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WINDOWS



Shrivastava given complete charge of Delhi Police

New Delhi: Senior IPS officer S N Shrivastava was appointed as full-fledged Commissioner of Delhi Police on Thursday, according to an official order. A 1985-batch IPS officer who is scheduled to retire next month, Shrivastava was holding the post of Delhi Police Commissioner as an additional charge. The order issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs stated that Shrivastava has been cleared for holding the post of Commissioner of Delhi Police until further orders. His name was cleared by the competent authority, the order said. He was given additional charge of Delhi Police Commissioner in February last year.

Mamata to contest from Bhowanipur

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who had lost the Assembly elections from Nandigam against her one-time aide-turned BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari, is likely to contest the bypoll from Bhowanipur, the south Kolkata constituency she had represented twice since 2011. Earlier in the day, the sitting Trinamool Congress MLA from Bhowanipur, Sovandeb Chattopadhyay, tendered his resignation to Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee, which was immediately accepted.

Speaker Banerjee said in a statement, "Chattopadhyay has resigned on his own will and he has not been forced to do so."

NDRF prepares for Cyclone Yaas

NEW DELHI: The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has begun positioning its teams in West Bengal and Odisha as Cyclone Yaas is likely to hit these states on the eastern coast of the country around May 26-27, officials said on Friday. Some of the teams dispatched to undertake evacuation, rescue and restoration work in states affected by Cyclone Tauktae on the western coast are being called back, they said. NDRF Director General S N Pradhan tweeted that the force has decided to "airlift" West Bengal and Odisha-based teams of the force in view of Cyclone Yaas and its "possible impact" in the coastal districts of the two states. The exact number of NDRF teams to be earmarked for the latest cyclone will be decided as per inputs received from the India Meteorological Department.

NEARLY 200 CASES OF 'BLACK FUNGUS' IN DELHI

NEW DELHI

DELHI Health Minister Satyendar Jain said on Friday said that there were close to 200 cases of 'black fungus' reported so far in the Capital and advised people to report such cases immediately to doctors and not take medicines on their own.

The minister stated that the health department of the Delhi government was taking steps to check the rising cases of black fungus in the city and making medicines available. "Once black fungus is confirmed, don't take medicines on your own

and contact your doctor," Jain said said while talking to mediapersons on Friday.

Due to surge in number of cases of 'black fungus', the Delhi government has decided to open dedicated centres at three hospitals - LNJP hospital, GTB hospital and Rajiv Gandhi hospital - for the treatment of the disease in Covid-19 recovered patients.

Jain said that high sugar levels and the use of steroids during Covid treatment are linked to black fungus. "Steroids should only be used as per the advice of doctor," he said.

With the rising number of cases of 'black fungus' in the capital complaints regarding shortage of Amphotericin B, a drug used to treat black fungus, have started coming in. Also, private hospitals are struggling to procure the suddenly in-demand drug.

The private healthcares in Delhi have voiced concern that the rare 'fungal' infection is only going to increase in the days to come. As per the reports, several private hospitals have pointed out that a committee setup under the Delhi Government to provide medicines is causing delay in pro-

viding Amphotericin B due to a lot of paperwork having to be done for the purpose. The Union Health Ministry on Friday said license has been given to five more manufactures for production of Amphotericin-B, used in the treatment of black fungus, and they will start producing 1,11,000 vials of the drug per month from July.

Efforts are being made to supplement the domestic availability of the anti-fungal drug through import, the ministry said, adding that 3,63,000 vials of Amphotericin-B will be imported in May, result-

ing in the total availability of 5,26,752 vials (inclusive of the domestic production) in the country.

It said 3,15,000 vials will be imported in June and along with the domestic supply, the countrywide availability of Amphotericin-B will be enhanced to 5,70,114 vials in June. Several states and union territories have reported an increasing number of patients suffering from COVID complications in the recent days in the form of Mucormycosis, popularly known as black fungus, the ministry said in a statement.

Doorstep treatment must to fight Covid, says Modi

VARANASI/LUCKNOW

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Friday urged bringing medical services closer to Covid-19 patients, coming up with a new mantra -- Jahan bimaar, wahin upchaar -- at a video conference with doctors where he choked up while speaking of lives lost to the virus.

"Though the attack of the pandemic has been checked to an extent with the joint efforts of all, it is not the time to feel satisfied," he told healthcare professionals and other frontline workers in his Varanasi constituency. "We have to fight a long battle," he added.

He said health services need to pay attention to the rural areas of Varanasi and Purvanchal and pitched his new 'mantra' of "treatment at the doorstep".

"We shouldn't forget -- Jahan bimaar, wahin upchaar" (treatment where the patient is located),"

"If the treatment is taken to the sick, it will bring down the pressure on the health system," Modi said. He talked about telemedicine and involving young and retired medical professionals in tackling the pandemic.



He lauded the efforts of doctors, nurses, technicians, ward boys and ambulance drivers. "But this pandemic is so big that despite all the efforts we have not been able to save the lives of our family members," he added.

"This virus has snatched so many of our near ones," Modi said, choking with emotion.

There was a long pause, before the prime minister continued, "I pay my

respects to all these people and offer condolences to their near and dear ones," he said.

Modi called for special efforts to save children from coronavirus. He also flagged mucormycosis or black fungus as a "new challenge".

He said the fight was on many fronts in the second wave of the pandemic. The infection rate was high, the patients had to be hospitalised for longer and there was "extreme pressure" on the health system.

Stressing the importance of vaccination, he said frontline workers managed to serve without worry because of it. This "suraksha kavach" (shield) should reach everyone, he added.

Just as the fight against coronavirus has been a joint effort, the vaccination should also be a collective responsibility and everyone should take the vaccine when their turn comes, he said.

He said the work done in the health sector over the past seven years helped but under such extraordinary circumstances, the situation was brought under control because of the health workers who worked round the clock.

Kejriwal gives ₹1 crore aid to family of teacher

NEW DELHI

CHIEF Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday provided financial assistance of Rs 1 crore to family of Nitin Tanwar, a teacher in a Delhi government school who died of COVID-19 in December last year. Tanwar passed away after getting infected while on COVID duty. Tanwar performed various non-teaching duties during the pandemic including ration distribution.

"Tanwar was a very hardworking and dedicated teacher in our Delhi government school. He was posted on various duties during the corona crisis, he was initially posted at the ration distribution centre, and later on many such duties. He passed away after getting infected while being on COVID duty last year," Kejriwal said. It is because of people like him that Delhi can cope with the COVID-19 pandemic because these people are fighting a tough battle against the virus, he said.

"While we cannot fill the loss, we have provided his family with the monetary support of Rs 1 crore. We will also provide his wife with a job in a Delhi government school."

ED searches several locations tied to Navneet Kalra

NEW DELHI: Two days after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) booked businessman Navneet Kalra in the alleged black marketing of oxygen concentrator case, the financial probe agency on Friday carried out searches at several locations, sources said.

An informed ED source told IANS: "The ED is carrying out searches at several locations, including Kalra's properties, the premises of Matrix Cellular Services staff and officials arrested by the Delhi Police, as well as a farm house in

South Delhi from where several oxygen concentrators were seized."

On Tuesday, the ED booked Kalra and several others under the sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) for the black marketing of oxygen Concentrators his restaurants Khan Chacha and Town Hall in Khan Market, and Nege and Ju located in Lodhi Colony.

The Delhi Police has seized over 500 oxygen concentrators from several locations including the three popular eateries on May 6 and 7.



Dead bodies of 13 naxals, who were killed in a gun battle at Kotmi forest during a anti-Naxal operation by commandoes, in Gadchiroli district on Friday

13 Naxals killed in encounter

MUMBAI

AT least 13 Naxals including seven women cadres were killed in an encounter with police in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra early on Friday, officials said. The slain ultras belonged to Kasunur Dalam (squad) of the Naxals, police said.

The encounter took place on a day the state home minister was visiting the eastern Maharashtra district, over 900 km from Mumbai. A release by Gadchiroli Police said they had received inputs that Naxals had gathered in the Paidi forest area in Etapalli tehsil for extortion as auctions of Tendu leaves --

used for making bidis or leaf cigarettes -- were underway, hence a team of C-60 commandos, a special combat force of the district police, was sent to the area. The encounter took place between 6 am to 7.30 am as about 60 to 70 Naxals opened fire on C-60 commandos and kept firing despite an appeal to them to surrender, it added.

After the Naxals fled into the dense forest, the bodies of six male and seven female cadres were found, while some more Naxals were possibly injured in the encounter but managed to escape, the police said. One AK-47 rifle, an SLR, a carbine, a .303 rifle and explosives were recovered from the spot.

Choudhary's resignation worrying for Congress: Pilot

JAIPUR

SOON after the resignation of 6-time Congress MLA Hemaram Choudhary, the Rajasthan Congress again looks split into two camps headed by CM Ashok Gehlot and former Dy CM Sachin Pilot, issuing their own different statements.

While Pilot termed his resignation as a worrying factor for the ruling party, Rajasthan PCC chief and state minister Govind Singh Dotasara said that the party has given a lot to Choudhary in the same

manner as he has nurtured the party since long.

Choudhary is known to be from the Pilot camp and stood firmly with him during the rebellion in July last year.

Choudhary sent his resignation to Assembly speaker CP Joshi a few days back asking him to accept it on the same day. However, his resignation is yet to be accepted.

Pilot on Friday said that the resignation of Hemaram Choudhary is a worrying factor for the party.

Noted environmentalist Sunderlal Bahuguna passes away

DEHRADUN

RENOWNED environmentalist Sunderlal Bahuguna, who pioneered the Chipko movement, died of Covid-19 at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Rishikesh on Friday. He was 94. He is survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter. Bahuguna was cremated with full state honours at the Poornanand Ghat on the banks of the Ganga in Rishikesh.

Known for his pioneering role in the Chipko movement, during which activists hugged trees to save them from being felled, Bahuguna had been undergoing treatment for Covid-19 at AIIMS-Rishikesh since May 8. Admitted to the hospital after testing positive for the infection, Bahuguna's condition had turned critical last night with his oxygen level dropping drastically.

He was on CPAP therapy in the ICU of the premier

hospital and breathed his last at 12.05 pm, AIIMS Director Ravikant said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled Bahuguna's death.

"Passing away of Shri Sunderlal Bahuguna Ji is a monumental loss for our nation. He manifested our centuries-old ethos of living in harmony with nature. His simplicity and spirit of compassion will never be forgotten. My thoughts are with his family and many admirers. Om Shanti," the prime minister tweeted. Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat described it as a big loss not just for Uttarakhand and India but for the entire world.

"It was he who made the Chipko movement a movement of the masses," Rawat said.

The void created by his death in the field of environment can never be filled, the chief minister said.

He prayed for peace to the departed soul and strength to the bereaved family to bear the loss.



Bahuguna's body was brought to the ghat wrapped in the national flag and was given a guard of honour by the Uttarakhand police.

The funeral pyre was lit by his son Rajiv Nayan Bahuguna in the presence of his wife Vimla, daughter Madhu and other relatives. Uttarakhand Assembly Speaker Prem Chand Aggrawal and Rishikesh Mayor Anita Mangai were also present.

Born on January 9, 1927 in Tehri district, Bahuguna is considered the pioneer of the Chipko movement of the 1970s which he had launched along with dedicated environment conservationists like Gaura Devi to save forests.

Started by Bahuguna at the foothills of the Himalayas in 1973 in Uttarakhand, then a part of Uttar Pradesh, the Chipko movement was a forest conservation movement in India. It later became a rallying point for many environmental movements all over the world. Conferred with the Padma Vibhushan

and many other honours for his pioneering work in the field of environment protection, Bahuguna also led protests against the construction of the Tehri dam.

He had observed an 84-day fast and got his head tonsured in protest against the project which displaced a huge population rendering them homeless.

He dug in his heels in protest against the project till the last minute. He had lost his own ancestral home due to the construction of the dam.

He also protested against the erstwhile Tehri royals which landed him in jail. He was also one of the most vocal critics of luxury tourism in the Himalayas and the construction of hotels which according to him did irreparable harm to the fragile Himalayan ecology.

He undertook several 'padyatras' to create awareness among people about conserving the Himalayan ecology and environment.

Womenia



KIRAN BEDI
@THEKIRANBEDI
From the Holy
#Vedas.
The Human Body.



Vedika Mehta: Short content format have grown over the years

TEJAL SINHA

Vedika Mehta is an Indian Content Creator and Instagram Star. She came into the limelight after appearing in the song Chaar Chudiyaa with famous Punjabi singer Nikk. She is well known for her beautiful looks, cute smile, and awesome personality. She is famous on various social media platforms including Instagram for posting her eye-catching images. Vedika Mehta has over 200K followers on her Instagram, having an impressive online presence which she keeps up to date with her engaging content.

Vedika shares, "Camera has always been my friend, I like staying in front of the camera. Growing up, I indulged into everything, be it hosting, acting, content creation or music videos I love my job. My journey has been amazing as well challenging. It can get overwhelming sometimes but I enjoy what I do which makes most things easier. What I've realised overtime is that consistency is the key with a lot of experimentation on creating content. Being true to yourself and promoting the content you believe in, makes it more relatable and organic I feel like more than me aspiring to get into this field, it's this field that found me. I started creating content just for fun and it lead me to bigger things. When I saw that people were enjoying my posts, that motivated me & increase my focus on preparing content that my audience would like to indulge in. It just happened and I am glad it did for me."



Sharing about the changes you have seen of content creation over the couple of years, she shares that last year, Instagrams IGTV was doing really well but after the introduction of reels, people have really started following short duration content. The visibility and reach that reels can give your profile is massive.

She adds, "I've seen so many people come up because of the introduction of reels. There's a long way to go for short format content. I believe short format content will last long. Based on the success of tiktok, we know that people enjoy short format content. Scrolling through Reels can be very addictive hence they offer more visibility potential and reach. Instagram trends have amplified that. The content is quicker to create, share and consume."

Vedika further shares that the pandemic has helped her gain a lot of focus into her work.

"The pandemic allowed me to devote allot more time and effort into it. I couldn't sit idle at home why is why I started creating content on a daily basis. I started experimenting & being consistent with my posts. Staying active on stories helped me a lot too. Being occupied with creation also kept me sane at home. So, lockdown actually turned out to be a blessing for me. In these short form content, there is so much room for creativity. We've seen how one trend gets introduced and people make it their own. Good reach on one trending reel motivated people to create more and be innovative," adds the influencer.

#WhatVedWore series

#WhatVedWore was started with wanting to give out genuine outfit and brand recommendations. Whether they're local businesses or already established ones. It's a lot to do with her personal style meaning what Vedika Wore.

The Pawfect Closet

Growing up, being an entrepreneur was always her dream and being an influencer gave her a platform to do it.

"The Pawfect Closet is an online store for pet accessories which will soon have clothing and other pet needs as well. The aim of Pawfect Closet is affordable fashion for pets. So, every pet owner can afford something as simple as a bowtie for their pet. This idea came out of love for my dog, Chase because I'd love dressing him up and that's when I knew I wanted to make something of my own," ends the actor and content creator.

Maternity styling for expecting mommies

Congratulations on your pregnancy. Excited to restyle your closet for pregnancy.

Celebrities have set a new trend for the new-age moms-to-be. Rather than picking up oversised shirts of their husbands, women today prefer to flaunt baby bump in style. Maternity fashion is not a one-size styling effort. While pregnant women experience a variety of changes in their bodies along with a continually growing bump, this requires them to be aware of how to dress the new shape.

Comfortable and stretchy fabric pregnancy wear

During pregnancy, being comfortable is very important. Always select lightweight and breathable fabric, irrespective of season. Most preferred fabrics for pregnancy clothes are Cotton Lycra, Denim, Rayon, Georgette and Linen. For sensitive skins, hypoallergenic fabrics such as organic cotton are recommended. Avoid synthetic fabric which can increase perspiration and can cause irritation or rashes on your skin. Also, try to avoid heavy embroidery or sequin work.

During Pregnancy, your clothes grow with you. Therefore, stretchable clothes are a wardrobe staple. Stretch fabric also helps in healthy circulation and free movement. Those well blended with cotton or spandex can be a perfect pick.

Always accessorise
Your pregnancy doesn't have to be a dull period. Donning the right accessories like

jewellery and scarf pieces add a touch of pizzazz to your outfit. Flaunt your pregnancy glow with a beautiful lip shade or a nail paint. Avoid heavy make-up, though.

Learn to make leggings stylish

Maternity Leggings are so comfortable that you practically will be living in those during pregnancy. And the best thing about leggings is that you can continue wearing them even after the birth of your baby. Leggings are very versatile and there are lot of different ways to style them. You can wear your favourite pregnancy leggings with maternity tees; jackets and comfortable footwear like sneakers, loafers, Over-the-Knee or ankle Boots, pumps, flats and sandals.

Choose sweatpants that are chic yet comfy

Particularly during the last trimester, you'll be wearing a lot of sweatpants because comfort is imperative when you're pregnant. However, wearing sweatpants doesn't necessarily mean you'll look frumpy and dull. Nowadays, there is a diverse range of trendy and stylish maternity sweatpants available.

The best part is that you can use them as maternity yoga wear, too!

Wear stretchy t-shirts you can grow into

If you're planning to shop for maternity clothing, opt for maternity wear that can accentuate your growing curves. Maternity t-shirts & tees are a perfect choice for every-

day dressing. Ideal to wear with pregnancy jeans, leggings, pants, shorts, or under a light jacket.

Maternity bra makes a big difference

When you're pregnant, your breasts get larger and more tender. Before they cause you any discomfort, invest in couple soft and supportive maternity bras. They are specifically-designed bras to support your enlarged breasts during pregnancy, provides good coverage and keeps you comfortable day & night. Maternity bra also helps to prevent back pain and even reduces stretch marks. The best part is that you can even use them to breastfeed your little one after pregnancy easily. Just make sure your new bra is comfortable, supportive, and allows for comfortable breastfeeding.

Invest in comfy underwear

While pregnancy changes the shape of your body, it also widens your hip area due to continually growing belly.

Pregnancy panties and underwear are specifically designed to accommodate your growing bump, butt area, and will stay in place better than your regular panties. Some are specially designed to solve pregnancy issue like thigh chafing.

Depending on your requirements and the level of comfort you want, you can choose from over the bump, or under the bump. Just make sure your new underwear is ultra-soft, incredibly comfortable, highly stretchable, and feels good on your skin.



Working from home? These bra types will support your daily comfort



The first few weeks of the second wave has been anxiety fuelled, but as time has passed, we have started adjusting ourselves according to the new normal.

The national emergency is out there but as a blessing we are getting more family time and some much deserved individual time. And while we are adapting to a reality of masking and constant hand washing, working from home is a reality that we are living with too. The most important part of your WFH wardrobe is a comfortable bra. If you are facing issues in choosing a bra type for your home comfort we are here

with a list of brands along with their offerings.

Choose from seamless, wire-free and non-padded styles for your everyday wardrobe and enjoy the new normal.

Elegant concealer bras: Ease into the day elegantly in the stylish moulded, non-padded, non-wired bra that has wide straps for extra support. With wider wings for bulge-free smoothness and a high centre-front for more coverage, this bra by Amante gives you the freedom to wear what you want. Pair it with a loose cotton shirt and stack up a few delicate necklaces and you are good to go on a call.

T-shirt bras: A T-shirt bra is most certainly every girl's best friend when it comes to her daily comfort. Groversons Paris Beauty's padded bra collection is one of the best T-shirt bras available in the market. They are wireless and are designed with soft cup pads to give you great freedom to move around along with proper support and shape all day long. To suit your wardrobe's colour palette, you can choose from a great combination of colours and prints available online as well as at their offline stores.

Cotton casual bras: A great option for modest coverage, the multipack of these cotton bras by Marks & Spencer will make a wonderful addition to your underwear drawer. Designed keeping the comfort in mind, these pure cotton bras feature adjustable straps and hook fastenings at the back to give a perfect fit to women bodies. Essential for some light coverage that looks natural under their favourite blouses, tees and dresses. The cotton for these clothing's is sustainably sourced by Marks & Spencer.

Contour bras: These

bras by Zivame provide lightweight comfort of a non-padded bra with single layered fabric cups. Full coverage of the bras give

maximum support and helps in no spillage from top and sides. The fabric being polyester cotton should be hand washed easily.

Fresh Aloe Finish bras: With Moisture Management Technology in place, this bra is sweat absorbent and regulates moisture, keeping you fresh all day long. The smooth, elasticated, detachable straps and the soft hook and eye tape are in place to provide you with maximum comfort when Indian weather decides to be just that. Say goodbye to under bust sweat and say hello to Aloe Fresh happiness!



International day for Biological diversity

Biodiversity, a simple word with some very broad reaching implications. Biodiversity, when split into its component parts, "Diversity" defined as "a range of different things." and bio meaning "life", quite simply means "A Diversity of Life". It has been shown that ecological niches with good biodiversity flourish and are healthy.

Celebrating Biodiversity can be fun and delicious, especially if you take this opportunity to visit farmers markets and co-ops in your local area to try new types of produce. Whether you incorporate heirloom tomatoes into your gardening or cooking, or try one of the rainbow of colors of carrots out there that aren't orange, biodiversity can bring a great new experience to your table.

Another way of celebrating biodiversity is to join a local park clean-up team and help to remove invasive plants from your local environment. These teams of volunteers will gather to remove plants that are impacting the local fauna's biodiversity by taking over natural grow areas.

Another way to celebrate the International Day for Biological Diversity is to simply get out into the world and enjoy all the different types of life your local area offers. Even a local park can have an amazing variety of life you've never noticed, from the insects crawling through the grass and dirt, to the

flowers we so clumsily lump together as 'wildflowers'.

Whatever the case, get out there and celebrate the diversity of our natural world, not just on the International Day for Biological Diversity, but every day.



Jailed godman Ram Rahim gets parole to meet ailing mother

CHANDIGARH

SELF-STYLED jailed godman and Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, who is undergoing a 20-year sentence for raping his two disciples, was finally granted parole on Friday to look after his ailing mother, officials said.

Earlier, he was denied bail on several occasions, including his plea to meet the ailing mother.

"Ram Rahim was granted parole as per the jail manual and after getting permission from the district administration and

the police," said the official said.

Ram Rahim, who had applied for parole on May 17, was taken to Gurugram under heavy security to meet his mother.

Last week, he was hospitalised at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences in Rohtak after he complained of low blood pressure. But he refused a Covid-19 test in the hospital. Reacting to his parole, murdered journalist Ram Chander's son Anshul Chhatrapati told the media, "The government should refrain

from releasing such dreaded criminals and it is foolish to let such a criminal be released from the jail."

Earlier, Ram Rahim was granted parole on October 24 last year on his wife Harjit Kaur's plea that his mother Naseeb Kaur, 85, suffering from a heart disease was seriously ill. Ram Rahim (52) is currently lodged at the high-security Sunaria jail in Rohtak, 250 kms from state capital Chandigarh.

At that time he was taken to the Gurugram hospital where he stayed during the day and



was brought to the jail in the evening.

In June 2019, Ram Rahim Singh had withdrawn his parole plea after the state BJP government was cornered by opposition parties for favouring the self-styled godman, who sought parole for 42 days to tend to his agricultural fields at his sect's headquarters in Sirsa town.

Also, the high court had rejected his parole plea for attending the wedding ceremony of his foster daughter. Ram Rahim was sentenced to 20 years in jail in August 2017 for

raping two women.

A special CBI court in Panchkula this January 2019 also sentenced Ram Rahim and three others to life imprisonment for the murder of journalist Ram Chander Chhatrapati over 16 years ago.

His conviction on August 25, 2017, had led to violence in Panchkula and Sirsa, leaving 41 people dead and over 260 injured. Ram Rahim was patronised by political leaders and parties in Punjab and Haryana for nearly two decades due to his ability to influence the votes of his followers.



FIR against seven for registering demolished mosque as Waqf property

LUCKNOW

A case has been lodged by Barabanki police against seven people for allegedly resorting to fraud and cheating to get a mosque that was demolished earlier this week, registered as a Waqf property. The case was lodged lodged a case against some members of the committee, including a former UP Sunni Central Waqf Board inspector. The district administration had demolished the mosque in the village of Bani Kada in Ram Sanahi Ghat tehsil on Monday, claiming it was an "illegal structure". It was locally known as the Gareeb Nawaz Masjid.

A day after the demolition, the Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board issued a statement terming the action as illegal and a violation of an Allahabad High Court directive. According to Ram Sanahi Ghat Station House Officer (SHO) Sachidanand Rai, the people named in the FIR had fraudulently got a structure in the tehsil premises registered as a Waqf property. "They had formed a committee to do so," the SHO added. The "fraudulent registration" was done in 2019. The FIR has named committee president Mushtaq Ali, vice president Waqel Ahmad, secretary Mohammad Aneesh, members Dastageer, Afzaal, Mohammad Naseem, and then UP Sunni Central Waqf Board Inspector Mohammad Taha. The complaint has been filed by Sonu Kumar, who is the District Minority Welfare Officer. The complainant said, "This is to bring to your notice that these people formed a committee and then through cheating and fraud, got a structure registered as a Waqf property on January 5, 2019. The structure is within the Ram Sanahi Ghar tehsil and is opposite the SDM residence."

It further stated, "This was done under a conspiracy, which included these people and also then UP Sunni Central Waqf Board Inspector Mohammad Taha."

Steroids a strict no for mild Covid patients: Dr Guleria

NEW DELHI

AMID rise of mucormycosis (black fungus) infection, diabetic patients are advised to frequently monitor and control their blood sugar levels. Diabetic patients (those with uncontrolled diabetes), steroid usage and being Corona positive, a combination of these factors places one under risk of getting mucormycosis. Therefore, diabetic patients should regularly monitor and control their blood sugar levels.

Mucormycosis or black fungus infection is not a new disease and it was reported even before the pandemic. Its incidence, however, was very low. Now, owing to Covid-19, this rare but fatal fungal infection is being reported in large numbers.

The Coronavirus Disease Associated Mucormycosis (CAM) is being seen in patients who are either recovering or have recovered from Covid-19.

Director AIIMS, Dr. Randeep Guleria, explained that earlier, mucormycosis was commonly spotted in people suffering from diabetes mellitus, a condition



where one's blood sugar (glucose) levels are abnormally high.

"Cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, those who have had a transplant and people taking immunosuppressants (medications that weaken the immune system) also used to get it. But now due to Covid-19 and its treatment, an increase in the number of cases is being witnessed," Dr Guleria said.

He mentioned that there are

more than 20 cases of the fungal infection in AIIMS itself, all of whom are Covid positive and many states have reported 400 to 500 cases, all among Covid patients.

There is a higher chance of occurrence of mucormycosis in patients whose immune system is not functioning well, and since Covid-19 treatment tends to suppress the working of the immune system, it places such pa-

tients at a higher risk of contracting the black fungus infection. He advised that Covid patients with a mild form of the infection should strictly avoid taking steroids as taking steroids increases the risk of secondary infections such as mucormycosis. If a Covid-infected person's oxygen saturation level is normal, and he/she is categorised as clinically mild, steroids should be completely avoided.

"Those who are taking steroids should also keep checking their blood sugar levels. In most cases, one who is not diabetic finds that after taking steroids, the blood sugar level shoots up to 300 to 400. Hence, it is essential to continuously monitor one's sugar levels," Dr Guleria said. "High dosage of steroids being taken by Covid-19 patients is of no use. Mild to moderate doses are good enough. As per the data, steroids should be given only for five to 10 days (maximum). Moreover, steroids increase the blood sugar level which can then become hard to control. This can in turn increase the chance of fungal infection," Dr Guleria said.

Youth Congress gives financial assistance to orphaned children

NEW DELHI

ON the 30th death anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the Indian Youth Congress (IYC) on Friday arranged a blood donation camp, distributed food packets and rations to the people in need and provided financial assistance to children orphaned due to Covid-19 pandemic.

The National Students Union of India also distributed PPE kits, sanitizers, face shields and face masks to the frontline workers in the national capital.

Paying tributes to Rajiv Gandhi, IYC National President Srinivas B.V. said that the former Prime Minister was the architect

of modern India, who worked towards making India strong and self-reliant.

He said that the IYC has organised ration kits distribution and blood donation camp to the needy people across the nation on the death anniversary of Rajiv Gandhi, today we are also providing financial assistance to the children orphaned due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Srinivas said that poor and helpless people are very much disturbed due to lockdown across India. Covid-19 pandemic has affected all sections of society ruthlessly, therefore as per the instructions of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and keeping in mind the ideals of Rajiv Gandhi



and his service to mankind, the IYC is organising such programs across the country.

Since the nation-wide lockdown imposed last year, the IYC till date has been working day and night to provide food, oxygen cylinders, ICU beds, and other

necessary things to the people in Delhi and elsewhere.

The IYC state units are also working day and night to help the people as much as possible, it is the ideals of the Congress and its great leaders that its members are working smoothly at the grassroots and will continue to do so.

Recalling the works of Rajiv Gandhi, the IYC leader said, "The country is still taking advantage of the foresight of the former Prime Minister. The design of the vaccination process in the country is based on previous vaccination processes. It is said that it is Rajiv Gandhiji's foresight that has placed India in the category of strong, modern nations.

Bodybuilder beaten to death in Gurugram

GURUGRAM

A 29-year-old bodybuilder was allegedly beaten to death with sticks during a fight while playing cards in Bandhwadi village of Gurugram, the police said. The deceased has been identified as Sandeep. The police have arrested five of his acquaintances in connection with the incident. Those arrested have been identified as Dhanesh alias Major, Jagbir, Praveen, Sunni and Sukka.

The father of the deceased in his police complaint said last Monday Dhanesh alias Major had asked his son to come out of his house but Sandeep did not do so. Thereafter, another man Jagbir came from Bandhwadi village on Wednesday night and took Sandeep to a plot owner Surajmal's room located in the Aravali area on the pretext of gambling.

"When Sandeep did not return home overnight, the family started looking for him. On getting some information from the



neighbours, they reached Surajmal's room in the Aravali area on Thursday morning. A man named Praveen was found at the spot there. When he was asked about Sandeep, he ran away," the complainant told the police. The family found Sandeep's body lying in a pool of blood on the floor of the room with injury marks.

Preliminary investigation suggested that all the accused, including the victim, were playing cards during which an altercation took place between them which led to the murder, the police said.

"A case of murder was registered against the culprits based on a complaint filed by the deceased's father at the DLF Phase-I police station in Gurugram," said police Spokesperson Subhash Boken.

'After 30 yrs of Rajiv's death, bogus probe continues to deny legacy'

NEW DELHI

CONGRESS leader Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday highlighted the work of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his 30th death anniversary and also attacked the government for bulldozing the democratic set up.

Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated on May 21, 1991 in Sriperumbudur town of Tamil Nadu by a suicide bomber during election campaigning. "False allegations were made throughout the years and even today bogus investigations are being continued after 30 years to deny him his legacy," Kharge said. The Congress leader alleged that Rajiv was targeted from both inside and outside.

"There was a concerted attempt to weaken his efforts to develop India from within his own government and party. Security was withdrawn from him by the government which led to his assassination," Kharge said that the circumstances are totally different today as because there are no principles at the highest level and there is a government with much less mandate than Rajiv Gandhi that pushes Bills which are against farmers and workers without listening to the genuine concerns raised by the Opposi-



tion because of the majority.

He alleged that the government is misusing the anti-defection law to bring down democratically elected governments in states where the Opposition is in power. There is a government that believes in keeping all powers to itself and refuses to even share tax revenues with state governments. So much of their talk of "cooperative federalism". Kharge said that the late PM will always be remembered as the person who took the first step to lead India to the 21st century of Industrialisation and Information Technology and ensured Maruti became a successful PSU within two years by choosing the right technocrats and also strengthened the panchayiraj system as well as reducing the age of voting.

The Congress leader said that Rajiv Gandhi laid the foundation for the economic reforms and signed historic Accords of Punjab, Assam and Mizoram.

'SIDHU-AMARINDER FEUD ORGANISATIONAL ISSUE, PARTY WATCHING'

NEW DELHI

AMID infighting in its Punjab unit with former minister Navjot Singh Sidhu training guns at Chief Amarinder Singh over the 2015 sacrilege issue and calling for party leaders to go to Delhi and raise it with the top leadership, the Congress on Friday said it was seized of the matter and will soon act.

Congress General Secretary, Organisation, K.C. Venugopal said: "We are watching it and will take a call on it" while terming it an "organisational issue".

Sources say that the party is likely to constitute a committee to look into the issue in Punjab, where Assembly elections are due next year.

Cricketer-turned-politician Sidhu, who had been lying low since his resignation from the state Cabinet in July 2019, has launched scathing attacks all this month against the Chief Minister over his government's



action over the alleged desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib in 2015 when the Akali Dal-BJP government was in power, and accused him of "shielding the Badals".

Charging the Chief Minister with taking action against his

own party leaders instead, Sidhu, in a tweet on Thursday, said: "In 2019, I began & ended my Election Campaign in Punjab seeking - Justice for Sacrilege of Guru Granth Sahib Ji & punishing the culprits & the ONE shielding them... Now,

Our MLAs & Party Workers must go to Delhi & speak the Truth of Punjab to our High Command, as I regularly do."

Earlier, he had tweeted: "Ministers, MLAs & MPs raising People's Issues are strengthening the Party, fulfill-

ing their Democratic Duty & exercising their Constitutional Right... But everyone who speaks the truth becomes your enemy. Thus, you threaten your party colleagues, exhibiting your fear & insecurity".

As his attacks on Amarinder Singh saw pushback from other ministers, who demanded his suspension from the party for indiscipline, Sidhu had urged him to stop firing from his "colleagues' shoulders", and asked "... Who will protect you in court of the Great Guru?"

Taking a tough stance last month, Amarinder Singh had said that if Sidhu "wants to contest against him, then he is free to do so but that would only lead to Sidhu meeting the fate of (former Army chief and Akali Dal candidate) General J.J. Singh who had lost his security deposit". He had also challenged Sidhu to clearly spell out whether he is a Congress member or not.

Dial 14443 to get countrywide Covid-19 counselling by Ayush

NEW DELHI

AYUSH Ministry has started a dedicated community support helpline to provide AYUSH-based approaches and solutions for the challenges raised by Covid-19. Through the helpline experts from different streams of Ayush -- Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani & Siddha would be available to address queries of the general masses. These experts would not only be providing counselling and feasible remedies to the patients but would also guide them about the availability of nearby Ayush facilities.

The toll-free number is 14443. The helpline is operational pan-India from 6 a.m. to 12 midnight all seven days of a week. The experts would also be suggesting post Covid-19 rehabilitation and management approaches to the patients. The helpline is IVR (Interactive Voice Response) equipped and currently available in Hindi and English languages. Other languages will be added in due course of time. The helpline will initially take 100 calls



simultaneously and the capacity would be increased in future, as per requirements. Through the helpline, the Ministry of Ayush aims to contribute to the community-wide effort to limit the spread of Covid-19. The effort is supported by the NGO Project StepOne. The ministry in a statement said that the use of these systems has increased during the current pandemic due to their unique approaches for strengthening host defence. These are found useful as effective, safer, conveniently accessible, and affordable prophylaxis in the management of Covid-19. In addition, the therapeutic potentials have also been explored and two potential Polyherbal formulations namely AYUSH-64, an Ayurvedic formulation developed by CCRAS and Kabasura Kudineer of Siddha system has been found effective in the management of mild to moderate Covid-19 conditions.

A feud which has taken a breather

A ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas has come into effect bringing down the curtains on a conflagration that was threatening to blow out into an all-out war that would have inflicted a great human tragedy on the region. The ceasefire began early on May 21, bringing to an end 11 days of bombardment in which more than 240 people have died, most of them in Gaza. Palestinians poured onto the streets of Gaza soon after the truce began, while a Hamas official warned its hands “are on the trigger”. Both Israel and Hamas have claimed victory in the conflict.

Fighting began in Gaza on May 10 after weeks of rising Israeli-Palestinian tension in East Jerusalem that culminated in clashes at a holy site revered by both Muslims and Jews.

Hamas began firing rockets after warning Israel to withdraw from the site, triggering retaliatory air strikes. At least 232 people, including more than 100 women and children, have been killed in Gaza, according to its Hamas-controlled health ministry. Israel has said at least 150 militants are among those killed in Gaza. In Israel 12 people, including two children, have been killed, its medical service says.

The Israeli Political Security Cabinet said it had “unanimously accepted the recommendation” for a ceasefire. “The political echelon emphasises that the reality on the ground will determine the continuation of the campaign,” it added. Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz said on Twitter that the Gaza offensive had yielded “unprecedented military gains”. A Hamas

official told the Associated Press that the ceasefire announced by Israel amounts to a “victory” for the Palestinian people and a defeat for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. A perfect encore, it is.

After all, both the sides knew why they escalated the situation. Both the parties to the conflict know full well the irrationality of it. They also knew it would certainly lead to blood on both the hands. Yet, the political outcomes of the same were important to them. US President Joe Biden said that the ceasefire brought “genuine opportunity” for progress. On May 20 more than 100 Israeli air strikes targeted Hamas infrastructure in the north of Gaza. Hamas retaliated with rocket fire. Past cease-fires between Israel and Hamas have often fallen apart, in-

cluding in 2014, when truces collapsed at least twice during a seven-week war. This peace, like all peace in the never-ending Israel-Palestine conflict, is fragile. Hamas and Israel have been engaged in some form of conflict since the Palestinian group was founded in the 1980s. Even if the fighting pauses, its underlying causes remain: the battle over land rights in Jerusalem and the West Bank, religious tensions in the Old City of Jerusalem and the absence of a peace process to resolve the conflict. Gaza remains under a punishing blockade by Israel and Egypt. All said and done, Palestinians have not gained anything except losing out more lives. It also led to days of violent attacks within Israel by Arab and Jewish mobs, and highlighted decades of frustration among Arab citizens of Israel who account for about 20 percent of the population and face frequent discrimination. This at best is the calm before the storm.



What is Mucormycosis, the Black Fungus?

DR C NITHISH



MUCORMYCOSIS (Black Fungus) is a rare infection. But now in present scenario, it is alarming the country, particularly Covid-19 recovered patients. Mucormycosis (Black Fungus) is caused by the group of moulds called Mucormycetes. Black Fungus is not a newly evolved fungus. It is present in our environment. When ever our immune system drops down rapily, we can't fight against the fungus, therefore it starts an infection.

Why post- Covid patients are more prone to Mucormycosis..?

Covid-19 is a viral disease and currently it is treated with blood thinners and steroids. These steroids are the culprits for Mucormycosis. Discriminate and irrational use of steroids is leading to this Mucormycosis. Dose tapering of steroids is to be done properly to overcome this infection. Water used in Humidifiers of Oxygen Cylinders is also reason for Mucormycosis.

Symptoms of Rhinocerebral Mucormycosis :-

- One-sided facial swelling
 - Headache
 - Nasal or sinus congestion
 - Black lesions on nasal bridge or upper inside of mouth that quickly become more severe
 - Fever
- Symptoms of pulmonary (lung) mucormycosis : - Fever, Cough, Chest Pain, Shortness of Breath.

Can Mucormycosis be treated?

Yes! Early detection of the infection can be treated with Anti-fungals like Liposomal Amphotericin-B injection or conventional Amphotericin-B Injection and Posaconazole tablets. As per studies Posaconazole is to be given 300 mg dose once a day or twice a day based on the severity.

Amphotericin-B is not compatible with normal saline. So it must be diluted with five per cent dextrose. All the health care professionals and nurses are to be trained about dilution and usage of Amphotericin-B. Before starting Amphotericin Therapy, we have to monitor renal functions and adjust the doses accordingly.

Voriconazole are not active against mucormycetes, As per studies there is some evidence to suggest that pre-exposure to Voriconazole may be associated with increased incidence of mucormycosis in some patients. So Voriconazole is not to be used in mucormycosis. In severe cases, surgical intervention is required.

Precautions to prevent Mucormycosis

- Mucormycosis is observed more in Covid patients with diabetes. So, diabetic patients should maintain normal sugar levels with regular use of medications, diet and lifestyle modifications.
- Home isolation Covid patients should not use steroids without doctor's advice.
- Steroids should not be used in early stages of Covid. They are to be used only when there is an evidence of Cytokine Storm. There after, they have to be tapered properly on the advice of Critical Care Physician.
- Use clean water in humidifiers of oxygen cylinders.
- Maintain personal hygiene.
- Use mouthwashes containing Betadine, particularly in patients who are oral corticosteroids.
- Do not use the same face mask for longer days.
- Wash the cloth mask with one per cent hypochloride solution.
- For patients who are on oxygen support, healthcare professionals should sterilise the oxygen mask, nasal and oral region with 0.9 per cent normal saline.

Early detection of infection can save lives

Mucormycosis is fatal when it transmits from nasal cavity to CNS. Diagnosis of the infection in early stages is helpful to treat the infection with Anti-fungals, thus we can prevent the fungal transmission to Brain and we can protect the patient from loss of vision.

So, whenever you get symptoms like Severe headache, blurred vision, swollen cheeks, swelling of face. Don't take risk by being at home. Immediately rush to an ENT specialist.

(The author is Clinical Pharmacologist, Care Hospitals)

Why rural India is combating Covid 2.0 better

IN MY OPINION

V RAMU SARMA

THE Covid-19 pandemic started as an urban phenomenon. Rural areas seem to be doing better in terms of ensuring that the virus does not enter their villages.

Health infrastructure in rural areas is significantly less if not worse as compared to urban areas. According to the National Health Profile 2019, there were 1.2 government hospital beds per 1000 people in urban areas compared to just 0.3 in rural areas. The literacy rate is also less in rural areas. The villagers do not have the kind of scientific temper and awareness as the urbanites.

But if one studies the issue of surge of Covid cases a little closely the ground realities indicate that the socio-economic aspect also seems to be playing a major role in the surge of cases in rural areas which have over a period remained as gram panchayats but are considered to be no less than towns in terms of money power and political power. In all such villages the pandemic has been spreading very fast. For example East Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh. Here the fatality rate has gone up.

But in rural areas which do not have that much influence of urban lifestyle have demonstrated that they can stop the entry of virus. There are any number of examples of villages which have the distinction of being Corona-free both during first and second wave. They should be eye openers for the so-called educated urban crowd including several politicians who think that health protocols are not for them and they are Corona proof.

Dr Rakesh Mishra has rightly pointed that in the first wave people had taken enough care but now they are not following Covid norms. He opined that the surge we are seeing is because of the sheer negligence on the part of the people.

In the backdrop of this, the success stories of the villages

which had succeeded in putting a check on the entry of Coronavirus into their villages clearly indicates that the urbanites lack the kind of determination which the rural people have. If a village decides to do something, no one can stop them and that has what some villages across the country have proved. But in urban areas, people brazenly violate all norms and feel because they feel they are law unto themselves.

First let us see how some villages have become role models. According to official press release two months ago, a girl in Bhosi village of Maharashtra's Nanded district was found coronavirus positive, infected after attending a wedding.

Days later, five people from the village, having a population of around 6,000 were also infected, sending local body members and health officials into a tizzy.

"A health camp was held in the village in co-ordination with the gram panchayat and the health department to conduct Covid tests. Rapid Antigen Tests and RT-PCR tests revealed that 119 people were positive."

"It was decided to isolate the patients to break the chain of coronavirus spreading to others. Accordingly, all the infected people were persuaded to go and live on their fields for 15-17 days, as mandated by the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for people with mild infections," the release said.

Farm labourers and others who did not own farms were accommodated in a makeshift 40 feet by 60 feet shed on the farm of Zilla Parishad member Prakash Deshmukh Bhosikar who took the initiative to organise the health camp.

"Ashatai village health workers and Anganwadi sevika would visit the fields every day and interact with patients. Food and medicines were also provided on the spot and all the villagers co-operated."

After 15 to 20 days of isolation, the villagers returned home as

coronavirus-free persons after a health check-up, it said. "A month and a half later, there is no new patient in the village. Covid can be fought effectively by adopting the age-old path of isolation as was being done during the days of the plague, even in villages without adequate health facilities." This was the story circulated by the Central government's Press Information Bureau (PIB).

While in Maharashtra the village could check further spread after people were infected, in the two Telugu States of Telangana



and Andhra Pradesh, villages succeeded in keeping the virus at Bay. Take for example, Gundepalli villagers of Nallajarla mandal, West Godavari district who are living without fear of Covid-19 due to the collective efforts of all villagers including children to make it Corona free village.

Even in the second wave of pandemic, The village with more than 330 families and population of about 1300 has not registered even a single case and set a perfect example to other villages in the district and state on how to fight Covid and prevent the entry of Virus.

The village secretary Banotu Venkateswarlu said he has been creating awareness among the villagers since the start of the Covid in 2020. This village has also demonstrated that they do not lag in using technology. He had created a Whatsapp group

and added the number of villagers and created awareness on the Covid protocol, problems of the patients infected with Covid, precautions to be taken to check virus, and safety measures to be followed all villagers when they go outside'.

The villagers avoided marriages and other functions for more than a year and did not go to other places to attend the functions. This does not mean no marriages took place in the village. Only 10 members including the bride and bridegroom and parents were permitted for the marriage in the village. Village Secretary distributed cloth masks to the villagers and ensured that they do not lower the guard.

The villagers are attending to their agriculture farm works and NREGS works. But, using mask is mandatory for all and that worked wonders. This re-

Rural areas which do not have that much influence of urban lifestyle have demonstrated that they can stop the entry of virus. There are any number of examples of villages which have the distinction of being Corona-free both during first and second wave. They should be eye openers for the so-called educated urban crowd including several politicians who think that health protocols are not for them and they are Corona-proof

minds me of a Telugu adage, "A dhobi is more intelligent than an educated person."

In Telangana State, the tribal village of Jagannathpur in Jagtial district in the Telangana State has shown a new path to lead a corona-free life. Not a single corona positive case was reported in the habitation which mostly consists of Gond tribes in the first and second wave of Covid pandemic.

Located amidst thick forests and on the banks of Godavari, dwellers in the village have been wearing face mask all the time and continue to sanitise their habitations regularly. The Village Panchayat has made arrangements for the supply of face masks and sanitizers free of cost to the majority of 800 population in the village.

Ever since the corona virus broke out in the state in March

Malavandlapalle village with a population of 400 families located in Siddiracherla Panchayat in Narpala mandal Anantapur district is another Covid-free village with a young and educated and proactive Sarpanch Raman-jeneyulu taking keen interest in keeping Covid-19 at bay. Stillness and curfew like conditions reign supreme in the village from 12 pm to 6 am, resembling a ghost village. The village is a classic example of how rulers and people if they tread on the same path can achieve anything.

The difference between rural and urban areas is that in urban areas the administration depends more on paper work, statistics and it works more to please the political executive while in rural areas, they local administration works in close coordination with the people and takes instant decisions.

PM should listen to CMs

THE saying "two heads are better than one" (means, it is easier for two people who help each other to solve a problem) is very much relevant in the present pandemic crisis and PM Modi should listen the CMs about state problems instead of carrying on one-way virtual meetings like a party gathering (PM's Covid meeting a super flop, says Mamata, May 21). Participation of chief secretaries is adequate for such meetings. Alternatively, centre can just do a video recording and send the same to chief ministers. It is not enough if Modi is a good speaker, he should also be a good listener .

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao, Hyderabad

Treatment trauma for Covid patients

BETWEEN two doses of Covaxin and Covishield, the gap was fixed six and eight weeks respectively to make the medicine more effective. Due to shortage of vaccines, the gap was extended to twelve weeks. Medical bulletins say that single dose also boosts tremendous immunity. Virus was affected shortly after taking second dose. Again there is news that these vaccines are less effective against B.1.617 or the Indian strain. Black Fungus is another threat. Now plasma is also stated to be ineffective. Most Covid victims take route from

houses to hospitals to grave yards. Whom to believe, what medicine exactly corrects and how to live a life when doctors and scientists have different opinions?

N Ramalakshmi, Secunderabad

Vijayan wins once again

THE left alliance led by Pinarayi Vijayan has completely changed the political history of Kerala by coming to power for the second time in a row. The mass victory by the left in the election only goes to show that the people of this most literate state irrespective of caste, religion and party wants good governance and a solid administration which Vijayan and his government was able to deliver during their tenure from 2016-2021 and the same expectation has made the people to choose him and his government for five more years.

His dealing with the fatal Nipah virus followed by the deluge and now the deadly covid pandemic and the way he and his cabinet were able to find quick solutions to mitigate the woes of the commoners has once again made the people to repose their faith in this government. Good governance, able administration, selfless service and quick remedy are what the public look for and here allegations, criticism and various issues raised against the government are simply ignored and brushed aside by the public. The people have shown that they support leaders who could feel

their pulse beating and show what they promise through deeds.

M Pradyu, Kannur

WB Guv needs to be humble

IT was amusing to observe the ire of West Bengal Governor, Jagdeep Dhankhar to the ten minute drama enacted by Kolkata Nagarik Manch using some sheep and a herdsman at the Northern Gate of Raj Bhavan. The Manch obviously wanted their five minute fame and chose the Governor's birthday as the occasion and that too on the northern gate. It is obvious that Raj Bhavan has at least another south gate if not east and west gates. Northern Gate darshan (known as utara dwara darshan) in Hindu customs is a sacred darshan normally happens once in a year. Probably the Manch has accorded the head (Maharaja) of West Bengal as a diety, again as per Hindu customs, they chose his birthday to prevent his people to have a glimpse, alas only for a few minutes. They made their point and succeeded mightily with a motley herd of bovines. All of us remember that we accord utmost respect to the lazy strolling bovines while travelling on Indian roads while they graze past us languidly. It is imperative that this Governor who is only one time MP & MLA understands that he is not a deity but a head of a state that too a titular head who owes his position to his erstwhile party rather than the people.

Yaddanapudi Srinivas, Secunderabad

KCR's visit to Gandhi Hospital is motivating

IT is a good gesture by the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao to visit Gandhi Hospital in the city for the first time after he became the CM of Telangana; and spend time with patients in various wards. It is not about countering the criticism of the Opposition, but truly a meaningful and practical move in infusing confidence among people of the state who are reeling under the unprecedented pandemic for



the past 16 months, and asserting and reassuring the solidarity of the government to the cause. This will also give a tremendous opportunity on part of the Chief Minister to know firsthand about shortcomings in the hospital requirements, and pave the way for constructive interaction with doctors and

on the need for improving the infrastructure facilities in the establishment, before complaining fingers are raised in this regard.

The Chief Minister is to be appreciative of doctors and staff for doing a great job in this situation. This will serve as a morale booster for these individuals, who truly deserve this pat on the back, to feel satisfied that their work is appreciated by none other than the CM; and to be motivated and rededicated to the cause of serving the people. Above all, the improved facilities that are proposed in the hospital will help dispel the stigma prevailing on the minds of so many in terms of hygiene and sanitation aspects in Gandhi Hospital, to make the place, more people friendly.

K R Venkata Narasimhan, Madurai

thehansreader@gmail.com

Patanjali store sells expired stock of biscuits

Police seize packets; book petty case against owner

ESA BIN ABDUL REHMAN
RAJENDRANAGAR

IN a scandalous incident, an unscrupulous Patanjali trader from Hyderguda was caught selling expired Baba Ramdev-led Patanjali biscuits packs. Following which Rajendranagar police booked a case and are investigating, however, action by the concerned food inspector is still missing.

The incident came to light on May 17 when a customer purchased the biscuit packets from the store and left for home. He was flabbergasted on finding the packaging date as September 11, 2020, with a special mention “best before six months from packaging.”

Om Reddy, the complainant, said, “I returned to the store along with the biscuit packets which I had bought home on May 17. The owner not only refused to repent and accept his ‘criminal misdeed’ but also responded ‘cantankerously’. Later,



he informed the police who soon reached the store and took into custody the stock of biscuits. The police later even booked a petty case against the owner.”

Meanwhile Reddy said that this is not the first incident. “Earlier too the store was found selling expired biscuits. But it did not compel me to bring the issue to the notice of the police, as it was confined to only one packet. This time I bought at least ten packets and all of them were expired.”



Fuming over the incident Reddy said that the shopkeeper argued stating, “How can we provide such biscuits?”

Interestingly, local food inspector Dasharath came into picture only after three days, despite the episode was covered by electronic media. When contacted, he informed The Hans India that he was unaware of the incident. The inspector assured to visit the store next day, saying he was at his native village.

The official later said that he

could not go to the store and inquire into the issue “Until the complainant himself calls him and explains.

“The biscuit stock confiscated from the store has been found with expired dates. We have booked a petty case and even bond over the store-owner. But the issue largely comes under the purview of the Food Safety Department of GHMC. The food inspector should look into the issue and report to the department soon, stated C I Kanakaiah.



2 nabbed for blackmarketing Remdesivir injections

HANS NEWS SERVICE
SECUNDERABAD

THE North Zone Task Force, along with the Market police, on Friday nabbed two persons for blackmarketing Remdesivir injections. They seized 40 methyl prednisolone sodium succinate and 12 injections from the accused Bhuvaneshwar Raju and Manasa.

According to Task Force officials, they received a tip-off about the duo which was transporting the injections illegally. Upon which the police laid a trap near Nimatran Hotel, Secunderabad, and apprehended them.

Investigation revealed that the

man is a contractor and the woman is a private employee. They were friends.

As there is a demand for Remdesivir injections, they conspired to procure them from known sources at cheaper rates and sell to needy patients for higher rates to earn illegal money. They procured the injections for Rs.3,490 and methylprednisolone sodium succinate injections for Rs.1,590 and intended it to sell them for Rs 15,000, said P Radhakishan Rao, Task Force DCP.

“We apprehended the duo and handed them over to the police for further booking of cases,” he stated.

Cyberabad Police organises blood donation camp

HANS NEWS SERVICE
GACHIBOWLI

LOOKING at the blood requirement and emptying blood stocks in blood banks, Cyberabad Police organised a blood donation camp in the Cyberabad Police Commissionerate Office on Friday.

The blood donation camp was organised for the patients of Osmania Hospital and Thalassemia Sickle Cell Society. A total of 104 police working in CAR HQ and Cyberabad Police Commissionerate Office voluntarily donated blood.

VC Sajjanar CP, Cyberabad Police said, “Thalassemia kids, cancer patients, mothers in deliveries need blood. Unfortunately, there is a myth that if they donate blood, their immunity is compromised, which is not true. There are 6,000 thalassemia kids in the State, and they need blood every month. If you are afraid of going to a hospital you should at least walk into the nearest blood bank and donate blood and save lives,” he added that all the eligible must come forward to donate the blood and assured that it is safe and you don’t have to worry about anything.

CP warns citizens not to use old passes, fake medical bills

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

HYDERABAD Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar on Friday visited the Malakpet check-post and supervised the ‘bandobast’.

Addressing media he said, “It has come to our notice that many people are using old passes and fake medical bills just to come out on streets and roaming unnecessarily.

On Friday at the check-post we seized 65 bikes and penalized the riders for not having proper documents.”

“If such things continue the police department will not be spare the violators. They will be booked under multiple sections of IPC and Disaster Management Act. The reason we are taking so much trouble to maintain law and order is for safety of people.

Monsoon may hit State early

- **Cyclonic circulation lies over Southeast and adjoining Central Bay of Bengal. Under its influence, a low pressure area is likely to form over east-central Bay of Bengal and adjoining north Andaman Sea around May 22**
- **It is likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm by May 24. This is expected to once again yield rainfall, as was the case with Cyclone Tauktae**
- **On May 22, Ranga Reddy Hyderabad, Medchal-Malkajgiri, Vikarabad, Sangareddy and Medak, along with 14 districts in State might witness thunderstorms with lightning**

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BEGUMPET

THERE are indications of the Southwest Monsoon entering the State earlier than the usual date of June 10-12, with it advancing into some parts of South Bay of Bengal, Nicobar Islands, entire south Andaman Sea and some parts of north Andaman Sea on Friday.

According to the IMD, in view of strengthening of south westerlies in the lower tropospheric levels, fairly widespread to widespread rainfall activity and persistent cloudiness are indicated.

The IMD bulletin said a cyclonic circulation lies over South-east and the adjoining Central Bay of Bengal. Under its influence, a low pressure area is very likely to form over the east-central Bay of Bengal and the adjoining north Andaman Sea around May 22. It is very likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm by May 24. This is expected to once again yield rainfall, as was the case with Cyclone Tauktae.

In view of these weather condi-

tions, the bulletin on Friday warned of thunderstorms with lightning very likely to lash on May 22 isolated places in Ranga Reddy, Hyderabad, Medchal-Malkajgiri, Vikarabad, Sangareddy and Medak, along with 14 districts in the State.

According to the bulletin, rain or thundershowers would occur from May 22 to 25 in Hyderabad towards evening or night. The day temperatures are likely to be 37, 37, 38, 38 degrees Celsius respectively. On May 26 and 27 the forecast is partly cloudy sky with possibility of rain towards evening or night, with day temperatures of 38 degrees Celsius on two days.

During the last 24 hours ending at 8.30 am on Friday, Medak recorded highest day temperature of 40.8 degrees Celsius. The other temperatures in the State were: Nalgonda 39.5, Adilabad 38.3, Bhadrachalam 38.2, Hanamkonda 38, Ramagundam 37.8, Khammam & Nizamabad 37 each, Mahbubnagar 36, Hyderabad 34.9, Hakimpet 34.2 and Dundigal 34.1.



Prof. S M Rahmatullah along with Prof. Siddiqui Mohd Mahmood and Prof. Mohammad Fariyad during anti-terrorism pledge ceremony on the occasion of Anti-Terrorism Day celebrations on Friday

MANUU observes Anti-Terrorism Day

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

MAULANA Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) observed Anti-Terrorism Day on Friday by administering Anti-Terrorism pledge online to its faculty members, staff, and students. The online pledge ceremony was organized by the NSS cell of MANNU.

Prof SM Rahmatullah, vice-

chancellor I/C administered the pledge both in Urdu and English language. The participants took the pledge to promote peace, social harmony among human beings and to oppose any kind of violence and terrorism. According to Prof Mohammad Fariyad, Programme and NSS Coordinator, anti-terrorism day was observed as per the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home

Affairs. He also spoke about the significance of the day and welcomed the participants. Prof Siddiqui Mohd Mahmood, registrar I/C, and Meraj Ahmad, assistant professor, dept of MCJ, and cultural coordinator were also present at the occasion.

A large number of students, research scholars, faculty members, and staff join the programme online.

Jagan sounds alert on black fungus

AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the officials to be alert over increasing number of black fungus (mucormycosis) cases.

During the review at camp office here on Friday, the Chief Minister directed them to prepare strong protocols for usage of oxygen in the wake of black fungus considering the precautions to be taken in regard to water while giving oxygen. He said oxygen supply pipes, masks should be used of stipulated standards and added oxygen generator plants be set up according to bed capacity in all government hospitals.

He said 30 per cent incentives should be provided to the hospitals which would set up oxygen generators and see that oxygen generators are set up in all hospitals within four months. He said oxygen generators must be set up in hospitals with 50 beds and above and added that the government will provide 20 per cent incentive to companies which come forward to set up new 100 metric tonne oxygen production plants.

The Chief Minister ordered setting up of ICU beds in government hospitals for treating children. He also asked the officials to focus on the production capacity of 300 metric tonne of oxygen and these arrangements should be in place to deal with any epidemic in the future. Steps must be taken to ensure that oxygen is produced as per the current demand in the state. The officials informed the Chief Minister that a manufacturing unit is being set up in Kadapa to meet the demand of Zeolite which is used in producing oxygen. The Chief Minister directed the officials to complete global tenders for vaccine procurement as soon as possible and added



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy reviews measures to tackle Covid, vaccination and other issues at his camp office in Tadepalli on Friday

32 cases reported in State

AMARAVATI

THE state has so far reported 32 cases of mucormycosis, commonly called black fungus, the health department said on Friday.

Chittoor district topped with 10 followed by Prakasam with six, Guntur four, West Godavari and Kadapa three each, Anantapur and Kurnool two each, Srikakulam and Nellore one each, the department said in a report.

Krishna, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari and Vizianagaram districts

did not report any cases so far, it said.

While 10 cases were reported in the state on May 16, three came on May 19 and 19 more on the 20th of that month. The state government has notified mucormycosis under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, and issued the AP Epidemic Diseases (Mucormycosis) Regulations, 2021 to be in force for a year.

All the healthcare facilities (government and private) will follow the guidelines for screening, diagnosis,

management of mucormycosis issued by the Union ministry of health and family welfare, ICMR and the state government, principal secretary (health) Anil Kumar Singhal said in the notification.

“They should report each and every suspected or confirmed case to the commissioner, health, through the district medical and health officer concerned and also to the district collectors,” he said. No person, institution or organisation should spread any information or material for management of mucormycosis without permission from the health commissioner, he said.

ter that four new companies are coming forward to setup oxygen production plants.

The officials informed the Chief Minister that there are 45,611 beds in 621 Covid hospitals in the state, of which 38,763 beds are occupied, out of them 28,189 are being treated under Aarogya and added that there are 6,217 ICU beds, 22,756 Non-ICU oxygen beds, 16,638 non-ICU, non-oxygen beds and 3,407 ventilators in Covid hospitals.

The officials said global tenders for 4 crore doses of vaccine procurement were called on May 13 and pre-bid meeting was conducted on May 20 and the last date for bidding is June 3.

SC GRANTS BAIL TO YSRCP REBEL MP

- **Medical report by Army Hospital, Secunderabad, indicates fracture of second toe of the MP, apart from other injuries**

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court here on Friday granted conditional bail to the YSRCP’s Narsapuram MP K Raghurama Krishna Raju, here on Friday “considering the totality of the circumstances and also the health of the petitioner”.

A Bench consisting of Justices Vineet Saran and B R Gavi observed that the medical report from the Army Hospital, Secunderabad, indicated that the second toe of the MP was fractured, along with other injuries. It further opined that charges against the MP are not such that custodial interrogation would be required as all statements of petitioner are on record while rejecting the AP government’s plea against deciding on the bail petition as the case was pending in the lower courts.

It noted that the jurisdiction of the trial court as well as High Court under Section 439 CrPC is “concurrent” and merely because the High Court was approached by petitioner without the trial court would not mean that High Court was not to consider the plea.

The order further stated that Raju would cooperate with the investigation and would respond whenever he was called upon by the investigating officer (IO). He should be given at



least 24 hours prior notice by the IO, it added.

Raju should be questioned in the presence of his advocate who may not be part of the investigation, but can be present, it added.

Raju was asked to provide a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh and provide two securities of the like amount before the trial court within one week

“He shall not give press interviews or make media statements. He shall not try to influence the witnesses or investigations,” the order further stated.

Earlier, the court witnessed considerable arguments both on behalf of the petitioner and against him.

When the court read out the Army Hospital’s medical report on the health condition of Raju and said that a plain perusal of

the same indicated that there was a fracture to the second finger of the foot alongside marks of injuries, senior counsel Mukul Rohatgi appearing for Raju, contended that it was all along being emphasised by him. There was a threat to the life of his client, he argued.

He argued against the contention of the AP government that Raju had resorted to sedition. “It was merely his view against the government. It was criticism of the policies and nothing more. Everything is in the open”.

Senior counsel Dushyant Dave arguing for the government said there was no merit in the appeal for bail at the apex court. He said he respected the medical reports of both the Army Hospital and the court constituted medical board’s. But, “something may have happened in between the two reports,” he said indicating self-infliction of injuries.

The Bench considered the health issues faced by Raju too in deciding on the bail finally.

Twitter calls Patra’s tweet on toolkit as ‘manipulated media’

Modi Government slams social media giant’s move, asks Company to drop ‘manipulated’ tag

NEW DELHI

Twitter has labelled as “manipulated media” a tweet of BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra on the alleged toolkit prepared by the Congress to target the Modi government.

Twitter says it “may label Tweets that include media (videos, audio, and images) that have been deceptively altered or fabricated.” The Congress on Thursday wrote to Twitter asking it to permanently suspend the accounts of BJP leaders including party chief JP Nadda and Union minister Smriti Irani for allegedly “spreading misinformation and unrest in the society”.

The opposition party has insisted that the toolkit documents flagged by the BJP are “fake”

and has filed police complaint against its leaders. The Chhattisgarh police has registered an FIR to probe the matter. The BJP has been attacking the Congress over some controversial content of the so-called toolkit. BJP leaders, including Patra, have posted numerous tweets to attack the Congress over the toolkit. Patra’s tweet, now labelled “manipulated media” had posted a document and said, “Friends look at the #CongressToolkit in extending help to the needy during the Pandemic! More of a PR exercise with the help of “Friendly Journalists” & “Influencers” than a soulful endeavour. Read for yourselves the agenda of the Congress”. On Friday, the Modi government has asked Twitter to remove “manipulated media” tag. The Ministry of Electronics and IT, in a “strong



communication” to the global team of Twitter, has objected to the use of the “manipulated media” tag on “certain tweets made by Indian political leaders with reference to a toolkit created to undermine, derail and demean the efforts of the government against COVID-19”.

The government’s letter slams Twitter’s move as “pre-judged, prejudiced and a deliberate attempt to colour investigations”. The government, say sources, asserts that a complaint has already been made questioning the veracity of the “toolkit” and it is under investigation.

“The investigation will determine the veracity of the content, not Twitter. Twitter should not interfere in the investigation process. Twitter cannot pass its judgment while the matter is under inves-

tigation.” The government has reportedly also told the social media giant that “such content moderation by Twitter puts a question mark on its status as an intermediary and its credibility as a neutral and unbiased platform facilitating the exchange of views by users”.

While the investigation is still on, Twitter “has unilaterally drawn a conclusion in this matter and arbitrarily tagged it as ‘Manipulated Media’”, the government says. Twitter’s “synthetic and manipulated media policy” says: “You may not deceptively promote synthetic or manipulated media that are likely to cause harm. In addition, we may label Tweets containing synthetic and manipulated media to help people understand their authenticity and to provide additional context.”

WINDOWS

13 acquitted in Senari massacre case

PATNA: The Patna High Court on Friday acquitted 13 persons who were accused in the infamous Senari massacre case, in which an erstwhile Maoist group had killed 34 upper caste men in 1999 at the Senari village in Bihar’s Jehanabad district. On March 18, 1999, the cadres of Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) killed 34 people belonging to a particular upper caste. The cadres forced the victims out of their houses and lined them up near a temple, before killing them with blunt objects and firearms.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi pays tribute to his father and former PM Rajiv Gandhi on his 30th death anniversary in New Delhi on Friday

‘Resume talks over farm laws’

NEW DELHI: The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body of over 40 protesting farmer unions, Friday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging resumption of talks over the three farm laws they have been agitating against at Delhi borders since November last year. Several rounds of talks between farmers and the government have failed to break the deadlock over the three Central legislations. The farmers’ body said in a statement on Friday.

2 Covishield doses 90% effective: UK

High Courts must avoid passing impossible Covid orders, says Supreme Court

LONDON/NEW DELHI/BHOPAL

TWO doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine are around 85 per cent to 90 per cent effective against symptomatic disease, Public Health England (PHE) has said, citing a new analysis of real-world data from the rollout of the shot in the UK. (The AstraZeneca vaccine is being manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, as Covishield). In its latest weekly Covid-19 vaccine surveillance report, the PHE also estimated that 13,000 deaths have now been prevented in people aged 60 years or older in England up to May 9, 2021 (11,100 deaths in individuals aged 80 years and older, 1,600 in individuals aged 70 to 79 and 300 in individuals aged 60 to 69 years).

New analysis for the first time estimates that 2 doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine provide around 85 to 90 per cent protection against symptomatic disease, PHE said in a press release.

In Delhi, the Supreme Court said that given the national and transnational ramification of Covid-related cases, High Courts must avoid passing orders that are impossible to implement.

It stayed an Allahabad High Court order in a suo motu case in which the court said that, within four months, all nursing home beds in Uttar Pradesh must have oxygen facility. The High Court had also directed the Uttar Pradesh government to ensure that within a month every UP village had two ambulances with ICU facility. “High Courts must pass orders that are possible to implement,” a Supreme Court bench of Justices Vineet Saran and BR Gavai said.

The top court, however, refused to cancel the High Court’s “Ram Bharose” comment, made on Monday, saying such observations need to be treated as advice.

About \$50 billion may be all it takes to vaccinate all eligible people around the world by the middle of next year, the International Monetary Fund or IMF has said, proposing an investment programme that could have a global economic benefit of around \$9 trillion.

Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kamal Nath claimed that over one lakh people have died in the state in March-April this year as per the figures provided by the cremation grounds and graveyards.

The daily rise in coronavirus cases in India remained below 3 lakh for the fifth consecutive day with 2.59 lakh new cases recorded in a single day. The death toll climbed to 2,91,331 with 4,209 daily deaths, the data updated showed.



Newly built temple dedicated to ‘Goddess Corona Devi’, at Irugar in Coimbatore (Right) a doctor treats a patient infected with black fungus at NSCB Medical College and Hospital, in Jabalpur, on Friday



Over 1L deaths in MP in 2 months: Kamal Nath India records 2.59 lakh fresh cases, 4,209 fatalities

Gum disease may lead to infection

Washington: As per a new report, studies show that maintaining good oral hygiene can help you overcome Covid-19, implying that there is a direct connection between oral hygiene and the deadly infection. The report was published in the US’s leading organisation of periodontists, the American Academy of Periodontology (AAP). Dr James G. Wilson, President of the AAP, mentioned in the report, “It is well-established that systemic inflammation is not only linked with periodontal disease but to several other respiratory diseases as well. Therefore, maintaining healthy teeth and gums in an effort to avoid developing or worsening periodontal disease is absolutely crucial in the midst of a global pandemic.”

UP: Black Fungus claims 13 lives

Lucknow: The deadly black fungus -- Mucormycosis -- has claimed six more lives in the Uttar Pradesh capital in the past 24 hours while 34 more patients were admitted to hospitals. So far, the number of deaths due to Black Fungus stands at 13 while black fungus cases tally has reached 127. All the patients had earlier contracted Covid-19. Among the six deceased, four were under treatment at King George’s Medical University (KGMU) and two at Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS). Those who died in KGMU had recovered from Covid. Three victims were women - a 38-year-old from Meerut, 62-year-old from Gorakhpur and 65-year-old from Faizabad.

Ex-RS MP, 2 sons die within days

Bhubaneswar: The two sons of eminent sculptor Raghunath Mohapatra died of Covid-19 within days of their father succumbing to the infection, family sources said. Raghunath Mohapatra, a former Rajya Sabha member who was conferred with Padma Vibhushan, died at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar on May 9 while undergoing treatment for COVID-19, they said. His younger son Prasanta Mohapatra, a former captain of the Odisha’s Ranji Trophy cricket team, died of the infection at the same hospital on Wednesday, they added. The sculptor’s eldest son Jashobanta Mohapatra, who was shifted to the SUM Covid Hospital from AIIMS on Wednesday in a critical state, succumbed on Thursday despite the best efforts of the medical team.

Opening Covid vax for many age groups created scarcity: SII

New Delhi: Opening up vaccinations against Covid for people from all age groups led to the scarcity of vaccines, a senior Serum Institute of India official said on Friday. India first rolled out vaccinations for healthcare workers on January 16, and for people above 45 years on April 1, and finally for people above 18 years from May 1.

“Initially, 300 million people targeted for vaccination for which 600 million dosages of vaccines were required, but before we reached the target, additional age groups were added starting from 45 years onwards, followed by 18 years onwards,” SII Executive Director Suresh Jadhav said at the 17th Episode of HEAL-Thy Samvaad series e-summit.

“We should have followed the WHO guidelines and prioritised the vaccination accordingly to avoid scarcity. Still 50 per cent of paramedical staff haven’t been vaccinated,” he added.

While vaccination is necessary, following the Covid preventive guidelines is essential because even after vaccination, one can be susceptible to the virus, he stressed.

On the efficacy of vaccines, Jadhav stated that the selection of vaccines is based on the CDC and NIH data.

“Whatever vaccine is available can be taken provided it is licensed by the regulatory body. And it is too early to say which vaccine is efficacious and which is not,” he noted. The second wave of Covid pandemic has been far more devastating than the first, wreaking havoc in India despite the ongoing vaccination drive. The e-Summit was organised by HEAL Health to discuss the vaccine conundrum, demystifying the reasons behind the resurgence of Covid and about the predicted gruesome Covid 3.0. HEAL Health Group founder Swadeep Srivastava said: “We have been passing through a tough time now because the wave of Covid 2.0 was not anticipated as deadly as it has unfolded. This time, many of the infected died because of the lack of oxygen. The oxygen crisis has also been unprecedented. Therefore, to combat the Covid 3.0, we need to follow the Covid preventive measures stringently and get vaccinated compulsorily.”

HC orders house arrest of four TMC leaders

KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Friday ordered house arrest of four political leaders, including two Bengal ministers, who were held in the Narada sting tapes case earlier in the week.

The judges of the division bench -- presided by Acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal -- differed in opinion over vacating a stay given by it on bail granted by a special CBI court to ministers Subrata Mukherjee and Firhad Hakim, TMC MLA Madan Mitra and former Kolkata mayor Sovan Chatterjee. The bench, also com-

prising Justice Arijit Banerjee, finally directed that the leaders, placed under judicial remand so far, will remain in house confinement for now.

It also decided to refer the matter to a different bench owing to difference of opinion between Acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal and Justice Arijit Banerjee. Hearing in the case is still in progress following prayers from both sides for further arguments on the court’s house arrest order. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the CBI, has pleaded for a stay on the execution of the order.



IAF pilot killed as MiG-21 crashes

MOGA

An IAF MiG-21 Bison aircraft crashed during heavy rain in a field in Punjab’s Moga district, killing its pilot Squadron Leader Abhinav Choudhary, officials said. The aircraft was on a training sortie from Suratgarh in Rajasthan when it crashed in Langeana village on Thursday night, said Moga Superintendent of Police Gurdeep Singh. The Indian Air Force has ordered a Court of Inquiry to ascertain the cause of the accident and said it condones the tragic loss of its officer.

The aircraft crashed in a field and caught fire. It was raining heavily at the time,” Singh said, adding that there was no other loss of life or damage to property.

Court acquits journalist Tejpal of rape charges

PANAJI

A sessions court in Goa on Friday acquitted journalist Tarun Tejpal of sexually assaulting a former female colleague.

Tejpal, former Tehelka editor-in-chief, was accused of sexually assaulting the colleague inside the elevator of a luxury hotel in Goa in 2013. Additional sessions judge Kshama Joshi acquitted Tejpal, who was present in the court along with his family members when the judgment was pronounced around 10.45 am.

“The court has acquitted Tejpal of all the charges. A detailed order about it will be made available later in the day,” advocate Suhas Velip, junior to advocate Rajiv Gomes, who represented Tejpal in the

court, told reporters. Gomes, who defended Tejpal in the case, died of COVID-19 last week. After the court verdict, the prosecution said it will challenge the order in the high court. The court had earlier adjourned pronouncement of the verdict in the case on three occasions, citing various reasons. The court was to deliver the verdict on April 27, but the judge had adjourned it to May 12. On May 12, it was further adjourned to May 19. However, it was again adjourned to May 21.

After the verdict, a statement issued by Tejpal was read out to media persons by his daughter Tara outside the court building in Mapusa town near Panaji, in which he thanked the court for its “rigorous, impartial and fair trial”.



Dalai Lama’s successor to be approved by us, says China

BEIJING

China on Friday asserted that any successor to the present Dalai Lama should be approved by it, ruling out recognition to any heir nominated by the India-based Tibetan spiritual leader or by his followers. The reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and other grand Living Buddhas has been subjected to approval by the central government since the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), claimed an official white paper issued by the Chinese government here.

The document has also asserted that Tibet was an inseparable part of China since ancient times. “In 1793, after dispelling Gurkha invaders, the Qing government restored order in Tibet and promulgated the Imperially Approved Ordinance for Better Governance of Tibet, improving systems by which the central government-ad-

ministered Tibet,” the white paper titled “Tibet Since 1951: Liberation, Development and Prosperity” said.

The ordinance stipulated that the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and other grand Living Buddhas had to follow the procedure of “drawing lots from the golden urn” and that the selected candidate would be subject to approval by the central government of China, the document said. The 14th Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 following a Chinese crackdown on an uprising by the local population in Tibet. India granted him political asylum and the Tibetan government-in-exile has been based in Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh since then. The Dalai Lama is 85 years old now and the issue of his successor has gained prominence in the last couple of years due to his advanced age.

The Dalai Lama’s succession issue was in the limelight, especially in the last few years after the US has stepped



up campaign that the right relating to the reincarnation of Dalai Lama’s successor should be within the exclusive authority of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people. Chinese foreign ministry officials have been asserting time and again that while the institution of reincarnation of the Dalai Lama has been in existence for several hundred years, the 14th (present) Dalai Lama himself was found and recognised following religious rituals and historic conventions and his succession was approved by China’s central government. The white paper said by 2020, a total of 92 reincarnated Living Buddhas had been identified and approved through traditional religious rituals and historical conventions for temples in Tibet. It also questioned the Dalai Lama’s proposals, called “the middle way” for Tibet to continue as part of China with autonomy for the province to run its affairs. Referring to the talks between Chinese officials and the Dalai Lama rep-

resentatives for several years, the white paper said the middle way “denies the fact that Tibet has been an integral part of China since ancient times; instead, it claims that Tibet was “an independent state”.

“It seeks to establish a “Greater Tibet” that has never existed at any time in history, claiming that Tibet, Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, Qinghai and other areas inhabited by compact communities of both Tibetans and people of other ethnic minorities should be incorporated into a unified administrative region, it said. It demands “a high degree of autonomy” that is not subject to any constraint whatsoever from the central government, and denies the leadership of the central government and Tibet’s present social and political systems; it proposes to establish an “autonomous government” under which “Tibetans (in truth the Dalai group) take full charge of all affairs other than diplomacy and national defence, it said.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Vax IP rights waiver is not enough

“IP waiver is a hot issue on which I can't take sides. Getting Intellectual Property (IP) rights waiver for vaccines will not be enough. There are other routes, namely, reducing export restrictions and reinforcing supply chains for vaccines, working with manufacturers to expand production.

— Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General, WTO



DATA BREACH

81% Indian cos acknowledge attacks

Most Indian companies (81%) in a survey acknowledged to have faced data breach in the past one year, with zero-day vulnerabilities and security loopholes in web application being common reasons across several organisations, cybersecurity firm Barracuda Networks said.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	73.58	South	
Euro	89.99	African Rand	6.02
UAE Dirham	20.43	Hong Kong Dollar	10.79
Thai Baht	2.55	Japanese Yen	0.77
British Pound	104.6	New Zealand Dollar	53.03
Australian Dollar	57.14	Saudi Riyal	21.36
Canadian Dollar	61.05	Swedish Krona	10.12
Swiss Franc	82.72	Singapore Dollar	55.85

DELHI SATURDAY 22 MAY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Shriram Life's profit grows

Private Insurer Shriram Life Insurance Company's profit after tax has grown 3 times to Rs 106 crore in FY21. This growth is backed by technology adoption and an increase in the rural penetration in the country as the company continues to serve the community at large. Effective and consistent focus on fundamentals also yielded strong results with the AUM growing at 30 per cent to Rs 6,261 crore. Income from investments has excelled more than double to cross Rs 500 crore. Casparus Kromhout, MD & CEO, Shriram Life Insurance said: "Shriram Life has been focused on serving the protection needs of the rural segment and lower income segments. These segments are most affected by the crisis due to the dual impact of the health emergency and loss of income." The company saw its gross premium grow by 23 per cent, crossing the milestone of Rs 2,000 crore.

Online learning effective: Study

An empirical analysis on academic performance of 20,000 students between academic year 2019-20 and post Covid year 2020 has revealed that online learning is as effective as offline learning. The analysis by EdTech player LEAD further indicates that students who had more than 80 per cent attendance during online classes scored 45 per cent higher than those students who had irregular attendance. The results abate the continued apprehensions of parents regarding learning efficacy in online classrooms — a new normal that was observed across India following school closures since March 2020. LEAD School Co-founder and CEO Sumeet Mehta said, "The results testify our long-stated stand that technology can provide uninterrupted learning whether it is done online or offline."

STOCKS REBOUND AS COVID CASES DECLINE

Sensex jumps 976 pts, Nifty gains 269 pts; investors richer by ₹2.41 lakh cr

MUMBAI

MARKET benchmarks made an emphatic comeback on Friday after two days of losses as robust results by SBI gave fresh impetus to banking and finance stocks, while a declining trend in Covid-19 cases also assuaged investor concerns.

A strong recovery in the rupee and positive global cues added to the buying momentum, traders said. Building on a strong start, the 30-share BSE Sensex advanced 975.62 points or 1.97 per cent to finish at 50,540.48. This was the benchmark's biggest single-day jump since March 30 this year. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty soared 269.25 points or 1.81 per cent to close at 15,175.30.

HDFC Bank was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying 4.48 per cent, followed by SBI which zoomed 4.30 per cent after posting solid quarterly earnings. The country's largest lender reported an 80 per cent surge in standalone net profit at Rs 6,450.75 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2021, aided by a decline in bad loans. IndusInd Bank, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC and Kotak Bank were among the other prominent gainers.

Only two Sensex stocks closed lower - Dr Reddy's and PowerGrid, slipping up to 0.37 per cent. Investor wealth surged by Rs 2.41 lakh crore, with the market capi-



talisation of BSE-listed companies reaching Rs 218.05 lakh crore. During the week, the Sensex soared 1,807.93 points or 3.70 per cent, and the Nifty rallied 497.50 points or 3.38 per cent. "Banks led the charge today buoyed by SBI earnings as bulls went on a rampage with stimulus hopes and transfer of surplus by the RBI to the government kept the street bullish.

"The broader market too witnessed good activity as the curve of daily corona cases displayed a declining trend," said S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday approved the transfer of Rs 99,122 crore as surplus to the central government for the accounting period of nine months ended March 31. On the Covid-19 front, the daily rise in coronavirus cases in India remained below 3 lakh for the fifth consecutive day, with 2.59 lakh new cases recorded in a

single day, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday.

Binod Modi, Head-Strategy at Reliance Securities, said, "As second wave of Covid-19 appears to be weakening, assumption of second wave... to peak-out by the end of May or mid of June holds true and adverse impact of second wave should not be felt beyond 1Q FY22." All BSE sectoral indices ended with gains, led by bankex, finance, telecom and power which surged up to 3.73 per cent. Global equities followed Wall Street higher as fears of inflation and the US Fed tightening its monetary policy receded.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Tokyo and Hong Kong closed in the green, while Shanghai and Seoul nursed losses. Stock exchanges in Europe were largely trading in the positive terrain in mid-session deals. Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.84 per cent higher at \$65.66 per barrel. The rupee strengthened by 29 paise to end at 72.83 against the US dollar amid a weaker American currency in the overseas market. Foreign institutional investors were net buyers in the capital market on Thursday as they purchased shares worth Rs 71.04 crore, as per exchange data.

Centre gets ₹99k-cr bonanza from RBI

MUMBAI

THE Reserve Bank on Friday decided to transfer Rs 99,122 crore as surplus to the exchequer, a move that will help the government to channelise more resources to combat the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic.

The decision to transfer the surplus amount for the accounting period of nine months ended March 31, 2021 was taken at a meeting of the central board of the RBI, held through video conferencing, under the chairmanship of Governor Shaktikanta Das.

The surplus is commonly called 'dividend'. The accounting year of RBI is truncated as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has aligned its July-June accounting year with the government's April-March fiscal year. The RBI has followed a July-June financial year since 1940, when it moved away from a January-December financial year. The RBI also decided to maintain a Contingency Risk Buffer (CRB) at 5.50 per cent in line with recommendations of the Bimal Jalan Committee report. The panel had prescribed a CRB range of 6.5 per cent to 5.5 per cent for the RBI.

The RBI Board, according to a release, also reviewed the current economic situation, global



The bank also set CRB at 5.50% in line with recommendations of the Bimal Jalan Committee

and domestic challenges and recent policy measures taken by the Reserve Bank to mitigate the adverse impact of the second wave of Covid-19 on the economy. With the change in the Reserve Bank's accounting year to April-March (earlier July-June), the Board discussed the working of the RBI during the transition period of nine months (July 2020-March 2021).

During the meeting, the board "approved the annual report and accounts of the Reserve Bank for the transition period. "The board also approved the transfer of Rs 99,122 crore as surplus to the central government for the accounting period of nine months ended March 31, 2021 (July 2020-March 2021), while deciding to maintain the CRB at 5.50 per cent."

The RBI had transferred Rs 57,128 crore as surplus to the central government for the accounting year 2019-20. A year before that (2018-19), the RBI had transferred Rs 1.76 lakh crore which included Rs 1.23 lakh crore as dividend and Rs 52,637 crore excess provisions identified as per the revised Economic Capital Framework (ECF).

SBI Q4 net zooms by 80% to ₹6,451 cr



NEW DELHI: The country's largest lender SBI on Friday reported an 80 per cent surge in standalone net profit at Rs 6,450.75 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2021, aided by decline in bad loans. State Bank of India (SBI) had earned a profit of Rs 3,580.81 crore during the January-March period of 2019-20, the lender said in a regulatory filing.

Total income of the bank during the March quarter of the last financial year rose to Rs 81,326.96 crore, from Rs 76,027.51 crore in the same period of 2019-20. During the quarter under review, net interest income rose 19 per cent to Rs 27,067 crore, from Rs 22,767 crore in the same period a year ago. On a consolidated basis, the bank reported a 60 per cent increase in net profit at Rs 7,270.25 crore, compared to Rs 4,557.49 crore in the fourth quarter of the financial year 2019-20. With regard to asset quality, gross non-performing assets (NPAs) of the bank improved to 4.98 per cent of gross advances as on March 31, 2021, as against 6.15 per cent in the same period of 2020.

It further said that in absolute terms gross NPAs declined to Rs 1,26,389 crore in March 2021, from Rs 1,49,092 crore in the same period last year. Net NPA or bad loans too came down to 1.50 per cent as on March 31, 2021 from 2.23 per cent in the year-ago period.

Jio adds 20 MHz spectrum in TS, AP

HYDERABAD

RELIANCE Jio Infocomm Ltd has implemented additional 20 MHz spectrum across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to enhance subscriber experience. This move of the company will add up to the existing 40 MHz spectrum and enhance the total spectrum availability in the region by 50 per cent. In the recently concluded spec-



trum auctions conducted by Department of Telecommunications, Jio has acquired 5 MHz of 850MHz band; 5MHz of 1800MHz band; and 10 MHz of 2300 MHz band for Telangana and

Andhra Pradesh.

As on date Jio has deployed all the three spectrums across all its sites spread across both the Telugu states. As a result, the customers network experience is likely to improve in the region. With this, the total bandwidth available for usage in 850MHz, 1800MHz and 2300MHz will be enhanced by 50 per cent (total of 60 MHz), the company said.

MSN Labs launches anti-black fungus drug

HYDERABAD: MSN Laboratories Pvt Ltd on Friday announced the launch of Posaconazole in India. It has launched the product under the brand name PosaOne as 100 mg delayed release tablets and 300 mg injections, respectively. Posaconazole is a triazole antifungal agent indicated for treating mucormycosis patients. MSN is now targeting to pro-actively reach to patients across India by ensuring the access of PosaOne, through its strong distribution network and field force.

MEIL starts 24-hr O2 production

HYDERABAD

MEGHA Engineering and Infrastructures Ltd (MEIL) has begun round-the-clock production of oxygen at its plant in Telangana to meet the shortage of the life-saving gas amid the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. The company has supplied 2.2 crore litres of oxygen free-of-cost to over 17 government and private

hospitals in Telangana, AP and Odisha. MEIL has started its 24-hour production plant at 100 per cent capacity to accommodate the shortage of oxygen in the southern states, a company said. It has already supplied 21,460 MT of oxygen which is equivalent to 2.2 crore litres free of cost and is continuing to supply to over 17 government and private hospitals in Telangana, AP and Odisha.

REAL CORNER

HOUSING SALES

Hyderabad sees highest growth

The city has lowest inventory overhang of 25 months across top 8 cities

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

ACROSS eight major cities in India, Hyderabad has reported the maximum increase of 39 per cent y-o-y in housing sales during January-March period of this calendar year as end-user demand surged despite the Covid-19 pandemic, says a recent research report by an online real estate brokerage firm PropTiger.com.

The city also has the lowest inventory overhang, time required to liquidate unsold inventories, of 25 months despite a sharp rise in new supply. Over the past few years, Hyderabad's residential property market, which was affected during the bifurcation into the two states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, has witnessed a steady growth in terms of sales, launches and price appreciation. The trend has continued in the first quarter of the 2021 calendar year. As per the research report "Real Insight - Q1CY21", housing sales in the IT city increased by 39 per cent to 7,721 units in January-March this year from 5,554 homes sold in the same period of the 2020 calendar year. The rise in demand was mostly driven by prominent localities of Hyderabad West like Sangareddy, Bachupally and Kompally. In value terms, builders sold properties worth Rs.8,400 crore during



Q1 of CY21, up by 34 per cent from the same period last year. "The pro-business State government policies, such as the T-iPass and the ICT Policy, have provided ease of doing business, the effect of which has trickled down to the real estate market," the report said.

On the supply side, Hyderabad saw a jump of 95 per cent in new launches to 7,604 units in the first quarter of this calendar year. It was observed that the maximum new supply was concentrated in the localities of Nallagandla and Kompally. Nearly 49 per cent of the new supply was concentrated in the more than Rs.75 lakh price bracket in Q1 of CY21. Units priced between Rs.45-75 lakh had a share of 40 per cent in overall launches.

The share of units with 2BHK configuration has increased to 48

per cent in Q1 of CY21 from 28 per cent in the same period in the previous year. "The primary residential market of Hyderabad performed very well during the first quarter of 2021 calendar year and has surpassed the pre-Covid sales numbers," said Mani Rangarajan, Group Chief Operating Officer of Housing.com, Makaan.com and PropTiger.com. After a huge setback during the April-June quarter of 2020, he said "The housing sales revived on pent up and festival demand, low interest rates and stable prices. The sales between July last year and March this year were strong, especially for trusted developers. However, the demand has slowed down since April because of the second wave of the pandemic." Although it is too early to assess the adverse impact of the second wave,

it has definitely put a brake on the revival of housing demand. The real estate industry is more prepared this time to handle the situation. The kind of acceleration we have seen during the last one year in adoption of digital tools for marketing and sales is very encouraging, Rangarajan observed.

Due to the sharp rise in new supply, the unsold housing stock in the city rose 26 per cent y-o-y to 39,191 units. Considering the current sales velocity, the rise in the numbers of unsold housing units is not a concern. Among the eight major cities in the country, Hyderabad has the lowest inventory overhang of 25 months, which means it would take little more than two years for builders to sell all of these unsold units. The inventory overhang for all the eight cities is around four

City	Inventory overhang (in months)
Ahmedabad	42
Bangalore	37
NCR	68
Chennai	40
Hyderabad	25
Kolkata	36
Mumbai	62
Pune	41
India	47

Source: DataLabs, PropTiger Research

Housing loan market grows by 9.6% in Q3

MUMBAI

THE housing loan market in the country witnessed a rebound and registered a year-on-year growth of 9.6 per cent in terms of portfolio outstanding (PoS) in the third quarter of FY2021, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, says a report.

The portfolio outstanding of the sector stood at Rs 22.26 lakh crore as of December 2020, as compared to Rs 20.31 lakh crore as of December 2019, according to a quarterly report released by credit information bureau CRIF High Mark.

The industry had witnessed 10.4 per cent growth in PoS in December 2019 quarter over December 2018 quarter. The report said the growth was flat in quarters ending March 2020, June 2020 and September 2020 due to Covid-19 pandemic, the resulting nationwide lockdown and suspension of most of the business and lending activities in large parts of the country.

"However, there has been a rebound in housing loan originations in the quarter ending December 2020, leading to 4.52 per cent growth in portfolio outstanding," the report noted. Affordable housing segment (ticket size up to Rs 35 lakh) constituted 90 per cent of the market by vol-

ume and nearly 60 per cent by value as of December 2020. Within the affordable segment, loans under ticket size of Rs 15 lakh comprised 70 per cent by volume and 38 per cent by value.

According to the report, young borrowers and millennials (less than 36 years), with high aspirations and commensurate disposable incomes are increasingly being seen as an attractive audience for housing loans, with a share of 27 per cent in the annual originations in FY20-21 (till December 2020). Public



sector banks have retained the largest market share in housing loans by value and volume, with a near 45 per cent share over the last three years.

As of December 2020, the top five public sector banks constituted nearly 30 per cent of the housing loan industry book by value, the report said. As of December 2020, top five private banks constituted 15 per cent of the industry book by value, the report said. Housing finance companies (HFCs) command an overall market share of nearly 37 per cent by value.

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