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## WINDOWS

### Covid tally below 5,000

NEW DELHI: New Covid cases in Delhi remained below the 5,000 level for the second consecutive day on Tuesday, with 4,482 reported in the last 24 hours. This was also the lowest since April 4, when 4,033 cases were reported. The capital city also continued to witness reduction in the daily test positivity rate which slid below 7 per cent, to 6.89 per cent. However, there were 265 deaths, taking the toll to 22,111. According to the Delhi government's health bulletin, a total of 9,403 Covid patients have recovered in the last 24 hours, while the city has 50,863 active cases at present. The number of Covid patients in home isolation has reduced to 31,197.

### Bike bot scam case: 2 held

NEW DELHI: In a major breakthrough in the Rs 42,000 crore bike bot scam, the Economic Offences Wing of Delhi Police on Tuesday said that it has arrested two beneficiaries of Gravit Innovative Promoters Limited and also identified properties worth hundreds of crore. EOW Additional Commissioner of Police R.K. Singh said that arrested accused have been identified as Badri Narain Tiwari, a resident of Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh and Vijay Kumar Sharma, a resident of Gautam Buddha Nagar. Both were arrested from Noida, he said.

### Cyclone: 93 still missing

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI: At least 93 of the over 500 personnel manning the oil rig and barges in the high sea off the Mumbai coast were still missing a day after Cyclone Taukta swept past the Maharashtra coast. The Indian Navy and Coast Guard have been involved in rescue operations round the clock, with over 180 people carried to safety through the day today, officials said. Three barges deployed by engineering firm Afcons for its contract with ONGC had 599 workers on board when the cyclone hit, official sources told PTI. Indian Naval Ships Beas, Betwa, and Teg joined INS Kochi and Kolkata in search and rescue (SAR) operations for Barge 'Pa-paa-305', which sank 35 nautical miles off Mumbai. The operations have been augmented with P8I and naval helicopters.



## IMA backs plasma therapy after ICMR drops it

NEW DELHI: Indian Medical Association on Tuesday lent its support to plasma therapy in moderate cases of Covid-19 infection and said such patients may need less oxygen with the use of plasma.

The approval for plasma therapy from the IMA comes a day after Indian Council of Medical Research's National Task Force had dropped use of convalescent plasma therapy from COVID-19 treatment protocol. "What the IMA is saying is that it (plasma therapy) has been removed as an 'off label' use. But

it is a clinical step that in moderate cases where oxygen saturation is low, the patient may need less oxygen to stabilise or saturate the oxygen level with the use of plasma," Dr Anil Goel, finance secretary IMA and urologist, told ANI. "The use of plasma is being put to use with the consent of patients and attendants," Dr Goel added.

He further said that the high death rate is because the patients are going to hospitals very late, especially those who are in home quarantine. "I advise them to see a chest specialist at some

Covid hospital regularly for their better and early treatment," Dr Goel added.

India had earlier conducted the world's largest randomised controlled trials to study the efficacy of plasma therapy. The study, which came out in September last year, showed that plasma therapy failed to save people dying from Covid-19.

Recently, British medical journal, Lancet published strong evidence reconfirming that plasma is not effective in reducing deaths in Covid-19 hospitalisation.

The ICMR decision, announced on Monday, followed a meeting of the ICMR National Task Force for Covid-19 on Friday. In the meeting, all members voted in favour of doing away with convalescent plasma therapy for Covid-19 treatment citing its ineffectiveness and inappropriate use in several cases.

Ganga Ram Hospital chairman Dr DS Rana said plasma therapy has failed to change the "course of mortality" and asserted that some scientists are also of the view that it is helping in promoting mutations and variants.

"I think it is wise that plasma therapy has been taken off the list because over a period of one year it has failed to change the course of mortality. Every step taken should absolutely be based on the evidence. Some scientists are also of the view that this is helping in promoting mutations and variants," he added. With an exponential rise in COVID-19 cases across the country, there has been an unprecedented spur in the demand for plasma which many experts believe to have done more harm than good.

## Free edn to kids orphaned due to Covid, says Kejri

### Each family in Delhi will be given 10 kg free ration

NEW DELHI

DELHI Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced on Tuesday that Rs 50,000 ex gratia will be given to each family in the national capital that has had a Covid death. Stating that many families have lost their loved ones during the second wave of the pandemic, Kejriwal said, "We cannot fill that void, but we will provide financial help of Rs 50,000 to each family that has lost at least one of its members to the pandemic." The Aam Aadmi Party-led government will also provide Rs 2,500 a month to the families whose sole breadwinner fell prey to Covid-19.

"There are many such families wherein the main earning members have died due to Covid. Delhi government will provide Rs 2,500 per month to each such family," Kejriwal said. Also, children whose parents have succumbed to the virus will be given Rs 2,500 per month, while Delhi government will bear all expenses for their education.

Apart from these, the Delhi government will also provide free ration to all the poor families which are struggling during the Covid-induced lockdown.



"Each such family in Delhi will be given 10 kg free ration (5 kg from the Centre and 5 kg from the Delhi government). There will be no need of producing income certificates to avail this ration. It would be given even to those who do not have a valid ration card," Kejriwal said.

The Chief Minister said that all these decisions will be approved by the Cabinet and implemented soon.

Meanwhile, the Delhi High Court on Tuesday refused to entertain a plea seeking waiver of clinical trials of foreign vaccines for Covid-19.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh said the relief sought in the plea was a policy decision and it is not in the domain of courts. The High Court emphasised that courts could only consider the possibility of policy decision only in exceptional cases.

As the plea sought priority in vaccination to those who have already taken the first dose, the court said authorities may treat the plea as a representation. It observed that if everyone is given priority, then the question would who will come next in line. "Government has its own priorities," said the bench.

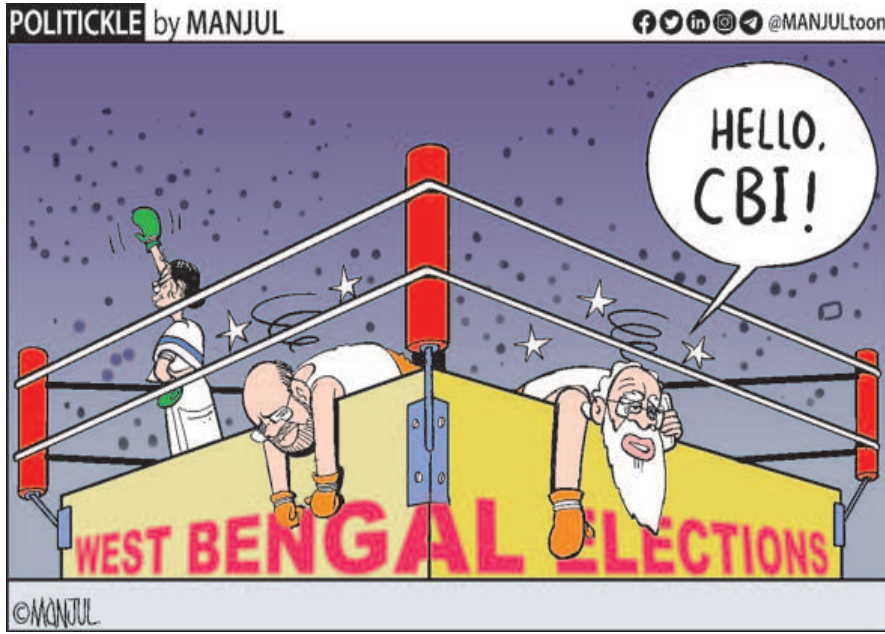
The court also stressed that that relief sought in the plea by advocate Nazia Parveen cannot be given just for the asking. "It has become a fashion in Delhi that every now and then people are rushing to the courts with PILs for priority in vaccination," it said.

The plea has sought framing of a policy in connection with vaccine distribution and waiver of clinical trials of foreign vaccines.

## Continuous efforts being made to ramp up vaccine supply: Modi

New Delhi: Describing state and district officials as "field commanders" in the fight against COVID-19, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said localised containment zones, aggressive testing and sharing correct and complete information with people are weapons to defeat the pandemic. Interacting with them at a meeting, which was attended by district magistrates from 46 districts across nine states, through video-conferencing, Modi said they were free to innovate to

suit their local requirements and asked them to share their feedback about any change in policy without any inhibition. Asserting that vaccination is a strong way to fight COVID, Modi said myths about it have to be collectively rooted out. He added that continuous efforts are being made to ramp up COVID vaccine supply in a big way, asserting that attempts are on to provide states 15-day advance schedule of the programme as it will allow them to prepare accordingly.



## CBSE extends deadline to tabulate marks for Class 10

NEW DELHI

THE Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Tuesday extended the deadline up to June 30 for schools to tabulate class 10 marks and submit it to the board, according to officials.

The board had earlier announced that the entire exercise of tabulation of marks will be completed by June 11 and the result will be declared by June 20. The decision has been taken in view of the lockdown in several states due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation and to ensure safety of teachers and staff members. "CBSE accords highest priority to safety and health of teachers. Keeping in view the situation of pandemic, lockdown in states and safety of teachers and other staff members of affiliated schools, the board has decided to extend the dates," said Sanyam Bhardwaj, Controller of Examinations, CBSE.

"The marks will have to be submitted to the board by June 30. For rest of the activities, the result committees can make

their own schedule based on the scheme provided by CBSE," he added. The CBSE had earlier this month announced a policy for tabulation of marks for class 10 board exams which have been cancelled in view



of the COVID-19 pandemic situation in the country.

According to the policy, while 20 marks for each subject will be for internal assessment as every year, 80 marks will be calculated on basis of the students' performance in various tests or exams throughout the year.

## Didn't export vaccines at cost of Indians: Poonawalla

LONDON: Serum Institute of India CEO Adar Poonawalla on Tuesday issued a statement saying that the company has not exported Covid-19 vaccines at the cost of the people of India.

Poonawalla said the vaccination drive for such a large population cannot be completed within 2-3 months and it would take 2-3 years for the entire world population to get fully vaccinated.

"SII has delivered more than 200mn doses, even though we received EUA two months after the US pharma companies. If we look at total doses produced and delivered, we rank amongst the top three in the world. We continue to scale up manufacturing and prioritise India," he said in a statement.

"We would like to reiterate that we have never exported vaccines at the cost of the people in India and remain committed to do everything we can in the support of the vaccination drive in the country, Poonawalla added.

## HC declines Kalra's plea for speedy decision on bail

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi High Court on Tuesday declined to direct an expeditious decision on the bail plea of businessman Navneet Kalra, arrested in connection with alleged black marketing of oxygen concentrators, saying "let the law take its own course".

Justice Subramonium Prasad also declined to interfere with the observations made by a sessions court while dismissing Kalra's anticipatory bail plea, saying the Supreme Court has already laid down the law with regard to observations made by courts and their reporting by media organisations.

The high court declined to grant the reliefs sought on behalf of Kalra, represented by senior advocate Vikas Pahwa, saying that he had moved an anticipatory bail plea which has become infructuous due to his arrest and therefore, nothing remains in the matter. Pahwa had made two oral prayers, at the start of hearing on Tuesday, that directions be issued to the trial court con-

cerned to decide his client's bail plea expeditiously and secondly, to expunge the observations made against Kalra by the sessions court as due to his arrest he can no longer challenge the order denying him anticipatory bail. A Delhi court on Monday re-



manded Kalra to three days of police custody, saying his custodial interrogation is required in connection with alleged black marketing and hoarding of oxygen concentrators amid the coronavirus pandemic.

He was apprehended from Gurugram on Sunday night and was formally arrested on Monday. He was on the run for over a week since the seizure of 524 oxygen concentrators from Khan Chacha, Town Hall, and Nege & Ju restaurants owned by him.

He was apprehended two days after the high court on May 14 declined to grant him any interim protection from arrest while his plea for anticipatory bail was pending before it.

## Day after PM's ₹2K dole, farmers stunned by hike in fertiliser price

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

DAY after Prime Minister Narendra Modi released Rs 2,000 each to 9.50 crore farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme on May 14, the peasantry was hit by an unexpected bolt from the blue.

Barely 24 hours after the PM's nationally-televised event, and the ensuing interactions and laudatory messages from the BJP leaders, all major companies in the country effected a steep hike in prices of different categories of fertilisers – a key farming ingredient – on May 15.

Many companies, whole-sellers and retailers by the weekend had implemented the new prices of fertilisers, just as the farming community was preparing for the upcoming monsoon sowing three-four weeks hence.

As the impact of the price hikes – ranging from

20-60 per cent for certain varieties or brands – sunk in, farmer leaders said that it could put a huge strain on the already over-burdened peasantry and compound the agro-crisis across the country.

The first to red flag the issue, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) has written to Union Minister for Chemicals & Fertilisers, DV. Sadananda Gowda, flaying the price hike as an "unfortunate decision" and demanding its immediate rollback.

NCP President and former Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar said on Tuesday that it (price hike) would hamper the pre-sowing farming activities and rub salt on the wounds of the farmers.

Backing Pawar, Shiv Sena's farmer face and Vasant Rao Naik Sheti Swavalamban Mission (VNSSM) President Kishore Tiwari – who has been accorded MoS status – said the price hikes



by the fertiliser companies "appears to be pre-planned and done hand-in-glove with government support".

"What was the need to do it just one day after the PM's highly-publicised but meager handout to the farmers? Why is the PM and the minister (Gowda) silent on this, knowing the current grave crisis afflicting the country on all fronts," Tiwari asked.

"The second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic has badly impacted our people, devastating their every means of livelihood," Pawar told Gowda, adding that the farming community is reeling under one of the worst-ever crises and its issues need be addressed on priority.

Maharashtra Congress President Nana F. Patole said that the Modi government has acted on expected lines "for the benefit of a handful of crony industrialists" at the cost of the tillers.

"This is the second time in less than 12 months that the BJP government has backstabbed the farmers – last year it was the three farm laws, and now on the threshold of monsoon, a surreptitious hike in fertiliser prices... After giving Rs 2,000, the government will now take away more than five times of that amount from the peasantry," Patole said.

Under the ambitious PM-KISAN Scheme, the Prime Minister released the eighth instalment of Rs 2,000, which amounted to a financial benefit of over Rs 19,000 crore for 9.50 crore farmers across the country for the 2021-2022 fiscal.

Launched in December 2018, PM-KISAN is a central sector scheme with 100 per cent funding from the Centre, for an income support of Rs 6,000 per year in three instalments of Rs 2,000 each to small-marginal farmers having a combined land holding of up to two hectares.



# Womenia

## Tips for being a new parent

Becoming a parent can be a bit overwhelming, especially when advice pours in from all sides. So, we've compiled this handy guide of quick tips from in-the-know parents and experts to get you started, and give you the confidence you need to embrace your new role.

**Plenty of folks offer new parents nitty-gritty baby tips for getting the job done. But here's something different tips to help you thrive, grow and truly enjoy your journey as a new-parent-to-be**

### Live in the now

You hereby have permission to stop worrying about your checklist—doing the laundry, pumping, buying diapers—and learn to be present with your baby. Enjoy your precious moments together.

### Chill out about toddler meals

Expect odd food habits. Offer a variety. Don't push, don't panic. They'll eat when they're hungry.

### Stick to an early bedtime

Your child will get the sleep he needs, and you'll get to recharge your batteries.

### Say no

The better you get at turning down requests that aren't in your child's best interest, the fewer times you'll need to do so. You can say no once in the su-



permarket when your child asks to buy a carton of ice cream, or you can say it every night once that carton is sitting in your freezer at home.

### Create mini traditions

Hang balloons around the kitchen table the night before your child's birthday so she wakes up to a special day. Make a funny noise when it's just you and your kids in an elevator. Create a

handshake that only they know and save it for big moments.

### Be ready for sick days

Stock up on rehydration drinks like Pedialyte, Gatorade, or Vitamin Water so you don't have to run to the store in the middle of the night when your little one is vomiting.

Know your kid. Each child is a unique combination of strengths and challenges. Try to

tailor your response to fit the kid in front of you.

### Find your crew

Identify the people you can call when you need to vent friends who'll give their opinion when you ask for it and keep their mouth shut when you don't, and who would drop anything to be there for you and your family (and vice versa). Love them hard and thank them often.

## Nikhath Zareen: The Future of boxing in India is very bright

SABYA SINGH

With the restoration of the new brand narrative, adidas wants to inspire and enable everyone to make their possibilities become a reality. The brand aims to inspire this attitude amongst the community and beyond. Narrating inspiring stories of individuals who've not only challenged their impossibilities but have also inspired others through their rebellious optimistic attitude to achieve the desired aim.

Nikhath shares, "Impossible is nothing but about seeing through possibilities rather than focusing on the problems and through this campaign my story is being told which is impossible is nothing as a individual we should see all the possibilities as wide as longer. Same thing if we talk about my story, in my story people say boxing is not possible sports, but I looked at the brighter side and saw possibilities, took boxing and that's why am here, I did hard work because of my hard work and saw all the possibilities instead of focusing on problems. Whatever I achieved it's just because of my hard work, because of that am today." Nikhath's journey is infused with hard work, failures and achievements. Her mom has always been her inspiration.

he adds, "Before boxing, I was in athletics. When I use to go for practice, I saw there were no girls boxing. Girls were in every sport, except in boxing. I asked my dad why there's no girl in boxing? My dad said that girls don't have guts to box. At that point I thought people think women can't box and people think being a medalic sport women can't box and it's not possible for a woman to box. So that day I decided to take boxing and change society thoughts. And let people know that women can also box and there is no impossibilities if you focus on your goal. A barrier for women i feel is that

The Hans India spoke to Nikhat Zareen in context to her collaboration with adidas and her journey. Nikhath an Indian amateur woman boxer, who won gold medal at the AIBA Women's Youth & Junior World Championships Antalya 2011. She won bronze medal at the 2nd India Open International Boxing Tournament held in Guwahati

society is still unaware of women in sports. Women's participation in sports is increasing in our country. There is lack of interest to cover women in sports. I think society should take women seriously and support them in every aspect to support them to play and give confidence that they can do that."

Nikhath believes that brands will play important role in supporting the women in sports and many global brands are extending a hand to encourage women in sports and especially in boxing. She adds, "Women should start believing in themselves and should only focus on their dreams rather than of what society thinks about them. I firmly believe in "No goal is to high

and no challenge is too big. If one is determined to become something, I see the possibility of India becoming a nation where women can pursue their dreams of becoming an athletic and Olympics is an example. Sports are being seen with the length of gender by the society. Sports are always compared with gender. As boxing is less medalic sport, women are not supported enough when they take up sport especially boxing. In India we have lot of talent especially from rural areas. Now I feel time has changed I see lot of boxers coming from rural areas and women as well."

Muhammed Ali, known as the greatest has always been an inspiration for her since the time, she joined boxing. "I just want to say to young people that they should see possibilities in every situation and should believe in themselves and should start seeing the possibilities. they should have such kind of attitude to take up sports. Right now my complete target is to compete all the tournaments no matter how big or small it is. I'll do my best to make my country and parents proud and my ultimate goal is to win an Olympic gold medal," concludes the boxer.



## Dressing up is important when working from home

PUJA GUPTA

During the pandemic, people's relationship with clothes has shifted significantly, as people prioritize comfort and convenience over appearance. Furthermore, the lockdown has left most of us with little or no desire to prepare a new look daily. For working women, it has actually become an even greater burden and source of anxiety.

Amidst the pandemic, Qua launched 'Embrace', a new collection designed for WFH- Work leisure. The collection has become a huge success given that it adapted perfectly to the growing need for more comfortable yet presentable clothing for Zoom meetings. Rupanshi, founder of Qua says, "Dressing up can motivate you and increase your productivity as well. The flared and



relaxed fits of the shirts, co-ords and dresses make dressing up easier, without compromising on comfort. On days when you are feeling uninspired, you can wear the co-ord or dress as it is and still look dressed up. These outfits can be elevated further by layering them with shirts and blazers, on days when you want to feel like a true professional." The collection includes already built ensembles

that require little to no styling, lightweight and breathable fabrics, seamless finish combined with comfy-style garments. The key garments of the collection namely smart co-ords, casual shirts and chic dresses are made of premium fabrics like moss crepe, viscose and cotton, which provide optimum breathability and homely comfort. These practical wardrobe must-haves have been a great help

to working women in order to maintain a work-life balance, as the garments are comfortable to wear, chic, and a great addition to the 9-5 and beyond wardrobe.

There have been studies that show how dressing up for work can improve performance. The brand also conducted a poll, where 100 women participated, which revealed that 84 percent of women felt unproductive while working from home and 85 percent of women agreed that dressing up for work increased their productivity.

Despite the shift in the workplace due to the pandemic, dressing up for work still holds much value as it gives people a sense of professionalism. By dressing up appropriately even for zoom meetings, you can adequately prepare yourself for the day ahead, otherwise you might get caught in the 'working from bed' vortex.

## Keep your nails beautiful and shiny with kitchen ingredients

Do you dislike the way your nails look right now? If you have been trying to get a manicure done but haven't had a chance to go to the salon due to lockdown, no need to bother. You don't really need to go through an elaborate process to keep your nails in the best of health. With just a handful of ingredients you can take care of your nails and keep them shiny while preventing common nail problems like breakage, etc. For those who have the habit of applying nail paints regularly, putting in a little extra effort to pamper your nails should be a part of your schedule. And there's nothing quite like going the natural way when it comes to beauty. Rather than stressing about what beauty products to buy to take care of your nails, turn to your kitchen store cupboard and pick from the many natural ingredients. Here are few home remedies for making your nails beautiful and shiny.

**Olive oil:** Clean your nails thoroughly. Then warm a small bowl of olive oil and keep your fingers for 15 minutes. Wipe clean with a towel and repeat the process daily for best results. Using nourishing oils, such as olive oil, can help keep your nails shiny by nourishing the cuticles from deep within. Olive oil has great moisturising properties, and hence is commonly used for various beauty remedies.

**Lemon juice:** Mix one teaspoon of baking soda in a small bowl of water, and add one tablespoon of lemon juice into the mix. Soak your nails for about 10 minutes. Then with the help of a brush, gently scrub your nails and wash clean. You can also mix two teaspoons of sea salt in a bowl of lukewarm water, add one teaspoon lemon juice and soak your fingers for 10-15 minutes. Lemon juice acts as a great cleanser, and is also known to help get rid of discolouration.



NEWS ROUNDUP

## Senior journalist Jayanti Waghdhare to head Planet Marathi's social media

Planet Marathi has been the prime focus of attention in the Marathi entertainment space. Ever since the launch of Planet Marathi OTT - the world's first-ever exclusively Marathi OTT platform, Marathi film and entertainment bigwigs have flocked to their nest. With various big names getting onboard the brand, now a new name is being associated with Planet Marathi. Popular senior journalist and alumnus of the company Zee Media Corporation Limited now joins Planet Marathi as AVP, Social Media. A seasoned journalist, Jayanti, has been a regular correspondent for interviews with top celebrities from Bollywood like Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Deepika Padukone, Ranveer Singh, Madhuri Dixit, Kajol and many more. Jayanti brings almost a decade worth of experience in media to the table. Her content creation is admired and sought after on social media. She is the right fit for being the face of Planet Marathi's fresh and evolving social personality. Talking

about her career move, Jayanti comments, "Having worked as an entertainment correspondent, I have formed a deeper relationship with this industry. From television to films and from regional to Bollywood, my endeavour has been to bring the action from the industry to spotlight. In this process, I have grown as a journalist and a person. With Zee, I have experienced every facet of media and communication that gave me recognition. But now I move on to become the face behind the camera in propelling Planet Marathi OTT - the world's first Marathi OTT platform towards greater heights. I am grateful to Akshay for this opportunity."

Planet Marathi has a power-packed team on board, and their synergy with the best of talent in the industry, too, adds to their momentum. Now with senior journalist Jayanti Waghdhare at AVP, Social Media, Planet Marathi, the OTT platform is heading towards bigger developments.

## Numeracy Day

Many of us may think that we are not number's people. But whether we like it or not, numbers play a big part in all our lives. Numeracy Day is about recognizing the importance of numbers and numeracy and encouraging people to sharpen their skills and build their confidence with numbers. Being smarter with numbers isn't a special talent, it's something we can all learn!

The aim of Numeracy Day is to celebrate numbers and how we use them in everyday life. The day is designed to encourage people to feel curious about numbers, explore how they can benefit them in their day-to-day life and give them the confidence to develop and improve their numeracy skills.

Numeracy Day brings together individuals, employers, educators, and supporters from across the UK, helping people to improve their own numerical skills as well as that of their children, colleagues, or students. The first-ever Numeracy Day took place on the 16th of May in 2018 and the day was a huge success. More than 25,000 people of all ages took part and started their journey towards improving their numeracy.

Mathematics can be found in all aspects of our daily lives. We use it at school, at work, and in practical activities at home and in wider society. Whether we're paying for a bus ticket, working out our tax, planning a holiday or thinking of taking out a mortgage, maths will always be involved.





# BJP demands audit of money spent on Delhi's 'Mohalla Clinics'

NEW DELHI

QUESTIONING the claims of the AAP Government about 'Mohalla Clinics' during the pandemic, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday demanded an audit of the money spent into setting up of these clinics.

Former Delhi BJP Chief and MLA Vijender Gupta claimed that as Delhi was hit by the second wave of the Covid-19 pan-

dem, the hollowness of the Arvind Kejriwal government's claims about its healthcare model stood completely exposed.

Referring to the Delhi High Court's observation that 'Mohalla Clinics' were a waste if not used during the pandemic, Gupta raising questions about the effectiveness of these clinics in the fight against Covid, said, "The Arvind Kejriwal government opened 450 Mohalla Clinics but not even one such clinic has been



of use during the pandemic."

According to Gupta, crores of taxpayers' money were spent on advertising these clinics and countless claims made on how the world is appreciating Delhi's healthcare model but today the condition of these clinics is pathetic as many of them are over-run by piles of garbage or lie abandoned like a haunted house.

"Not a single mohalla clinic could support Covid patients in

this hour of need. They could not even be turned into isolation centres or be equipped with life saving oxygen or drugs. Meanwhile, people of Delhi were dying because of lack of hospital beds and oxygen shortage, which proved to be an AAP-made disaster only," he said.

Gupta asked the government where are those doctors and nurses working in the 450 clinics when they were needed the most and demanded an audit of

the money that went into the setting up of these clinics. "Money spent on the non-functional clinics could have gone into building more hospitals, or buying ventilators or other life-saving equipment. But due to the callousness of the Kejriwal government, Delhiites were left to fend for themselves as black marketing soared and Delhi's health infrastructure was found wanting during the second wave of the Covid," he said.

## UP govt inviting 3rd Covid wave: Priyanka

NEW DELHI

CONGRESS leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday hit out at the Yogi Adityanath dispensation over the alleged low COVID-19 testing in Uttar Pradesh, and asked if the state government was preparing to make way for a third wave and then fight it.

Her attack on the government came a day after the Allahabad High Court said the entire medical system in villages and small cities of Uttar Pradesh is at God's mercy ('Ram bharose').

"Only 800-1,000 RT-PCR tests are being conducted every day for the same 32 lakh population of Bijnor. The honourable high court has said that 4,000-5,000 RT-PCR tests should be done daily in a district like Bijnor or else we are inviting the third wave," Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi.

"Is the UP government preparing to make way for the third wave and then fight it," the Congress general secretary said, tagging media reports on the high



court's observations. If a self-praising government was not there in Lucknow, it would have tried to look at the reality of COVID-19 in the 'Indira Gramin Kshetra' just 35 km away, Gandhi said in another tweet in Hindi and shared a media report on it.

"Neither there is testing, nor treatment, nor medical kits, but

the government says that everything is fit," she said. The Allahabad High Court had made the 'Ram Bharose' observation while hearing a PIL over the coronavirus spread and the condition of quarantine centres in the state.

A high court bench of justices Siddharth Verma and Ajit Kumar made the observation while tak-

ing into account the death of Santosh Kumar (64), who was admitted to an isolation ward at a Meerut hospital. Gandhi and other Opposition leaders have hit out at the state government over the handling of the COVID-19 situation, while the UP government has been rejecting all such criticism.

### Man beaten to death for 'meddling' in family dispute

BAREILLY

A man was beaten to death in Uttar Pradesh for allegedly interfering in a husband-wife dispute. The incident took place in the Prem Nagar locality in Bareilly on Monday when Naveen was reportedly beating his wife Deepmala with a stick.

When their neighbour, Arjun (24), tried to rescue the wife, the enraged husband started thrashing him instead. Arjun was apparently beaten up so severely that he later succumbed to his injuries at the hospital. His family members had taken Arjun to the police station to lodge a complaint before taking him to the hospital. Naveen has been booked for culpable homicide not amounting to murder, the police said.

According to reports, Naveen had lost his job last month and was in a foul mood. He often quarreled with his wife. Bareilly SSP Rohit Singh Sajwan said, "We have registered an FIR under the section of culpable homicide and the accused Naveen will soon be arrested. Prima facie it appears that the victim died of a head injury."

### MLA from Pilot camp steps down

JAIPUR

IN a new twist to the political saga in Rajasthan, senior Congress MLA Hemaram Choudhary, who belonged to the camp of former Deputy CM Sachin Pilot, sent his resignation to Assembly Speaker C.P. Joshi on Tuesday, creating ripples in the state's political circles. In July last year, the Pilot camp had rebelled against the leadership of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. However, the 19 rebel MLAs were reinducted into the party after senior Congress leaders stepped in to sort out the matter, including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and the late Ahmed Patel.

Choudhary stood with Pilot all through the rebellion.

Even after the return of the rebel leaders into the party fold, they were not allotted any portfolio, nor were their grievances addressed. Choudhary has been raising his voice over the issues being left unaddressed.

A few MLAs from the Pilot



camp had even raised their concern over the functioning of the state government on the floor of the Assembly.

Meanwhile, Choudhary has requested Speaker Joshi to accept his resignation.

Rajasthan minister and Congress leader Pratap Khachariyawas said that this is an internal matter of the party which will be resolved soon.

BJP state president Satish Poonia said, "The party (Congress) is divided ever since the formation of the Congress government. It is their internal matter. In this time of crisis, we are busy saving the lives of the people amid the second wave of the Covid pandemic."

### Special grant of Rs 10L to Punjab villages for 100% vaccination

CHANDIGARH

TO incentivise villages to give up vaccine hesitancy, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Tuesday announced a special development grant of Rs 10 lakh to every village that achieves 100 per cent vaccination target.

Appealing to the sarpanches and panches across the state to lead their villages in the fight against Covid-19, the Chief Minister urged them to motivate the people to undergo testing even in case of mild symptoms, and to get themselves vaccinated.

He was interacting virtually with village panchayats represented by more than 2,000 heads and members across over 4,000 locations in the rural parts through LED screens.

He informed them that his government had already sanctioned permission for the sarpanches to utilize up to Rs 5,000 per day from panchayat funds for emergency Covid treatment, upto a maximum of Rs 50,000.

Underlining the need to sensitize the rural population about the harmful effects of corona and the importance of early detection and treatment to save precious

lives, the Chief Minister said this could only be done through special awareness campaigns.

He asked the panchayats to organize special medical camps, and to rope in the services of ex-servicemen, who had fought several wars during their active service career and were now part of the state's fight against the pandemic.

He asked the sarpanches and panches to start 'theekri pehra' or community policing in their vil-



lages to prevent infected persons from coming in, and also distribute Fateh Kits to every person who tests positive, besides ensuring proper treatment in case oxygen saturation level goes below 94 per cent.

He urged the people living in villages to immediately quarantine themselves in case of any symptoms, and get themselves tested to ensure early detection of the infection.

### 7 children orphaned amid Covid-19: Himachal CM

SHIMLA

HIMACHAL Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Tuesday said seven children in the state were orphaned due to Covid-19.

"The state is ensuring proper care and protection of orphaned children and also those in distress. We are providing Rs 2,500 per child per month as financial assistance for their maintenance till the age of 18 years," he said.



He said the government has approached guardians of the children who were orphaned by the pandemic but they refused to send them to the child care institutions.

"Directions have been issued to

field officers to provide Rs 2,500 per child to the foster parents or the children," he added.

Thakur said the children who are enrolled in childcare institutions and temporarily restored to their families due to closure of schools amid the pandemic would be provided Rs 2,000 per month to enable them to continue their online education.

At present, 598 children are being benefitted under this scheme.

### Groom goes missing, bride marries one of the baraatis

KANPUR

IN a bizarre incident, the bride got married to one of the 'baraatis' (member of the marriage party from the groom's side) after the groom disappeared mysteriously from the wedding venue.

The incident took place two days ago in Maharajpur area.

According to reports, the 'jaimala' (exchange of garlands) ceremony had taken place and the families were preparing for the main wedding ceremony when the groom sud-



denly disappeared.

Both the families began fran-

tically searching for the groom and the bride was distraught at

the turn of events.

After searching for a while, the bride's family members came to know that the groom was not missing, but had deliberately fled from the spot for reasons best-known to him.

Seeing the bride's family upset, one of the guests from the groom's side suggested that the marriage should be solemnised with another suitable boy from the baraat.

The bride's family zeroed in on one of the boys and their respective families, after consultations, agreed on the alliance.

The marriage was solemnised at the venue.

Later, the bride's family lodged a complaint against the groom and his family members.

Inspector Narwal, Shesh Narain Pandey, said, "We have received a complaint in this regard from both the bride and groom sides. While the bride's side has sought suitable action against the groom and his family members, the groom's father, Dharampal, in his complaint, has sought police help to trace his missing son. Investigations are continuing in this regard."



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# Time to stem ransomware attacks

A ransomware attack on one of the largest oil pipelines of the US, Colonial Pipeline, last week shows the vulnerabilities of global establishments to various cyberthreats. This pipeline, which carries 100 million gallons of fuel daily, accounts for 45 per cent of the fuel used on the East Coast of the US. The shutdown has caused gas shortages in areas served by Colonial with prices shooting up in some areas.

According to preliminary investigation, a hacker group called DarkSide, based in Russia is believed to be responsible for this attack. Though Colonial Pipeline has denied that it has paid a ransom of \$5 million to the hacker group, some reports suggested the same. Like Colonial Pipeline, the Health Department of Ireland has been under a ransomware attack.

Similarly, a ransomware attack as early as Monday was seen on insurance major Axa's subsidiary in four Asian countries- Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Philippines. The ransomware attack is one of the most

potent threats in the cybersecurity space. During this pandemic period, incidences of such attacks have only risen as most people operate from home.

According to global consultancy firm KPMG, remote working increases the risk of a successful ransomware attack significantly. This is majorly due to a combination of weaker controls on home IT system and a higher likelihood of users clicking on Covid-19 themed ransomware emails given the levels of anxiety, KPMG added.

In the Indian context, the government and enterprises should take all cyber safety measures to check such attacks. According to a report by Chennai-based Cyber Security Works (CSW), the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), Apollo Tyres, India Bulls, and Delhi Medical Council were victims of ransomware attacks in the past year, and their data has been exposed on the dark web.

Even reports have come out on data breaches in variety of sectors including pharma, telecom, e-com-

merce, and public sector entities. Dr Reddy's, Big Basket, Airtel, Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) and Juspay had their sensitive information exposed as per reports over the last year.

According to US cyber tech firm CrowdStrike, more than one-third (34 per cent) of Indian organisations paid between \$1-\$2.5 million to the hackers to get back their data and system access in the last 12 months, which is second to only Singapore (69 per cent). A global survey carried out by the tech firm found that India Inc is particularly threatened by cyberattacks emanating from China and Pakistan due to rising geopolitical tensions. Over half (51 per cent) of Indian companies said that nation-state attacks will remain the biggest worry in 2021.

Against this backdrop, organisations will be well-advised to create awareness among their employees regarding ransomware attacks. With a raging second wave sweeping across India, the likelihood of return of employees to offices remains remote in the near team. As most workers continue to operate from home, cybersecurity measures are a must to save precious personal and business data from hackers.



# MODI-SHAH IMAGE SUFFERS A HUGE DENT

GIDUGU RUDRA RAJU

SEVEN years ago, in 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stormed to power, riding the crest of a wave, having projected himself as the most popular and decisive leader India has ever known. He was joined by Amit Shah, first as BJP President in 2014, winning over States to the BJP and then as the Union Home Minister in 2019, presiding over the National Disaster Management mechanism. The two have since projected themselves as Jodi No 1.

Prime Minister Modi, as the overall Head of Government, and Home Minister Amit Shah, as head of the National Disaster Management mechanism in the country, found the fury of Corona Virus pandemic hitting hard the entire nation. From the 5th worst affected country in the world during the First Wave, India has now moved to world's number one position in Corona cases and deaths. If any proof is needed of the magnitude of the catastrophe hitting India, one has only to see the flames of mass funeral-pyres in crematoria across the country shown on TV screens by the various news channels. Failure in the elementary duty of the Modi Government to ensure supplies of oxygen, has cost the nation dearly. Covid patients in the hospital ICUs and even in hospital parking lots, died gasping for breath in the absence of availability of oxygen.

According to Commerce Ministry Report, India sold large quantities of oxygen to the world during the first ten months of fiscal 2020-21. The oxygen exports increased by a staggering 734 per cent in January 2021, especially at a time when the pandemic was also set to peak, according to experts.

Nearly 6.5 crore doses of vaccines were exported by the Modi Government, jeopardizing the vaccination drive within the country. People, who have taken the First Vaccine Dose, are now waiting for vaccine stocks to arrive for taking the Second Dose. What is more is that while the Modi Government took the responsibility for vaccinating the frontline workers and those above 60 years age and above 45 years age, it washed its hands off the responsibility of vaccinating the 18-44 years age-group, shifting the responsibility of Vaccination on the States, whose financial condition is already stretched.

What is worse, it allowed differential pricing of the same Vaccine, which it is difficult to defend. Besides, now States have no Vaccines and are waiting for the arrival of Vaccine stocks to roll out vaccination drive for the 18-44 years age-group.

Significantly, in Uttar Pradesh, right under the nose of Yogi Adityanath Government, more than half-a-dozen ruling BJP MLAs died of Covid, which is a telling commentary on the state of affairs in the largest Hindi-heartland State. In Uttar Pradesh, as many as 18 senior Professors in various Departments of Aligarh Muslim University died of Covid. An estimated over 700 school teachers have died in Uttar Pradesh, including a pregnant lady, who was forced to attend polling duty for the Uttar Pradesh Panchayat elections.

These elections have been conducted in almost 60,000 Gram Sabhas of UP, without any thought of the catastrophe. People are dying in homes across rural UP, but these deaths are not even counted as Covid, because people have not been tested.

Far from using the over 6 months precious time available after the First Wave, to ramp up medical facilities, like ICU beds, oxygen supplies, medicines and vaccines availability, Prime Minister Modi was in a self-congratulatory mood. What is worse, he began mocking other countries, saying how they proved totally wrong that the pandemic would create havoc in India. India, he boasted, was the world's pharmacy, as India was supplying medicines and vaccines for other countries.

International community is now rallying around to rush aid to India. Interestingly, during the Kerala floods, when State Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan wanted to take help from Gulf countries, the Modi Government dissuaded him from doing so. The argument was that India does not accept international aid. Ironically, the Modi dispensation is now looking to all countries all across the globe for aid to trickle in, in order to help the Indian people.

Finally, the matter landed in the courts, in the face of deafening silence of the Modi Government on the issue. Several High Courts pulled up the political dispensation for its lackadaisical attitude and approach in dealing with the pandemic. In the Delhi High Court, the Modi Government, represented by Additional Solicitor-General Chetan Sharma, contended that the Supreme Court had not directed the Centre to supply 700 tonnes, but to just fulfil the deficit in oxygen supply.

The Delhi High Court took strong exception to the Additional Solicitor-General dismissing as "rhetoric," Delhi Government counsel Mehra submission that "people are dying" due to lack of sufficient oxygen supply to hospitals in the National Capital.

This past week, finally the Supreme Court has constituted a 12-member National Task Force to streamline and ensure the efficient and transparent allocation of liquid medical oxygen equitably to all States. Perhaps the Supreme Court stepping in is symbolic of the colossal failure of the Modi Government in tackling the pandemic. This was an indictment for Prime Minister Modi, who never tried of tom-tomming himself as the most decisive leader of India.

This situation, however did not come about suddenly overnight. As the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah duo was busy in the political conquest of West Bengal, the situation on the pandemic front slipped out of hand and spiralled out of control. By the time the Modi Government realized what was happening, it was too late in the day and the damage was already done. The Jodi Number 1 became helpless, mute spectators. They even forgot their Jai Shri Ram and Bharat Mata Ki Jai slogans, as they faltered for words to explain away this dastardly situation that shocked the whole world.

Perhaps, the Modi Establishment is still unable to come to grips with the gravity of the pandemic situation. In the First Wave of Corona Virus, the highest single-day figures were less than the one lakh. In the Second Wave, the highest single-day cases crossed the 4,00,000 mark and the highest single-day deaths figure has crossed 4,000. Tragedy has not left any family untouched. Everyone has suffered a loss in their family or in their friends circle, loosing their near and dear ones. Unlike the First Wave of Corona pandemic, the Second Wave is not a natural calamity, but a man-made tragedy. It is a man-made tragedy because, the Modi Government clearly ignored the experts warning and the global experience of the Second Wave of the pandemic coming with greater severity.

If this was not all, the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar and the mammoth election rallies in the election-going States served as the trigger for the Second Wave of Corona. What was most indefensible was the green signal from the Modi dispensation for the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar and the massive crowds at the election rallies addressed by Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah in the five Assembly elections that became super-spreaders of the pandemic.

Lakhs of people visiting the Kumbh in Haridwar were all mostly from rural areas in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, besides New Delhi. As a result, for the first time, the pandemic spread rapidly in the villages of Uttar Pradesh, where there are no medical facilities available to meet requirements of the pandemic.

Surely the larger share blame rests with Prime Minister Modi, as he happens to be Head of Government. At the same time, the people cannot absolve themselves of their share of responsibility. Despite the First Wave of Covid pandemic, they failed to adhere to and observe Covid-appropriate behaviour and Protocol. Even after both doses of vaccination, there is no escape from Covid-appropriate behaviour: compulsory wearing of masks, frequent use of Sanitizers and handwash and physical distancing. After all, each individual has to take responsibility for his own personal safety and individual life. This cannot be outsourced.

(The writer is AICC Secretary In-charge of Odisha and former MLC)

## MOOT POINT



Dr Ramu Suravajjula

AT a time when the entire humanity is in grief, lakhs of bereaved families are mourning and crores of Covid-19 positive patients are struggling for life, dear doctor, my heart is bleeding for you. I am

writing this to thank you for relentlessly working overtime by risking your personal and family safety amidst an unprecedented uncertainty, stress and turmoil caused by the apocalypse.

We, the citizens, are in the race for survival and individual safety is the topmost priority for each one of us. Let alone others, our own mothers and fathers become 'untouchables' from the minute they test positive. Alas, we are not at the bedside of our loved ones and we are dead-scarred to perform the last rites of those who lost the battle, fearing the pugnacious nature of the virus. Notwithstanding the risk involved, you are taking care of our people to bring cheer in our homes. I don't know whether you have taken the two doses of the vaccine or not, but I salute you for the yeoman service you are rendering while braving all odds!

I get shivers down my spine when I think about you in the ICUs wearing the thick polyester PPEs in grueling double shifts amidst a mountain of grief every day. It is a wonder how you go about the task in the absence of appropriate infrastructure like oxygen cylinders, ICU beds and ventilators and life-saving medicines. The breathlessness of your patient could momentarily stop your own breath. There will be a deep psychological impact on the professional in you, if your efforts prove futile. Sometimes, relatives of the deceased point fingers at you and the resultant exasperation may render you helpless. Doctor jee, it takes us up to ten days to digest the news of a death. How can you come to terms of such deaths on an hourly basis? May be our philosophical moorings are coming in handy for you. God bless you.

Traditionally, we equate doctors to Gods. Trust me when I acknowledge that you are more than that for people at this critical phase of human history. The challenges you brave-hearts are facing, and overcoming are mind-blowing. They are: 1) Multiplied work-load, 2) Unprecedented uncertainty, 3) Shortage of essential infrastructure, 4) Non-availability of suitable medicines, 5) Patients' mistrust, 6) Physical strain, 7) Mental trauma, 8) Worry about personal and family safety, 9) Lack of time to upgrade subject knowledge 10) Fear of attacks from the kin of the deceased,

11) Infodemic, and 12) Media bashing.

Challenges faced by doctors in the government sector are, of course, different but then you all endure the same kind of challenges, once you don the white coat and carry stethoscope. I know you are cheesed off with the half-baked knowledge shared on social media and when patients consult three to four doctors simultaneously, a trait which Dr Bikkasani Kalyani has aptly called as 'medical shopping.'

It is unfortunate that from the day, the 33-year-old Dr. Li Wenliang, an ophthalmologist who lost his life on February 7, 2020 after being infected with SARS-CoV-2 in Wuhan, many doctors lost their precious lives, the world over. The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has declared that around 864 modern medicine doctors have lost the battle against Covid-19 and, God forbid, we are told that the worst is yet to come.

It feels sad that you are paying a heavy price for the failures of various governments. Sorry doctor, we are loaded with money to distribute freebies keeping votes in mind but no funds to provide proper medical infrastructure. It is painful to note that independent India has not even met the WHO norm of 1:1000 doctor-population ratio. Our population has been projected to touch 144,75,60,463 by 2024 and the doctor-population is expected to be around 1.03 per 1,000 population by then. In the face of Covid-like situations, a doctor per 1000 population is meaningless and you all would be swamped with patients beyond the logical human capacity.

India's expenditure of 1.5 per cent of GDP on health is meagre compared to the spending of European countries (7-8 per cent of GDP). India's expenditure is expected to touch three per cent by 2025 but an urgent correction course is needed, particularly in the wake of lessons learnt from the present crisis. I know how embarrassing it would be when ill-informed political bosses speak about the virus and mutations when they should actually be leaving the job to medical experts.

I am even more worried about doctor couples. For instance, Dr Sama Suraj Kumar and Dr Sindhura have to leave their kid at relatives' homes to meet the workload. Dr Suraj's migraine attacks became more frequent and severe, and he suffered from gastritis due to such daily routines during the first wave. Later, his wife Dr Sindhura contracted Covid. Straight from 14-day isolation, she had to attend an uninterrupted 24-hour shift, even though she was experiencing post-illness fatigue.

"We kept our 2-year-old son away from us and we definitely miss the times we would have otherwise spent with him. Being a parent, I feel extremely bad for all



kids whose childhood is being deprived of social experiences and family bonding because of the pandemic," the young doctor couple told me.

I know the story is similar with many families in which both husband and wife are doctors.

All said and done, doctor, I have a couple of suggestions for you. Kindly take note of them and introspect.

- 1) Stay away from corporate looting: I don't know whether you have sensed it or not but corporate culture has changed the image of a doctor. You are seen as a profit-maker for the well-maintained, star-hotel like, multi-speciality hospitals. The other day, I saw a bill served to a Covid-19 patient's family. It ran into a whopping Rs. 24 lakh for 28 hospital days. On an average, doctors' fee was around Rs.5,000 per visit! To my surprise, they mentioned names of the doctors who visited the patient, in the bill. Dr Ashish Chauhan confirmed me that doctors don't get a cut of that amount. I know it is the corporate hospital's way to avoid government stipulations. Let you forget, dear doctor, it is at the expense of your name and credibility! Is it true that managements of corporate hospitals force you all to write a number of needless tests only to make money? If that is the case, avoid the sin. I think you should also stop the corporate pharmacy tamasha in which hapless patients are fleeced by charging exorbitant prices for medicines. You should put your foot down to stop such practices to safeguard professional ethics.
- 2) Do communicate with compassion: I agree, doctor, it is humanly impossible to have a detailed discussion with every patient in this mad rush hour! Let me cite a latest instance to drive this point home. On the telephonic advice of a doctor, the better-half of a senior journalist, who tested positive and had liver issues, rushed him to a private hospital. His condition was not

serious. He wanted to get admitted to be on the safe side. In the hospital, the doctor refused to treat as 'this case needs an ICU bed immediately.' As an ICU bed was not available, he was asked to go to another hospital. The condition of the journalist, who had very good oxygen saturation levels till that point of time, deteriorated moments after the doctor's inhuman verbose had sounded the 'death-knell.' A couple of days later he passed away in a government hospital. I strongly feel that had the doctor communicated in a more subtle manner, the patient would have survived. May be due to lack of time or training, many doctors fail to communicate well. Have you realised that online consultation, today's norm, needs special communication skills? We don't expect you to give false hopes but a word of assurance from you means a lot for the aggrieved families. You know placebo effect, right? A soothing word from a doctor carries a similar psychological impact on a patient.

Sir/Madam, I had to mention these key points with due respects to all of you. It hurts me when people talk ill about you and your ilk who are serving the country on par with our brave soldiers. You deserve respect, not criticism. Before signing off, dear doctor, here is a clarification: For my convenience, I have addressed 'doctors' per se in this column but this letter is meant for the entire medical fraternity, from ward staff to nurses to lab technicians to community health workers to all kinds of caregivers. Let me tell you that I don't want to belittle your humungous work by keeping you in the bracket of a single phrase: 'Covid frontline warriors.' You are more than that. And, you all deserve to take a bow. Stay safe, stay blessed.

(The writer, a PhD in Communication and Journalism, is a senior journalist, journalism educator and communication consultant)

# Google launches News Showcase in India with 30 news publishers

GOOGLE on Tuesday announced it has rolled out News Showcase in India with 30 news publishers including national, regional and local news organisations like Indo Asian News Service (IANS), ABP LIVE, India TV, Zee News, Amar Ujala, Deccan Herald, Punjab Kesari, The Tribune, Kalinga TV and others. The aim is to support news organisations and readers supports news publishers to curate high quality content on Google's News and Discover platforms in the country, connecting readers with the news they need, especially in these tough Covid-19 times. "This builds on News Showcase deals signed by 700 news publications in more than a dozen countries, including Germany, Brazil, Canada, France, Japan, the U.K. Australia, Czechia, Italy and Argentina, more than 90 per cent of them representing local or community news - with discussions underway in several other countries," said Brad Bender, VP Product Management, News.

Content from the Indian publisher partners in English and Hindi will begin to appear in dedicated News Showcase panels in Google News and on Discover. "We're committed to launching in additional Indic languages this year and we'll continue to incorporate more languages in the future. As part of our licensing agreements with publishers, we're also paying participating news organisations to give readers access to a limited amount of paywalled content," said Sanjay Gupta, Vice President of Google India.

This feature means readers will have the opportunity to read more of a publisher's articles than "they would otherwise be able to, while deepening readers' relationships with publishers and encouraging them to subscribe".

Over the next three years, with increased support from the News Lab, Google will train 50,000 journalists and journalism students in the country.

"We'll focus on digital tools to aid verification and combat misinformation online, and we'll expand our programs to connect Indian journalists and fact-checkers," said Google.

The GNI Advertising Lab, which includes training sessions and implementation support to help more than 800 small Indian news organizations grow their digital ad revenue. "These investments will help people find quality journalism, contribute to the sustainability of news organizations, and expand our programs under the Google News Initiative - enabling newsrooms to engage their readers in new and compelling ways through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond," the company stressed.

# RSS vs BJP

KVVV CHARYA

"WILL RSS jettison Modi?" This question is making rounds frequently these days, especially, after Covid19 second wave impacted the country with large number of deaths.

In fact, it is the hot topic even among the RSS-BJP circles who feel worrisome, after Modi garnered huge support within India and outside. However, the topic has come to forefront after RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's recent observation in a webinar that the government, administration and public dropped their guard leading to the present situation.

Another senior RSS leader Ram Madhav, former BJP functionary, in his writings in Indian Express is also critical about the handling of Covid second wave by the Modi administration.

Here to say that, the meaning of these statements are very well understood by the people who know the working of the RSS. They will not speak out just like that, without debating internally.

The opinion of the people who respect the organisation is more oblique. They say the government must consider constructive criticism, at least, from the inner circles, leave opposition or so-called extreme think-tanks.

In his own-way, Mohan Bhagwat referred

from religious text about "Samudra Manthan" where churning produces poison first and later nectar. He sums up that it is time for the people of this country should move shoulder-to-shoulder with the government and administration in order to face this extraordinary condition.

Bhagwat urged people to stay positive and proactive to fight the pandemic. The country should stay united and work as a team in these testing time, stopping pointing fingers at each other. "We will not be scared. We shall stand like a rock."

His acceptance of the present situation, point-blank, Bhagwat exhorted his own men to join the chorus of service without finding fault with the Modi government and his party's decision to go ahead elections.

Let us look at the pre-2014 days how Narendra Modi's candidature was promoted by the RSS and its groups, and they found him better 'Hindu' as against Advani. Even now, nobody is doubting his Hindutva. Clever Modi, in the entire campaign, never posed as 'communal' and finally he walked off with the thumping victory to Lok Sabha. In 2007, Narendra Modi was 'Vikas Purush', and now he is 'Hriday Samrat' of Hindus. For RSS, Modi did fulfil all its dreams, its ideology expanded beyond propoitions and RSS is no longer considered 'untouchable'.





# Fine slapped on Kothapet fruit mkt traders for using Ethephon

ESA BIN ABDUL REHMAN

ALL instructions, measures and warnings failed to yield any fruitful result as the team of officials from the Food Control Wing and the Analysts from State Food Laboratory cracked the whip against the fruit agents on Tuesday at Gaddiannaram Agricultural Market Yard (Kothapet Fruit Market) for using chemical substance Ethephon for artificial ripening of mangoes and other fruits beyond permissible limits.

The officials imposed fines varying from Rs.1,000 to Rs.5,000 on at least 13 fruit agents for carrying unhealthy and harmful practices despite several warnings and edifications in the past.

"In the surprise inspection carried out today we found that 'Ethephon' which is permissible for artificial ripening of fruits with prescribed guidelines was placed in sachets under the fruits bags beyond prescribed limits, regardless of the safety principles that says the sachets should be kept under the boxes carefully so to avoid direct contact with the fruit," stated Laxminarayana Reddy, Senior Scientific Officer, State Food Laboratory.

It is learnt that the fruit agents at Kothapet Fruit Market soon pump in the support of local markets committee officials and held a meeting together with the inspecting authorities to prevent them from going further into action. During the meeting, the agents have assured the whipping authorities not to take any further action and provide them yet another chance to mend ways. The officials were reportedly heard saying that next time they would



**Wound up Officials made surprise inspection and imposed penalties on bolshie fruit agents**

- Ethephon leaves its chemical traces behind that turn the fruit into a bunch of health problems
- The officials imposed fines on 13 fruit agents for carrying unhealthy and harmful practices

file cases against fruit agents in the market yard as they are having the primary role to prevent such unhealthy practices that put peoples' lives into jeopardy. Though the mango and sweet lime produce largely comes from the Telangana region, the other fruits get into the market yard from other States.

It is said that a chemical compound called 'Ethephon' is being used at the Kothapet market to provide artificial repining not only to raw mangoes but for other fruits like pineapple and sweet

lime/citrus that comes with a host of health benefits. However, the Agri-experts claim that the use of Ethephon leaves its chemical traces behind that turn the fruit into a bunch of health problems instead of providing health benefits.

"The most commonly used chemical for artificial ripening is called Ethephon (2 chloroethyl phosphonic acid). It penetrates the fruit and decomposes ethylene. Similarly, calcium carbide, another chemical used regularly, produces acetylene which is an

analogue of ethylene. It is, however, fraught with several problems. The studies have shown that it breaks down the organic composition of vitamins and other micronutrients," explained Dr Ch Subba Raju, an agricultural expert.

Apart from GHMC Food Safety Officer Megham, Junior Scientific Officer N Ravindra, Food Safety Officer, and Flying Squad member Dharmendra and Praveen Reddy Special Grade Secretary Agricultural Market Yard Gaddiannaram took part in the inspection.

## Free ride to plasma donors in TS

MOHAMMED HUSSAIN  
HYDERABAD

IN these gruelling times of the Corona pandemic people are trying their best to provide help to everyone. These days have truly brought the best out in some citizens.

Ramu Dosapati, an HR executive in a corporate, has turned a social activist during lockdown by starting a 'Rice ATM' for the needy. He has taken another initiative aiming to offer a free transportation facility to plasma donors across the State.

According to health professionals, Covid-19 survivors in the 18-55 age group and weighing above 50 kg are eligible to donate plasma after completion of the 14-day recovery period.

Members of Hyderabad Blood Donor Groups mention that demand for plasma donors has increased. But with the shutdown in force, they are facing difficulties in reaching hospitals.

Coming forward with help, motivating donors and ensuring their safety, Ramu has set apart five vehicles dedicated to providing free pick and drop to donors.

He says "to spread awareness and sensitising people on plasma therapy and donation, I have



■ Vehicles to reach donor's home with a separate seat fully sanitised, with a kit

■ Five vehicles dedicated to providing free pick and drop facilities

■ Plasma may help seriously ill Covid patients

taken this initiative with these vehicles to provide free transport for donors, as it may help seriously ill Covid patients."

Till now, Ramu has successfully provided transport to more than 30 donors in the State. He gets calls from donors through his contact details spread over social media. The vehicles reach the donor's home with a separate seat fully sanitised, with a kit that includes a face mask, gloves, sanitiser and energy drink.

Ramu said he had also brought donors from nearby districts and

villages to patients in City hospitals. He is collaborating with the Hyderabad Blood Donors Society in LB Nagar.

He had felt that even if a few people are coming forward to donate plasma, after recent recovery from Covid, they were unable to reach hospitals due to lack of public transport during lockdown hours. With his vehicles reaching their doorstep many are willing to donate plasma, "These vehicles can also reach donors staying in villages, suburbs and districts," Ramu added.

## Kamson healthcare donates sanitisers to Cyberabad police

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
RANGA REDDY

KAMSON Healthcare Pvt Ltd Director Mukesh Kumar Gilada, along with Managing Director Manish Kumar Gilada and HR Nursing donated sanitisers and multivitamin tablets to Cyberabad police on Tuesday. Kamson health-

care Pvt Ltd handed over a total of 300 sanitisers bottles (500 ml), 250 sanitisers bottles (100 ml), 2,000 sanitisers portable tubes (20 ml), 30,000 multivitamin tablets to Cyberabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar.

Speaking on the occasion, the Cyberabad CP Sajjanar thanked Kamson Healthcare Pvt Ltd for do-

minating sanitisers and multivitamin tablets to Cyberabad police. He said that there are almost 5,000 officers from Cyberabad on the ground implementing the lockdown. CP Sajjanar urged citizens to keep up the same zeal in following the lockdown rules to successfully curb spread of the virus. Cyberabad Police and others were present.

### MATSYAKARA BHAROSA

## Fishermen receive ₹119.88 crore

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday disbursed Rs 119.88 crore into the accounts of 1,19,875 fishermen families crediting Rs 10,000 each for the consecutive third year under YSR Matsyakara Bharosa compensating the off-season ban on marine fishing.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that the programme, benefiting about 1,19,875 families, was taken up for the uplift of fishermen who were struggling for livelihood during the lean period from mid-April to mid-June. The scheme was initiated in 2019 increasing the financial assistance from Rs 4,000 to Rs 10,000, and the state government had spent around Rs 332 crore on the scheme.

With welfare of fishermen being the priority, the Chief Minister said the government had increased the fuel subsidy from Rs 6 to Rs 9 per litre which can be redeemed instantly at 100 recognised petrol bunks and also providing power at a subsidised cost of Rs 1.50 per unit to the aqua farmers despite being burdened with Rs 780 crore annually. In case of accidental death, the state government enhanced the ex gratia from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh to support the bereaved family in the hard times and so far 67 fishermen families have been provided with an assistance of Rs 6.7 crore. He asserted that the previous government completely neglected the



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy with fisherfolk's tools during the transfer of Matsyakara Bharosa amount into the accounts of fisherfolk at his camp office on Tuesday

● CM credits the amount into the accounts of 1,19,875 fisherfolk as a relief in view of the ban on fishing which is enforced every year from mid-April to mid-June

● Says to prevent migration of fishermen to other parts of the country in search of livelihood, the State govt started construction of four fishing harbours and four more will be taken up soon

● Each of the beneficiaries will get Rs 10,000

welfare of fishermen and aquaculture in the state.

In order to create more opportunities for the fishermen here in the state rather than going to other states in search of livelihood and risking their lives, the Chief Minister said that eight new fishing harbours are going to be established, where the works of four harbours in phase-1 at Juvvaladinne in Nellore district, Uppada in East Godavari, Nizampatnam in Guntur, and

Machilipatnam in Krishna district are under way at a cost of Rs 1,510 crore. Soon, four more harbours will be set up in Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, West Godavari and Prakasam districts at a cost of Rs 1,365 crore aiming to create employment for 80,000 fishermen.

Also, the Chief Minister said that the state has set up 35 aqua labs to check the quality of aqua products at a cost of Rs 50.30 crore along with a AP Fisheries

University in West Godavari district to give expert training in aquaculture. In order to support aqua farmers to provide better prices for their produce, the state government is setting up 100 aqua hubs at a cost of Rs 332.9 crore, where each hub will have 120 retail shops to sell their produce directly. Currently in phase-1, 25 aqua hubs are being set up across the state and works are in progress.

Criticising the previous government for failing to compensate the fishermen of Mummidi-varam village, the Chief Minister said that his government had paid the compensation of around Rs 75 crore to the fishermen of that constituency who incurred a loss due to GSPC pipeline evacuations. Though they did not get the amount from the company, the government had cleared it on humanitarian grounds, he added.

### RUIA DEATHS

## NHRC seeks report from Health Dept

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
TIRUPATI

RESPONDING to the two complaints on the death of 11 Covid patients due to non-availability of oxygen in government SVRR (Ruia) general hospital here, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) called for a report within four weeks from the principal secretary, department of health and family welfare, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

The commission in its order said that it has taken the issue of health care of Covid patients very seriously and the allegations if true raise serious issues

● Former MP Chinta Mohan and another person from the State lodge a complaint with the rights panel seeking probe into the tragedy

of human rights violations.

The commission has also issued an advisory on the subject after transmitting the complaint to the principal secretary for submitting a report. It may be recalled that senior Congress leader and former Union minister Dr Chinta Mohan on Friday petitioned the NHRC to probe the Covid patients deaths

that occurred due to lack of oxygen in SVRR government hospital ICU and other wards (on May 10) and alleged that about 30 died in the incident which is a serious human rights violation and injustice to the poor.

He requested the NHRC to register a case into the deaths in SVRR and investigate.

Another person, Jestadi Sudhakar of All India Council of Human Rights, Liberties, Social Justice, also on May 10 filed a complaint with NHRC, requesting the commission to intervene in the issue of the death of Covid patients due to non-availability of oxygen supply in SVRR hospital.

## MP examined at Army Hospital as per SC orders

HYDERABAD

NARSAPURAM MP K Raghurama Krishna Raju was medically examined at Army Hospital in Secunderabad here on Tuesday.

On the direction of the Supreme Court, a three-member medical board at Army Hospital examined rebel MP of ruling YSRC who was arrested on sedition charges and allegedly tortured in police custody for criticising Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy.

The MP was brought to Hyderabad from Guntur by Andhra Pradesh CID late on Monday.

He was examined by doctors at Army Hospital at Trimulgherry in the presence of a judicial officer ap-

pointed by Telangana High Court. Doctors conducted various tests on him and also videographed the same. Police had made tight security arrangements at the hospital. Reports of these tests will be submitted to the Supreme Court through Telangana High Court registrar. Earlier, as per the orders of the Supreme Court, Telangana High Court appointed a judicial officer to monitor the medical tests on the Narsapuram MP. The High Court named its registrar Nagarajuna as the judicial officer.

A bench of Justices Vineet Saran and B R Gavai had on Monday directed that the MP be examined at Army Hospital in Secunderabad.

## AP reports 98 deaths, 21,320 new cases

AMARAVATI

THE state on Tuesday reported fresh coronavirus cases and recoveries almost in equal numbers, of over 21,000 each, while 98 people succumbed to the infection. The latest bulletin said 91,253 tests turned out 21,320 fresh Covid-19 positives in 24 hours ending 9 am on Tuesday, with a positivity rate of 23.36 per cent. Also, 21,274 Covid-19 patients had recovered in a day. The gross positives now touched 14,75,372 and the recoveries 12,54,291. The overall coronavirus toll in the state increased to 9,580, the bulletin said. The state now has 2,11,501 active cases. East Godavari district reported

the highest 2,923 new cases, followed by Anantapur (2,804), Chittoor (2,630) and Visakhapatnam (2,368). Six districts registered between 1,000 and 1,800 new cases each and three more logged less than 1,000 each.

East Godavari crossed the 30,000 mark in the number of active cases, the highest in the state so far during the second wave. Chittoor, Krishna and Vizianagaram districts reported 10 fresh Covid-19 fatalities each, East Godavari and Prakasam nine each, Anantapur, Guntur, Visakhapatnam and West Godavari eight each, Kurnool and Srikakulam six each. Nellore had five and Kadapa two coronavirus deaths in a day.







## TODAY'S QUOTE

### More cos should be allowed to make vax

"I suggest that more pharma companies should be allowed to make the Covid-19 vaccine in the country during the pandemic to scale up production. I will also request Prime Minister to bring a law for allowing more pharma companies to manufacture life-saving drugs."

— Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister



## K'PATNAM PORT

### APSEZ gets CCI nod for port stake buy

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) on Tuesday gave nod to proposed acquisition of additional 25% stake of Adani Krishnapatnam Port Ltd by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd. The acquirer already holds 75% shareholding in Adani Krishnapatnam Port.

## FOREX (buy rates in ₹)

US Dollar	73.72	South	
Euro	90.05	African Rand	5.94
UAE Dirham	20.46	Hong Kong Dollar	10.81
Thai Baht	2.55	Japanese Yen	0.77
British Pound	104.69	New Zealand Dollar	53.43
Australian Dollar	57.52	Saudi Riyal	21.4
Canadian Dollar	61.34	Swedish Krona	10.11
Swiss Franc	82.19	Singapore Dollar	56

DELHI WEDNESDAY 19 MAY 2021

## BIZ BRIEFS

### Rupee hits 7-week high

The rupee rose by 17 paise to close at a seven-week high of 73.05 against the US dollar on Tuesday, extending its gaining streak to the third straight session on positive domestic equities and weakening of the American currency in the overseas markets. At the interbank forex market, the rupee opened at 73.18 and hit an intra-day high of 72.95 and a low of 73.18 during the session. "Rupee gained for the third day in row to the highest in almost seven weeks as dollar drifted lower while equities roared after daily virus cases started declining," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities. However, sharp gains were prevented on surge in crude oil prices, continued FII outflows, traders said.

### Lanxess India donates

Lanxess India has committed over Rs 2.1 crore as part of its CSR spends to support the medical infrastructure in the country in its fight against the coronavirus pandemic. The spike in Covid-19 cases in the second wave has been severe. To help medical institutions tackle the situation better, LanxessIndia has donated 20 units of advanced German ventilators worth approximately INR 1.9 crore to various hospitals, besides extending other support. Neelanjana Banerjee, Managing Director, Lanxess India, said: "The current second wave of the coronavirus pandemic in India has overwhelmed the medical infrastructure of our country and has led to a severe shortage of critical medical equipment. We have yet again tried to support augmenting the infrastructure of some of the hospitals".

### Dhani's CSR initiative

Healthcare business app Dhani app has started distribution of 25 lakh free Covid-care health kits worth Rs 90 crore that will benefit 50 lakh adults. Each kit has preventive medicines for two persons. Dhani is a digital app-based business of healthcare by the Indiabulls Group. This kit has been packaged as per the recommendation by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and will be helpful in the initial preventive care of Covid-19. Nikhil Chari, President, Dhani Healthcare, says, "This kit will help boost immunity and if any individual develops any symptom such as fever, cough or throat infection could start using these medicines as an early care for Covid. Families can also connect with a Dhani doctor for free video consultations for any guidance."

### Mineral output up

India's mineral production rose by 6.1 per cent in March 2021 as compared to the year-ago period. The index of mineral production of mining and quarrying sector for the month at 139, was 6.1 per cent higher as compared to the level in March 2020, the data released by the Mines Ministry said. The cumulative growth for 2020-21 dropped by 7.8 per cent over the previous year, it said. The production level of important minerals in March 2021 includes, coal 960 lakh tonne, lignite 52 lakh tonne, natural gas (utilised) 2,612 million cubic metre, petroleum (crude) 26 lakh tonne and bauxite 2,103 thousand tonne. The minerals whose production rose during March 2021 over the year-ago period include manganese ore (80.1 per cent).

# Sensex recaptures 50,000 level

Stock market shoots to 2-month high on fall in fresh Covid cases

MUMBAI

EQUITY benchmarks Sensex and Nifty on Tuesday settled above the levels not seen in over two months as economic recovery hopes amid continuous decline in fresh Covid-19 cases further perked up investor sentiment. Recapturing the 50,000-level milestone, the BSE Sensex soared 612.60 points or 1.24 per cent to settle at 50,193.33.

This was the highest closing for the index since March 16. Likewise, the NSE Nifty went past the psychological 15,000-mark. At the closing bell, the NSE gauge quoted higher by 184.95 points or 1.24 points at 15,108.10 – the best closing since March 10. On the Sensex chart, M&M was the top gainer, rallying nearly 6 per cent, followed by Bajaj Auto, Titan, Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank and L&T.

On the other hand, Bharti Airtel, ITC, Dr Reddy's, SBI and HUL suffered losses. Sectorally, BSE auto, industrials, consumer durables, capital goods, power and utilities indices rallied up to 3.19 per cent. Telecom and FMCG indices fell up to 1.66 per cent. In the broader market, midcap and smallcap indices outperformed the benchmark by rallying as



### Investors' wealth zooms by ₹5.78 L cr

Investors' wealth zoomed by Rs 5,78,634.72 crore in two days of intense market rally, with participants adding Rs 2,74,908.83 crore to their fortune on Tuesday. Over the past two sessions, the BSE gauge Sensex has gained about 1,461 points or 2.99 per cent. Following the two-day massive rallies, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies jumped by Rs 5,78,634.72 crore to a record Rs 2,16,39,367.91 crore on Tuesday. "The rise can be attributed to a decline in India's Covid cases and stability in the global markets," said Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

much as 1.87 per cent. Largecap index rose 1.22 per cent "Domestic equities extended gains as early sign of decline in Covid-19 daily caseload and improving prospects of faster economic recovery emboldened investors," said Binod Modi, Head Strategy at Reliance Securities. Additionally, strong cues from Asian markets also supported the rally in domestic market, he added.

# IT hiring goes on even as Covid 2.0 rages

DEBASIS MOHAPATRA  
BENGALURU

DESPITE the unrelenting second wave of the pandemic, hiring momentum is unlikely to slacken up in the IT industry.

Experts are of the opinion that overall hiring in the first quarter of the ongoing fiscal FY22 will be at least 20 per cent more than the same period of last fiscal.

"In the current quarter (April-June), hiring will be at least higher by 20 percent than the year-ago period. Last year, hiring was subdued during this period owing to the first wave of the pandemic," said Aditya Narayan Mishra, Director and CEO of CIEL HR Services.

He also said that during the Jan-March quarter of fiscal 2021, hiring momentum was also robust as compared to same period a year ago.

According to experts, higher attrition rate and employee utilisation levels are the key factors driving this trend.

Country's second largest IT firm Infosys witnessed employee attrition going up by 5.2 per cent at 15.2 per cent in Q4 of FY21 as compared to 10 per cent reported in the previous quarter.

Similarly, Wipro has also seen attrition level going up by 110 basis points to 12.1 per cent during fourth quarter. Market leader TCS was the only exception, whose attrition level fell to 7.2 per cent in the IT services space from 7.6 per cent reported in the previous quarter. In the employee utilisation front, Infosys' em-

## NUMBERS MATTER

- TCS to take in 40,000 fresh college graduates; employee count to touch 5 lakh
- Infosys to recruit 26,000 freshers
- Wipro to recruit good number of fresh graduates; last year intake was 9,000
- HCL to appoint 12,000 freshers this year



ployee utilisation excluding trainees touched 140 basis points at 87.7 per cent. Similarly, Wipro's employee utilisation stood at 86 per cent during this period.

Apart from high attrition and utilisation levels, rising employee absenteeism is another factor responsible for addition of new employees. "IT firms require more hands for smooth project delivery as many employees are reporting sick due to the infection. Also, the hiring process has been streamlined in the last one year (with virtual on-boarding)," said Pareekh Jain, an IT outsourcing advisor and founder of Pareekh Consulting.

During the post earnings conference call, the top four IT services companies - TCS, Infosys, HCL Technologies & Wipro - are likely to hire around one lakh fresh college graduates in FY22.

TCS has said that it is looking to bring 40,000 freshers on board in FY22, which will push up its total employee count above 5 lakh. Similarly, Infosys said that it would hire 26,000 engineering graduates from campuses in the current financial year. Though Wipro didn't provide any specific number, it said it would be hiring more fresh graduates this fiscal over last fiscal year. In FY21, it had hired 9,000 college graduates. Earlier, HCL Technologies had said that the Noida-headquartered firm would hire 12,000 freshers in the current financial year.

"Hiring momentum was so strong in the January-March period that 30-40 per cent candidates dropped out as they had better offers. We see the demand for IT engineers to continue in the current quarter (despite the pandemic)," Mishra of CIEL HR Services said.



## Tata Motors Q4 net loss at ₹7,585 cr

NEW DELHI: Home-grown auto major Tata Motors on Tuesday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 7,585 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2021. It had posted a consolidated net loss of Rs 9,864 crore in the January-March period of FY2019-20, Tata Motors said in a BSE filing.

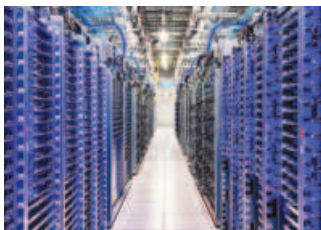
The auto major's total income in the fourth quarter of FY'21 stood at Rs 89,319 crore. It was at Rs 63,057 crore in the year-ago quarter. For the entire 2020-21 fiscal, the company reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 13,395 crore, against a net loss of Rs 11,975 crore in 2019-20. Its total income stood at Rs 2,52,438 crore for the last financial year as against Rs 2,64,041 crore in FY'20.

# Data centres need \$3.7-bn boost to meet demand: JLL

HANS BUSINESS  
HYDERABAD

INDIA's data centre sector will require investment of \$3.7 billion over the next three years in order to fulfill the 6 million square feet greenfield development opportunity for the industry, a JLL report said.

Titled '2020 India Data Center Market Update', the report said that as the data centre landscape continues to evolve, the industry is expected to grow exponentially to reach 1,007 MW by 2023 from its existing capacity of 447 MW. With growing reliance on digital connectivity, demand is likely to rise further due to the imminent rollout of 5G, IoT-linked devices, data localisation and cloud adoption. "India's colocation data center industry witnessed unprecedented absorption of 102 MW during 2020, notching higher absorption than most key markets of Europe and America. Fueled by



longer-term trends of rising cloud adoption, increasing digitalisation and progressive legislation, we anticipate increased demand for colocation space nationwide," said Rachit Mohan, Head, Data Center Advisory (India), JLL.

Rising demand led data center operators and developers to pursue ambitious expansion plans, while some adopted the acquisition route to enter Indian markets, which is expected to continue. Colocation capacity grew by around 28 per cent to reach 447 MW in 2020 from 350 MW in 2019, he added. Mumbai and Chennai are expected to drive 73

per cent of the sector's total capacity addition during 2021-23, while other cities like Hyderabad and Delhi-NCR emerging as new hotspots.

Robust expansion by global cloud players in the established markets of Mumbai and Pune continues owing to prevailing infrastructure, while new markets like Hyderabad are gaining momentum in this space.

"India's data center industry is expected to add 560 MW during 2021-23 leading to a real estate requirement of 6 mn sq ft. The supply addition will be complemented by densification of racks and servers, sustainable energy sourcing and use of indigenous resources," said Samantak Das, Chief Economist and Head of Research & REIS (India), JLL.

Rising demand is leading operators to pursue ambitious expansion plans, while some are adopting the acquisition route to enter Indian markets.

## AIC-CCMB invites startups to join CoviTeD

HYDERABAD: Atal Incubation Centre-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (AIC-CCMB) has invited entrepreneurs and innovators with promising technologies to join their Covid-19 Technology Deployment (CoviTeD) Acceleration Program.

A CSR initiative of Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Limited (SPM-CIL), the CoviTeD program aims to provide high impact mentoring, financial, regulatory and marketing support to take Covid-19 relevant products and technologies to market along with funding.

AIC-CCMB is looking for startups and innovators with focus on medical devices for management of covid-19 patients, quantifiable tests for ancillary markers of Covid-19, rapid diagnostics, drugs & therapeutics, sterilization and hygiene, logistics for biological and post-mortem management.

## T-Hub ties up with 9 cos to push growth of startups

HANS BUSINESS  
HYDERABAD

INNOVATION ecosystem enabler T-Hub has collaborated with nine new leading companies to help its startups accelerate their growth during pandemic by providing various operational services. It has joined hands with Cashfree, Cas-sixcom, CFO Bridge, Conduira, Fireflies.ai, Handysends, Lunchclub, Sapience and The Legal Capsule as its premium partners.

These new partners of T-Hub will support all its startups with a suite of services for efficient functioning and will be aligned to the drastically changing needs of startups to grow since the pandemic. This alliance benefits the service providers as well by giving them a platform showcase their offerings and establish them as reliable partners for our startups.

Ravi Narayan, CEO of T-Hub, said, "Our partnership with these new service providers is an effort to support our startups that are facing immense operational chal-



lenges because of the pandemic. Our startups have always been aided with world-class tools, guidance, libraries, and other services that have enabled them to cut operational costs and gain efficiency."

He adds, "These new partnerships will further help our startups to be confident with their technical, operational and sales processes so that they can completely focus on innovation and impact at a global level." Each startup has different budgets. Hence T-Hub has carefully curated this pool of service providers to propel startups on the path to success and makes them economically viable entities.

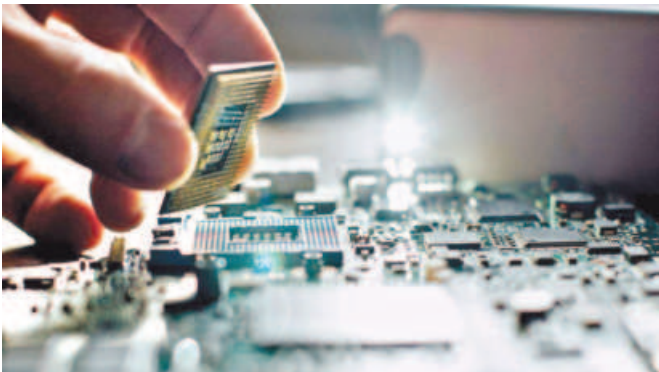
# AP's new policy bets big on electronics mfg

AP govt promises to offer customised incentive packages and clearances on a fast-track

SANTOSH PATNAIK

ANDHRA Pradesh Government has unveiled its New Electronics Policy with thrust on investments in electronic manufacturing clusters and component manufacturing, giving a fillip to private investments so as to create more employment opportunities for local youth.

The government promised to offer customised incentive packages and clearances on a fast-track. It says the electronics manufacturing unit/company has to generate an employment of more than 4,000 people or invest Rs. 500 crore or above in the State. Special incentive package for semiconductor and LCD fabs will be given. The government will work with large investors with an investment of over Rs.7,500 crore (USD 1 billion) to create a global fab manufacturing destination.



The government said it will make efforts to not only fast track such investment proposals through a special committee setup but also ensure that these investors are ensured infrastructure and skilled manpower in a rapid manner. The salient features of the new policy include encouraging State manufacturing firms in AP Government projects,

preferential market access shall be given to electronics industry as per the directions of government from time to time. AP Electronics & Information Technology Agency (APEITA) will act as a nodal agency for implementing the policy.

The State also articulated its desire to make a big impact in the Indian market for electronics

goods, which stood at \$118.2 billion in 2019-20 and is expected to quadruple to \$400 billion by 2025, driven by growth in income levels and higher disposable incomes.

Mobile phones, industrial electronics, strategic electronics are some of the major sub-sectors in electronics with growth potential in India.

Electronics manufacturing has become one of the fastest growing manufacturing industries in the world with a global production of about \$2 trillion in 2017-18. While traditionally countries such as China, South Korea and Taiwan have led the manufacturing output, the fast-changing trade equations between major economies worldwide combined with the supply chain rearrangements as a result of Covid-19 pandemic are causing investments to flow into countries such as India, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam.

The electronics system design and manufacturing (ESDM) sector currently provides employment to about 20 lakh people in the country and the Government of India in its National Policy for Electronics 2019 highlighted the strategic importance of electronics manufacturing and set a target to produce 1 billion mobile handsets by 2025. The policy explains that there is a need for a holistic policy framework for the electronics sector in AP to compete with other States which have an existing electronics ecosystem along with attractive incentives and tap into investments coming to India.

Senior IAS officer and Principal Secretary G. Jayalakshmi, in the GO containing details of the policy released on May 17, stated that the AP government is committed to developing the State in a holistic manner.

## Industrialists' body donates 40 O2 concentrators

HANS BUSINESS

HYDERABAD: To alleviate the oxygen shortage during the current crisis of Covid second wave, Telangana Industrialists Federation (TIF) donated 40 oxygen concentrators to Telangana State government. They have imported the oxygen concentrators from abroad and handed over to State Industry Minister K.T. Rama Rao said on Tuesday at Pragati Bhavan. These are requested to be used by the people in rural areas.

On this occasion the minister commended the efforts of TIF. He also urged the industrialists to come forward and provide conscious support to them in the face of this pandemic. The event was attended by TIF President Kondaveeti Sudhir Reddy, Joint Secretary Mirupala Gopal Rao and other members.



Sandpaper Gate

# Bancroft backtracks on ball-tampering claims

Other Aussie bowlers say we didn't tamper with ball, end rumour-mongering, innuendo

SYDNEY

CAMERON Bancroft backtracked after dropping hints of other bowlers' involvement in the 2018 ball-tampering scandal while the men in question, including top pacer Pat Cummins, claimed innocence and pleaded for an end to "rumour-mongering and innuendo" surrounding the incident that tarred Australia's cricketing reputation.

Bancroft kicked up a storm recently when he stated that it was "pretty self explanatory" when asked whether other bowlers in the team knew of the plan to use a sandpaper on the ball during the Cape Town Test against South Africa in 2018.

On Tuesday, a Sydney Morning Herald report, quoting sources familiar with the situation, stated that Bancroft had no fresh information to give to Cricket Australia's integrity unit, which contacted him. CA had offered a reinvestigation after Bancroft's interview.

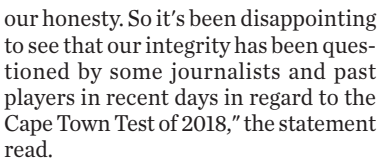
The men who were caught in the storm triggered by his statement were Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, Mitchell Starc and Nathan Lyon, who were all part of the team during the series. They issued a joint statement to deny any knowledge of the illegal plot.

"Bancroft, who is playing county cricket in the UK, had responded overnight on Monday in a conciliatory manner and indicated that he did not have significant new information to share with CA," the 'Sydney Morning Herald' report stated.

"Bancroft is said to have told CA he is supportive of the investigation and satisfied with the outcome," it added. The Australian bowling attack in the Cape Town Test also comprised all-rounder Mitchell Marsh.

According to the report, Bancroft also reached out to the affected bowlers in order to explain his recent comments. "...Bancroft had claimed he was left flustered by the unexpected line of questioning and that there was no malice behind his remarks."

The joint statement issued by Cummins, Starc, Hazlewood and Lyon sought closure. "We pride ourselves on



our honesty. So it's been disappointing to see that our integrity has been questioned by some journalists and past players in recent days in regard to the Cape Town Test of 2018," the statement read.

"...we feel compelled to put the key facts on the record again: We did not know a foreign substance was taken onto the field to alter the condition of the ball until we saw the images on the big screen at Newlands."

The four bowlers said they learned valuable lessons and it is time to move on from the issue. "None of this excuses what happened on the field that day at Newlands. It was wrong and it should never have happened.

"We've all learned valuable lessons and we'd like to think the public can

see a change for the better in terms of the way we play, the way we behave and respect the game. We respectfully request an end to the rumour-mongering and innuendo. It has gone on too long and it is time to move on."

The 28-year-old Bancroft was caught on camera using sandpaper on the ball in the third Test against South Africa in 2018. Bancroft, then skipper Steve Smith and his deputy David Warner were eventually banned for their roles in the scandal which led to a review of Australia's win-at-all-cost team culture.

While Bancroft was handed a nine-month ban, Smith and Warner were suspended for a year each. Head coach Darren Lehmann also resigned in the aftermath of the scandal. PTI

## Wrestler murder case

### Olympic medallist Sushil denied anticipatory bail

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Tuesday declined to grant anticipatory bail to Sushil Kumar, India's double Olympic medallist in wrestling, in connection with a brawl at Chhatrasal Stadium, which led to the death of a wrestler.

Additional sessions judge Jagdish Kumar declined to grant the relief to Kumar who has been booked for murder, abduction and criminal conspiracy. Kumar in his plea seeking anticipatory bail filed by advocate Kumar Vaibhaw has said: "unfounded, baseless, scurrilous and preposterous allegations have been made against the applicant maliciously with the only motive to humiliate and injure the reputation of the applicant." The police said Kumar is the main accused who has played a key role in the commission of offence.

The police have also announced a cash award of Rs.50,000 for anyone who provides information on Sushil's associate Ajay Kumar, who is a co-accused in the murder of Sagar Dhankar, a former international wrestler. On May 4, two groups of wrestlers clashed at Chhatrasal Stadium, resulting in the death of 23-year-old Dhankar.

Kumar, in the plea, argued that statement of the victims has been recorded and alleged recoveries have also been made, therefore no custodial interrogation was required. Kumar also claimed that he has no connection with the alleged firing, which took place during the brawl.

Senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, representing Kumar, questioned before the court the act of prosecution seizing Kumar's passport.

Additional public prosecutor Atul Shrivastava replied, "We have an apprehension that he may flee from the country." Shrivastava added that there is electronic evidence against Kumar.

# AB de Villiers's no to comeback as SA names squads for WI, Ireland

JOHANNESBURG

FORMER South Africa captain AB de Villiers will not come out of his international retirement, said Cricket South Africa (CSA) on Monday while announcing squads for the upcoming tours of the West Indies and Ireland.

CSA said it held discussions with de Villiers, but his retirement decision remains final. "Discussions with AB de Villiers have concluded, with the batsman deciding once and for all that his retirement will remain final," said CSA in a statement.

de Villiers, who retired from all forms of international cricket in 2018, had said during the 2021 Indian Premier League (IPL) that he would have a discussion with CSA about returning for this year's T20 World Cup.

CSA announced a 19-man squad, to that be led by Dean Elgar, for two Test matches in the West Indies that will be played from June 10 to 22. A 20-man squad led by Temba Bavuma has also been named for the five-match T20I series against the



West Indies, following the Tests, and a limited overs tour of Ireland in July.

The T20I series against West Indies will be played from June 26 to July 3. After that the Proteas will play a three-match ODI series in Ireland from

July 11 to 16, and a three-match T20I series from July 20 to 25. **Test squad:** Dean Elgar (captain), Temba Bavuma (vice-captain), Quinton de Kock (wicketkeeper), Sarel Erwee, Beuran Hendricks, George Linde, Keshav Maharaj, Lungi Ngidi, Aiden Markram, Wiaan Mulder, Anrich Nortje, Keegan Peterson, Kagiso Rabada, Rassie van der Dussen, Kyle Verreynne, Tabraiz Shamsi, Lizaad Williams, Prenelan Subrayen, Marco Jansen

**T20 squad:** Temba Bavuma (captain), Quinton de Kock (wicketkeeper), Bjorn Fortuin, Reeza Hendricks, Heinrich Klaasen, George Linde, Sisanda Magala, Janneman Malan, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Andile Phehlukwayo, Dwaine Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada, Tabraiz Shamsi, Rassie van der Dussen, Kyle Verreynne, Lizaad Williams

NEW DELHI

REPLACING the current three-game format with a best of five scoring system will once again be put to vote by the Badminton World Federation (NEF) during its AGM on Saturday.

The game's governing body, under president Poul Erik Hoyer Larsen, had floated the idea in 2014 for the first time but it didn't receive the support. The 11x5 system, which was criticised by players and coaches alike, couldn't gather enough votes in last year's AGM.

This time, a joint proposal to "amend the Laws of Badminton relating to the

## BWF members to vote on proposed 5-game scoring system during AGM

Scoring System" came from Badminton Indonesia and Badminton Maldives, and was seconded by Badminton Asia, and associations from Korea and Chinese Taipei.

"One of the key topics that will be voted on by the Membership is the proposal ... to amend the Laws of Badminton relating to the Scoring System," BWF said on Tuesday.

"BWF Council decided to express its support for this proposal as it aligns with the objectives of the BWF Strategic Plan 2020-2024.... According to the BWF strategic plan, it wants to "include new and innovative elements of the game to ensure this continues to evolve over time and excite, engage and enhance global fan base through inspirational performances at world-class events." During the meeting, "related changes regarding change of ends and continuous play" will also be motioned. However, BWF made it clear that it "not to be introduced until after the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games."

## 'WTC has made Test cricket exciting'

SOUTHAMPTON

NEW Zealand skipper Kane Williamson acknowledged World Test Championship (WTC) for bringing context to Test cricket and making the longest format of cricket exciting.

"It brought in real excitement. We saw that in declarations, games getting really tight. We saw it in the India-Australia series, our series here against Pakistan. Results had to be hard-fought for and you are willing to risk to win it," said Williamson while speaking in a video posted by the ICC Twitter handle.

Williamson will lead his side in the WTC final against India here from June 18. Before that, the Kiwis will have to play two Test matches against England at Lord's and Edgbaston. The Eng-

land Test series begins on June 2 and ends on June 14 giving them only three days to recover for the final against India.

The No. 3 batsman, who represents SunRisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League, said facing India in the WTC final would be a challenge.

"When we play against India, it has always been a fantastic challenge. It is really exciting to be playing them. It's really, really exciting to be involved in the final, obviously to win it would be that much better," he added.

The New Zealand squad has already reached Southampton and will play a four-day practice match against Somerset in Taunton from May 25.

Kiwis though will be missing

their ace seam bowler Trent Boult for the first Test. The left-arm pacer may arrive for the second Test but he will surely be available for the WTC final against India.



## India men & women's teams may travel together to England

NEW DELHI

IN what could possibly be the first instance of its kind, the India men and women's cricket teams are likely to travel together to England on a charter flight on June 2 for their respective series.

The two teams are likely to assemble in Mumbai on May 19 for a two-week quarantine although there were talks and speculation on Monday that cyclone on the west coast may delay their arrival.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had been mulling May 19 and May 24 as dates for assembling cricketers in Mumbai before departure.

While the Indian men's team will play six Test matches -- the World Test Championship final against New Zealand from June 18 and five Tests against England from August 4 --, the women's team will play a one-off Test in mid-June, three ODIs and three T20Is. According to a report in ESPNCricinfo.com, 'the 20 players in the men's Test squad, excluding those residing in Mumbai, will start their quarantine at the team hotel from Wednesday'.

It added that the 'rest of the squad and members of team management residing in Mumbai, including captain Virat Kohli, his deputy Ajinkya Rahane, Rohit Sharma and head coach Ravi Shastri, will enter the bio-secure bubble at the Mumbai team hotel from May 24'.

The teams will undergo a 10-day quarantine upon arrival in England. (ANS)

## Indian eves set to play Test cricket in Australia after England

NEW DELHI

INDIAN women's cricket team is set to play a Test in Australia after playing one in England next month.


India, who play their first Test in seven years from June 16 in England, will play another one during the tour of Australia. They will also play ODI and T20I matches Down Under. India last played a Test against Australia in 2006.

"England and Australia are the two teams that still play Tests and going forward you will see a Test slotted in when they visit India or when India tour the two countries," a BCCI official told PTI on Tuesday.

"The idea was floated on the sidelines of the men's pink ball Test and later discussed in the Apex Council meeting (last month)."

The tour of Australia is not yet announced but Australian pacer Megan Schutt said earlier this month the series is planned for mid-September.


The Indian squad assembles in Mumbai on Wednesday ahead of the UK tour comprising a Test in Bristol, followed by three ODIs and as many T20Is. (PTI)





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