injection like this with skill, Mittal

says, "Administering such an expensive and uncommonly used drug can be a challenge. One will need to have complete knowledge about procuring, handling and administering the medication. Also, one would have to have all facilities to handle the side effects if they occur, such as liver damage, drop in platelet count

Speaking about vaccination for children, the doctor said vaccinations for vaccine preventable diseases should continue on time for children as per schedule.

NEWS ROUNDUP

Raja Kumari's new track 'The Rani Cypher' focuses on gender equality

🛘 ndian-American rapper Raja Kumari released her latest track "The Rani Cypher" on Monday, to mark World Music

The track highlights its theme of woman power with appearances by female emcees Dee MC, Siri and Meba Ofilia.

"When I entered the Indian rap scene in 2016, it was rare to see a woman on stage and even more rare to hear a woman on the mic.

I decided early on to use my Influence to create a platform for female artistes and creatives in order to claim a space that could be safe for all of us," claimed Raja Kumari.

She added, "It's so exciting to feature Meba Ofilia, Dee MC and Siri on this all-female rap cypher out of India. From beginning to end, working on Rani Cypher has been a handson experience and I'm thankful to have worked with such a talented female led team."

Siri said, "(I am) So hyped for this one! A much-needed collaboration for the scene. The shoot was super fun, all of us in our element, exchanging positive energy."

Dee MC said, "Super stoked to have worked with these



amazing and talented ladies on 'Rani Cypher'. This was definitely in the works for a while and I'm so glad it's finally happened. Safe to say it sets a benchmark for all upcoming female collaborations."

Meba Ofilia said, "I'm nervous, yet very excited! Honoured to be a part of this

unique project. Definitely a first for me, sitting down in a studio with artists from different parts of India (and the world!) to record a song. Colourless campaign in order to create a world in which people look beyond their differences, while also driving global

Pastels and Pop's karigars bring vision to life with S/S21 collection

N LOTHUNGBENIHUMTSOE

Bengaluru-based handcrafted jutti brand Pastels and Pop celebrates the karigars that infuse life into every pair of juttis, not just by its sewing and embroidery but by making us believe that a happiness still lies ahead, even after these uncertain times.

The colours chosen for the collection imbibes a sense of happiness and positivity, meanwhile providing one with fabrics and accessories ranging from luscious silk, organic cotton, linen, and organza.

Embellishments such as hand-cut sequins, Czech glass beads, pearls, colorful anchor threads, and beads are some of the elements added to the new launch. The designs range from exquisite to versatile, with different schools of embroidery such as Zardosi, tassels, knot embroidery, striking floral patterns, organza, and mirror embroidery.

'Pastels and Pop' Spring Summer collection "Promise of Tomorrow" is a melting pot inclusive of individual tastes, styles, and palette. Akanksha and Aarti Chhabra Co-founder. Pastels and Pop shares the inspiration and journey of creating "Promise of Tomorrow" while celbarting the Karigars - craftsmen who have put all their effort to bring vision to life.

Why launch a collection when stores are shutting down?

Our Spring Summer collection '21 had been primed for launch on 20 April. But the unfortunate escalation of coronavirus cases and casualties meant that this had had to take a backseat while our country tries to get back on its feet.

However, we came to realise now that keeping the new collection under wraps meant keeping our team of gifted artisans from savoring the fruit of the labour and painstaking effort they have put in over the last few months to bring this collection to life. Hence, we decided to launch our SS '21 in May, with the name 'Promise of Tomorrow'.

What are the fabrics that you have used? How many pieces are in this collection?

This season, we have predomi-

nantly featured striking floral patterns in our embroideries, while the fabrics and accessories employed range from the exquisite to the versatile. We have made a total of 6 styles using a varied range of fabrics such as luscious silks, organic cottons, Linen and organza.

What is so unique about your prints? Are these all-digital prints?

We do not work on prints so much, our forte is hand-embroidery. We work with some of the best karigar from across the country who are highly skilled in their craft and weave their magic on shoes. Our designs are unique because you can find great examples of different schools of hand embroidery like Zardosi, tassels, knot embroidery, organza and mirror embroidery in our juttis. Our design team also works with a vast range of embellishments such as hand-cut sequins, zardosi, Czech glass beads, mirrors, pearls, colorful anchor threads and colorful beads to create beautiful juttis.

Do you think fashion is moving

towards a more season-less approach?

I personally don't follow the seasonal trends. I focus on the styles of clothes I love instead of feeling pressured to update my wardrobe with the latest fashion. I see this change in many people around me which I think is fantastic as it saves money, time and is more environment friendly. Another big plus is that one gets to wear something one loves and is comfortable in. At Pastels & Pop, we have in fact never followed seasonal color schemes. We make juttis that are timeless, beautiful, and are loved by customers all year round.

What is your take on responsible fashion?

At Pastels and Pop, we've reused our leftover fabric and faux leather trimmings to make potli bags, hair bands, rakhi's and cute brooches. We send these out as 'Free gifts' on special months like Rakshabandhan, Diwali, New Years and valentines. Personally, I have also made conscious changes to my wardrobe. Quality wins over quantity. I choose classic

timeless pieces over cheap and disposable ones, whenever I can.

We should all try to invest in handmade pieces over machine manufactured. This provides livelihood to so many and also keeps art and craft alive. All of us in the industry need to ensure safe and healthy working conditions for our employees and provide them a fair wage with benefits.

What is the impact of the pandemic on the brand and the craftsmen

We had big plans for 2021 for two really exciting announcements but they have been on hold for some time now due to the current situation. Our shipments to customers have been delayed because to us. the safety of our team is of utmost priority and so our office was shut down for almost a month. We decided to not have any form of gathering in the office from mid-April 2021 and everyone has been working from home including the designers and the karigars which has certainly slowed things down and pushed some plans further.





- Lubricates (4)
- Thick mucus in throat (6)
- Manner (3)
- 10 Exploited (4) 13 Tailor (8)
- 14 Knight's attendants (7)
- 15 Bruce Lee's forte? (4,2) 17 Telling, recounting or re-
- porting (9)
- 21 For what reason? (3)
- 22 Literary snippets (3) 23 Male child (3)
- 26 Explosive material con
 - sisting of saltpetre, charcoal and sulphur? (9)
- 27 Neck-cloth (6)
- 28 Repeat (7)
- 32 From nothing (2,6)
- 34 Fail to win (4)
- 35 Unit of illumination (3) 36 Up-to-date in ideas; in the manner or fashion of the
- present day (6) 37 Optical device (4)

Down

CROSSWORD

- 1 Responsibility (4) __ of:instead?(4)
- Ascend (4)
- Peppermint drop (6) Swallow food (3)
- 7 Speak in low voice (6)
- 9 Short native? (3)
- 11 Red indian woman (5)
- 12 Journal (5) 15 Strike sharply (4)
- 16 Well behaved (4)
- 18 South American
- ostrich (4) 19 Pulled tight (4)
- 20 Hostelry (3)
- 23 Eddy (5)
- 24 Cosy homes (5) 25 Yell, belly laugh (6)
- 26 Pick (6)
- 28 Unwell, sick (3) 29 Solicit customers (4)
- 30 First-class (1-3) 31 Long fishes (4)
- 33 Sign of assent (3)

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Onion Rings Day

Onion Rings Day is your opportunity to get out there and enjoy your favourite deepfried savoury treat. They're simple to make at home, and while a deep fryer is great, it isn't essential in their preparation. There are even baked Onion Rings if you decide to go that way, but nothing beats the original. Just heat up a pan of oil until a small drop of batter starts to sizzle when

dropped in, and then carefully submerge your coated Onion Rings one by one and cook until a golden brown. There are dozens of recipes online that you can try, and even more recipes



for sauces to serve them with.

If making onion rings isn't your idea of fun, but you like eating them, then you can head out to any one of the dozens of restaurant chains that serves them as part of their daily menu. While many fast-food chains offer onion rings, the best examples come from independent restaurants with proprietary recipes. It's highly likely that you have at least one of these in your area, serving up rings in the traditional style. Look for local diners with a long history and experienced management. Family businesses tend to be the best.

Some people really don't like onions. Many won't go near them, even if they're covered in batter and deep-fried, but that's okay. You don't have to eat onion rings, though, to celebrate Onion Rings Day - you can branch out. Remember, onion rings were the inspiration for many of the fried snacks and sides that we enjoy today. French fries, deep-fried brie, and fried chicken are all delicious alternatives that you can try if you fancy something different.

Mahoba first Uttar Pradesh district to be Corona free

LUCKNOW

MAHOBA district in Uttar Pradesh has become the first district in the state to be completely Covid-free. The district, on Monday, saw recovery of the last known infected person.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has announced a reward for the district which eliminated the disease with emphasis on strict screening, treatment and vaccination. "Mahoba's success must serve as an inspiration for all other districts. It is attributed to the combined efforts of all residents

of the district, including health workers, frontline workers and the local administration. The district will be rewarded if the current situation is maintained for one more week," announced the chief minister at a high-level Covid review meeting held on Monday.

Mahoba has been able to bring down the fresh Covid-19 cases from 150 daily to not even a single fresh case of Covid-19 infection for almost a week now. District magistrate Mahoba, Satyendra Kumar, explained, "This achievement is a result of dedicated efforts of the surveillance committees, local

participation, timely provision of free medicine kits, large-scale contact tracing and planned containment strategy as per the directives issued by the chief minister."

The administration prioritized active surveillance while simultaneously providing free medicine kits at the doorstep of infected people through more than 3,000 members of over 363 surveillance committees that are active in the district. The district conducted house-tohouse surveillance through surveillance committees to detect all influenza like illness (ILI), traced contact consistently, and provided



medicine kits to ASHA workers and gram pradhans for timely distribution wherever required. Meanwhile, for the first time in three months, Uttar Pradesh has reported less than 215 new confirmed cases of coronavirus in a single day. Prior to this, less than 215 fresh cases of infection were recorded in a single day in the state before March 15 this

The state is left with just 4,163 active cases out of which nearly 2,500 are under home isolation while the percentage of active cases as against the total confirmed cases is just 0 per cent. Similarly, the test positivity rate is 0.09 per cent. No new Covid cases have been reported from, at least, 18 districts of Uttar Pradesh in the past 24 hours. Except for Lucknow, all districts of the state have less than 200 active cases. As many as 66 districts have reported 10 or lesser number of fresh cases.

Additional Chief Secretary (Information) Navneet Sehgal said: "At a time when several states are recording thousands of cases, UP has been able to bring down cases. However, the decline does not mean that people should drop guard against the pandemic as the virus is still active.'

UP CM will be decided after polls: Minister

SENIOR BJP leader and Uttar Pradesh Labour Minister Swami Prasad Maurya has said that the next chief minister of the state will be decided by the central leadership after the completion of Assembly elections early next

The chief minister will be finalised by the central leadership after the Assembly elections, Maurya told newspersons in reply to a question at the BJP.

Conflicting signals have continued to emerge from the ruling BJP over who would lead the party in the 2022 Assembly elections and who will be the chief ministerial candidate.

Speaking to newspersons in Etah last week, the BJP's state unit president Swatantra Dev Singh had said that the next Assembly polls will be contested under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

"Corruption and hooliganism have ended and development is taking place. We will fight the 2022 elections under the hardworking and honest Chief Min-



ister Yogi Adityanath," Swatantra Dev had stated.

Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya had earlier said in Bareilly that the party's national leadership will decide under whom the upcoming elections will be fought.

When asked if there was any confusion in the party over who would lead the party in the coming polls and who would be the chief ministerial candidate as seen in the recent statements of

party leaders, BJP spokesman Harishchandra Srivastava said "Swatantra Dev is the state unit president and what he has said is important. What Keshav Prasad Maurya and Swami Prasad Maurya have said is on the basis of the party's norms and traditions.

"Formally, the announcement of chief minister's name is decided by the Parliamentary Board, and so Keshav Maurya and Swami Maurya would have said this, Srivasatava added.

Row over UP IPS officer's alleged tweet

LUCKNOW

A 2014 batch IPS officer, Gaurav Banswal, has landed in controversy after a tweet posted from his profile said that he has stayed on a non-cadre IPS post for one year. However, on Sunday, the tweet and the account of the IPS was deactivated. ADG, law and order, Prashant Kumar said that the matter has come to his notice and Gaurav Banswal has informed about his Twitter account being hacked in the past. "The matter will be investigated and action will be taken based on the facts," he said. On Friday, a tweet from Gaurav Banswal's handle, sarcastically stated that

- "Today I completed one year in a non-cadre post in UP".

Bhim Army founder Chandra Shekhar Azad, an activist and others were tagged in the controversial tweet, allegedly made from Gaurav's Twitter handle. Banswal has been posted as superintendent of police, crime, in DGP Headquarters for almost a year. Gaurav Banswal was earlier posted as ASP in Kanpur and Kushinagar and later, as SP in Hathras.

Loni case: Twitter MD says available for video call

LUCKNOW

TWITTER India has responded to the legal notice issued by the Ghaziabad Police regarding the viral video of an elderly man being assaulted in Loni, Ghaziabad.

Twitter India Managing Director Manish Maheshwari said he is available on video conferencing to explain the issue to the concerned authorities. While clarifying that he does not deal with the matter at hand, Maheshwari said he is willing to be questioned by the police.

Ghaziabad Police is not satisfied with the social media giants response and is mulling if it should send a second notice. The police are also reportedly seeking legal counsel on whether or not to take up Twitter India on its offer. If accepted, the video call will be made by an official at the level of Senior Superintendent or Superintendent of Police.

In the legal notice mailed to Twitter India MD Manish Maheshwari last Thursday, the police had directed him to come to the Loni Border Police Station and record a statement within seven days. Maheshwari and several others are accused of sharing



Rana Ayyub gets transit bail

 \mathbf{M} UMBAI

THE Bombay high court on Monday granted 4 weeks transit anticipatory bail to journalist Rana Ayyub in the FIR registered by the Uttar Pradesh police over her tweet on the Ghaziabad incident related to the assault of an elderly Muslim man. A single bench of Justice PD Naik ordered that protection can be granted to Ayyub for a period of four weeks to enable

the video of the elderly man being assaulted in Loni with the alleged

her to approach the appropriate court to seek appropriate reliefs. Senior Advocate Mihir Desai, who appeared for Ayyub, told the bench that she was a globally renowned journalist who has won several awards for her work and contended that she had only made the tweet based on news reports.

When conflicting versions emerged about the incident, Desai said, Ayyub deleted the

intent of "provoking communal

Big B's family priest involved in clash with police

BOLLYWOOD actor Amitabh Bachchan's family priest, who has also reportedly performed 'pujas' for the Gandhi family, was allegedly beaten up during a scuffle between priests and the police at the Vindhyavasini temple in Vindhyachal area.

A video of the incident has gone viral.

According to reports, the clash took place on Sunday after the district magistrate of Chandauli district and his family were escorted to the temple by the police to perform pujas despite the weekend lockdown.

However, when Bachchan's family priest Amit Pandey, along with other priests, reached the temple for performing pujas, the police refused to let them in, leading to an altercation.

Seeing the district magistrate offering puja, the priests also insisted that they be allowed in.

No case has been filed in the incident so far. Sumit Pandey, brother of the priest, told reporters, "Police deliberately did this. Protesting priests are also



implicated in false cases. We are very respected in the community." He said that his brother regularly performed 'puja' for the Bachchan family.

Rajan Pathak, former president of Panda Samaj, also condemned the incident and said that every worshipper is equal in the eyes of the almighty. He also said that the temple does not discriminate against anyone.

Additional Superintendent of Police Sanjay Verma denied the incident and said that no policeman escorted any official for performing puja in the temple.

"A priest performed darshan puja and when Amit Pandey started taking other visitors for the darshan puja which the police objected to," Verma said.

5 bike-borne miscreants rob editor-in-chief at gunpoint

FIVE miscreants in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida the Editor-in-Chief of a wellknown news channel at gunpoint and robbed him. The miscreants also threatened to shoot the journalist.

Following this incident, the law and order situation in Noida has come under severe criticism and to improve it the commissionerate system has been implemented.

This incident took place just 300 metres from a police sta-

Journalist Atul Aggarwal narrated the incident on the social media. He said he pleaded with the miscreants for his life for the sake of his young son. As of now no complaint has been lodged with the police in connection with the incident.

The journalist wrote a social media post, saying, "On June 19, 2021 at nearly 1 p.m, I was passing by near Rise Police station at Noida Extension when the music system in my Safari Storme car stopped working, so I stopped my car and took a pen drive comprising my song playlist. I must have been at a distance of nearly 250-300 metres from the police sta-



"Suddenly five boys riding two motorcycles stopped near Noida Extension. One bike was parked in front of my car and the other one on the side of my driving seat door. All the boys were wearing masks. A tall 6'4" boy first got off the bike and pulled my car's door with

The journalist said, "The door of my car was locked so they could not open it. The tall boy then hit hard on my car's window and ordered me to lower it down. When I refused to lower the car window, he took out a pistol. I had no choice left but to obey his orders and opened the door of my car. He threw me down from the car and held me at

gunpoint." "The miscreants pointed a pistol at me and asked me to hand over my chain, ring, watch, money and mobile phone to them. I gave all my money worth Rs 5000-6000 to the miscreants. I replied that I have allergy from gold which is why I don't wear chains and rings.'

The journalist further wrote, "My condition was battered and my legs were shivering. I again pleaded for mercy with folded hands to the miscreants to leave me as I have a little son. Then the tall guy got down from my car and grabbed my collar and said in a growling tone that if I acted oversmart then everybody would die. He threw my phone on the car seat and left from there."



FIR against 3 for objectionable FB post against Champat Rai

THREE persons, including a woman, have been booked for creating an objectionable and indecent Facebook post against Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra trust's general secretary Champat Rai, police said.

An FIR against the trio has been lodged on the complaint of Bijnor resident Sanjay Bansal, who has claimed himself to Champat Rai's brother, Nagina police station's in-charge Krishna Murari Dohre said.

In his complaint, Bansal said that a man named Vineet has made several objectionable and derogatory remarks against the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra trust's general secretary in his Facebook post.

Bansal also annexed to his complaint a screenshot of Vineet's Facebook post, the SHO said. In his complaint, Bansal

said that when he called up the mobile phone linked to the Facebook account, the man receiving the call said the post was written on the instruction of a woman living in Nagina, the SHO added.

The SHO said that the complainant also accused the person receiving the call of calling him names and threatening him.

Bijnor's Superintendent of Police Dharmveer Singh said on the basis of the Facebook post, the police have lodged an FIR against two men, Vineet and Rajnish, and a woman, Alka, under various penal sections for forging a fake document and using

objectionable language. The trust general secretary was recently accused by AAP MP Sanjay Singh and other Opposition leaders of buying some land for then Ram temple premises in Ayodhya at an inflated price, but Rai has refuted those allegations.

Amid infighting in Punjab Cong, Amarinder to meet panel today

New Delhi

AMID escalated infighting in the Punjab Congress, chief minister Amarinder Singh has arrived in Delhi and is scheduled to meet the party panel on Tuesday. The panel is headed by leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge and Harish Rawat and JP Aggarwal are its members.

The meeting gains significance after disgruntled leader Navjot Singh Sidhu once again opened front against the chief minister. Sidhu has reportedly said that he is not a 'show piece' to be used in elections. The Congress panel has been authorised to resolve the issue without alienating any of the factions in the state.

The Congress panel constituted to resolve factionalism in the Punjab unit, submitted its report to party interim President Sonia Gandhi on June 10.



Sources said the panel has not recommended the removal of the chief minister and Captain Amarinder Singh is likely to lead the party in the next elections. Instead, a slew of reforms have been suggested in the party state unit. While the fate of Navjot Singh Sidhu is still not clear, sources said the panel wants his rehabilitation in the Punjab cabinet. Amarinder Singh is averse to Sidhu being elevated to the post of deputy CM but is ready to accommodate him in the cabinet, sources said.

The panel had met all the stakeholders in the party including chief minister Amarinder Singh and Navjot Singh Sidhu.

Two held for forcing over 1,000 conversions in UP LUCKNOW

THE Uttar Pradesh ATS have arrested two people from Delhi for allegedly forcing over 1000 people to change their religion.

The two accused, Umar Gautam and Jahangir, have allegedly forced around 1000 non-Muslims to convert to Islam. One of the accused revealed that he is a resident of Batala house in Jamia Nagar and he himself has converted his religion.

UP ADG (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar said in a press

conference here on Monday that there is a racket operating in the state, forcing people to convert to Islam. Kumar confirmed that around 1000 people have converted their religion till now.

The ADG further said that these two people used to target poor families, unemployed youth, and handicapped people, especially those who were hearing and speech impaired, children and forced them to change

According to the police, people were lured to convert their

religion for money and financial stability. UP ADG also mentioned that this might be a case of funding from ISI for religious conversions

Prashant Kumar also said that many women have been forced to change their religion and were married off. He said that the racket was operating in Noida, Kanpur, and Mathura. The accused used to run a centre named 'Islamic Dawa Centre' that got funding from all across

the world. Police is also tracking those



people who got trapped in this racket and is investigating fur-



ther to understand how they influenced people.

Girl child most affected by pandemic

HAVE women, particularly the girl child, in India borne the brunt during the pandemic in the last one year or so? Yes, by all means. Women have always suffered during calamities and wars. But, even this war against the virus has seen them suffer the most. A study by a prominent organization working in the field, Aksha Centre for Equity and Wellbeing, whose head is also the vice president of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, has confirmed that the worsening of poverty during the pandemic may well have led to a worrying spurt in marriages of girl children in India. The information available indicates that has happened, pushing back the progress of recent decades in reducing child marriages. Experts in the field and other social scientists are now having a relook into the issue demanding a serious study of the same. The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted life for all groups in society. While attention has been focused on the direct effects of Covid-19 on hospitalisation and deaths, the ways in which it has affected the young has received less at-

tention. Indeed, the young have been thus far less affected by the virus than older age groups. However, studies have found that the pandemic has affected the young indirectly and it is these indirect consequences that pose a severe threat to the future of the generation, especially for the most vulnerable among them. What is important here is that the least documented consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and related lockdowns in India is a spurt in child and early marriage. Drawing from available insights - from research in previous humanitarian disasters and crises in India and elsewhere, as well as from reports of telephone and online surveys, and print and electronic media reports it was concluded that these young adolescents have taken the worst blow. Alongside we have the estimates from the UN child agency UNICEF suggest that while 110 million child marriages took place globally and an estimated 25 million were averted over the decade 2011-2020, this trend may now be reversed. UNICEF now projects that up to 10 million more girls are at risk of child marriage in the decade 2021-2030 (UNICEF 2021). In contrast, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates that the Covid-19 pandemic will globally result in 13 million additional child marriages over the 2020-2030 decade. Of these, 7.4 million are attributable to the slowdown in programme implementation, and the remaining 5.6 million to the worldwide economic downturn through its effect on household poverty (UNFPA 2020). Perhaps the least documented consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and related lockdowns in India is a spurt in child and early marriage. Earlier research is indicative of the fact that every third child marriage takes place in India and the implications of these estimates for India are severe. In 2006-07 almost half (47%) of females aged 20-24 in India had married as children, that is, below the age of 18, the legal minimum. Juxtaposing the figures of its own survey over the next decade, the Aksha centre has concluded that all the good work in the field could come to naught in future. Is this 'Beti Bachao,

IT Rules 2021: UN Rapporteurs see chilling effect on freedom of expression



HE Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, published on 25 February 2021 under the Information Technology Act, 2000 will have a chilling effect on the freedom of ex-

pression of ordinary individuals, social media writers and the journalists working in print and electronic media. The ethical norms so far will get converted into penal provisions and the immunity that was given to intermediaries by IT Act 2000 now vulnerable to criminal liability through these Rules 2021.

The Principal Secretary of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and the minister or government through him will be exercising enormous powers as he would be heading the Inter-Departmental Committee of Secretaries of Central Ministries as an oversight body.

Three UN Special Rapporteurs (a) on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; (b) on the rights to freedom of peaceable assembly and (c) on the right to privacy, expressed their serious concern at the possible chilling consequences of implementing the Rules 2021 replacing the Rules 2011.

The Special Rapporteurs team is of opinion that the Rules 2021 do not appear to meet the requirements of international law and standards related to the rights to freedom of opinion and expression and right to privacy as protected by Articles 17 and 19 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which India acceded, in 1979.

Article 19 (3) of the ICCPR says that the restrictions on the right to freedom of expression must be "expressly prescribed by law" and necessary "for respect of the rights or reputations of others" or for "the protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals".

The devil in 'ambiguity'

The devil dwells in details. A close reading of the Rules 2021 reveal that the restrictions are 'catch all' provisions with wide scope and highly ambiguous. The penal law becomes atrocious not because of severe punishments prescribed but because of ambiguity in defining criminality. UN Rapporteurs cautioned against adoption of broadly defined legislation which may result in undue restrictions to freedom of opinion and expression.

Big source of abuse

Whether international law or domestic law, the restrictions must be provided by law (statute passed by legislature) and be formulated with sufficient precision to enable an individual to regulate his or her conduct accordingly. In this regard, terms such as content that is "racially or ethnically objectionable", "harmful to child",

"impersonates another person", "threatens the unity... of India," "is patently false and untrue", "is written or published with the intent to mislead or harass a person [...] to cause any injury to any person", are overly broad and lack sufficiently clear definitions and may lead to arbitrary application.

Most of the terms in the Rules 2021 do not rigorously define grounds for restrictions and fail to provide adequate guidance on the circumstances under which content may be blocked, removed, or restricted, or access to a service may be restricted or terminated, thereby falling short of the legality requirement under international human rights law.

Freedom of speech is not absolute. The Parliament can impose restrictions reasonably on only grounds listed in Article 19(2). Neither the PMO nor the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting imposes any new restrictions through their sub-ordinate legislation like framing of rules.

The Government of India is trying to usurp the power of Parliament and control the media through the Rules and not by statute passed according to procedure.

False, fake, and untrue information

Generally, the restrictions and use of high power from authority is based on a ground of false and untrue information. The UN Special Rapporteurs wrote: More specifically, we would like to underscore that false and untrue information is protected under international human rights law. In its General Comment no. 34, the Human Rights Committee has made clear that the ICCPR does not permit general prohibition of expressions of an erroneous opinion (CCPR/C/GC/34 para. 49)".

opinion (CCPR/C/GC/34 para. 49)". Referring to fake news as a ground for restriction on Media, the UN Rapporteurs said that the Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression and "Fake News", Disinformation and Propaganda published by my mandate and regional experts on freedom of expression, sets out the applicable human rights standards in this context. While noting with concern that disinformation may harm individual reputations and privacy, or incite to violence, discrimination, or hostility against identifiable groups in society, the Joint Declaration made clear that general prohibitions on the dissemination of information based on vague and ambiguous ideas, including "false news," are incompatible with international standards for restrictions on freedom of expression, and" should be abolished".

Another ambiguity is about 'misleading' news. If the executive governments exercise power in directing the removal of content that may "mislead" and cause "any" injury to a person is considered excessively broad and can cause selective interference into media from the authorities.

What needed is specific and precious definition. As social media intermediaries deal with a huge amount of content, a rigorous definition of the restriction of freedom of expression is critical for them to protect speeches that are legitimate under international law, such as the expression



The Special Rapporteurs team is of opinion that the Rules 2021 do not appear to meet the requirements of international law and standards related to the rights to freedom of opinion and expression and right to privacy as protected by Articles 17 and 19 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which India acceded, in 1979

of dissenting views. A sufficiently precise definition is essential to prevent the possibility that legitimate expressions is taken down on political or other unjustified grounds. It will ensure that the new rules do not have a chilling effect on independent media reporting.

Leading to removal of legitimate expression

Now, the serious problem in India is that the ruling parties and their governments frequently seek removal of contents called takedown requests. The social media platforms, or intermediary companies must comply with commands of the government to takedown the material from the publication sites. These companies are under obligation either to develop digital recognition-based content removal systems or automated tools to restrict content. These techniques are unlikely to accurately evaluate cultural contexts and identify illegitimate content. There are serious apprehensions and worries as to compliances of these commands at the short deadlines, coupled with the criminal penalties that could lead service providers to remove legitimate expression as a precaution to avoid sanctions.

Respecting human rights is an obligation not only on state-actors but also the private companies like social media intermediaries. The private companies have a responsibility to respect human rights, per the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. However, the outsourcing of content moderation by requiring private companies to remove broad categories of content, without an order of a court or independent administrative authority, may run contrary to international standards on freedom of expression. Content removals must be

undertaken "pursuant to an order by an independent and impartial judicial authority, and in accordance with due process and standards of legality, necessity and legitimacy" (A/HRC/38/35, para. 66).

In this context, the landmark judgement of the Supreme Court in Shreya Singhal vs. Union of India, of 24 March 2015, wherein it was clarified that content restrictions may only come from a reasoned order from a judicial, administrative, or government body.

It is known to all that the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology directed Twitter to shut down over 1,000 accounts under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, on 31 January 2021, on grounds that these accounts were spreading misinformation about farmers' protests. The UN Rapporteurs and democratic activists in India are worried that the new Rules may provide the authorities with the power to censor journalists who expose information of public interest and individuals who report on human rights violations in an effort to hold the government accountable. We would like to emphasize that the respect for diversity, pluralism and independent information is a necessary condition for the functioning of any democratic society.

The Rules 2021 are potential enough to subject individual employees of companies to criminal liability, which is of serious concern for the international and internal intermediaries in India. The UN Rapporteurs said "The severity of the envisaged penalties incentivizes the restriction of content and is likely to have a chilling effect on freedom of expression.

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



Yoga helps improve respiratory health post Covid: Experts

It has been observed that nearly 10 per cent of people diagnosed with Covid-19 experience prolonged symptoms, including breathing trouble, headaches, blood clots, nausea, fatigue and muscle pain which may last for weeks, months, possibly years even after recovery. Apart from a healthy diet, yoga can play an important role in the recovery process post Covid

 $Y^{\rm OGA}$ has long been known as a holistic medium to achieve health and wellbeing. The Covid-19 pandemic has further put the spotlight on the myriad benefits of yoga.

On the occasion of International Day of Yoga on Monday, experts said that practising yoga can boost respiratory health and immunity post Covid.

It has been observed that nearly 10 per cent of people diagnosed with Covid-19 experience prolonged symptoms, including breathing trouble, headaches, blood clots, nausea, fatigue and muscle pain which may last for weeks, months, possibly years even after recovery.

Apart from a healthy diet, yoga can play an important role in the recovery process post Covid, experts said.

"Yoga can help support, balance and boost the immune system and can help fight oxidative stress that poses a risk to the healthy cells. While the novel coronavirus especially attacks the respiratory system, breathing exercise or 'pranayam' can help a lot in strengthening the system if done in a correct way and under good guidance," Ismit Tyagi, Consultant Physiotherapist, Columbia Asia Hospital, Gurugram, told IANS.

Patients who have recovered from Covid-19 can do some easy yoga movements to increase the body's capacity.

"Movements like Tadasana, Chakrasana, Trikonasana, Bhujangasana and Pawanmuktasana will not only help in increasing the capacity of the lungs, but will also increase the amount of oxygenated blood in the body and transfer direct blood to the brain, due to which the body feels strong and young. Yoga also helps to maintain proper alignment of our body besides enhancing our immunity," said Chitra Kataria, Head-Rehabilitation, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, New Delhi.

Besides physical health, the pandemic has taken a severe toll on the mental health of people -- dealing with the deaths of loved ones, loss of jobs, being cooped up at home and uncertainty of the future. All these can result in feelings of anxiety and despair.

"Yoga could be useful during the pandemic in three ways -- helping to cope with the stress by alleviating depression and anxiety, improving the respiratory system which is mainly damaged by the virus, and boosting immunity. Yoga is a great tool to help improve respiratory health and immunity, both of which are involved in the prevention and healing from Covid-19," said Tilak Suvarna, Senior Interventional Cardiologist, Asian Heart Institute, Mumbai.

While yoga and meditation are known to be beneficial for holistic health, there is no proof that they help the human body to fight coronavirus. However, studies on yoga in managing flu symptoms during an influenza season have shown promising results, the experts noted.

Regular yoga practice can also help people of all ages prevent and control noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) like cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes -- a major risk factor for developing severe Covid-19 symptoms, said Poonam Khetrapal Singh, WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia.

NCDs kill 41 million people globally every year, more than a third of them prematurely. "People living with NCDs are at higher risk of developing severe Covid-19 symptoms. They must continue to be provided uninterrupted access to NCD services and encouraged and enabled to take preventive action, for which yoga at home can prove beneficial and safe," Singh said.

"Yoga is a powerful way for people of all ages and incomes, whatever their gender or ethnicity, to prevent and control NCDs, increase overall physical and mental health, and reduce individual and public health expenditure," she added.



LETTERS

Abrogation of Art 370 accrued no visible benefits

THE Modi government ended the statehood 1 and autonomous status to Jammu & Kashmir by dividing it into two Union Territories -Jammu and Ladhak, and revoking Article 370. Since 5 August, 2019, the day parliament attached administration of J&K to the Centre, people of the area have been undergoing great troubles. It is because almost all the political heads including former CMs have been under house arrest and internet service has been shut down. In fact there has been absolutely no political activity which is bedrock of democracy. The Modi government in a hurry to implement RSS ideology revoked Article 370. But it said it did it to control terrorism, promote rapid development and finish separatist tendencies. But in reality none of them came true. Instead, this action promoted encounters in new areas. Now, the Modi government has decided to invite all political parties to a meeting on 24 June with a view to beginning a political dialogue as it is being pressured on account of border aggression by China, changes to be occurred in

Afghanistan, failure to control coronavirus and clear warning like statement from US President Joe Biden for early solution to the issue. Under this backdrop, the Centre has convened the meeting even without disclosing agenda. So, political parties in the area especially regional parties must participate in it whether it is for restoration of statehood or delimiting constituencies. On the other hand the regional parties can demand the agenda for the next meeting in the interests of people of the area.

Pratapa Reddy Yaramala, Tiruvuru, AP

Political motive behind lifting of Covid curbs

KCR seems to have taken the decision on lifting lockdown curbs with the sole aim to stem the rot in his government and party. TRS and government are being used as exclusive properties of KCR and his family with no minister or leader getting any chance to express any opinion. By deciding to reopen educational institutions, he has dumped the responsibility of Covid protocol on the institutions without even assessing their capability to handle the situation. If any untoward incident happens, KCR can wash his hands of.

The school administrators, teachers and parents will have to draw up specific SOPs to be implemented and ensure a smooth transition from online to physical functioning. The set of guidelines so framed by these groups should specify the duties and responsibilities of all the cohesive units. Everyone will have to function/perform with dedication and care to ensure that the children are able to pursue their studies and regain their confidence without any mishap or malfunction.

Let us not depend on our politicians whose aim is to stay in power so as to command power and amass wealth.

J Kannan, Hyderabad

Safety of students should be top priority

THE editorial "Govt should rethink on reopening of schools" (June 21) giving mild warning in the guise of advise is very timely. As rightly said online teaching is not a replacement to listening in class room physically. Somehow studies are going online and examinations too. Are teachers not

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aware that taking two vaccine shots do not shield them from virus attack? Children are more prone to atmospheric ailments. They are being transported in crowded autos and other vehicles. Hostels are also crowded. Parents should also give a thought in such critical moment - so also education institutions. Education is a must but safety is first.

Dr NSR Murthy, Secunderabad

Govt must pay ex gratia to kin of Covid victims

THE central government's 'discovery' that the Covid-19 pandemic is not a 'one-time disaster' and it is unlike a natural disaster like an earth-quake or a flood appears to be an excuse to abdicate its responsibility to give ex gratia to families of Covid-19 victims. It should not be so used. Its thesis that limiting relief to monetary pay-off is a 'narrow and pedantic approach' is rendered spurious by the simple fact that money matters; it is needed to alleviate suffering and survive. The contention that there is no precedent of giving ex gratia payments for a disease or a disaster spread over a long period of time does not hold good as everything in life is not done on the basis of precedent. Now set a precedent by doing this humani-

tarian gesture for the future. True, there is no certainty of an end to the pandemic. But the government cannot cite it as a reason for refusing to consider granting ex gratia compensation. The government bases its reasoning against ex gratia to the families that are suddenly left in dire straits without earners because of Covid-19 on the premise that this pandemic disease is not different from other diseases of which too people die is specious. Just by saying that it has earmarked lakhs of rupees for augmenting health services, oxygen production and supply, providing succor to migrant workers and economic stimulus packages, the government cannot shy away from giving a helping hand to families that have lost their breadwinners to Covid-19. Such families cannot be forsaken and left to fend for themselves. If the government is not there to help them to pick up the pieces, who else will be there? The government holds that distribution of ex gratia payments will dry up precious financial resources. At the same time, it has no qualms about spending a whopping Rs 20,000 crore on the Central Vista, a vanity project while Rs 4 lakh for each of 4 lakh families bereaved due to Covid-19 comes to Rs 16,000 crore. By getting its priorities right, the government can secure fiscal affordability for ex gratia payments without overstretching itself.

ments without overstretching itself. *G. David Milton,* Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

'Stop projects or we will divert Krishna waters in Mahbubnagar'

HYDERABAD

CAUTIONING Andhra Pradesh government not to disturb the friendly relations with Telangana, Excise Minister V Srinivas said that the Telangana government would divert Krishna waters in Mahbubnagar district if the neighboring Telugu State does not change its attitude.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, Srinivas Goud said that there are good relations between people of the two States and these



should not be disturbed. Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao wants cordial relations between two States but the AP government was involved in water dacoity, said Goud

with a plan against this da-

Srinivas Goud said the Telangana government gave water to Telugu Ganga on a humanitarian basis, but this has turned into water dacoity. By increasing the capacity of Pothireddypadu, the AP government was doing severe injustice to Palamuru district. He said that there was no truth in the statement by AP Minister Anil Kumar that the projects were constructed as per rules.

The Telangana Minister re-

promised that is will not start new lift irrigation projects in Rayalaseema before the Apex council meeting, but they failed to live up to the promise. The AP government was indulging in enmity in the guise of helping hand, alleged the Minister. "Even the people of Seemandhra are shocked with AP government's move asking how they will get drinking water in Hyderabad," said Srinivas Goud. He urged the AP government to come to a compromise or CM KCR would act accordingly.

Cyient Endows Chair in Future Communications at IIT Hyderabad

HYDERABAD

CYIENT, a global engineering, manufacturing, and digital technology solutions company, on Monday announced that it has established an endowed chair in the field of new-age communications at the Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH). Prof. P. Rajalakshmi, Department of Electrical Engineering at IITH, was chosen as the first appointee of the Cvient Chair in Future Communications. The Cyient Chair will endow the professorship with an honorarium of Rs 25,000 and a contingency grant of Rs 1,00,000 per year for three years to further research and development in the

A selection committee comprising IITH Director Prof B S Murty, Chair Professor Ranjan Mallik, IIT Delhi, and Prabhakar Atla, Senior VP & Business Unit Head - Communications and Utilities, Cyient, picked P Ra-

in the field of new-age communications tech-Prof. P. Rajalakshmi, IITH Chair Professor, Cyient Chair in Future Communications, said, "It is indeed a moment of pride to be recognized and picked for this Chair. I am thankful to the selection committee for appreciating

my work in the field of communi-

cations. This recognition will

ialakshmi for her sig-

nificant contributions

surely result in more good research in the future to come." Conveying his wishes on the oc-

casion, Krishna Bodanapu, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Cyient, said, "The Cyient Chair is a significant step forward in deepening the relationship between academia and enter-

prise to accelerate innovation. Helping attract the best minds and providing opportunities to experiment with new ideas and incubate technologies is exciting for Cyient. This is another important step of delivering on our vision of applying technology imaginatively to solve problems

MANUU awards **PhD to Arif Moin**

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

THE Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) has declared Arif Moin qualified for the Doctor of Philosophy in Journalism and Mass Communication on topic "Socio-Cultural, Political and Re-

ligious Impact of Urdu Satellite Channels on Indian Muslims".



Ehtesham Ahmed Khan, Dean, School of Mass Communication & Journalism, supervised his research.

The topic covered four Urdu channels ETV, Door Darshan, Zee Salam and Munsif TV. Moin has extensive experience in TV production. He has been associated in various capacities with the programming department of ETV Urdu and News18 Urdu.

Hyderabad roads buzz back with vehicles

HYDERABAD

ON the second day of complete unlocking on Monday, roads were busy with heavy vehicular traffic in different parts of the City. They were again seen with traffic all day of private vehicles and public transport, like buses, autos and cabs. There were traffic jams in a few areas. The public were seen doing their tasks, as also Government employees, heading to and back from their

Areas like Raniguni, Masab Tank, Mehdipatnam and Koti witnessed heavy traffic jams. Even RTC buses plied with 70 percent passengers. All business establishments---like shopping malls, restaurants, street food vendors---freely carried out their trade, as there was no time bound restrictions.

The public were excited on stepping out. In places like General Bazaar, Koti shoppers were seen with friends and relatives. There was a huge rush at General Bazaar. At restaurants on the Necklace Road there was a heavy movement of drive-in customers.



As most restaurants did not have walk-in facility during the lockdown, with unlocking most of them were crowded, with families coming with friends. Most resto-bars were open in Jubilee hills, Hi-tech City, Alwal, where customers were seen hanging out

with friends.

Street food businesses picked up in the Old City areas, like Charminar, Pathergatti, Puranapool. and even on the Necklace Road. At a few places like General Bazaar, Necklace Road. people were seen without masks

and not following Covid norms. The police were seen fining the violators.

The Hyderabad Metro Rail ran its services from 7 am. While the last train started at 9 pm and reached the terminating station by 10 pm.

Dalit woman lockup death: Uttam, Bhatti write to Governor

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

THE TPCC president and Nalgonda MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy and Congress Legislature Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Monday urged Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan to take stringent action against the police for the alleged lockup death of a dalit woman

Mariyamma, under the SC and ST Atrocities Act. In an open letter they demanded her to take steps to prevent such incidents in Telangana. They also demanded the Governor to direct the State government to give Rs 50 lakh compensation to the victim's family and a government job to her son Uday Kiran.

They alleged that Mariyamma died in police custody after she was 'tortured' by Adla Guduru police.

Giving details, the leaders said she was a native of Komatigudem village of Chintakanipalli mandal of Khammam district. She had worked as cook in a house in Govindapuram village of Adla Guduru mandal of Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri district.

The police had arrested Mariyamma and Uday Kiran on the charge of theft in the house. They were arrested on June 16 in Komatigudem and taken to the Adla Guduru police station and later to Chintakanipalli police station by the Adla Guduru and Komatigudem police on the evening of June 17.

Both were subjected to severe torture with third degree methods in the Chintakanipalli police station. They were brought to Adla Guduru police station again and interrogated Mariyamma died due to severe torture.

AP's projects are based on allocated water, asserts Anil

- Taking strong exception to TS opposing State's irrigation projects, the Water **Recourses Minister alleges** that the neighbouring State has been building new project without permission and raising the capacity of Kalwakurthi and Nettempadu projects
- Stating that Rajolibanda project has an allocation of 4 tmc ft, he declares that CM will go to any length to protect the State's interests

HANS NEWS SERVICE **A**MARAVATI

WATER resources minister P Anil Kumar Yaday clarified that the construction of irrigation projects in the state is subject to water allocations by the tribunals and ridiculed the objections of the Telangana state on Andhra Pradesh's projects.

Speaking to the media at YS-RCP party's central office in Tadepalli on Monday, the minister said that Andhra Pradesh has been using only the water allocated to it, while Telangana had



been constructing new projects without any permissions and has increased the capacity of Kalwakurthi and Nettempadu projects. Asserting that the state government is not going beyond its allocations, Anil Kumar said that for Ravalaseema lift irrigation project, the state couldn't draw the allocated water of 44.000 cusecs from Srisailam through Pothireddypadu, if the water level drops below 848 feet. To provide water for Rayalaseema and Nellore districts, the water could be drawn only at 881 ft level, which could be possible only for 15-20 days during flood period. Whereas, Telangana state can draw over 6 tmc ft of water, even when the water level is below 800 ft and also taking up the projects like Palamuru-Ranga Reddy lift irriga-

it would be wrong for Andhra Pradesh to construct lift irrigation just to ease the process of withdrawing the allocated share of water, while the same is being done by Telangana state. The minister said that the Rajolibanda project has an allocation of 4 tmc ft and Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy will go to any extent to protect the interests of the state. Telangana officials are falsely accusing the state, despite all the projects being administered as per the state allocations, he added.

He said the Chief Minister wanted the two states to be on friendly terms and took a step forward in that regard. All these projects have been there for decades and the state government is only trying to increase their capacity, he said. The minister stated that the Vamsadhara Tribunal has given clearance to construct the Neredi project and the construction will start

AP CM lauds staff for vax feat

- Says administering 13 lakh doses of Covid vaccines on single day proves that they can administer large number of jabs if there is enough supply
- Notes that the State has effective mechanism consisting of Asha workers, ANMs, village/ward secretariat staff and PHCs

HANS NEWS SERVICE **A**MARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy congratulated the staff for setting record by administering over 13 lakh doses of Covid-19 vaccine on a single day.

During the review at camp office on measures to control the pandemic and vaccination drive here on Monday, the Chief Minister said they had proven that they can administer large number of vaccines if provided and added that the state has effective mechanism comprising of Asha workers, ANMs, staff in village/ward secretariats and two primary health centres (PHCs) per each mandal. He said they should be



mega drive once vaccines are available. The officials informed the Chief Minister that the state has the capacity and mechanism to administer 20-25 lakh vaccines in a single day. The Chief Minister directed the

officials to expedite the construction of new medical colleges and complete them on a war footing. The officials should focus on new medical colleges and monitor the work in progress regularly.

The officials said positivity rate has been decreasing in all the districts except East Godavari and active cases decreased to 63,068 cases. Positivity rate is 5.65 per cent and recovery rate is 95.93 per cent, they said.

The Chief Minister told the officials to be on alert as lockdown imposed in neighbouring states is being relaxed. The officials said 2,655 ICU beds and 13,824 oxygen beds are available at present and added that 91.48 per cent beds were occupied by patients who were being treated under Aaro-

They said 7,056 beds were occupied in Covid care centres. The state has registered 2,772 black fungus active cases till date of which 922 patients underwent surgeries, 1,232 were discharged, 212 died and remaining are being treated. The officials explained that 1,37,42,417 doses of Covid vaccine were administered in the state of which first dose was given to 82,77,225 people and two doses were completed to 27,32,596 people.

Vaccine was administered to 10,29,266 mothers of children below five years of age and first dose of vaccination is completed to 11,158 people who will be going to abroad. As many as 13,72,481 people were vaccinated in a single day during mega vaccination drive on June 20, they said.

Lokesh likens Group-1 to Vyapam scam in MP

HANS NEWS SERVICE MANGALAGIRI

TDP national general secretary and MLC Nara Lokesh on Monday called upon the AP job aspirants and unemployed youth to

wage a united battle against the Jagan Mohan Reddy government's bid to commit huge irregularities in the Group-1 exam on the lines of Vyapam scam in Madhya Pradesh. Lokesh demanded the state

government to immediately conduct manual evaluation of the Group-1 Mains answer sheets so as to ensure justice to the deserving candidates. Addressing a meeting with the aspirants on 'Irregularities in APPSC Group-1 and impact of

court order', Lokesh asked the job aspirants not to lose heart but continue their united strug-

Digital evaluation of the Group-1 Mains papers should be cancelled forthwith. A white paper should be published on the standard operating procedures followed in this.

Lokesh demanded an explanation from the YSRCP government on the huge gap between the Group 1 and 2 posts announced during former chief secretary Nilam Sawhney's term and now. Nilam announced 907 posts but now only 36 jobs were proposed. Even in the police force, Nilam proposed 7,740 jobs while this number was reduced to 450 now, he pointed out.



of Legislative Council V Subrahmanyam hands over rule book kit to K Moshen Raju after after he was sworn-in as MLC at his chamber in Legislative Council

MLCs take oath

HANS NEWS SERVICE **A**MARAVATI

PRO-TEM chairman of Legislative Council V Subrahmanyam administered oath of office to newlynominated MLCs (under Governor's quota), RV Ramesh Yadav, K Moshen Raju, Tota Thrimurtulu and Lella Appireddy, at his chamber in the Council on

Monday. Later, the pro-tem chairman handed over council rule book kit to the new members.

Ministers Kodali Venkateswara Rao, Kannababu, M Sucharitha. T Vanita, Ranganatha Raju, G Jayaram, government advisor Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy, MP Mopidevi Venkataramana, MLAs and MLCs were present.

TDP objects to Kanagaraj appointment as PCA chief

MANGALAGIRI

TDP national general secretary Varla Ramaiah on Monday strongly objected to the YS-RCP government appointing Justice V Kanagaraj as the chairman of the Andhra Pradesh State Police Complaints Authority (APSPCA) without trying to ensure accountability or transparency. He said that this appointment was unacceptable since Justice Kanagaraj was known for having bias in favour of the ruling YSRCP leaders.

The APSPCA should be promoted as an independent and

 Varla says constitutional institutions being used for political rehabilitation

 Alleges that unlawful appointments unabated under YSRCP rule

unbiased constitutional institution. It should not be turned into a centre for political reha-

bilitation of the ruling party, he said. In a statement here, the TDP leader criticised that many unlawful decisions were taken in

the constitutional institutions like the State Election Com-

could not act unbiased and she gave arbitrary election notification for the MPTC and the ZPTCs. Eventually, the High Court cancelled the elections. A lot of time and energy was being wasted in AP now because of unlawful decisions which were eventually getting struck down in the courts.

mission ever since the Jagan

Mohan Reddy regime came to

Commissioner was turned into

a rubber stamp by appointing

Nilam Sawhney who served as

the advisor to the Jagan Reddy

Ramaiah recalled how Nilam

government till a day before.

power in the past two years.

The post of State Election

Pawar set to lead 'Oppn front' against Modi govt

Details of the meeting emerge after Pawar's discussions with poll strategist Prashant Kishor

New Delhi

NATIONALIST Congress Party (NCP) leader Sharad Pawar has called a meeting of opposition parties on Tuesday to explore a joint fight against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP, not just in the 2024 national election but also in Uttar Pradesh, where elections are due next year.

Invitations have gone to several parties on behalf of Sharad Pawar and former BJP leader Yashwant Sinha, who joined the Trinamool Congress of Mamata Banerjee just before the Bengal election. "Sharad Pawar ji and Yashwant Sinha ji are co-chairing a discussion on the present national scenario. Yashwant Sinha has requested your kind presence and participation in the meeting," says the invite sent out by Rashtra Manch,

Sinha's outfit. Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Manoj Jha, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)'s Sanjay Singh and Congress leaders Vivek Tankha and Kapil Sibal are some of the invitees. Sibal has reportedly declined, so has Jha. Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK will be represented by

Reacting to initial reports that the Congress was not invited, the party's Maharashtra leader Nana Patole said "in a democracy everyone has a right to do whatever they want to.. We won't stop anyone. But there can be no front without the Congress," he said, adding that this was not the first time that Pawar was trying to organize a third front.

Details of the opposition meeting emerged after Sharad Pawar's discussions with poll strategist Prashant Kishor in Delhi on Monday. The two met for



the second time in two weeks amid speculation about a plan for "Mission 2024" to fight the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance in the next national election. They had last met on June 11 at Sharad Pawar's Mumbai home for three hours.

Apart from talks on a joint opposition candidate to challenge PM Modi, tomorrow's meeting will also facilitate an "exploratory exercise" to try and evolve an alternative to the BJP focusing on Uttar Pradesh, where there is sharp discontent against the BJP's Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, "Some sections of the BJP are silently supporting Pawar, who has understood that there is a huge decline in the popularity of PM Modi and that there is a need to take on the BJP." Many parties have indicated their willingness to join such a grouping. Pawar, one of the canniest and senior most politicians in India, has been involved in crafting the unlikeliest of coalition governments and fronts over the years.

The election victory in Bengal is being held up as an example that it is possible to outmaneuver the BJP and its virtually invincible poll machinery.

Kishor's client Mamata Banerjee, who won a third straight term in West Bengal after fighting off a difficult challenge from the BJP, was asked whether she saw herself as the opposition prime ministerial candidate. "I think all together, we can fight the battle for 2024. But let's fight Covid first," she had said soon after the verdict. Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut had talked about the need for an alliance of opposition parties at the national level. Raut had said that he had spoken Sharad Pawar on this matter.

WINDOWS

NSA invoked against 4 for killing girl

KANPUR: The National Security Act (NSA) has been invoked against four accused, including a couple, who had hacked a seven-year-old girl to death in Ghatampur police area in November 2020.

The four had extracted her liver and lungs as part of a 'tantrik' (occult) ritual on Diwali. The childless couple had indulged in the macabre crime so that they could have children. DM, Kanpur Nagar, Alok Ti-

wari told reporters, "We have slapped the National Security Act against the four accused, including Parshuram and his wife Sunaina, with regard to the case." A youth and his accomplice had hacked to death a seven-year-old girl in their neighbour, extracted her liver and lungs and gave them to his uncle and aunt to be eaten as part of a 'tantrik' (occult) ritual on Diwali so that the childless couple could have

Nagpur tailor kills 5 kin, commits suicide

NAGPUR: In a sensational development, a man working as a tailor, allegedly killed five members of his family before ending his own life, police said here on Monday.

The shocking incident, which took place at the family's home near Pachpau Phata in the Tehsil area of the city, came to light on Monday after locals complained.

"As per preliminary information, the person Alok Matulkar, 50, allegedly killed his wife and their son and daughter, besides strangulating his mother-in-law Lakshmi Bobade. sister-in-law Amisha, before hanging himself," said a police official from Tahsil. "It is not yet clear when the incident may have occurred but came to light today. We are investigating the circumstances behind it from all angles" the zonal Deputy Commissioner of Police Lohit Matani told IANS. The bodies have been re-

moved and sent for an autopsy while police are questioning the people in the neighbourhood and the victims' relatives to ascertain the motives resulting in the six

Jaan Hai To Jahaan Hai campaign begins

528 inmates of Mizoram orphanage test +ive; no local body polls in Maha till 70% vaccinated

New Delhi

WITH increasing hesitancy among people towards Covid-19 vaccination in remote and rural areas of the country, the Central government on Monday started a campaign to make aware people and assuage rumours being spread about the ongoing vaccination exercise against the deadly

The nationwide "Jaan Hai To Jahaan Hai" campaign aims to create awareness on corona vaccination in rural and remote areas and also to "crush and curb" the rumours and apprehensions, being spread by some vested interests regarding the ongoing vaccination drive.

Triggering fresh concerns, as many as 528 inmates of an orphanage-cum-rehabilitation centre in Mizoram have tested positive for Covid-19, officials said on Mon-

Officials of the Health and Family Welfare Department said that during a mass screening at the orphanage, samples of 989 out of the 1,500 inmates were tested, of which 528 returned positive.

India's cumulative vaccination coverage has exceeded the 28-crores mark, informed the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) on Monday.

Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan on Monday said that rumours and fake information against coronavirus vaccines is harming people belonging to the economically weaker section of society the most. The Minister said, "People should be protected from those who are spreading rumours and fake information against coronavirus vaccines, it harms the poor people the most..

"In the battle of the second wave of covid, we are slowly moving towards success, we do not have to be careless at all, if we would be careless and relax again, then there can be many more cases of Covid again," the Minister warned.

Maharashtra Rural Development Minister Hasan Mushrif on Monday said there will be no elections to local bodies in the state till 70 per cent population is vaccinated against COVID-19. Till Sunday, 2.76.99.419 people were inoculated against Covid-19 in Maharashtra, according to the health department. NCP leader Mushrif was talking to reporters in Kolhapur when he was asked about Maharashtra minister and Congress leader Vijay Wadettiwar's comment that he would not allow local bodies polls to be held in the state till the OBC quota issue is resolved.



Doctors and Covid-19 patients, perform yoga on International Day of Yoga, at Government Institute of Medical Sciences in Greater Noida on Monday

28 crore Indians vaccinated against Covid: Centre

Anti-Covid vax propaganda harming poor: Vardhan

MTC resumes bus services in Chennai

CHENNAI: The Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) resumed operations of its bus services in Chennai on Monday after the government announced various relaxations amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The state government has allowed non-airconditioned buses with 50 per cent occupancy in Chennai, Kancheepuram, Chengalpettu and Tiruvallur districts from Monday onwards. After inspecting the central bus depot at Pallavan Salai, Transport Minister R.S. Rajakannappan said: "MTC has started operating 50 per cent of its total of 1.792 buses, while the Villupuram State Transport Corporation would be operating 750 buses in Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur and Chengalpetu districts, where MTC is not allowed to operate.'

Man gets 2 jabs in 30 minutes

PURI: A 51-year-old man in Odisha was administered two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine within 30 minutes of each other. prompting the authorities to order an inquiry though he suffered no adverse

event, official sources said on Monday. Prasanna Kumar Sahu of Raghupur village in Mayurbhanj district had visited the vaccination camp at Satyasai Government High School at Khuntapur on Saturday for the first dose after booking a slot. After taking the shot, as he was waiting for the 30- minute observation period to get over, a nurse came in and nonchalantly injected a fresh dose even before he could protest, Sahu claimed. "I raised an alarm, but by that time the nurse had already administered the vaccine," Sahu insisted.

China's Guangdong reports new case

BEIJING: China's Guangdong province reported one new locally-transmitted confirmed Covid-19 case, the National Health Commission said on Monday.

The case was reported in the city of Dongguan, Xinhua news agency quoted the Commission as saying. Guangdong on Sunday also reported six imported confirmed cases and 11 asymptomatic carriers who had come from abroad.

The province has so far reported a total of 2,699 confirmed Covid cases, including 1,135 imported ones.

Currently, 230 patients are being treated in hospitals, said the Commission. The latest Covid resurgence in the southern manufacturing heartland of Guangdong started in May.

Delta strain predominated during second wave: PGI

CHANDIGARH: Delta (B.1.617.2) and Alpha variants (B.1.1.7) were found to be present in the second wave of coronavirus among 61 and 30 per cent, respectively, of the samples sent for whole genome sequencing, PGI Hospital Director Jagat Ram said on Mon-

The majority of these samples (92 per cent) belonged to residents of Chandigarh. Thus, during the second wave in Chandigarh, Delta strain was the main circulating strain, he said.

"The Department of Virology of the PGIMER has been carrying out the Covid-19 testing by RT-PCR since March 2020 and till date more than 2.5 lakh samples have been tested. To study whether there was any change in the circulating strain in Chandigarh during the second wave, 25 stored positive samples of the period May 5 to May 24 were sent for whole genome sequencing to the NCDC in New Delhi.'

PGI's Dean, Academics, G.D. Puri, said the samples sent from admitted patients in Nehru Hospital Extension Block, where severe and critical Covid positive cases are admitted, belonged to Delta strain.

The Delta variant, which currently accounts for at least 10 per cent of all the confirmed coronavirus cases in the US, could spur a surge of infections in the country during fall, if 75 per cent of the country's eligible population is not vaccinated, former Food and Drug Administration chief Scott Gottlieb said.

Gottlieb said that states with low vaccination rates are already showing a concerning rise in cases with the spreading of the Delta variant, which is up to 60 per cent more contagious than earlier variants, the Washington Post reported on Sunday.

He urged a renewed vaccination push closer to the fall, as people prepare to return to school and work, when he said they may be more open to the shots.

'Yoga scientific, need not be linked to spiritualism'

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday said that modern day yoga is a proven scientific activity and need not be linked to spiritualism or to any one religion.

"If that happens, then a huge section of the populace might not get the desired benefit of yoga. Even the UN General Assembly has spoken about the scientific aspects of yoga. Hence modern day yoga should not be linked to spiritualism or to one religion," he said, inaugurating the 7th International Day of Yoga.

Vijayan asked the people to ensure that yoga is remembered not just on this day.

"The benefits of yoga, by now, have been proved and hence, it should become a part of our life and one should practice it daily. It not only refreshes our mental health but also our total well being and both these aspects are interlinked," he

Vijayan also pointed out that the Yoga Association of Kerala, during the Covid pandemic, had imparted yoga training to 50,000 people here as a preventive measure.

Top LeT terrorist among 3 killed

SOPORE: One of the most wanted militants, Mudasir Pandit, and a Pakistani ultra were among the three militants killed in an overnight encounter with security forces in the Sopore area of Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district, police said on Monday. Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh said all

the three slain militants were top commanders of the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) outfit. The operation was very important for the police and other security forces as the militants were involved in several attacks and killings,

These include two major attacks in Sopore -- one on March 29 in which two municipal councillors and a policeman were killed and another on June 12 in which two policemen and an equal number of civilians were

The encounter broke out late on Sunday night as the security forces launched a cordon-and-search operation following information about the presence of at least



three militants, including Pandit, in the area.

"The operation was very important for the police and security forces. In the encounter, three dreaded terrorist commanders, who were active for a long time and were involved in several terror crimes, were killed," Singh told reporters at a press conference here.

BJP's north Bengal leader, seven others join TMC

KOLKATA: In yet another jolt to the BJP, the party's Alipurduar district president, Ganga Prasad Sharma, joined the TMC on Monday, as senior leader of the state's ruling party Mukul Roy, who also switched sides two weeks ago, claimed that this was the "beginning of the saffron party's end" in the state. Seven other BJP leaders from the region, too, followed in Sharma's footsteps and joined the Mamata Banerjee camp. Roy, addressing a press meet here, said the BJP's rise in the state began with the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, when it managed to bag several seats in north Bengal, and its downfall, too,

will start from the region. "This is just a glimpse of what lies ahead... The BJP's fall in the state is imminent," Roy, who was the saffron partys national vice president until recently, underlined. Asked what he might have to say about BJP MLA Suvendu Adhikari's insistence that he quit as an MLA, having won the Krishnanagar Uttar assembly seat on a saffron camp ticket, Roy said, "He should first find out what his father (Sisir Adhikari) was up to." Rov was referring to the TMC's demand for disqualification of Kanthi MP Sisir Adhikari, who crossed over to the BJP, much like his son, ahead of the polls.

Calcutta HC refuses to stay order on NHRC probing violence

he five-member bench of the Calcutta High Court refused to recall its June 18 order directing the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to constitute a committee for examining complaints filed by persons displaced during post-poll violence in West Bengal. The state had moved the court on Saturday seeking recall and stay of the High Court's Friday order.

The five-member-bench comprising Acting Chief Justice Rajesh Binal and Justices I.P. Mukerji, Harish Tandon, Soumen Sen and Subrata Talukdar, said the order was passed after the state failed to inspire confidence of the court and there is no reason to recall, modify or stay the

order. "There were allegations that the police are not taking action and that is why we had to involve NHRC. You have not put on record a single complaint received by you. Your conduct in this case does not inspire confidence of this Court," Acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal ob-

Advocate General Kishore Datta appearing for the state pleaded that in the absence of the report, he was unable to effectively argue his case. He therefore urged that the order be stayed so as to give more time to the State to demonstrate the steps being taken by them to amelio-

"We have merely asked NHRC to file a report on the present situation. Let them do it. What is the harm?" the Bench asked Advocate General



Kishore Datta. It added that the West Bengal government may place its submissions and also the actions taken by it before the Committee to be appointed by NHRC.

The court was also surprised at the state's submission that it was not served a copy of a report filed by the West Bengal State Legal Services Authority regarding rehabilitation of displaced persons, which formed the basis of the June 18 order. The bench strongly reacted saying that on one hand, NHRC has received over 500 complaints and on the other, State claims that no complaints have been received by its State Human Rights Commission. "How is it possible. This is lethargy on part of the State," the Bench observed. Advocate Priyanka Tibrewal, representing some of the complainants, alleged that

the State is trying to give a bird's eye view while violence in West Bengal continues. She cited the Barrackpore constituency blast incident and violence against a woman, to demonstrate that normalcy has not returned. Earlier the Court snubbed the Mamata Banerjee government and observed that the state has not taken any concrete steps to address the complaints pertaining to post-poll violence. The court then ordered the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to constitute a committee that will examine complaints filed by persons who were displaced during the post-poll violence in West Bengal.

Earlier, the High Court had constituted a committee of members nominated by NHRC, SHRC & SLSA to coordinate rehabilitation of displaced persons of Entally constituency.



TODAY'S QUOTE

Yoga eliminates all diseases and discomforts

YOGA should be popularised and practised even more as it eliminates all diseases and discomforts from lives of people. Yoga is a science that has unending benefits. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made yoga a global practice and initiated a special global day to make people aware of benefits and significance of yoga

— Nitin Gadkari, Union Steel Minister



MADE IN INDIA Airtel, Tata Group team up for 5G

BHARTI Airtel and Tata Group on Monday announced a strategic partnership for implementing 5G network solutions for India. Tata Group has developed "O-RAN (Open Radio Access Network) based Radio and NSA/SA (Non-Standalone/standalone) Core and has integrated a totally indigenous telecom stack, leveraging the Group capabilities and that of its partners

FOREX (bu	n ₹)		
US Dollar	74.85	South	D. BY
Euro	89.05	African Rand	5.97
UAE Dirham	20.78	Hong Kong Dollar	10.98
Thai Baht	2.58	Japanese Yen	0.77
British Pound	103.8	New Zealand Dollar	52.18
Australian Dollar	56.19	Saudi Riyal	21.72
Canadian Dollar	60.2	Swedish Krona	9.91
Swiss Franc	81.29	Singapore Dollar	56.19

DELHI TUESDAY 22 JUNE 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Karur Vysya's CSR initiative

Karur Vysya Bank has do-nated 10 ambulances to Tamil Nadu health systems project to fight Covid pandemic. The ambulances were flagged off by MK Stalin, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in Chennai. The ambulances will be deployed for Covid relief activities across the State, two for use in the plains and eight for use in hilly regions. This contribution is being implemented by the bank under its CSR initiatives at an outlay of Rs 1.77 crore. KVB earlier has donated oxygen generators to various government hospitals. B Ramesh Babu, bank's Managing Director, said: "As a responsible corporate citizen, Karur Vysya Bank has been supporting healthcare, education and environment sustainability projects. The bank will continue to provide valuable support to sustainable projects."

Vivo starts campaign

Vivo has kicked off UEFA EURO 2020 with its campaign 'To Beautiful Moments' that encourages and enables fans to be in the moment virtually. Fans around the world tuned into the opening ceremony recently. The showstopper of a performance included collaboration between three great artists, Martin Garrix, Bono and The Edge, leading to a virtual performance that allowed fans across Europe and the world to feel closer to the tournament. Spark Ni, senior vice president, CMO, Vivo, said: "Along with football fans around the world, we've been eagerly awaiting the kick-off of the tournament. We are honored to have partnered with UEFA to present the opening ceremony and excited to help connect fans around the world and be in the moment for the beautiful game."

Zupee launches skill academy

7upee has announced the Llaunch of their skilling academy, which will impart employable skills and promote equal opportunities in the youth of the country. Zupee Skilling Academy (ZSA) will be a first-ofits-kind mission by a corporation, aimed at skilling, upskilling and educating young, disadvantaged Indians. The idea is to prepare them for the future by getting them ready through skill training and ensuring that everyone in the programme has equal opportunities for employment. "We are truly delighted to launch the Zupee Skilling Academy (ZSA), which is part of our broader CSR vision based on three key pillars focusing on Sustainability and ESG, equal opportunities through skilling and upskilling, and technology and gaming for good. " said, Subi Chaturvedi, Chief Corporate, Public Affairs Officer, Zupee.

JD Institute's new admissions

D Institute of Fashion Technol-Jogy has opened admissions for the academic year 2021. The institute offers a plethora of undergraduate, postgraduate, diploma and post diploma programme in the field of fashion design, interior design, jewellery design, fashion communication, fashion and lifestyle entrepreneurship, fashion business management. visual merchandising, fashion photography etc. It is also providing a new 10 per cent scholarship in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes for backward community students including SC/ST and kins of ex-servicemen from 2021."Making higher education accessible to all sections of the society equally without any discrimination is the only way we can provide for an egalitarian form of education. ," said Sandra Sequeira, Director, South, JD Institute of Fashion Technology.

Ficci sees business normalcy in 12 mths

HANS BUSINESS

New Delhi

WITH States easing lockdown curbs due to declining number of Covid -19 cases; there are immediate indications of improvement in economic activity as companies are hopeful of better performance in the next 6 to 12 months, according to a survey.

About 60 per cent of 212 companies, which participated in the survey conducted by Ficci and Dhruva Advisors, said there was a high impact on their businesses due to the State-level lockdowns. With different parts of the country under different sets of restrictions and consumer sentiment impacted due to the ferocity of the second wave of Covid-19, an evident dip in demand was witnessed by companies, it added.

This time it was not just demand in urban areas that was constrained but even the rural areas saw a compression in demand, according to the survey. "While the impact of the second wave-induced lockdowns on businesses is clearly visible, there is a silver lining on the horizon...With different States getting into the unlock mode, there are immediate indications of improvement in economic activity," the survey said.

Ficci said that with the number of new cases ebbing and States getting into the unlock mode, there is hope that business and economic activities would regain normalcy in the months ahead. "Even

Economic activity picking up as States get into unlock mode: Survey



For dealing with any subsequent waves, it suggested measures such as ramping up investments in healthcare infrastructure in smaller cities and rural areas; maintaining a sufficient pool of essential medicines; continuing with newly created temporary facilities; strengthening testing infrastructure

as we see signs of improvement, we must prepare ourselves well for the subsequent waves....Clearly, vaccination at scale has to be the priority if we have to beat Covid-19 and put it behind us," it added.

For dealing with any subsequent waves, it suggested five measures — ramping up investments in healthcare infrastructure in smaller cities and rural areas; maintaining a sufficient pool of essential medicines; continuing with newly created temporary facilities; strengthening testing infrastructure, and setting up a national facility for vaccine manufacturing with government funding.

The survey also suggested setting up vaccination facilities at airports, railway stations, bus depots, schools and village panchayat ghars; organizing mobile vans that can undertake vaccination in slums, rural areas and planning for vaccination of the elderly and people with disabilities, who have limited mobility, at home

Aparna to invest ₹100 cr in Alteza door biz

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

LEADING building materials player, Aparna Enterprises Limited has announced their plans to invest Rs 100 crore towards building its aluminum window and door system brand Alteza in next 4 years. The investments will be used for strengthening its product portfolio as well as manufacturing facility, marketing and retailing. The occasion also witnessed launch of their latest range of slim aluminum sliding door system - ACA M-19 series. The system works on very narrow sightlines and is the slimmest aluminium sliding that Alteza offers to its customers. This unique system is based on min $imalistic \, design, which \, offers \, 19$ mm thickness throughout the door including the interlock, and the system can be used for corner openings as well.

Commenting on the plans for Alteza, Ashwin Reddy, Managing Director, Aparna Enterprises Limited, said, "Aluminum window and door system market in India is close to Rs 20,000 crore and it is growing at the rate of 7.9 per cent every year. There is a growing demand for quality products as well as services and we are gearing up to address this demand." "Sixty per cent of the funds will be directed towards strengthening the manufacturing capacity and the rest towards research & development and building our dealership network," he added.

Maruti to jack up prices amid rising input costs

New Deli

THE country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Monday said it will increase prices of its entire product portfolio in the second quarter of the current fiscal due to rise in prices of various essential commodities, including steel. The auto major, which has already taken a price increase in April this financial year, noted that the price of steel and various precious metals has gone up considerably prompting the company to pass on some of the impact to the customers.

"The prices of steel and precious metals like rhodium and palladium have gone up substantially. In April we passed on a part of the increased input costs to consumers thinking that the prices of these essential commodities will come down eventually. But that has not happened and as a last resort we are doing it to safeguard the company's financial health," MSI Executive Director (Sales and Marketing) Shashank Srivastava said.

He noted that the price of steel has gone up from Rs 38 per kg to Rs 68 per kg while that of rhodium has gone up from Rs 19,000 per gram to about Rs 66,000 per gram thus impacting the production cost. Rhodium and palladium are used in the catalysers and their demand has

Prices of steel, rhodium and palladium continue to surge



gone up manifold due to the introduction of stricter emission norms across the world.

"There is no signal that prices of steel and precious metals would come down, in fact it is increasing. We are not in a position to absorb the impact and therefore would pass on some of it to the consumers in the July-September quarter," Srivastava noted. The company is currently doing internal calculations regarding the price hike for different models, he added. Earlier in a regulatory filing MSI stated: "Over the past year the cost of the company's vehicles continue to be adversely impacted due to increase in various input costs. Hence, it has become imperative for the company to pass on some impact of the above additional cost to customers through a price rise." The price rise has been planned in the second quarter of the fiscal and it would vary for different models.

'Connectivity, communications fundamental rights'

String of digital and physical (healthcare infra) will be new normal: Mukesh Ambani

New Delhi

BILLIONAIRE Mukesh Ambaniwho heads India's youngest, but the largest telecom operator- on Monday pressed for bridging the digital divide 'both among nations and within nations,' saying connectivity and communications have be-

munications have become the fundamental rights of every person. Also, there is a need to bring back the economies around the globe, added Ambani.

Speaking at the Qatar

Speaking at the Qatar Economic Forum, Ambani said: "It's difficult to imagine what India would have been without the 4G telecom network during the pandemic. The digital divide must be bridged, both among nations and within nations. This is because connectivity and communications have become the basic needs, and also fundamental rights of every human being on

the planet (just) as basic as food, clothing, and shelter." "I think that this string of digital and physical (healthcare infrastructure) will be the new normal," he said. "To my mind, it is an absolute must for all economies to integrate and enhance this digital

infrastructure which has been so very useful in the corona crisis." Ambani, CMD of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), India's most valuable company, said Covid-19 is a once-in-a-century humanitarian crisis and the world was not prepared for it.

On his connection with the Middle East, Ambani said he was born in Yemen where his father Dhirubhai had gone to work. And "he (Dhirubhai) always said I have Arabic blood", he said, adding Reliance values its relationships with all the Arabic countries. Reliance operates the world's largest oil refining complex at Jamnagar in Gujarat.

Indices recoup early losses as banks, RIL support

Mkt opened on weak note due to hawkish monetary policy of US Federal Reserve, later clawed back above day's low and closed in the green

Mumbai

THE BSE Sensex wiped off early losses to finish with smart gains on Monday, propped up by HDFC twins, SBI and Reliance Industries amid a mixed trend in global equities. After plunging over 600 points in early trade, the 30-share BSE benchmark made a U-turn to settle 230.01 points or 0.44 per cent higher at 52,574.46. Similarly, the broader $NSE\ Nifty\ advanced\ 63.15\ points\ or$ 0.40 per cent to 15,746.50. NTPC was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying 3.87 per cent, followed by Titan, SBI, HUL, UltraTech Cement, Tata Steel and IndusInd

"The domestic market opened on a weak note due to the hawkish monetary policy of the US Federal Reserve. But the market clawed back above day's low and closed in the green as the market expects a faster economic recovery owing to the PM's announcement on free inoculation for all citizens. PSU Bank was the top sectoral performer on reports

of the government finalising Central
Bank of India and Indian Overseas
Bank for privatisation," said Vinod
Nair, head (research) at Geojit Fiduce of the current fiscal due to rise in prices of various establishment.

nancial Services. Binod Modi, head (strategy) at Reliance Securities, adds that "investors once again seemed to be lapping up quality mid-cap and smallcap stocks after the recent steep correction. Strong rebound in PSU banks was a prime factor for market's recovery. Further, Reliance Industries also recorded some gains ahead of its AGM and arrested market's fall. Barring Auto and IT, most key sectoral indices recovered to green from initial losses." In value terms, HDFC twins, HUL and Reliance Industries accounted for

most of the gains. On the other hand, Maruti Suzuki was the biggest laggard, shedding 0.82 per cent, after the country's largest c a r -

second quarter of the current fiscal due to rise in prices of various essential commodities, including steel. TCS, Tech Mahindra, M&M, L&T and Infosys were among the other losers, skidding up to 0.74 per cent. Sectorally, BSE power, realty, utilities, oil and gas, finance and bankex rose up to 2.55 per cent, while auto, IT and teck ended in the red. Broader BSE midcap and smallcap indices rose up to 0.83 per cent. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses largely ended with losses. In Europe, equities were trading on a positive note in mid-session deals. International oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.18 per cent higher at USD 73.64 per barrel. The Indian rupee slumped 24 paise to finish at 74.10 per US dollar as participants turned risk-averse. Meanwhile, India logged 53,256 new coronavirus infections, the lowest in 88 days, taking the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 2,99,35,221, while the active cases further reduced to 7,02,887, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Monday.

Synchrony among top 5 cos to work for

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

FINANCIAL services company Synchrony said it has been listed among India's 100 best companies to work for 2021 by the Great Place to Work Institute. The company jumped from 27th place in 2020 to fifth rank this year. Synchrony has earned the recognition for four consecutive years.

This recognition further highlights company's efforts to create an environment that is caring, inclusive, collaborative, and innovative despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the company said.

"Our employees are our greatest asset and we are committed to supporting their well-being and success. Being recognized as a Great Place to Work, especially in this challenging year, further demonstrates our commitment to being a company that puts people first and maintains a high-trust culture with a positive and empowering working environment," said Andy Ponneri, Senior Vice President and Business Leader, Synchrony India.

Covid 3rd wave fears turn dampener for gold buyers

ARCHANA RAO NEW DELHI

CUSTOMERs' spirit to purchase gold and silver picks up marginally in the national capital as jewellers reopen the shutter after a long-localised lockdown. BizzBuzz spoke with the buyers and jewellers to know the market's performance and the optimistic future ahead of upcoming religious festivities. 51-year-old Sangeetha Kumar, a resident of Malviya Nagar, South Delhi, explained that although the price of gold seems lucrative, the dampened emotional spirit due to Covid-19 pandemic dissuades her from investing in jewellery. The fear of a possible third wave of Covid has also been a contributing factor in keeping business low at most marketplaces. "The catastrophe of the ongoing wave has been such that big celebrations do not seem like a viable option. Moreover, the situation seems to be getting better only now. We have postponed marriage functions and



other big celebrations for next year," Ms Kumar told *BizzBuzz*.

As of June 18, gold rates in major metropolitan cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata took a marginal dip compared with the previous day's rates. Gold rate in Delhi for 10 gram of 22-carat Rs 47,000, and that of 10 gram of 24-carat

was at Rs50,900 with a slide of Rs 500 and Rs 700 respectively.

Janak Jewellers at the heart of old Delhi's Chandini Chowk is upholding an optimistic view amid third phase of ease of lockdown. "The business has been down even before the second wave. The last 14 months have been stressful for us. Consumers tighten the purse strings, postpone marriage ceremonies and big celebrations

But I'm hoping that people will start thronging the market given big festivals like Ganesh Chathurthi and Diwali will be coming up in a few months. By then, I believe, that (Covid) situation will subside. Our only hope is on the acceleration of the vaccination drive," Rajesh Mahanty,

owner of the store said.

Earlier this week, Union Minister Piyush Goyal had announced mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts from June 16. The first phase of gold hallmarking will be carried out in 256 districts across the country to ensure better protection and satisfaction of customers, according to the government announcement.

TREDA CONDUCTS BLOOD CAMP

HYDERABAD

A blood donation camp was organised jointly by Telangana Real Estate Developers Association (Treda), Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC), Seva Bharthi in association with Society for Cyberabad Security Council (SCSC), Commissionerate of Police, Cyberabad, in PBEL City, a gated residential community. The blood donation camp received a phenomenal response with residents from the community donating blood with enthusiasm.

Krishna Yedula, General Secretary, SCSC, said, the group of these four organisations is conducting the blood donation camp with the help of Red Cross Society, Warangal.

SCSC has been organising the blood camps since April 2020 during the first wave of lockdown. Most blood banks had depleted reserves at that time. Cyberabad Police and SCSC conducted mega drives as well as multiple blood donation camps and collected 10,500 units. In the second wave, over 3,000 units have been collected by these organisations.

Noting that service to mankind is service to God, he said thalassemia patients require blood infusion on a regular basis as also cancer-leukaemia patients need blood regularly and other emergency surgeries. The camps conducted are a wonderful contribution and the various gated communities need to be congratulated for their cooperation.

Euro 2020

Switzerland's 3-1 win seals Turkey's group-stage exit

SWITZERLAND snatched a 3-1 victory and will have to wait if they have done enough for their progression as Xherdan Shaqiri scored twice in the last Euro 2020 Group A game late on Sunday.

Both sides needed a victory to maintain their minimum chance and ensured a lively opening period at the Baku Olympic Stadium, reports Xinhua.

It took only six minutes for the opener as Haris Seferovic had enough time and space to drill Steven Zuber's assist past Turkey goalkeeper Ugurcan Cakir.

Turkey responded well and earned their chances through Mert Muldur, whose shot was thwarted by a busy Switzerland goalkeeper Yann Sommer, before Ozan Tufan missed the target from a promising position moments later.

It looked like Turkey would claw their way back into the game as Sommer was the busier goalkeeper. However, Switzerland was ice cold in front of the target and doubled their advantage as Shaqiri collected Zuber's square pass before curling the ball into the top right corner in the 26th minute.

Switzerland should have made it three, four minutes later but for all that Shaqiri wasn't able to beat Cakir in a one-on-one. Turkey remained dangerous and pressed but Sommer drove Senol Gunes' men to despair before the half time.

Rani Rampal named women's hockey captain for Olympics

New Delhi

HOCKEY INDIA (HI) on Monday named veteran striker Rani Rampal as the captain of the 16member Indian women's hockey squad that will compete at the next month's Tokyo Olympic Games

Defender Deep Grace Ekka and seasoned goalkeeper Savita Punia will be vice-captains of the team.

While announcing the team on June 17. HI had said that the captain would be named later

"It is a huge honour to lead the Indian team at the Olympics. In these past years my role as a captain was made easy by teammates who shared the responsibilities as senior players. I look forward to this added responsibility and thank HI for this honour," said Rani

after being named captain. Rani, 26, was also skipper of the Indian women hockey team that competed in 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

HI said that Rani was the obvious choice, not just for her on-field exploits but also for her innate ability to guide the

youngsters in the team. "Savita and Deep have been in the core group for nearly a decade and have been an integral part of the leadership group. They also played a key role in Indian team achieving the best ranking of world No.9 in 2018, following a strong performance at the FIH women's

World Cup," said HI. The Indian team has over the past four years achieved significant results, including winning the Asia Cup in 2017, silver at the Asian Games 2018, and the Asian Champions Trophy.

The team led by Rani also made it to the quarterfinals of the FIH women's World Cup 2018 in London for the first time. She was the cynosure of India's performance during the FIH Olympic Qualifiers in Bhubaneswar where her goal put the team ahead by 6-5 against the USA and secured the qualification. (IANS)

After the interval, Turkey was able to overcome Sommer as Irfan Can Kahveci unleashed a 20-metre hammer to catch the Swiss goalkeeper flat-footed in the 62nd minute.

Turkey halved the deficit, yet it was a short-lived joy as Shaqiri wrapped up his brace after striking a one-timer into the roof of the net, following Zuber's third assist, to restore Switzerland's twogoal lead six minutes later.

the result, Switzerland recorded their first win in their Euro 2020 campaign and could advance from the third spot into the round of 16. Meanwhile, Turkey crashed out in the group stage with zero points from three games.

"It was important to show a reaction as a unit, as a team. We knew we could create a lot of chances against this opponent," Switzerland Shaqiri said.

Italy's Matteo Pessina celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal during the Euro 2020 soccer championship group A match against Wales at the Stadio Olimpico stadium in Rome late on Sunday



ITALY made it three wins from their Euro 2020 three Group A matches without conceding a goal as they beat Wales 1-0 in Rome. The Italians controlled the match

> evening, giving the Welsh few options in either midfield or attack. Following their group stage performance so far, they are being consid-

ered serious candidates for this year's European Championships. With his side already assured of a place

in the last 16, Italy coach Roberto Mancini made eight changes to the team that beat Switzerland in their first game, and although his side lacked some of the fluency of their wins against

and the Swiss, Italy still

Turkev

Marco Verratti was running the midfield, where the Welsh were keeping things tight, but struggling to string any moves together.

Chiesa Federico

flashed an effort across the face of the goal and although Danny Ward hadn't been forced into a difficult save, a goal looked to be coming. It arrived in the 39th minute when Matteo Pessina got a neat flick on Verratti's low free kick to send the ball in at the far post.

Another free kick early in the second half saw Italy again cause danger with Federico Bernardeschi rattling the woodwork, before Joe Allen almost found himself through on goal at the other end, before getting his feet in a tangle as he was caught in two minds.

The Welsh were down to 10 men in the 55th minute when Ethan Ampadu was shown a straight red card for a late challenge that saw him plant his studs on the top of Bernardeschi's foot.

Chiesa found space on the right in the 59th minute, but Ward did well to keep Andrea Belotti's effort out as Italy kept up the pace looking for a second goal.

Another corner from Verratti caused problems for the Wales defence, before Gareth Bale smacked a volley over the bar in his side's best chance of the game. The Wales' captain was subbed shortly afterwards to reserve him for the knockout phase as his side also progressed to the next phase.

Meanwhile Mancini showed his confidence by replacing goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma in the 88th minute with Salvatore Sirigu.

Italy (9 points) have been confirmed as Group A leaders followed by Wales (4 points), Switzerland (4 points) and Turkey (nil). (IANS)

WTC final: Fourth day's play abandoned without a ball bowled

SOUTHAMPTON

THE fourth day's play of the World Test Championship (WTC) final between India and New Zealand here on Monday was abandoned without a ball bowled due to persistent rain. The umpires waited for about five hours before calling off the day.

Monday, the fourth day, is the second day to be washed out at the Hampshire Bowl. The first day on Friday was also

washed out without a ball bowled.

When play ended, due to poor visibility, on Sunday, New Zealand were 101 for two wickets, replying to India's first innings' 217. Captain Kane Williamson was batting on 12 (37 balls, 1x4) while Ross Taylor was yet to open his account.

In-form Devon Conway was out for a fine 54 (222 minutes, 153 balls, 6x4s), just moments before the umpires decided that the light was not good enough for play. (IANS)

Sneh's all-round display due to good couple of domestic seasons: Mithali

Bristol

INDIA women's team cricketer Sneh Rana's all-round display in the drawn one-off Test against England has earned her praise from skipper Mithali Raj, who felt that "a good couple of domestic seasons" had given her a lot of confidence.

Sneh became the first Indian woman cricketer to take four wickets and score a half-century (unbeaten 80 in the second innings) in

"Sneh Rana is sure coming back after five years but that girl has clearly had good couple of domestic seasons. I'm sure she walked in with loads of confidence. She played very, very sensibly, along with Taniya Bhatia (44

not out) and Shikha Pandey (18). That partnership was very, very crucial for us, after losing Harman (Kaur) and Punam Raut at that stage," Mithali was quoted as saying by cricinfo.com.

Mithali said that Sneh's contributions in the lower order, including her 41-run partnership with Shikha, which lasted almost 16 overs, played a big role in taking India to the safety of the draw.

"I'm mightily impressed with all the debutants because right from Shafali to Deepti, Sneh, Pooia Vastrakar and Taniva Bhatia. they've all really done well. See, we need to understand that they don't have the experience and you can't really bombard them with too many inputs about how to play in these

situations and all you can do is give them a lot of confidence that they need to believe in their ability," opined Mithali.

Mithali added that the draw had given the team a huge psychological boost.

"Psychologically, I think, it's a big boost (managing a draw). It definitely will put England on the back foot," she added. (IANS

Chhetri commits himself to

TOP Indian football striker Sunil Chhetri has signed a new two-vear contract with Bengaluru FC that will keep him with the Indian Super League (ISL) side until 2023.

The deal will ensure Chhetri, who had signed his first contract with the club in 2013, extends his stay at Bengaluru FC

"I'm really happy to have signed on for two more years at Bengaluru FC. The city is home now, and the people at this club are like family to me. It feels like just yesterday that I signed for the first time here, and I have to say the journey has been nothing short of special," said Chhetri on Monday. "I love this club, the supporters and the city, all three of which I have a strong bond with, and I'm looking forward to being part of many

Chhetri, 36, has made 203 appearances for the club, topping the charts in each of his eight seasons with the side by scoring 101 goals.

Chhetri, a six-time Player of the Year adjudged by the All India Football Federation (AIFF), led Bengaluru FC to their first League title in 2013, and has since won five more trophies with the club, including the Federation Cup (2015, 2017), the ISL (2018-19) and the Super Cup (2018). Besides, Chhetri was named the Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) Asian Icon in 2018 and the following year, he was conferred the Padma Shri, India's fourth-highest civilian honour.

Chhetri, who scored twice against Bangladesh in India's joint World Cup 2022 and AFC Asian Cup 2023 qualifiers in Doha recently, has played more than 100 games for India and is the country's all-time leading scorer in international football with 74 goals. (IANS

Bengaluru FC for 2 more years

BENGALURU

into the 10th ISL season.

more great moments with them.

EUGENE: An additional \$2million (Rs.14.82 crore) has been allocated to prize money for the World Championships in 2022 and 2023, the World Athletics (WA) has said. This money is the fine paid by the Russian Athletics Federation (RAF) for breaching the sport's anti-doping rules. . According to the WA, it will fund an additional \$1million (Rs.7.41 crore) per World Championships for the next two editions, with each of the 44 individual events receiving an additional \$23,000 (Rs.17.05 lakh) of prize money at each championship. At the most recent World Championships in Doha in 2019, \$75,30,000 (Rs.55.83 crore) in prize money was distributed to athletes who finished in the top eight in their respective events. WA said last year it had set up an athlete fund, supported by some generous donations, to provide financial relief to those athletes most in need. In all, 193 athletes from 58 countries were granted up to \$3,000 (Rs.2.22

₹14.82cr added to WA C'ships prize money fund

lakh) to go towards basic living costs such as food, accommodation and training expenses. (MAS)

Tokyo agrees to allow 10,000 local spectators at venues

THE Tokyo Olympic Games organising committee on Monday confirmed that up to 10,000 domestic fans would be allowed to attend events when the fortnight-long quadrennial showpiece commences on July 23.

Spectators from outside Japan have already been barred from attending the Games. "The capacity will be set at 50 per cent for all venues at the Games, and 10,000 fans will be permitted pro-

viding it does not exceed that limit; decision on the Paralympic Games will be made by 16 July 2021," the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games wrote on its official twitter account.

The other key decision taken during the meeting involving five parties -- International Olympic Committee (IOC), International Paralympic Committee (IPC), Tokyo 2020, Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the government of Japan -- was that, in the event of any

"rapid change in infection status",the number of spectators could be reduced, or competitions could be held without spectators".

"Restrictions on the number of spectators at the Games, including nonspectator competitions, will be based on the content of the state of emergency or other relevant measures in force at that time," said a joint statement.

The other key measures to be implemented are, strict adherence to the wearing of masks at venues at all times.

