

Amid spiralling coronavirus cases in the country, the demand for medical oxygen in the country has gone through the roof. Empty tankers will begin their journey from Kalamoli and Boisar railway stations in and near Mumbai on Monday to load liquid medical

Womenia

TWEET PATROL



JENNIFER MISTRY BANSIWAL
@JENNIFERMISTRYB

MAIN JIS DIN BHULA DU TERA PYAR DIL
SE... #jennifermistrybansawal #jmb

#jmbreels #sari

<https://instagram.com/reel/CNzXc95Fbxj/?igshid=spq42ucndkgc>



FASHIONISTA

Slay your traditional look

We all love Indian ethnic suits, be it salwar suits, Patiala suits, churidar suits or the ethereal Anarkali suits. But sadly, they have started featuring quite low on the priority list of women, especially if they are trying to project a modern and contemporary image. There are tons of ways, you can experiment with Indian suits, and make them your go-to dressing option – even for occasions, you wouldn't normally consider them for. Here are tips that you need to re-kindle your love affair with the lovely, eclectic and time tested 3-piece Indian Dress Suit.

Palazzo Suits

They are the perfect reason, you should (and must) try Indian suits. They are akin to pairing a long tunic with formal trousers or cigarette pants. You can always give dupatta a miss, when wearing this super-elegant style. It looks great on women of all ages and body types. You just have to learn to style it well. Long kurtas look great with palazzos on women with a good height. But, slightly shorter ones can try wearing trimmer palazzos with fitted kurtas or ones with asymmetrical hemlines.



Amika Shail: It is important to respect the profession of dancers

TEJAL SINHA

Amika Shail, a singer turned actor and a fitness freak will now be seen on a Disney + Hotstar series 'Nachaniya'. Amika started her journey of singing at the age of 5 as she was inspired by her mother who was also a singer.

During her childhood days, she has participated in various singing reality shows like Sa Re Ga Ma Little Champs, Amul Star Voice of India, Bharat Ki Shaan and many more. It has been years since, Amika has been into singing and has her own YouTube channel where she posts her music albums. It has been 2 years that she has been into acting.

Amika will now be seen in Nachaniya, which is slated for release on Disney + Hotstar. Nachaniya is a working title of the series and the production house will change its name shortly. Directed by Shraddha Pasi, the series revolves around the story of 3 female friends who entertain people in villages with dance performances.

It also features actors such as Vikram Singh Chauhan, Sandeepa Dhar, Nimai Bali and Deepak Qazir. Amika will be seen playing the character of this girl called Dhaani who is also the second female lead of the series.

Sharing about her role, Amika shares, "The story of the series revolves around 3 female friends. All three of them are village dancers but their personalities are quiet opposite of each other. If we talk about Dhaani in particular then she is a naive village belle and lives in her fantasy land. Although

I am a workaholic and I will always be grateful that I bagged 5 digital and 2 television series during the pandemic. – Amika Shail

she is a dancer yet she doesn't want to pursue it as her profession. She wants to get married and have a family, romance her prince charming and live in her dream world. She even tried to convince her best friend to give up her carrier ambitions and get married. In all we can say that Dhaani is a very bubbly and full of life kind of a person who is not very ambitious about her dancing carrier."

Amika shares that her character is something different from the rest of her works, where she had her own challenges to get into the skin of the character.

"It took me some time to understand the personality of Dhaani completely. She is very different from the kind of person I am in real life. While I am very carrier oriented and focused on my work, Dhaani on the other hand loves to live in her dreamland and it not concerned about her carrier. Although Dhaani is very bubbly and fun loving yet she has her differences with her friends when they fail to understand her perspective. The character has a lot of shades in herself. She plays a main role in the climax of the show. You will know more about it once the series is on the OTT. Although she is a naive belle yet sometimes it is a challenge to portray that simplicity on screen," adds the singer turned actress.

Amika shares that her immediate release is the web series called Nachaniya on Disney + Hotstar and another one titled Video call which will be released on a new OTT platform called Cine Prime. It is a Horror series. Coincidentally another of her upcoming series on Tamasha is also titled Nachaniya, where Amika will be seen playing the main lead.

'Nachaniya' is often termed in a negative way
'There are still people who call professional dancers as Nachaniya. What would you like to say about it?'

What's the proper order to use shampoo and conditioner?

Shampoo is a cleansing agent. It contains ingredients called surfactants and detergents that help remove oil, sweat, dirt, product build-up, and environmental pollutants from your hair.

Conditioners, on the other hand, contain natural oils, proteins, and botanical extracts that help keep hair soft, shiny, and smooth. They leave a thin film on your hair once rinsed to protect it. Most people apply shampoo to their hair, scrub, and rinse before applying conditioner. Shampooing removes dirt and oil from the hair, but it can leave the hair rough, frizzy, and unmanageable. Using conditioner after cleansing with shampoo is thought to help this issue. However, is shampooing before conditioning the only way to wash your hair? A new way to wash hair called reverse shampooing or pre-wash conditioning proposes that you apply conditioner before applying shampoo. There's also a new trend known as co-washing that skips the shampoo altogether.

So, which method is best? While the traditional shampoo-first routine is still necessary



BEAUTY FUNDA

most of the time, depending on your hair type and preferences, you may find it beneficial to try another method every once in a while.

How to use shampoo and conditioner

The general recommendation is to use shampoo to cleanse the hair before conditioner. Follow these steps for best results:

- Completely saturate your hair with warm, not hot, water.
- Squirt a small amount of shampoo into the palm of your hand.

- Apply it to your scalp and massage until it lathers.
- Work the shampoo through your hair, but pay the most attention to the scalp.
- Rinse your hair and scalp completely.
- Squirt a small amount of conditioner into your hand.
- Massage it into the length of your hair, avoiding the scalp.
- Leave the conditioner in for about 3 minutes.
- Rinse your hair completely.
- After leaving the shower, gently blot a towel on your hair to remove moisture.

How often you wash and condition your hair is up to you. People with hair that's prone to becoming oily may want to wash more frequently than people whose hair tends to be dry. Regular cleansing with a mild shampoo won't damage the hair. A mild shampoo contains gentler cleansing agents as well as added conditioning agents. If your hair is oily or dirty, you should still use a stronger clarifying shampoo once a week.

Diet drinks & sodas might be harming your fertility

DR ANJU YADAV

Are you fond of fizzy drinks or diet cola breaks? Do you prefer sugar in your brew for a sweetener? If so, your 'diet' beverage could be messing with your pregnancy plans.

Did you know, artificial sweeteners are chemical-based and all the soda's and sugary drinks are made of artificial sweeteners? There are so many things to think about when you're trying to increase your chances of conceiving. But did you know or ever think that maybe your daily intake of soft drinks can affect your chances of having a baby?

Couples planning a pregnancy should consider limiting their consumption of these beverages,

especially because they are related to other adverse health effects. Research has shown women undergoing fertility treatments found that frequent consumption of the artificial sweeteners commonly found in these beverages significantly decreased their chances of conceiving a child.

To conceive, 'consider cutting back on sodas'

Sugared sodas, and diet sodas are among the most popular beverages consumed by reproductive aged men and women. Research has shown that drinking one soda per day is linked with a 20-25 percent reduction in the average monthly probability of conception for both men and women. These adverse effects are not only limited to natural conception but may also have implications if you are pursuing fertility treatments like IUI & IVF.

Soda and infertility

Studies have found that excessive consumption of soda is strongly linked to infertility in both men and women. Men who consume soda regularly are at four times the risk of lowering the sperm count, motility, and other parameters that affect fertility. Moreover, soda being an acidic beverage alters the pH of the body which further affects fertility. Aspartame is an artificial softener used in most soft drinks which can alter the functioning of the endocrine glands and lead to hormonal imbalances. Excess soda consumption can also lead to the generation of free radicals which can result in the death of many

sperm and ovum. Besides, most soft drinks are rich in caffeine which reduces menstrual bleeding as it is a vasoconstrictor. Hence, it is clear that excessive consumption of soda can lead to infertility in both men as well as women.

Other harmful effects

Besides the above-mentioned direct effects of soda consumption on fertility, there are various other ways in which the consumption of soda affects fertility like:

Soda is extremely high in sugar content which leads to excessive weight gain, obesity, poor digestion, etc. which is extremely bad for fertility. Soda intake could cause subfertility through increased risk of insulin resistance, metabolic syndrome, weight gain, impaired fasting glucose which can affect ovulation and risk of polycystic ovarian syndrome.

Sodas and soft drinks are also rich in chemicals like additives, preservatives, colourants, etc. which are also bad for fertility. Soda intake leads to ovulatory infertility among females and lower sperm concentration and total sperm count among males. Excessive soda consumption increases blood sugar levels and can lead to type-2 diabetes which is not only bad for fertility but can also result in complications during pregnancy.

Hormonal consumption disrupts the hormonal levels in the body, including estrogen, which can also contribute to infertility. Besides, soda is highly addictive and has other negative health effects on gut health, bone strength, and various organs of the body. All these factors combined do affect fertility in a very negative way.

The takeaway, ditch the diet drinks. In order to boost your baby-making chances include more eggs, green leafy vegetables, regular exercise, maintaining a healthy weight, stopping smoking, decreasing alcohol intake and most importantly the soda intake.

POETRY AND THE CREATIVE MIND DAY

THIS DAY IN HISTORY
HANS INDIA

Creative minds have led the way throughout all of history's innovations and growth. Through poetry and art, they challenge the idea of what's possible, and shine a spotlight on the society that birthed them. Poetry and The Creative Mind Day is set aside to honour the bright and glittering jewels that are the minds of these creative pioneers. Most of us are introduced to poetry and art at an early age, whether it's the nursery rhymes sung by our parents, or the combination of poetry and art in books.

Poetry and Creative Mind Day is a great time to dig up some of your favourite old poems and read them, or sing a favourite old nursery rhyme. If your talents lean more towards the physical mediums, you can take out your paints or pencils, or any other form of art you enjoy. If you've never been the creative sort, Poetry and Creative Mind Day is a great day to pick up that opportunities.

There are so many great ways to celebrate it, including memorizing old poems, or writing your own. If you're the adventurous sort you can leave poetry in creative places today. You can leave snippets of poem on the inside of bathroom stalls on sticky notes, print them out and leave them



on desks, drop inspirational poems in the collection bowls of the needy, or anywhere else. Poetry readings are another great way to celebrate, and are still a common sort of gathering of creative minds. If you can't find a poetry reading, you can certainly try to organize one.

There are many ideas regarding the poets role in society, as the compressed nature of information in poetry tends to directly reach into the subconscious of a people. It creates imagery and evokes memories and emotions of events going on in and around people. It has been said that "writing is where thought meets impulse", allowing the conscious mind to communicate with the subconscious. It is the opinion of some that it becomes the responsibility of the poet to use this communication to reveal the truth to those unable to see it.

Poetry comes in many forms, from William Shakespeare's Iambic Pentameter, to the rigid structure of the Japanese

Haiku, to the simple rhyming nature of children's nursery rhymes, poems can come in many different forms. Take for instance acrostic poetry, that form by which a word of a person's name is used to write poetry, using the letters of the first name to form the framework of the poem. If you've ever seen poetry done in a particular shape, such as a rainbow or tree, you've read examples of concrete poetry. And these are just a few of the hundreds of different types to be found throughout the world and its thousands of cultures.

For Poetry and Creative Mind Day, take your brain out, dust it off, and introduce it to the beauty of poetry again. Remember that we hear poetry every day, as every song on the radio is based off of a poem, called lyrics simply because they are placed to music. Poetry isn't just for High School English and Liberal Arts classes, it is a very powerful and real way to express our thoughts and emotions and share them with our fellow man, or just get them out onto paper. Don't let Poetry and Creative Mind day pass you by without writing one of your own, and maybe sharing it with others to encourage them to write their own.



Youth Cong chief sets example by helping people amid pandemic

NEW DELHI

ANYBODY in the country who is in dire need of some help, be it the requirement for plasma or medicine, can approach Youth Congress President Srinivas B.V., who is ready to help even in the middle of the night.

The Youth Congress has received about 50,000 requests in the last one week for help on social media from different parts of the country. Srinivas and his team has helped around 15,000 people across the country so far.

Srinivas said, "We are getting requests from arranging plasma to oxy-

gen cylinders to getting admitted in the hospitals, our volunteers are reaching them and helping the people. Earlier, we used to provide injections too but now it has been banned."

He said, "Our volunteers are also donating plasma and also convincing people to donate to help the needy."

Today also he has helped a person, who was in need of oxygen and a hospital bed. He got this request from a media person, whose son's oxygen level had dropped drastically.

This is not the first time the Youth Congress president has helped the



people during the lockdown, he had helped people reach home and had booked vehicles for the migrants during the lockdown.

Srinivas said, "This is all about what his party stands for and it is under the guidance of Rahul Gandhi that the team is working for the people."

He also organised a 'langar' service during the migrant crisis.

The Congress leader alleged that the government failed to plan properly after the pandemic first hit the country last year.

Amid the blame game among the

political leaders over the Covid crisis, the Youth Congress team is quietly working to provide help to the people who are in distress. However, there is a need for more people to come forward and help the needy, says Srinivas.

India has reported 2,61,500 fresh Covid cases in the last 24 hours, the highest single-day spike ever, pushing the country's overall Covid tally to 1,47,88,109, according to the Health Ministry data released on Sunday. A total of 1,501 people died of Covid in the last 24 hours, taking the country's death toll to 1,77,150 so far.

14-day quarantine for Kumbh returnees in Delhi

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi government has issued an order making it mandatory for all residents of Delhi who visit the Kumbh in Haridwar to quarantine themselves at home for fourteen days on return. Anyone who violates the order will face legal action.

An order issued by Chief Secretary Vijay Dev states, "All those residents of Delhi, who have visited or are going to visit Kumbh, will be required to compulsory home quarantine themselves for 14 days on arrival to Delhi."

"Residents of Delhi who visited the Kumbh Mela between April 4 and April 17 are required to upload their details on a link provided on the Delhi govern-

ment website within 24 hours," he added in an official letter.

"Those who are going to visit Kumbh between April 18 and April 30 must fill in their details before leaving Delhi. This will allow the government to effectively trace all Kumbh Mela visitors," the letter reads. It further stated that If anyone who visits the Kumbh Mela fails to upload their information, they will be sent to an institutional quarantine centre for two weeks, the official order reads. More than 1,700 people have tested positive for Covid-19 at the Kumbh in Haridwar. The COVID-19 protocol including wearing of masks and social distancing was openly violated as lakhs gathered for the major Hindu pilgrimage.



Ram Navmi celebrations in Ayodhya scrapped

AYODHYA

THE Ayodhya administration has decided to call off the 'Ram Navmi Mela' on April 21, which attracts a huge gathering of pilgrims on the last day of Navratri.

Ayodhya's borders will be sealed and nobody, including seers from Haridwar Kumbh, will be allowed entry.

Hundreds of seers were scheduled to come to Ayodhya to offer prayers at Ram Janmabhoomi temple on Ram Navmi.

The district administration has directed devotees to celebrate Ram Navmi at home and curtailed pilgrim presence at temples.

District Magistrate Anuj Kumar Jha said, "Our priority is to break the corona chain. We have taken all precautionary measures and banned all gatherings in Ayodhya."

The administration has ensured low-key Navratri celebrations in the temple town.

'Ram Ki Paidi' on the banks of Saryu river that used to be



bustling with devotees for a holy dip in the river, now wear a deserted look because bathing has been banned and all entry points are heavily barricaded.

Acharya Satyendra Das, chief priest of Ram Janmabhoomi temple, said, "There will be no devotees at the temple on 'Ram Navmi' this year due to the pandemic. There will be only one priest, on-duty policemen and Ram Lalla Virajman."

This is the second consecutive year when Ram Navmi celebrations have been scrapped due to

the pandemic.

In fact, Ram Navmi has not been celebrated in the holy city after the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the temple in November 2019.

Mahant Jugal Kishore Sharan Shastri, the chief priest of Saryu Kunj temple, said, "Not just devotees, even saints and seers of Ayodhya will not be visiting Ram Janmabhoomi temple to offer prayers due to the pandemic. Holding the Haridwar Kumbh was a big mistake and we cannot afford a repeat in Ayodhya."

Temporary jails to serve as quarantine for criminals

LUCKNOW

THE Uttar Pradesh government is setting up temporary jails for keeping criminals, who are arrested or have surrendered, in quarantine till they test negative for Covid.

This is being done to ensure that there is no spread of Covid among convicts and undertrials lodged in jails.

DG, prisons, Anand Kumar, said that all the jail superintendents have been instructed to contact their respective district administrations and start setting up temporary prisons.

"Instructions have been given to jail superintendents to resume manufacturing of masks,

sanitiser and to conduct regular yoga exercises for prisoners and staff to increase their immunity and protect them from Covid," he said.

At present, there are 48 temporary jails in the state in which around 3,500 prisoners are lodged.

The prisons department has also requested courts for hearing of cases of prisoners via video conferencing only.

Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Avansh Awasthi has also directed all the district magistrates to write to district judges, requesting them to allow hearing of convicts and undertrials via video conferencing.



Wrong pic of Hathras rape victim: Plea in HC for info on uploader

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi High Court has sought responses of the Centre and social media platforms, Facebook, Google and Twitter on a plea seeking complete details of those who uploaded a wrong photo of the Hathras rape victim.

Justice Prathiba M Singh issued notice to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technologies and the social media platforms and asked them to place before the court, in a sealed cover, the basic subscriber information of the person(s) who uploaded videos and photos which showed a deceased woman as the rape victim.

The direction came on the application moved by the widower of the deceased in his main petition in which he has contended that his wife's photograph was being circulated on various social media platforms wrongly depicting her as the victim of the unfortunate incident of rape and murder of a young girl at Hathras, Uttar Pradesh.



In January, Facebook, Google and Twitter had told the court that they have blocked or taken down all links which incorrectly showed the deceased woman's photo as that of the Hathras rape victim. On the last date of hearing, Facebook and Google also told the court that they cannot on their own search for such links and remove them without a court or government order.

The petitioner's lawyers told the court that a victim cannot be expected to keep on providing the links after they have brought the issue to the notice of the social media platforms. The court

had also earlier said that "a victim cannot go on searching for links and making complaints."

There has to be some other solution." The petitioner has also contended in his plea that even otherwise, revelation of the identity of the rape victim is an offence under the Indian Penal Code, though in the present matter image of a wrong person is in circulation. A 19-year-old Dalit woman was allegedly raped by four upper-caste men in Hathras on September 14, 2020. She died on September 29, 2020 at Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital during treatment.

UP allows medical aid to those testing -ve despite Covid symptoms

LUCKNOW

IN a major relief to people who have tested Covid negative but are still showing symptoms, the Yogi Adityanath government has directed all the medical facilities to treat them as presumptive Covid-19 cases.

The order, issued by additional chief secretary, health and family welfare, Amit Mohan Prasad, said that the suspected symptomatic cases who test negative in the RT-PCR method but show physiological changes like positive patients, corroborated and co-related on basis of blood test, CT scan or doctor's opinion, should be treated as a positive case and given treatment be given as per protocol.

The order further said that such patients will be treated at designated Covid-19 hospitals but they may be kept separate from the clearly positive cases. Physicians in particularly



Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences and King George's Medical University, have noticed cases of Covid symptoms but had tested negative. They could not be treated as per protocol as they did not belong to either of the existing category - Covid or non-Covid.

As a result, RT-PCR negative persons with mild-moderate symptoms had to resort to self-medication or depend on informal advice of their doctors. Abhishek Shukla, geriatric physician, one of the first ones to flag the issue, said, "Many such patients turned to us for help. We proceeded only after

explaining the risks involved and also taking clear consent."

Official sources said that the treatment regimen for such patients is also being worked upon and will be released by the state medical education department shortly.

The move was lauded by the doctors and scientists' community.

The order speaks for the fact that inputs from the field are being attended. It will contribute in checking non-Covid deaths.

Community epidemiologist Dr Vishwajeet Kumar said on the reason for samples testing RT-PCR negative, "First of all, RT-PCR is not fail-safe. There is a chance of getting 20-30 per cent false negative cases. Then, the virus could have mutated. Thirdly, the system is under deep stress and the chances of human errors cannot be ruled out."

Covid-19 surge: Delhi HC to hear only urgent matters filed in 2021

NEW DELHI

IN view of the alarming rise in COVID-19 cases in the national capital, the Delhi High Court on Sunday issued an office order stating that from April 19 onwards it will only take up "extremely urgent matters" filed this year. The order issued by the High Court's Registrar General Manoj Jain also said that other pending routine or non-urgent matters and those cases filed or listed before the court between March 22, 2020 and December 31, 2020 shall not be taken up for now and would be adjourned en bloc.

"In case of any extreme urgency, the request in the pending matters may be made on the already notified designated link," the order said.

"Keeping in view the alarming rise in COVID-19 cases in



the NCT of Delhi, it has been ordered that all the benches of this court shall with effect from April 19, 2021 take up extremely urgent matters filed in the year 2021 only," the order said.

The national capital reported 25,500 fresh coronavirus infections in the last 24 hours

The latest direction is in continuation of the court's April 8

decision that from April 9 to April 23 it will take up matters "through virtual mode only" in view of the rise in COVID-19 cases.

The high court had commenced complete physical functioning from March 15 onwards.

Subsequently, it had said that virtual or hybrid proceedings

would be held on the request of lawyers.

Following the outbreak of COVID-19 in March last year, the court was holding proceedings through video conferencing. Its functioning was restricted to urgent matters from March 16 last year.

Thereafter, from March 25 last year, the functioning of the high court and district courts was further restricted and no physical hearing was being conducted due to the spread of COVID-19.

Subsequently, from September last year a few benches started holding physical courts everyday on a rotation basis.

Some of them also started holding hybrid proceedings, wherein lawyers have the option to attend the hearing via video conference instead of appearing in person.

NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that the district administration of Varanasi should extend all possible help to the people with utmost sensitivity.

The Prime Minister reviewed the Covid situation in Varanasi, his parliamentary constituency, through video conferencing. He interacted with regional public representatives and officials. He took stock of testing, availability of beds, medicines, vaccines and manpower for prevention and proper treatment of infected patients. He directed the officers to provide all possible assistance to the public expeditiously. During the discussion, the Prime Minister emphasised that everybody should follow the "distance of two yards and mask is essential". Stressing the importance of the vaccination



campaign, the Prime Minister said that the administration should make everyone above the age of 45 years aware of the campaign.

He also asked the administration to extend all possible assistance to the people of Varanasi with utmost sensitivity. The Prime Minister thanked all the doctors and medical staff of the country and said that even in this hour of crisis, they are doing their duty sincerely. "We have to learn from last year's experiences and move forward cautiously," he said. The Prime Minister said that as a rep-

resentative of Varanasi, he is also taking constant feedback from the general public.

"The expansion and modernisation of medical infrastructure in Varanasi in the last five-six years has helped in fighting Covid. Simultaneously, the availability of beds, ICU and oxygen in Varanasi is being augmented," he said.

The Prime Minister was briefed on the issues of control rooms set up for contact tracing, command and control centres set up for home isolation, dedicated phone line ambulances, provision of telemedicine from control rooms, deployment of additional rapid response teams in urban areas etc. The Prime Minister was informed that so far 19,838 persons have received the first dose and 35,014 persons have received both the doses of vaccination to prevent Covid.

When religion overtakes safety precautions

In April 2020, print and electronic media as well as social media was full of news, stories, comments and analysis on the main reason for the spread of Covid-19 across the country. While the global media was accusing Wuhan of being responsible for lab leak of corona virus, here the Tablighi Jamaat in Delhi was said to have contributed to the fast spread of the pandemic.

It was alleged that the Jamaat had violated the guidelines issued by various authorities after the outbreak of coronavirus and a huge gathering assembled inside a closed premise over protracted period. There was nothing like social distancing and no health protocols like wearing of masks were followed. This gathering the Centre said was one of the main reasons for spread of corona virus in Delhi and other parts of the state. Those who attended the Jamaat were found in almost all the states including the two Telugu states.

Preachers and people from Malaysia and Indonesia

are said to have been at Nizamuddin for this congregation. This led to the area being sealed by the Delhi authorities. About 2361 people of Tablighi Jamaat were evacuated by Delhi police and hundreds of them-both foreigners and locals tested positive. It took 36 hours for the police to complete the operation. Delhi police said that they had arrested 233 persons of Jamaat.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called the gathering at the Centre an “irresponsible act.” The Home Ministry then decided to blacklist around 800 preachers from Indonesia who took part in the Nizamuddin meeting. New York Times report stated that this meeting had become the “largest viral vector in Southeast Asia”.

Now a year later when a massive gathering of 25 million people took place since January on the banks of the holy river Ganges in Haridwar including two auspicious days as part of Kumbh Mela, neither the media

nor the political executive or political parties are making any noise.

Though alarm bells are rung, the government is still in appealing mode. It's shocking to see why the rules could not be implemented. Are rituals more important than lives? The big question is why the Prime Minister and other leaders failed to discuss the issue with Mahamandaleshwars and other concerned religious heads and see that such massive gathering does not take place. Does it really make any sense that appeal is made to them after over 2,000 tested positive? It is said that about 40,000 Bairagis are defiant. Will the government blink by saying it is religious issue?

It is surprising that the Centre which had earned the name of being a decisive government failed to restrict gathering of such huge numbers and allowed the situation to go from bad to worse.

No religious scripture says that one must follow rituals even if there was pandemic situation. It is unfortunate that the central and many state governments were busy with election managements and ignored Corona management resulting in the second wave of Covid turning into tsunami.



Is Modi era the end of Congress?

A timely and comprehensive political critique of India's 'grand old party', the Indian National Congress, author Amit Bagaria's new book "Congress-Mukt Bharat: Is the Modi Era the End of Congress?" is a compelling and multi-dimensional take on the political, ideological and structural downfall of this 135-year-old party and the ascent to power of the Narendra Modi-led BJP.

Overall, it aims to ask and answer the question: Will the Congress now be relegated to the history books?

Taking a leaf from India's history and crunching important data, the book, published by Garuda Prakashan, breaks down crucial themes like Congress helmsmanship, family-controlled party leadership, breaking away of senior Congress leaders, loss of vote share, and the Congress-led UPA's defeat in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha Elections.

"There is already talk of an anti-BJP alliance led by regional parties in preparation for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, similar to 1977, 1989, and 1996. Some regional leaders were quoted as saying that the Congress can no longer be the ebeg brother' of the opposition, and will have to play esecond fiddle' to regional parties in an anti-BJP front. Are we truly headed towards a Congress-Mukt Bharat by 2024," writes Bagaria in the book.

The opening chapters speak of Congress party's corruption. The fourth chapter quotes from former bureaucrat RVS Mani's book on how Congress falsely spread the narrative of Hindu Terror and Saffron Terror. It includes spine-chilling details on the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack.

The next three chapters analyse the 2019 elections in great detail, followed by one on how the Congress claim of being the enatural party of choice' for voters is completely disproved by the results of the last seven Lok Sabha elections. Two chapters analyse Congress performance in each state since Sonia Gandhi became the party president, and how the Left Front fared since 1989.

The next nine chapters are about Narendra Modi, his successes, his failures, and the work he has done in 80 months.

The longest chapter, divided into 14 sections, details the successes and failures of India's 14 Prime Ministers. The author has given points on a scale of 0 to 10 to each PM, and two Congress PM's, PV Narasimha Rao and Lal Bahadur Shastri, are among the Top 4.

In his in-depth analysis of the Modi 2.0 ministry, the author gives only 6.56 out of 10. Next is an interesting chapter on revamp of the Central ministries and the author's choice of ministers if he were to be the PM.

"Is Congress Becoming Anti-India?" and "The End of Congress?" are concluding chapters. The Appendix lays out eAgenda 2024' for India.

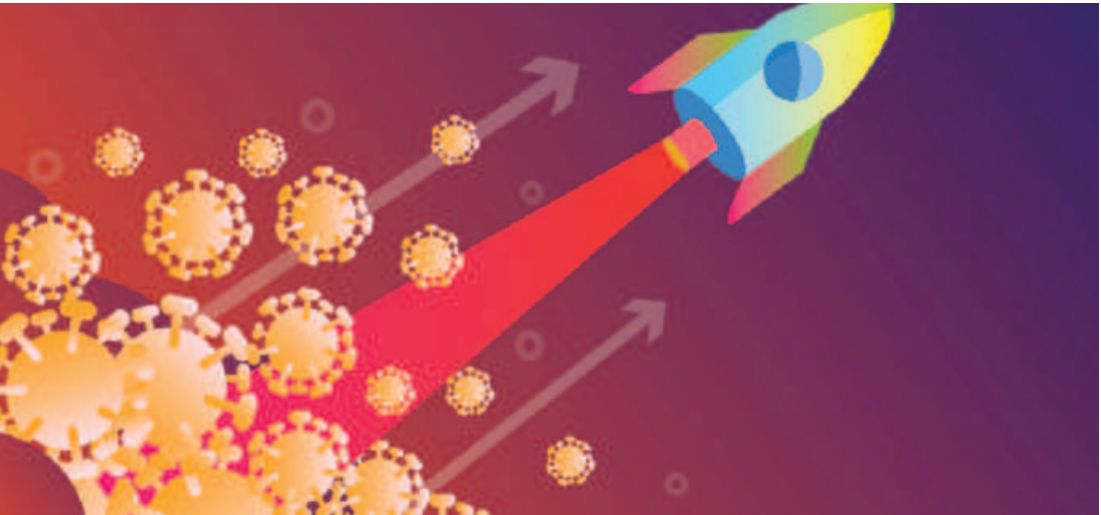
"Amit has once again crafted a book, which is a testimony to his strenuous research, felicitous writing, and erudition. The book covers PM Modi's innovative and ambitious foreign policy, which is my subject matter. The author has carried out this task with admirable skill and efficiency," says TP Sreenivasan, IFS, Former Ambassador of India to Austria and Slovenia and Former Permanent Representative of India to the UN. (HANS)

THE WAY AHEAD



An October 2020 study by McKinsey Consultants in the European Union has found that one-half medium, small and micro industries (MSMEs) believe that they will not be able to survive more than 12 months. The condition in our country is likely to be much worse because our MSMEs have faced the problems of demonetisation and GST earlier.

The simple fact is that the cost of production of MSMEs is more in comparison to large industries and they cannot survive unless given special protection. First reason is that the cost of information is more for them. Let us say a businessperson of Kanpur has to get information about the market for leather goods in Mumbai. The cost of travel by a large businessperson would be, say, double of the MSME businessperson. However, the large businessperson would sell ten times the goods sold by the MSME businessperson. Accordingly, the cost of information would be five times for the small businessperson.



Our government, on the other hand, has been focusing on providing access to credit to MSMEs which is good. However, the utility of a loan arises when there is demand in the market. The MSMEs will use the loans for consumption and sink into the quicksand of debt in absence of demand from the market. Therefore, the Government should consider giving subsidies on wages and income support to the MSMEs

The second reason is that a small businessperson has to manage production, marketing, finance and accounts himself. Large businesses have specialised managers for each of these functions. The MSME businessperson does not have the level of skill in any of these functions as available with the large businessperson. The lower level of skill translates into higher cost.

For example, a MSME businessperson would not be able to assess the competence of a sales outlet in same depth as the marketing manager of the large business. He may not be able to access the credit reports of the sales outlet. In course of time this lack of skill will translate into losses for the MSME.

The third reason is that MSME face a higher cost of compliance with regulations. A number of studies indicate that the cost of compliance of GST has been more for MSMEs across the world. Large businesses have in-house chartered accountants who can manage such regulations with ease.

The fourth reason of digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, robots, 3-D printing, Internet of Things and internet-based platforms like Amazon and Flipkart. The cost of production of large businesses is reducing by the day due to the use of these technologies. They are producing large quantities with lesser number of workers by using robots. Further, they are able to persuade the large platforms to push their goods.

For example, Amazon or Flipkart can push the sales of a particular chocolate manufacturer of Switzerland. MSMEs do not have the clout to persuade the large platforms to push their goods. It is necessary to strengthen the MSMEs against big businesses in view of these inherent disadvantages if we have to ensure their survival and the jobs that they create.

A guidebook for supporting the internationalisation of MSMEs made by the European Commission has suggested that the task of training, research, provision of information and making their clusters could be done better through the MSME associations. The associations are in deep contact with their members and they can what kind of training and research is needed by their

members. The same training module or research programme made by academic institutions or government officials may be off the mark.

Similarly, the associations have a better understanding of what goods have a sale potential in which country and they make efforts to obtain that particular information and provide to their members. The associations have a better grasp of the potential of making clusters as well. For example, the association of weavers of Varanasi would have a better understanding as to whether the cluster of weavers should be made around a sales website, testing facility or designing.

The policy of the India Government appears to be moving in the opposite direction, however. The Board for MSMEs had large numbers of representatives of associations in the past. The Government has reduced their representation and instead appointed MLAs and the like who have no grasp of the problems of MSMEs. The funds provided to the MSME associations have also dried up.

The second step especially in the present scenario of Covid is that the Government must consider providing direct financial support to MSMEs. A study by the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy dated April 2020 has noted that MSMEs in Brazil were being provided part salaries of their employees as subsidy. Canada and New Zealand were providing salary support to their MSMEs for three months. It was advocated that Indian MSMEs may be provided income support for some time if they can show that there has been an actual decline in their incomes.

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sence of demand from the market. Therefore, the Government should consider giving subsidies on wages and income support to the MSMEs.

MSMEs often buy purchase imported raw materials like plastic and sell the finished goods such as dolls made by them. They can do this only if they get cheap plastic and protection from cheap imported dolls. However, the policy of the Government has been exactly in the opposite direction.

Heavy import duties have been imposed on certain raw materials while low import duties have been imposed on certain finished goods. Thus, Anil Bharadwaj, Secretary General of the Federation of Indian Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has said India's increased import duties on raw materials have made the MSMEs highly uncompetitive.

A 2018 report by the International Trade Centre titled "Business Systems for the Digital Age" has said that in 2017, the market capital valuation of the top ten internet platform companies reached more than USD 3.3 trillion. This is significantly higher than India's GDP of USD 2.6 trillion in that year. These platforms can push the goods of particular producers who may give them higher margins. Ola and Uber drivers have told me that their companies give more bookings to the taxis own by themselves to the disadvantage of single-taxi owners who have attached themselves to these platforms.

Therefore, the Government must consider breaking the large platforms into smaller companies so that competition between them can prevent the dominance of a particular platform. The Competition Commission of India has adequate powers in this direction. The Government must direct the Commission in this regard.

(The author is formerly Professor of Economics at IIM, Bengaluru)

LETTERS

The politics of Covid turns uglier

As second wave of covid-19 spread rapidly across the country has gone out of control due to laxity on the part of both Centre and state governments, opposition accusing the Centre of criminal negligence for ignoring the warnings of second wave and not ramping up health infrastructure cannot be brushed under the carpet but at the same time, the fault also lies in opposition for remaining a mute spectator and not effective to force upon the government to act upon aggressively to make available critical items necessary to meet the emergency.

Why opposition who joined together to raise farmers' issue and other matters and even staged protests day in and day out all of a sudden become proactive now to point fingers at Centre when its own government in several states have faltered badly? In fact, it is said that none of the political parties at any point of time raised about cancellation of poll rallies knowing well that Covid is playing havoc with the lives of people and now accusing prime minister at the fag end when polling is due to come to an end on 30th of this month. of what use, if Congress holds inner-party meeting to discuss the worsening situation and slamming the Centre but doing nothing in Maharashtra where its coalition government has washed off its hands off by shifting the entire blame on the Centre.

The Gandhi family pointing fingers at prime minister even when the situation is grim due to various factors is easy but they must realise the futility of playing politics on every issue is not going to take them anywhere at a time when cases are rising alarmingly and deaths are climbing up. The fact that inoculating 130 crore people is a herculean task within a reasonable period with experts still not sure when the Covid will be defeated, therefore, mere criticism is not enough. Rather it is prime duty that all political parties must act responsibly by coordinating with local administration to lessen the burden of people suffering from the pandemic.

Similarly society need to be proactive to the concerns of people by lending a helping hand to the needy. All the same, it is all the more important that placing strict curbs on potent super spreaders besides masking, testing and ramping up critical care facilities is the dire need which need to taken up on priority so that it would go a long way in vaccinating more people at a faster pace essential to instil confidence to fight the pandemic effectively.

K R Srinivasan, Secunderabad

II

DAILY COVID-19 cases are growing day after day in an alarming manner but pitifully last year's same story of shortage of medical facilities in respect of beds, oxygen and mortuary is being experienced across the country. Further, vaccine shortage could not be contained. That shows our governments lack of concern for the welfare of people. Nevertheless various elections are

conducted pan India punctually. It is a shame leaders consider their opponents as enemies rather than the deadly virus. No wonder virus is riding on mankind successfully as we are divided.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao, Hyderabad

Remembering Dr Kakarla

MAY Dr.Kakarla's soul rest in peace. He was brought from USA to lead and develop the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences(NIMS) by the then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, N.T.Rama Rao. Dr.Kakarla Subba Rao was a renowned radiologist and great academician. He developed the erstwhile Nizam's Orthopaedics Hospital to the stature of a full blown Multi-speciality Hospital (NIMS) on par with All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and NTR and he remained immortal in the annals of medical history with the laurels the NIMS got and the yeomen services rendered to the common man. The academic excellence was such that even Christian Medical College(CMC) Vellore students took up PG here and had a stint as faculty as they equaled its standards. Dr.Kakarla was humble to the core and when I'd been to meet him at NIMS and he stood up to greet and welcome me though I was far young then.

Dr T Ramadas, Visakhapatnam

A multi-faceted movie star

Vivekh has made his mark on Tamil cinema. A household name, Vivekh is also affectionately called Chinna Kalaivanar. He started with nothing but raw talent, determination and dedication.

To say that he has made himself a servant of his art and excelled in his career as a comic actor is an understatement. In the crop of comedians Vivekh has stood out for conveying social messages through the comedy track he has established for himself in his own inimitable way. Vivekh comedy is a genre of its own.

The name Vivekh has become a by-word for wit. His uproarious dialogues and punch-lines couched in common sense always set us thinking. He was a specialist in 'invoking laughter and inciting thought'. It is apt to extol Vivekh as a serious comedian in that he has held a mirror up to the society with all its faults and weaknesses. In his wonderfully spontaneous performances comedy has attained the status of satire. In other words, he had the innate skill to elevate comedy to the status of satire. Blending comedy with satire with effortless grace was his forte. His acting was underpinned by his reforming zeal. His manner of lampooning superstitious beliefs won him many fans.

Whether Vivekh has consciously seen his role as being a catalyst for change, he deserves praise for the cultural influences he has had on society. Vivekh was a man of wide interests outside cinema like conservation and music. The trees planted by him and at his initiative are a witness to the meaningful life he led. Vivekh has broadened our horizons and enriched our lives. We feel a deep sense of gratitude to him.

G David Milton, Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

thehansreader@gmail.com



First human-monkey embryo sparks ethical debate

A joint team of US and Chinese scientists have, in breakthrough research, grown human cells in monkey embryos in a laboratory for up to 20 days. The development, which has sparked ethical debates, has implications for developing new models of human biology and disease.

Interspecies chimeras in mammals have been made since the 1970s, when they were generated in rodents and used to study early developmental processes.

In the current study, detailed in the journal Cell, six days after the monkey embryos had been created, each one was injected with 25 human cells. The cells were from an induced pluripotent cell line known as extended pluripotent stem cells, which have the potential to contribute to both embryonic and extra-embryonic tissues.

After one day, human cells were detected in 132 embryos. After 10 days, 103 of the chimeric embryos were still developing.

Survival soon began declining, and by day 19, only three chimeras were still alive. Importantly, though, the percentage of human cells in the embryos remained high throughout the time they continued to grow.

"As we are unable to conduct certain types of experiments in humans, it is essential that we have better models to more accurately study and understand human biology and disease," said Juan Carlos Izpisua Belmonte, Professor in the Gene Expression Laboratory at the Salk Institute for Biological Sciences.

"An important goal of experimental biology is the development of model systems that allow for the study of human diseases under in vivo conditions," Belmonte added.

But there was opposition too.

"My first question is: Why?" Kirstin Matthews, a fellow for science and technology at Rice University's Baker Institute, was quoted as saying to NPR.org.

"I think the public is going to be concerned, and I am as well, that we're just kind of pushing forward with science without having a proper conversation about what we should or should not do," Matthews said.

However, Belmonte notes that before beginning this work, "ethical consultations and reviews were performed both at the institutional level and via outreach to non-affiliated bioethicists". (HANS)

50% OF CITY GARBAGE IS COMPOSTABLE: EXPERTS

ESA BIN ABDUL REHMAN
HYDERABAD

Of the 4,500 metric tonnes of waste produced in Hyderabad a day, at least 50 per cent is compostable, say experts. This can be used for helping grow organic food locally.

According to experts, soil requires manure or compost to make it fit for cultivation. Due to shrinking space, urban residents are now resorting to composting their wet waste in pots for plants. "Of the garbage produced daily in the City, at least 50 per cent is compostable. The organic waste can be composted to enrich the soil, in order to produce vegetables and fruits and also to create a micro-climate for trees and shrubs, which are essentially required for afforestation," argued agri specialist Narsimha Reddy.

For example, Rajendranagar circle, on City outskirts, alone generates 800 metric tons of garbage a day that carries large amounts of green waste, as this part of the City has a myriad number of trees and



plants of all sizes straight on countryside in homes and backyards.

"With a total 80,000 households in the Circle, this area generates a whopping 300 metric tonnes of garbage a day through door-to-door collection. There are around 800 sanitary workers with 100 tipper and approximately 90 autos to cart away the trash every day to Jawaharnagar dump yard. This task could be averted if the open spaces in the colonies here could be used to promote compost yards," said Anjaneulu, Sanitary Inspector, GHMC, Rajendranagar Circle.



Every day, he said, the exceptional amount of green waste extricated from different types of trees in residential colonies, if meticulously used, could produce good amounts of compost and organic manure to promote nurseries and maintain an eco-friendly environment along with revenue generation.

"We have appropriate remediation mechanisms to stinking garbage menace, but we aren't taking sincere enough steps to heed to those ideas. People are inherently inclined towards nature, but resist

to invest in causes associated with betterment of our natural ecosystem. For instance, by transforming organic waste into wealth, we all can escape the detrimental effects of waste, and benefit from its yield. Such an effort, if rightly

Invested, can produce amiable results for everyone. This idea can also be replicated beyond Shastripuram Colony in the long run," argued M A H Asif, a resident of Shastripuram Colony, who spearheads the moment against the illegal plastic industries in the residential colony.

IITM-2021 admissions

HYDERABAD: The Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management, an autonomous body under the Ministry of Tourism and Government of India, has issued a notification for admissions 2021-22. The courses offered are BBA (Tourism & Travel) and MBA (Tourism & Travel Management). For more details www.iittm.ac.in can be visited or 9425407607, 9752042246, 8778158261 contacted. Email: admissions@iittm.ac.in, said an official release.

TS-EDCET 2021 schedule released

HYDERABAD: The Telangana State EDCET-2021 notification has been released. Applications will be available online from April 19 to June 15. EDCET is slated to be held on August 24 and 25. "This year only one common question paper will be there for all methodologies and syllabus. Model question papers are available on EDCET website," said Prof. A Ramakrishna, convener. Effecting many changes in the B.Ed course, the government has issued a GO on April 14. The GO stated that along with BA, BCom and BSc graduates, BBA, BBM and BCA passed candidates can join BEd course, provided they secure 50 per cent marks. In the case of engineering students, the eligibility earlier was 55 per cent marks, but now it has been reduced to 50 per cent. According to the convener, the BEd notification is expected to be released within a week.

OU fails to get accreditation to conduct SLET since 2019

VRC PHANIHARAN
HYDERABAD

HUNDREDS of postgraduate students in Telangana are at the receiving end losing opportunities to compete for the teaching position in the two Telugu states.

According to the Osmania University sources, accreditation given by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to Osmania University to conduct the State Level Eligibility Test (SLET) has expired in December 2019. Speaking to The Hans India, a senior OU official said that the accreditation is given for three years after a team of UGC officials inspecting the existing logistics, human resources, to assess whether the university is capable of conducting the SLET examinations.

The SLET is being conducted on the lines of the UGC-National Eligibility Test (NET) by the National Testing Agency (NTA). As per the existing regulations candidates who have qualified in the UGC-NET are eligible to compete for teaching positions anywhere in the country. Those candidates who qualify for the SLET

- Hundreds of postgraduate students in Telangana at the receiving end
- Neighbouring states of Telangana have already completed SLET till 2020
- PG candidates in other States get opportunity to appear for UGC-NET and SLET appointments of respective States



are eligible to compete in the teaching positions within the state where the eligibility test is conducted.

Accordingly, TS SLET-2019 was the last SLET conducted in Telangana while the neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala and several other States have completed conducting the SLETs till 2020, and preparing for the issue of notification for the SLETs for 2021.

However, the lack of a regular vice-chancellor reportedly left Osmania University unable to obtain the extension of accreditation to conduct TS SLET after December 2019. "For it is quite a normal procedure that when the UGC accreditation team visits, it

is the vice-chancellor who presents the credentials of the university to get the accreditation," said another official looking after the SLET affairs.

Further, inquiries revealed that there is no bar on the in-charge vice-chancellor performing the same what a regular vice-chancellor does for getting accreditation to conduct the SLET. However, the current in-charge vice-chancellor, who is a senior IAS officer reportedly failed to give sufficient time for the university affairs. In turn, UGC accreditation to conduct SLET has taken a backseat resulting in hundreds of postgraduate candidates lost the opportunity to appear for SLET in 2020.

Ramzan gifts distribution from mosque premises planned



MOHAMMED HUSSAIN
HYDERABAD

THE Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has reviewed the number of probable beneficiaries for Ramzan gifts this year. Zonal Commissioners concerned have been asked to inspect mosques as Ramza gifts will be provided from the mosque premises.

The State Government is once again planning to distribute gifts packs to Muslims through the 832 mosques spread across Telangana. While under the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits, the officials have already started visiting mosques, the venue of gift distribution for festival gift packs among the marginalized Muslims. They have asked the mosque committee to prepare the list of beneficiaries through a proper selection mechanism.

It may be mentioned here that in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic followed by a lockdown, the State government could not provide any gift to Muslims. However, it is learnt that this year the government will be going ahead with its distribution programme, which can be ascertained by the fact that GHMC officials are making preparations in this endeavour.

According to reliable sources, in each of these mosques some 500 Ramzan gift packets will be stocked. For instance, a total of 8,000 people will receive the gifts in each constituency, local MLA along with GHMC Corporators will take up the distribution programme. The Zonal Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners of the GHMC have started conducting a survey in their respective zones.

The Urban Community Development

Wing of the GHMC will be managing the distribution programme. Recently, officials from the UCD department have inspected several mosques in six divisions of the Khairatabad constituency and selected as many as 500 impoverished Muslims families. However, the Minorities Welfare Department has not yet announced how much amount of funds will be taken out from the budget for the distribution of Ramzan gift packets.

Every year, the State government used to allocate an amount for holding iftar arrangements in mosques during the holy month but this year due to surge in Covid-19 cases the government restrained from holding iftar parties.

By now the date for the distribution of gifts has not been fixed by the State Government, said a senior official from the GHMC.

VIVEKA MURDER CASE

ABV pressurised cops to falsely implicate CM Jagan, family, says DIG

- Pala Raju, DIG, Technical services, wonders why the former Intelligence chief was silent for two years after the murder
- Asks him why he made his nine-page letter to the CBI public now

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

DIG (Technical) Pala Raju on Sunday alleged that the former State police intelligence chief and suspended IPS officer AB Venkateswar Rao (ABV) pressurised police officers to falsely implicate CM Jagan and his family members in the YS Vivekananda Reddy murder case. He said some sincere police officers did not succumb to the pressure exerted by Venkateswar Rao. The DIG along with two other police officials on Sunday responded to the nine-page letter written by Venkateswar Rao to the CBI which said that the then CBI officials have ignored when



DIG G Pala Raju (middle) and other officers speaking to the media at the DGP's office in Mangalagiri on Sunday

he had furnished information to the CBI in Vivekananda Reddy murder case.

Andhra Pradesh police represented by DIG Technical services, Palaraju, former SP of Kadapa Rahul Dev Sharma and Ammireddy (representative of IPS officers association), addressed a media conference at the State police office. Pala Raju questioned as to why the former intelligence chief did not respond for two years after the murder and now why he sent a letter to the CBI. He said AB Venkateswar Rao

should have used important information in the investigation when he was the chief of the intelligence bureau. Palaraju said, "For 15 days after the murder, AB Venkateswar Rao was running the entire investigation on Vivekananda Reddy murder case and passing orders to the then Kadapa SP and others."

Palaraju also wondered, 'Why didn't Venkateswar Rao use important information that he had on the murder when he was an active part of the investigation? While leaving,

it is mandatory for any officer to disclose every single detail to the successor," Pala Raju added. Pala Raju stated that for three months after the murder, the then government was in power and nine months after the present government took over also the case was with Andhra Pradesh police only. He said, "Since the last one year, it has been with the CBI. What took Venkateswar Rao more than two years to come out with this information?"

Questioning the manner in which the letter was made public and the timing of the same, the officer said, "When ABV was investigating the case, he pressurised the then SP of Kadapa district Rahul Dev Sharma and other officers to implicate the present CM and his family in this murder case. Even today, if he actually wants to provide evidence, he could do so in a sealed cover to the CBI. Why Venkateswar Rao had made public the letter he had written to the CBI on Vivekananda Reddy murder case?"

- Party State president Somu Veerraju says the party will bring to the notice of the ECI the irregularities committed during the byelection
- Laments that the police failed to respond to the complaints lodged by the BJP leaders

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

BHARATIYA Janata Party State president Somu Veerraju said the party would lodge complaint with the Election Commission of India on the irregularities committed in the Tirupati Lok Sabha byelection.

He alleged that the police department had failed to check the irregularities and not responded to the complaints made by the BJP leaders.

Addressing a media conference at the party State office here on Sunday, Veerraju demanded that the election should be cancelled and re-election should be conducted in a free and fair manner.

He said fake voters had cast votes in the elections and the po-



BJP State president Somu Veerraju addressing the media at the party office in Vijayawada on Sunday

lice failed to prevent it. He alleged that the BJP workers were intimidated by the ward/village volunteers. He said the BJP and Jana Sena would develop a mechanism in the State to root out the volunteers system. He alleged the police were registering red sanders smuggling cases against the Opposition parties for questioning the irregularities committed in the election.

Veerraju demanded that Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy should tender his apology to the people on the irregularities committed in the Tirupati byelection. He said the TDP got only 23 seats

in Assembly elections because the party resorted to many irregularities and the YSRCP will also meet the same fate and will win only 30 seats in the next Assembly elections.

He said both the TDP and YSRCP were following the same ideology and bot are family parties. Veerraju predicted that the BJP would win the 2024 Assembly elections.

Referring to allegations leveled that the BJP leaders were behind the attacks on the temples and desecration of idols in the State, the BJP leader said the police have to prove the allegations.

Less than 100 ICU beds vacant in Delhi hospitals: Kejriwal

Maharashtra preparing for the third Covid wave, says Minister Aaditya Thackeray

NEW DELHI

OVER 25,000 people have tested COVID-19 positive in the last 24 hours in Delhi and less than 100 ICU beds remain available in hospitals, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Sunday, delivering more bad news in an unprecedented public health crisis sweeping not just the capital but the entire nation.

Pointing out that the positivity rate has gone up from 24 per cent to 30 per cent in just 24 hours, he said due to fast pace in increase of COVID-19 infections, hospital beds and oxygen for patients are rapidly depleting in the city.

Kejriwal cited that less than 100 ICU beds are available in Delhi now and said he spoke to Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday morning and stressed

on the need of beds for the COVID patients. "I spoke to Home Minister Amit Shah and informed him of our dire need of beds and oxygen. We are constantly in touch with the Centre and getting help from it," he said. Kejriwal who had talked to Union Health Minister Harshvardhan on Saturday, requested the Centre to reserve at least 7,000 of 10,000 beds in hospitals run by it in Delhi as COVID beds and ensure immediate supply of oxygen. Currently only 1,800 of 10,000 central government hospital beds are reserved for COVID-19 patients, he said.

The Delhi government in the next 2-3 days will come up with 6,000 beds with oxygen facility at Yamuna Sports Complex, Radha Swami Satsang Beas premises and schools, Kejriwal said. It is also arranging high flow oxygen beds for patients in some hospitals, he



said. "In the last 24 hours, approximately 25,500 cases of COVID have come up. Before that, we had around 24,000 cases, and before that, we had 19,500 cases," he said.

"We have noted that the number of available beds reserved for COVID patients is reducing at a fast rate. We are falling short of ICU beds. In Delhi, we are now left with less than 100 ICU beds. We are falling short of oxygen as well," Kejriwal said. Last night, a private hospital informed that the shortage of oxygen was so severe that they just about managed to prevent a tragedy, he said.

Maharashtra Cabinet Minister Aaditya Thackeray said that a third wave of Covid-19 was likely soon, though it cannot be determined now if it will be as strong as or weaker than the second wave ram-

pling through the country now. He also said that even if vaccination doesn't help right away, it will help prepare for the future. "We have come to the genuine belief that under-reporting is not going to help...Now we are preparing for the third wave. We have five lakh beds, 70% of them oxygenated," he said.

Earlier, NCP spokesperson and Maharashtra Minister Nawab Malik said if the vaccination certificates carry Prime Minister Narendra Modi's photo, then the death certificates of Covid-19 victims should also carry his image. "If the prime minister wants to take credit for vaccination, then he should also take responsibility for Covid-19 deaths, if vaccination certificates carry the prime minister's photo, then the death certificates of Covid-19 victims should also carry his photo," the NCP leader said, speaking to reporters.

WINDOWS

Ward boy held for rape attempt

BHOPAL: A ward boy at a private hospital in Gwalior was arrested for attempting to rape a 50-year-old Covid-19 patient admitted at the hospital's Covid care unit, police said on Sunday.

The case came to light after the woman lodged a police complaint alleging that the accused tried to sexually assault her twice during the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday, police said.

The accused reportedly fled the private hospital after the patient informed her family, said Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Hitika Vasal adding that he has been arrested.



Family members react on the death of a relative, who died of Covid-19, outside a mortuary in Ahmedabad on Sunday

Teen kills grandma over new phone

ALIGARH: In a shocking incident in Uttar Pradesh, an 18-year-old boy strangled his grandmother to death after she refused to give him money to buy a new phone. According to sources, the incident took place on April 2 but was not reported to police as the accused Sachin told everyone that his grandmother, Munni Devi, had died of cardiac arrest. The woman's last rites were performed the next day. However, the boy's uncle found his mother's death suspicious and lodged a police complaint recently.

Sibal: Declare Natl health emergency

NEW DELHI

AMID rising cases of Covid-19 former Union Minister and Congress leader Kapil Sibal on Sunday demanded that the Centre declare a national health emergency in the country. He also urged the Election Commission to declare a moratorium on election rallies.

Meanwhile, former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Hooda and his wife Asha Hooda tested positive for Covid-19 on Sunday.

Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij put forward two options -- lockdowns and a strict adherence to the Covid-19 protocol -- to tackle the second wave of ravaging pandemic the country. Imposing curbs even in the face of public anger was acceptable, he said, adding that he was not willing to see bodies piled up.

"We are not in favour of a lockdown. People get angry when restrictions are imposed. I am okay with people's anger but not with laashon ka dher (piles of bodies)."



A devotee performs rituals during the 'Chaiti Chhath' Puja, amid the rise in Covid-19 cases across the country, in Ranchi on Sunday

AIIMS chief Dr Guleria suggests 3 steps to fight Covid effectively

NEW DELHI: The chief of India's premier medical science institute has recommended three key steps to battle the rampaging second wave of Covid-19: Creation of containment zones, banning of crowds, and boosting vaccination. All India Institute of Medical Sciences' (AIIMS) director Dr Randeep Guleria, speaking at the NDTV Solutions Summit today, said second waves of pandemics have always been more dangerous historically.

"We should have been more alert. We knew there are variants (of Covid-19) circulating in the world. It was only a matter of time until the strains are found in India...We got complacent," Dr Guleria said.

"We have to do 3-4 things: We must stop the infection from spreading. We must create a strict

containment zone in the most affected areas with testing, tracking, and treatment. Secondly, we must ban crowding. Third, we must boost vaccination," he said. "Like how we earlier divided the country into red, green, orange zones, we must do that again. Get more beds and oxygen points."

The AIIMS chief's comments came a day after India reported a record 2.61 lakh new cases with 1,501 deaths.

"If we go back to the pandemic 100 years ago, the second wave was more dangerous. Even now, people started going out and now we are seeing a surge," he said.

Referring to the use of Remdesivir, a drug that is increasingly being seen to have key role in treating critical cases of Covid-19, Dr Guleria



said it may reduce hospitalisation but won't help reduce mortality.

"Remdesivir is an antiviral drug and was developed for Ebola. The first paper in China showed it had no effect on Covid-19. Subsequently studies showed, it could reduce hospitalisation, but could nothing about mortality," the veteran doctor said.

Meanwhile, Mumbai police are likely to call the director a pharma company for one more round of questioning for allegedly stocking thousands of Remdesivir medicine vials, an official said on Sunday.

Rajesh Dokania, director of Bruck Pharma, a Daman-based pharmaceutical company that manufactures Remdesivir vials, was questioned on Saturday night, the police official said.

Police have said that they had information that the Remdesivir stock was going to be flown abroad by air cargo, despite a ban on the export of the drug.

"Dokania was questioned at the BKC police station," the official said, adding that the cops later allowed him to go, but asked him to remain present for inquiry whenever he is called.

"While the director of the pharma company was brought for questioning at the police station, a team of the Food and Drugs Administration was also present there," Mumbai police spokesperson S Chaitanya said in a statement on Sunday.

The commissioner and the joint commissioner of the FDA were also aware of the questioning, the statement said.

COVID +VE RATE DOUBLES IN 12 DAYS

Leave election management, start Covid management: AAP's Raghav Chadha to PM Modi

NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW/MUMBAI

THE daily coronavirus positivity rate in India in the last 12 days has doubled to 16.69 per cent, while the weekly positivity rate has increased to 13.54 per cent in the past one month, the Health Ministry said on Sunday.

India reported a record 2,61,500 new coronavirus cases and 1,501 deaths on Sunday, while active cases have surpassed the 18-lakh mark, the ministry data stated.

Ten states -- Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan -- reported 78.56 per cent of the new infections, it said. "The daily positivity rate in the last 12 days has doubled from 8% to 16.69%," the ministry said in a statement.



A worker installs a ceiling fan at Sardar Patel Covid Care Centre and Hospital, as coronavirus cases surge in New Delhi on Sunday

Rahul cancels poll rallies in West Bengal Over 12 cr doses administered in 92 days

Female cop cremates unidentified body

MATHURA : A female constable in Mathura cremated the body of an unidentified young woman, which was found in a canal on April 11.

Shalini Verma, 25, posted at the Kosi Kalan police station, said that the decomposed body of the woman remained unidentified and so she decided to give the woman a dignified farewell.

The priest at the crematorium tried to stop her from lighting the pyre of the unidentified woman but she argued and managed to get her way.

"Every dead person deserves respect," said Shalini who belongs to Bulandshahr.

Shalini had earlier been infected with Covid-19 and said that she did not have any fear performing the last rites in these times of crisis.

UP: NSA against 3 Remdesivir hoarders

KANPUR: The Yogi Adityanath government has decided to invoke the provisions of stringent National Security Act (NSA) against three persons who were arrested in Kanpur, carrying 265 Remdesivir injection vials.

"The state government has instructed police to act tough against people who are black-marketing Covid-19 medicines," said a government spokesman.

Police commissioner Asim Arun said that no illegal activity would be tolerated in this time of crisis and would invite strictest punishment.

"It is a crime against humanity and we will invoke NSA against the three persons arrested with Remdesivir injections on Thursday," he said.

HC extends bail of murder convict

NEW DELHI: Owing to the prevalent COVID-19 pandemic and the need to de-congest jails, the Delhi High Court has extended the interim bail of a murder convict, who lost three of his fingers while working in the prison factory.

A bench of justices Rajiv Sahai Endlaw and Amit Bansal extended the interim bail of the 30-year-old convict till April 20, when the matter will be considered by a regular bench. "Only owing to the prevalent pandemic and the need for de-congestion of jails, we are of the view that the interim bail should be extended till the matter is considered by the regular bench. List on April 20. Till then, the interim bail stands extended on terms and conditions already prescribed," the bench said.

'Bed for my bro': Union Minister VK Singh's tweet fuels row

GHAZIABAD

AMIDST the shortage of beds being faced in various states of the country, Union Minister General VK Singh's tweet seeking 'help' for a Covid-19-infected person in his constituency, Ghaziabad, in the same regard has fuelled controversy as it indicates the poor condition of the country's health infrastructure. However, his tweet was perceived as a sign of his privileged position. To avoid controversies further, the minister deleted the tweet later.

The Union Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways had posted on Twitter seeking help from authorities in Ghaziabad to get a hospital bed for "my brother".

He had tagged the district magistrate in his tweet, prompting Twitterati to raise questions about the state of the medical infrastructure in the country where even a minister's relative was struggling to find a bed.

Reacting to his tweet, Shiv Sena MP Priyanka Chaturvedi realised that General Singh had only forwarded a plea, even though she, too, highlighted the "helplessness of an elected representative".

The MP tweeted, "Here, Hon. MP and Minister has forwarded a plea received by him to the DM. But this tweet in itself explains the helplessness of an elected representative & his inability to find a single bed in his constituency. I hope the patient gets the help needed and is fine soon."

Later Singh justified his tweet saying, "Clarification: I tweeted this request so that the district administration can reach the person in need and provide him with the medical care that his brother requires. He is not my brother by blood relation, but by bond of humanity. I think it's an alien concept to some."

He deleted the older tweet and said, "Am amazed at IQ level of trawls and fastest finger channels. Tweet was forward of a tweet to DM and says 'please look into this'."

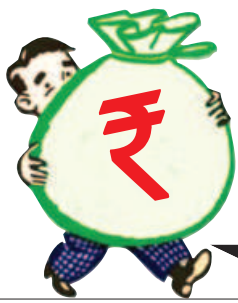
10 die in MP due to low oxygen pressure

BHOPAL: At least 10 Covid patients have reportedly died due to low pressure in Liquid Oxygen tank at government medical college in Madhya Pradesh's Shahdol district. The district administration and the hospital has however dismissed the news as factually incorrect, according to NDTV report.

"Only six deaths were reported last night in ICU. Lack of oxygen is not the cause. There are a total of 62 critical patients in the ICU itself. Overall there were 255 patients in the Covid hospital last night. Out of them about 155 are on oxygen," Dr. Milind Shiralkar, the dean of the medical college hospital said.

DM Satyendra Singh said that "no deaths" took place due to lack of oxygen or low pressure in the oxygen tank. "A back up with jumbo cylinder always available in medical college, medical college continued supply with jumbo cylinders," he said. Relatives of the patients, however, alleged lapses on the part of the hospital staff. "Oxygen level was above 91%. By morning, they said oxygen level was low. They did not allow us to enter but somehow we entered and saw that that bodies were cold. There was not one, but many. This is complete failure of the hospital administration," said a relative of the patient.

“ Courage taught me no matter how bad a crisis gets, any sound investment will eventually pay off – Carlos Slim Helu



HANS INVEST

Stocks.MFs.Bonds.Commodities



Covid crisis pushes up gold prices

DR HC UPADHYAY

Despite the deadly second wave of the coronavirus spreading its wings rapidly all over globe, coupled with a chain of shootings and violence taking the toll of human beings in the US; due to gradually improving relations between the US and Russia, the market sentiment remained moderate during the week ended Saturday. Consequently, New York gold appreciated and closed at \$1,776.50 (per Ounce) while silver followed the suit and closed at \$25.95 (per ounce). Platinum and palladium closed at \$1,197 (per ounce) and \$2,684 (per ounce) respectively.

Other economic parameters remained moderate. Brent closed at \$66.77 (per barrel) while Crude MCX oil was quoted at Rs 4,722 (per barrel). Gold MCX stood at Rs 47,350 (per 10 gram), while MCX Silver closed at Rs 68,602 (per kg). Copper MCX closed at Rs 709.50 (per kg). Sensex and Nifty 50 closed at 48,842.03 and 14,617.85 points. Leading foreign currencies' exchange rates on the week's closing day were: US \$: Rs 74.54, British Pound: Rs 103.12, Euro: Rs 89.31, Singapore \$: Rs 55.86, Swiss Franc: Rs 81.00, Australian \$: Rs 57.65, Saudi Riyal: Rs 19.87, New Zealand Dollar: Rs 53.25, Kuwaiti Dinar: Rs 247.21, Omani Rial: Rs 193.56 and UAE Dirham: Rs 20.29, Japanese Yen: Rs 0.69 and Hong Kong Dollar: Rs 9.59.

In local markets, amidst the fear of second wave of Covid-19 becoming more deadlier day after day, the standard gold (24 carats) appreciated by Rs 810 and closed at Rs 48,160 (per 10 gram). Ornamental gold too, followed the suit and was quoted in the range of Rs 44,050 – 44,150 on the closing day. Silver (0.999) further appreciated by Rs 1,900 and closed at Rs 73,500 (per kg).

MKTS MAY REMAIN HIGHLY VOLATILE

Second Covid wave may generate greater uncertainty for investor and consumer sentiments

CHERUKURI KUTUMBA RAO

Nervousness over the rising Covid cases and increased restrictions in several States and weakness in the Indian Rupee against the United States Dollar triggered weakness in the equity markets and the market fell for the second consecutive week. The Sensex declined 759.29 points or 1.53 per cent to close at 48,832.03 and the Nifty dropped 217 points or 1.46 per cent to 14,617.85. The broader markets saw more correction than benchmarks, with the Midcap and Smallcap indices falling 2.91 per cent and 2.68 per cent, respectively.

FIIIs have net sold Rs 2,597 crore worth of shares till date this month. On the contrary, the DIIs continued to be supportive as they net bought Rs 1,736.6 crore worth of selling in equities. The wholesale price inflation rate rose to a more than eight-year high of 7.39 per cent in March. It is pertinent to observe that the WPI was 4.17 per cent in February and 2.51 per cent in January. Economy observers feel that with higher inflation there is negligible space for rate cuts to support growth, in spite of the growing uncertainty related to the surge in Covid-19 cases, localised restrictions and emerging concerns regarding migrants returning to the hinterland. Second Covid wave may generate greater uncertainty for both investor and consumer sentiments. The rupee weakened to close at 75.54 against the dollar, declining 1.1 per cent on week-on-week basis.

In fact, the currency has seen the lowest level since June 2020 amid unwinding of short dollar positions and RBI's Rs 1 lakh crore bond purchase plan. Experts feel the picture for rupee looks gloomy amid rising coronavirus cases and its impact on the economy. Weak rupee deters FIIs from investing. Union Government should

be ready to respond with fiscal measures, if required, to deal with situation due to rising Covid cases. In the near term, expect volatility to remain high as the market is expected to continue its focus on updates of State-wise restrictions and the spread of the virus.

Stock-specific movements based on upcoming results can be expected in the market. Similar to week ended, the coming week will be a truncated one with Wednesday being a trading holiday on account of Ram Navami. The 14,735 and 14,900 levels are likely to act as immediate resistance points, while supports will come in at 14,400 and 14,280 levels. Any violation of the 14,400 level will make the trading range wider than usual. Key results to watch for in the coming week - ICICI Bank, HCL Technologies, ACC, CRISIL, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company, Indus Towers, Rallis India, Tata Elxsi and Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services.

Heard on the street

Investment professionals often talk about geopolitical risk. For those new to investing, the term can be unclear. For Indian investors, geopolitical risk typically refers to the added problems and opportunities that come with developments across globe and foreign institutional investors. Recent border skirmishes with China had its toll on markets. Likewise, US-China trade war had its impact on our domestic market. In many countries, for example, a change in the political landscape can send markets into turmoil. For instance, when US bond yields rose, markets reacted quickly and negatively to the news, leading to selloffs. Sometimes analysts focus on identifying longer-term or secular changes in how countries interact with each other to determine where and how the world economy will

MARKET Khabrein



grow. It is important to realise that geopolitical risk is one of the potential disruptions, investors will have to grapple with in the coming years.

Futures & options / sector watch

Mirroring the indecisive trend in broader market, derivative segment witnessed subdued volumes during the week ended. Metals continued to be resilient and outperformers during last few weeks of uncertain times. Apart from firm domestic demand and price trends, the country's primary steelmakers have increased their share of exports in Q4 amid rising international steel prices. JSPL's share of exports in sales was around 21 per cent in Q3 as against 38 per cent in Q4. SAIL has increased exports to 0.40 million tonnes from 0.27 million tonnes in Q3.

JSW Steel reported a crude steel production of 4.19 million tonnes in Q4 and sources said that there was a significant rise in exports. Tata Steel's exports remained flat at 11 per cent of total deliveries in Q3 and Q4. Analysts argue that copper will play the critical role in achieving the Paris climate goals and say that copper is on a necessary path to \$15,000 per tonne. Use declines to buy Vedanta and Hindustan Copper. In a quarter where earnings

of banks are expected to be hit by the recognition of Covid-related stress following the Supreme Court's order, HDFC Bank reported steady earnings for the quarter ended March. While the bank's net profit growth of 18 per cent on-year was below analysts' estimates, its asset quality performance and net interest income growth were ahead of Street's expectations. Recent correction in banks provides good entry point. Most banks have corrected on account of the relapse of Covid outbreak-related concerns.

However, this time around the lockdown is not as stringent as earlier and observers expect banks to come out stronger from the Covid-related jolt in terms of asset quality outcomes and cost efficiencies. Aided by elevated provisioning coverage ratios (PCRs) and delinquencies much lower than anticipated, credit costs are likely to fall sharply by FY22F/23F. Rates seem to have bottomed out and this augurs well from the net interest margins (NIMs) standpoint. Contained delinquencies will aid NIMs too. All taken into consideration, expect margins to stabilise and credit costs to fall from FY22F. Top picks are SBI, Axis and ICICI Bank. Covid-related relapse in asset quality remains a key risk. The stock market will remain shut on April 21 on account of Ram Navami.

Stock futures looking good are Aurobindo Pharma, Cipla, Dabur, Glenmark, Hindalco, HCL Tech, Sun Pharma, Tata Consumer and Zee Entertainment. Stock futures looking weak are AU Bank, Indigo, LIC Hsg, Muthoot Finance, Shriram Transport and UBL.

Stock picks

Trivent Engineering and Industries Limited is engaged in the manufacturing of sugar. The company's segments include sugar, engineering and others. Its sugar

business consists of sugar, co-generation and distillery. Its engineering business comprises its operations in high-speed gears, and water and waste-water management segments. The other segments include execution of a turnkey project relating to installation of steam turbine-based power evacuation system, trading of various packaged fast-moving consumer goods under its brand name and retailing of diesel/ petrol through a company-operated fuel station. It manufactures white crystal sugar and has approximately seven manufacturing plants in UP. It has installed capacity of 68-megawatt spread over Khatauli and Deob and sugar mills. It manufactures high-speed gears and gear boxes at the manufacturing facility located at Mysore. It provides engineered-to-order process equipment and solutions.

Why we are recommending the stock

- One of the largest integrated sugar manufacturers in India with seven sugar units in UP. 104.5 MW grid connected co-generation capacity at six power plants.

- Manufactures extra neutral alcohol, which is used to produce potable alcoholic drinks, and fuel-grade ethanol at distilleries with 320KLPD capacity at two locations Muzaffarnagar and Sabitgarh. It also produces hand sanitizers.
- It manufactures industrial high-speed gears and gearboxes, and has three different business segments – gears, defence, built to print. Outstanding order book of Rs 1147.28 crore for combined engineering businesses.

Buy between Rs 95-105 for price target of Rs 175-200 (in 9 to 12 months). Risk to reward ratio is 1:5. In the event of very sharp downswing in markets stop loss should be at Rs 80.

(The author is a stock market expert. He is former vice chairman of AP Planning Board)

How to buy international stocks?

Some of the consumable goods on a daily basis could turn out to be good investment choices, here's how you can invest in them



K Naresh Kumar

In our daily lives, we consume or get interacted with multiple brands i.e., various companies which provide us with choices in our usage of goods and services. When we use a particular product, the origin could be from India (manufactured) but the brand could be owned by a foreign company whose listing may not be wholly or subsidiary is not in India. The pandemic has transformed the way we work, and the enabler of this change is the penetration or adoption of the technology.

As an investor, one of the rudimentary observations in fundamental analysis is to evaluate a company on the basis of the market size and market share of a company's product/service. At this stretch, some of these which we consume on a daily basis could turn out to be good investment choices, only if we could get a hand on them.

As the producers or owners of these products or services are unlisted in our country, access to this is difficult. Of course, the government has allowed Indians under the Liberalized Remittance Scheme (LRS), any resident to remit up to \$250,000 in a financial year. This could be done in any number of times in a year though no further remittance is allowed even if the remitted amount is brought back



in the same year. So, an Indian investor could use this option to invest in the international stocks which own these brands. For this one has to avail the services of the brokers who provide these facilities and the various costs and taxes associated with it. This, of course is, apart from the enormous amount of exercise to be done to identify a particular stock(s) and also arrive at the right allocation to be done.

The other easier way is to achieve this through global or international funds provided by the mutual funds. For Indians exploring through mutual funds, there're variety of options to consider from investing through cherry picking active management on one extreme to ETFs (Exchange Traded Funds) on the other with multiple alternatives in between. There are some feeder funds which route the capital invested into an already existing fund operating overseas. Then there're funds which invest specifically into a particular region or sector to cater

out viz., DSP Mining Fund or DSP World Agriculture Fund which as the name suggests concentrates purely with this bias of investing philosophy.

Invesco India Feeder - Invesco Global Equity Income Fund which invests the capital collected in India into their global fund, contrast to that is ICICI Prudential US Bluechip Equity Fund, an active management fund which diverts the capital into specific US stocks picked deemed desired by the fund manager. Then there's an offering from Motilal Oswal S&P Index Fund which parks money in the S&P 500 Index of the US directly. A recent offering from Kotak has added a different flavour through their international REIT FoF which predominantly invests in securities of underlying asset as real estate.

The offerings are getting interesting with exploring multiple possibilities like that of investing in sustainable energy through funds like DSP NRNE (Natural Resources

and New Energy) fund. Investors are spoilt with choice with offerings like PGIM India Emerging Markets Equity Fund to Edelweiss ASEAN Equity Off Shore Fund. The greatest importance, however, an investor has to consider while opting any of these funds is the fund objective (philosophy, style and scope of investment) and the cost of funds i.e., fund management charges. The latter is lower in the Index funds while higher in the actively managed funds.

The biggest headwinds these funds face is the volatility associated with the currency. Though, traditionally, INR experiences depreciation over long periods (being a net importer), there're bouts of underperformance (in these funds) due to intermittent currency appreciation. Another important aspect that influences the fund performance is the not limited to the geopolitical situations but also the factors related to that particular country (regulations, govt. policies, stability, etc.). These funds (irrespective of the underlying asset) are taxed as capital gains based on non-equity. Investors should be judicious in the allocation into these funds and the decision especially shouldn't arise from the past performance while also ensuring enough hedge is provided for these.

(The author is a co-founder of "Wealocity", a wealth management firm and could be reached at knk@wealocity.com)

Key indices likely to consolidate

THOVITI BRAHMACHARY

The Indian stock market began with a big fall on Monday. It declined over 3.5 per cent on a single day. It was the biggest fall after 26th February. The following positive days for three days cropped the losses, but failed to fill the Monday gap. For the second successive week, it closed with a loss. The Nifty lost 217 points on a weekly basis, settled at 14617.85. Only the Nifty Pharma index gained by 1.8 per cent. All other sectoral indices declined. The PSU Bank index lost the most by 6.9 per cent, followed by the Realty index with a 5.7 per cent decline. FIIs sold Rs. 2596.76 crores this month, and the DIIs bought Rs.1736.57 crores. The overall market breadth is mostly negative.

Technically, the Nifty formed identical candles for the last two weeks. On Monday, the Nifty breached the long weekly trendline support and the 100DMA support, which is negative for the Market. Though it closed above these support lines, it shows the weakness in the overall Market. At the same time, the Nifty failed to form a higher high. It moved above the 14880 zone twice, but failed to close above it. Even on a weekly chart, it formed a lower high. Two successive doji candle on weekly chart shows the indecisive on the direction.

The weekly price action confined to Monday's range and did not fill the gap. On Friday, with the late hour selling pressure, the Nifty formed a shooting star kind



of a pattern, which is bearish. Importantly, the fall on Monday has broken many critical supports and formed a new low post-budget day. As I mentioned earlier, the broader 1000 point range of 14469-15431 has broken many time during the five weeks.

At the same time, the range of 14800-14265 also broken on the downside. These are the significant weak signs. Even on the shorter period chart, the 14700 levels worked as resistance on Friday. After several efforts, the Nifty declined below the four 75 minutes candle at one go. The long lower shadows on the weekly chart show the buying support at the dips. It also faced resistance at 21EMA and closed below the 20DMA. Above these levels, 14880-14985 is the key resistance zone.

Only above these resistances, Market will see the new highs. But, in any case, the Nifty closes below 14550 is enough to resume the downtrend. As the next week also truncated, with Wednesday being a trading holiday, it is expected that the Nifty may consolidate further between support and resistance. The 14 periods weekly RSI (59.41) is below the prior swing low, which is a bearish sign. It is

moving in lower highs and lower low fashion. No positive divergence is visible. The MACD histogram shows an increased bearish momentum on weekly charts. All the directional

movement indicators are below 25 is a weak sign.

India VIX is slightly up by 3.12 per cent to 20.40, indicates increased volatility. The latest earnings mixed, and there are no pleasant surprises. The Nifty PE is still high at 32.84. The current earnings failed to influence the market direction. In fact, they did not show any impact. Unless there is a significant improvement in the earnings, we cannot expect the liquidity push will support the Market. The FIIs are already paring their inflows. The DIIs are not matching the selling pressure. As the Mid and Small-cap underperformance once again created a dilemma among the retail participant. The Covid-19 second wave spread is faster and more aggressive. The Government may not be interested in imposing the nationwide lockdown, but the prevailing health emergency kind of situations certainly dampen the sentiments for sure. No negative triggers do not mean Market move up. It may consolidate further till the business environment improves.

(The author is a financial journalist and technical analyst. He can be reached at tbchary@gmail.com)

DERIVATIVES OUTLOOK

DASARI SREENIVASA RAO

As per the latest options data from NSE, the support level for the broad-based Nifty remained at 14,000 strike, while resistance level declined by 500 points to 15,000 strike.

The highest call OI is at 15,000CE followed by 15,500/14,700/14,800/15,100/15,300 strikes. 14,800/ 15,300/ 15,500/ 14,900/ 15,000 strikes recorded reasonable addition of Call OI. Coming to the Put side, the highest put OI is at 14,000PE followed by 13,500/ 13,000/ 14,500/ 14,400/ 14,600 strikes. Strikes 14,600/14,500/ 13,800/13,500 recorded significant Put OI build-up.

Options data holds broad-range consolidation

A close above 32,000 strike may trigger a 1000-point rally in Bank Nifty

According to the data from ICI-CI Direct.com, the NSE Nifty has major call base placed at 14,700 strike with highest Call base placed at 15,000 strike for the weekly settlement. On the downside, the 14,500 remains a crucial support due to continued build-up seen in this strike. Analysts predict any move above 14,700 strike may trigger upside momentum towards 15,000 in the April series.

Dhirender Singh Bisht, senior research analyst (derivatives) at SMC Global Securities Ltd, said: "From the derivatives front, Call writers were seen adding hefty Open Interest at 14700-14800 &

15000 strikes, which could limit any sharp upside into the index. On the downside, put writers added marginal open interest at 14,600 and 14,500 strikes, which could act as support levels for the Nifty on a short-term basis."

For the week ended April 16, 2021, BSE Sensex closed at 48,832.03 points, a net fall of 759.29 points or 1.53 per cent, as against 49,591.32 points. NSE Nifty further declined by 217 points or 1.46 per cent and closed at 14,617.85 points from 14,834.85 points.

"Indian markets once again saw trading in range bound manner as tug of war between bulls and

F&O TRADING			
Product	Contracts	Turnover (Rs/cr)	Premium (Rs/cr)
Index Futures	3,07,087	28,815.88	--
Stock Futures	6,48,997	64,089.80	--
Index Options	2,00,65,380	18,85,819.73	13,660.17
Stock Options	18,45,114	1,91,783.45	3,554.88
F&O Total	2,28,66,578	21,70,508.86	17,215.0

NSE / As on Apr 16, 2021

bears kept Nifty indices in the range of 14,250-14,700 during the week. Technical oscillators suggest that the market is likely to remain volatile in the upcoming week as well with some consolation moves in the broader range of 14750-14350 zone. Traders should keep stock-specific action onto radar on the back of ongoing result season," forecasts Bisht.

The BFSI space did well in the last few weeks and some short

covering was experienced. The banking sector may take the lead from here onwards. It will be crucial for a market recovery towards 15,000 level for the NSE Nifty. Moreover, analysts expect some consolidation in the technology space post their quarterly results.

The volatility on the bourses eased sharply towards 20 levels once again after testing 23 levels on Monday. Volatility may remain subdued, which should bode well

for the current recovery. "The Implied Volatility of Calls closed at 19.76 per cent, while that for Put options closed at 20.48 per cent. The Nifty VIX for the week closed at 20.89 per cent. Put-call ratio of OI for the week closed at 1.35 and it indicates more Put writing than Calls," remarked Bisht. For the week, FIIs sold Rs1,006 crore, while domestic institutions (DIIs) remained on the side-lines as they sold just Rs51 crore.

In the F&O space, FII action was primarily seen in the stock futures and index options segment. FIIs were net buyers in the index futures segment worth Rs925 crore and sold to the tune of Rs565 crore in the stock futures. Further, FIIs bought index options worth Rs9,123 crore.

Bank Nifty

The NSE's banking index Bank Nifty closed at 31,977.45 points, a

net loss of 470.60 points or 1.45 per cent from 32,448.05 points.

The banking space recorded some short covering and recovered from the lows near the 30,500 strike. In the last two sessions, fresh long OI build-up is seen as Bank Nifty closed near its sizable Call base of 32,000 points. Derivatives analysts forecast some recovery in the Bank Nifty at the current juncture and stocks like HDFC Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank are expected to do well from current levels. Supportive action is expected from mid-cap banks like Federal Bank and Bandhan Bank.

On the options front, a sizable Call OI base is placed at 32,000 strike followed by 33,000 strike. Further downside move is limited as recent lows should provide cushion. In contrast, a close above 32,000 strike again should trigger a 1000-point rally for the Bank Nifty.

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

De Villiers, Maxwell fire RCB to 38-run win against KKR

CHENNAI

GLENN Maxwell was good but AB de Villiers was better as Royal Challengers Bangalore bested Kolkata Knight Riders by 38 runs in their IPL match here on Sunday.

Batting first, De Villiers' master class and Maxwell's counter-attacking half-century propelled RCB to an imposing 204 for four.

In reply, KKR were stopped at 166 for eight as RCB regained the top spot in the pecking order. RCB smashed 56 runs in the last three overs, including 21 in the final six deliveries, thanks to de Villiers 34-ball 76 not out.

Maxwell blazed away to 78 off 49 deliveries, hitting nine boundaries and three maximums before the genius from South Africa strode in and struck the same number of fours and sixes as his teammate from Australia.

The Knight Riders were off to a brilliant start with leg-break bowler Varun Chakravarthy leaving RCB in early trouble at 9/2 with the big wickets of skipper Virat Kohli (5) and Rajat Patidar (1) in the second over.

Opening the bowling for KKR, veteran off-spinner Harbhajan Singh bowled a tight line and length to stifle the RCB batsmen in his first two overs. After Chakravarthy lured Kohli to go over cover with a tossed-up delivery that drifted

away from the right-hander, Rahul Tripathi pulled off a sensational catch running back from extra-cover.

The top batsman was nowhere close to the ball. Chakravarthy then went through the defence of Patidar with one that darted back on landing. Mixing aggression with caution, Maxwell and Devdutt Padikkal (25) revived the RCB innings after the early blows at the MA Chidambaram Stadium. While the young Indian seemed content playing the second fiddle, the swashbuckling Australian counter-attacked in fine fashion and played the big shots with consummate ease.

The in-form Maxwell upped the ante when he cleared his front leg to plonk Shakib Al Hasan over long-on for his first maximum in the sixth over. The one bowled by Shakib turned out to be a productive over for RCB as they got 17 runs off it.

Morgan's decision to take out both Chakravarthy and Harbhajan at a time when they were bowling well was baffling, but RCB didn't mind at all as they capitalised on the surprising move. After reaching 45 for two at the end of the six powerplay overs, Maxwell shifted gears and raced to his half-century in just 28 balls.

Even Chakravarthy, who was on fire some time ago, was not

SCOREBOARD	
Royal Challengers Bangalore	
Virat Kohli c Tripathi b Varun.....	5
D Padikkal c Tripathi b Prasidh Krishna	25
Rajat Patidar b Varun	1
GMaxwell c Harbhajan b Cummins	78
AB de Villiers not out	76
Kyle Jamieson not out	11
Extras: (NB-3, W-5)	8
Total: (for 4 wickets in 20 overs)	204
Fall of wickets: 1-6, 2-9, 3-95, 4-148	
Bowling: Harbhajan Singh 4-0-38-0, Varun Chakravarthy 4-0-39-2, Shakib Al Hasan 2-0-24-0, Pat Cummins 4-0-34-1, Prasidh Krishna 4-0-31-1, Andre Russell 2-0-38-0.	
Kolkata Knight Riders	
Ni Rana c Padikkal b Chahal	18
S Gill c sub (DT Christian) b Jamieson	21
RTripathi c M Siraj b W Sundar	25
Eoin Morgan c Kohli b Patel	29
Dinesh Karthik lbw b Chahal	2
Shakib Al Hasan b Jamieson	26
Andre Russell b Patel	31
P Cummins c de Villiers b Jamieson	6
Harbhajan Singh not out	2
Varun Chakravarthy not out.....	2
Extras: (W-4)	4
Total: (for 8 wickets in 20 overs)	166
Fall of wickets: 1-23, 2-57, 3-66, 4-74, 5-114, 6-155, 7-161, 8-162	
Bowling: Mohammed Siraj 3-0-17-0, Kyle Jamieson 3-0-41-3, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-34-2, Washington Sundar 4-0-33-1, Glenn Maxwell 2-0-24-0, Harshal Patel 4-0-17-2.	

spared by Maxwell as he smashed him for a six and four off successive balls. Prasidh Krishna ended the third-wicket partnership of 86 runs by sending back Padikkal, which signalled the arrival of De Villiers in the middle. Joining forces, the dazzling duo of Maxwell and De Villiers did not allow the KKR bowlers to settle into any sort of rhythm until premier pacer Pat Cummins ended their 53-run association.

After that, the show belonged to De Villiers as he toyed with KKR bowlers. He finished it off in style, pummelling Andre Russell for three fours and a six in the last over of the innings. The last-over onslaught was preceded by 4, 4, 6 as de Villiers left poor Russell bruised and battered. (PTI)



MUMBAI

STEVE Smith makes his Delhi Capitals (DC) debut on Sunday as they won the toss and chose to bowl against the Punjab Kings (PBKS) at the Wankhede Stadium in the Indian Premier League (IPL).

DC captain Rishabh Pant said that he expects dew to come in during the second innings which is the reason why they chose to bowl first.

PBKS captain KL Rahul, meanwhile, said that the team is looking to put behind their crushing defeat in the last match against Chennai Super Kings.

"Those things happen with every team, every sea-

Smith makes DC debut as they bowl against PBKS

son, it's important that you forget it. You learn a little just in case you're in that situation again. Lalaj Saxena comes in for M Ashwin.. It's been hard to read the pitch, generally Wankhede is high scoring. If you have wickets in hand, then you can assess later," said Rahul.

Delhi Capitals: Prithvi Shaw, Shikhar Dhawan, Steven Smith, Rishabh Pant (captain, wicketkeeper), Marcus Stoinis, Lalit Yadav, Chris Woakes, R Ashwin, Kagiso Rabada, Avesh Khan, Lukman Meriwala

Punjab Kings: Mayank Agarwal, KL Rahul (captain, wicket-keeper), Chris Gayle, Deepak Hooda, Nicholas Pooran, Shahrulkh Khan, Jhye Richardson, Lalaj Saxena, Mohammed Shami, Riley Meredith, Arshdeep Singh (IANS)

POINTS TABLE

	Team	Played	Won	Lost	Tied	Net RR	Pts
1	RCB	3	3	0	0	+0.750	6
2	MI	3	2	1	0	+0.367	4
3	CSK	2	1	1	0	+0.616	2
4	DC	2	1	1	0	+0.195	2
5	RR	2	1	1	0	+0.052	2
6	KKR	3	1	2	0	-0.633	2
7	PBKS	2	1	1	0	-0.909	2
8	SRH	3	0	3	0	-0.483	0

RR up against rejuvenated CSK

MUMBAI

BOTH Rajasthan Royals (RR) and Chennai Super Kings (CSK) have won one game and lost one. It is only the net run rate that puts CSK (0.616) ahead of RR (0.52) on the points table.

Importantly, both are coming of a win in their previous match. While CSK were clinical in their dismissal of Punjab Kings (PBKS), winning with plenty of overs to spare, Rajasthan Royals faced hiccups before the league's most expensive player ever, Chris Morris saw them through a tough phase against Delhi Capitals (DC).

The focus will be on pace bowler Deepak Chahar who had rocked the PBKS top order. His ability to move the ball got accolades from even the Indian team coach Ravi Shastri who tweeted his appreciation. RR will have to handle him well on a Wankhede

SQUADS

Chennai Super Kings

MS Dhoni (captain/wicketkeeper), Suresh Raina, Narayan Jagadeesan, Ruturaj Gaikwad, KM Asif, Karn Sharma, Ambati Rayudu, Deepak Chahar, Faf du Plessis, Shardul Thakur, Mitchell Santner, Dwayne Bravo, Lungi Ngidi, Sam Curran, Ravindra Jadeja, Imran Tahir, Robin Uthappa, Moeen Ali, K Gowtham, Cheteshwar Pujara, M. Harisankar Reddy, C.Bhagath Varma, C Hari Nishaanth, R Sai Kishore, Jason Behrendorff.

Rajasthan Royals

Sanju Samson (captain), Jos Buttler (wicketkeeper), Riyan Parag, Shreyas Gopal, Rahul Tewatia, Mahipal Lomror, Kartik Tyagi, Andrew Tye, Jaydev Unadkat, Mayank Markande, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Anuj Rawat, David Miller, Manan Vohra, Robin Uthappa, Shivam Dube, Chris Morris, Mustafizur Rahman, Chetan Sakaria, KC Cariappa, Liam Livingstone, Kuldeep Yadav, Akash Singh.

Match starts at 7.30pm

Stadium pitch that has helped seamers.

Chahar's battle with RR skipper Sanju Samson will hold key. Samson likes to go after the bowling but there have been occasions, like in the last match, when a bit of movement has troubled him like in the last match against Delhi Capitals when Kag-

iso Rabada had him caught in slips. RR will have to bat well considering that their bowling is a bit weak due to the absence of Jofra Archer and Ben Stokes. Both the Englishmen are injured and a lot will again depend on Chris Morris's all-round performance. Morris will have to bat well as well as bowl well. (IANS)

Jhilli fetches gold at Asian Weightlifting Championship

TASHKENT

INDIA'S Jhilli Dalabehera clinched the gold medal in the 45kg category in a severely depleted two-lifter field at the Asian Weightlifting Championship here on Sunday.

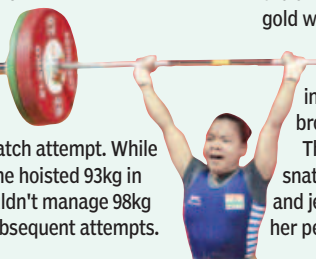
Jhilli, a junior world championship bronze medallist, lifted 69kg in the snatch and followed that up by 88kg in clean jerk for a total of 157kg to finish on top of the podium in all three categories of the gold level Olympic

qualifier event which was postponed last year due to the pandemic. However, 45kg is not a Olympic weight category.

The silver medal went to Philippines' Mary Flor Diaz for her effort of 135kg (60kg+75kg). With the win, Jhilli bettered her silver-winning performance in the last edition. However, it was an underwhelming performance as she had lifted 162kg (71kg+91kg) at the same event in 2019. The other Indian in the fray, Sneha Soren finished third in group B of the

women's 55kg event. The 20-year-old from Odisha lifted a total of 164kg (71kg+93kg) in the four-woman field. After lifting 68kg and 71kg, Sneha failed to lift 73kg in her final snatch attempt. While in clean and jerk, she hoisted 93kg in her first try but couldn't manage 98kg and 100kg in the subsequent attempts.

Her final standing will be determined after the end of the group A proceedings. Jhilli's gold was India's second medal of the tournament as star weightlifter Mirabai Chanu had smashed the world record in the clean and jerk category enroute a bronze medal on Saturday. The Olympic-bound Chanu lifted 86kg in snatch and a world record of 119kg in clean and jerk for a total of 205kg, which was also her personal best. (PTI)



Nagal one step away from Barcelona Open main draw

BARCELONA

INDIA'S top-ranked men's tennis player Sumit Nagal overcame a tough challenge from Ukraine's Ilya Marchenko 3-6, 6-2, 7-5 in the ATP 500 Barcelona Open qualifier to be one step away from the main draw of the tournament.

The 136th-ranked Nagal, who is aiming to get into the top-100 on the ATP rankings, will now take on Italy's Thomas Fabbiano for a place in the main draw of the tournament, which is one of the most important events in Spanish tennis.

Spaniard Rafael Nadal, the joint Grand Slam record holder with Roger Federer with 20 titles each, has won 11 trophies at the Barcelona Open.

Despite being ranked higher than his opponent on the ATP, Nagal (136th) cannot take Fabbiano (171st) lightly as the 31-year-old Italian had a singles ranking of 70 in 2017 and twice reached the Wimbledon third round, in 2018 and 19.

For more than a month now, Nagal has been playing in Europe but has met with little success. The Indian had to bite the dust in the opening qualifying round of the Rolex Monte Carlo Masters, going down to Italy's Stefano Travaglia recently.

Nagal also lost in the opening round of the ATP 250 Sardegna Open in Cagliari, Italy to fellow Slovakian qualifier Jozef Kovalik earlier this month after winning two rounds of qualifiers. (IANS)

Deepak Punia settles for silver, Ravinder ends up with bronze

ALMATY (KAZAKHSTAN)

DEEPAK Punia's defence fell apart in front of his idol and Iranian legend Hassan Yazdanicharati as the Olympic-bound Indian settled for a silver medal while Sanjeet claimed a bronze on the concluding day of the Asian Championship here on Sunday.

Deepak lost his 86kg final inside the first period by technical superiority as the Iranian's relentless attacks had the clueless India gasping. It was the second time that Deepak was up against 2016 Olympic champion and two-time World champion but challenged him for the first time as he had withdrawn from the 2019 World Championship final against the Iranian due to a leg injury.

Another Indian earning a podium finish on Sunday was Sanjeet (92kg) who almost blew away a commanding position against Uzbekistan's Rustam Shodiev before winning the bronze play-off 11-8. He led 11-2 at one stage but let the Uzbek wrestler clawed his way back. Eventually the big lead helped the Indian claim bronze.

Overall, India won seven

medals from the men's free style event with only Ravi Dahiya (57kg) managing to win a gold. Ravinder (61kg) lost his bronze play-off to Kyrgyzstan's Ikromzhon Khadhimurodov by technical superiority. Deepak, who has won two bronze medals at the continental championship before, showed defence skills before the final as he notched up a confident 2-0 win over Korea's Gwanuk Kim in the semifinals. Kim's several double leg attacks bore no fruit in the face of the 22-year old Deepak's solid defence.

The Indian, who secured his Olympic quota with a World Championship bronze, earned both his points on passivity of his opponent. Deepak's defensive tactics also won him bouts against Uzbekistan's Isa Shapiev (9-2) and Tajikistan's Bakhodur Kodirov (4-3).

In the 61kg, Ravinder began with a close 4-3 win over Iran's Majid Al-mas Dastan but lost 4-7 in the semi-final against Kazakhstan's Adlan Aakarov. The home wrestler's relentless attack resulted in him getting out of breath in the second period but Ravinder could not take advantage of that. (PTI)



World Youth Boxing: Five Indians storm into quarters

KIELCE

INDIAN boxers put up a phenomenal performance at the AIBA Youth Men's and Women's World Boxing Championships with five of them making it to the quarter-finals on the fifth day of the competition on Sunday.

Asian junior champion Biswamitra Chongtham led Indian boxers' charge in the men's section outclassing Khosroshahi Parvizi 5-0 to enter the 49kg quarter-finals. The Manipuri pugilist looked in complete control against the Irish boxer as he carried on with the momentum before finishing the bout in his favour.

Ankit Narwal also secured a place in the last-eight along with Uttar Pradesh's Vishal Gupta (91kg) and Bhiwani's Sachin (56kg). Asian Youth silver medalist, Haryana's Ankit defeated Polish boxer Olivier Zamojski with a 4-1 split decision in the men's 64kg category. However, Vishal and Sachin comfortably



registered identical 5-0 victories against Croatia's Borna Loncaric and Jose Valdez of Colombia, respectively.

In the women's section, Gitika (48kg), who came into the match beating European champion Diana Ermakova, continued her impressive form, notching up a flawless 5-0 triumph against Kazakhstan's Aralym Marat to progress into the last-eight stage.

Nisha Gurjar (64kg) was the lone Indian who could not progress on Day 5 after a 1-4 loss against Latvia's Beatrise Rozen-

tale in the pre-quarters.

The sixth day of the event, where India has fielded a 20-member team, will see nine Indians in action. Five women boxers -- Poonam (57kg), Alfiya Pathan (+81kg), Khushi (81kg), Gitika (48kg) and Vinka (60kg) - will look to make their way into the semi-finals and assure their country of medals.

In the men's section, Akash Gorkha (60kg), Manish (75kg), Sumit (69kg) and Vinit (81kg) will be seen in pre-quarterfinal action. (IANS)

Barca win Copa del Rey with destruction of Athletic Bilbao

BARCELONA

LIONEL Messi and Frenkie de Jong inspired Barcelona to a 4-0 thrashing of Athletic Bilbao on Saturday to win the Copa del Rey for a record 31st time.

The Catalans picked up their first silverware of the season and gained revenge for their Spanish Super Cup defeat by Athletic in January with a convincing victory, DPA reported. The Basques, who lost the postponed 2020 final a fortnight ago also at La Cartuja in Seville, have not won the cup since 1984, when they beat Barcelona.

Ronald Koeman's side, in search of their first trophy for almost two years, started well and almost went ahead when De Jong fired against the post from Messi's cut-back.

It was the best opportunity of a first half which they dominated, without creating too many clear-cut chances.

Messi had a shot blocked and a free kick which hit the wall, while Inigo Martinez flicked an effort inches wide at the other end. Antoine Griezmann should have broken the deadlock in the second half but was denied from point-blank range by Athletic goalkeeper Unai Simon. The Spain international pulled off an even bet-

ter stop moments later, denying Sergio Busquets from a similarly close proximity.

Eventually, Barcelona broke the deadlock on the hour mark, with Griezmann making amends for his earlier miss by sweeping home from De Jong's cross.

