

Womenia

TWEET PATROL



VARALAKSMI SARATHKUMAR
@VARUSARATH5

Superrrr happy to be working with my good friend
@iamVikramPrabhu in #PagaiyeKathiru
Dir @maniveldirector Produced by #RasiMuthuSamy
#KandhanArts @varusarath5 @smruthi_venkat
@Vidya_actress @SamCSmusic @selvadop1694@editor_raja
@dhilipaction @sivayad66490133
@idiamondbabu



TEJAL SINHA

Zariin, a handcrafted gold-dipped jewelry label founded in 2010, aims to provide affordability and wearability at the fore, and with the tagline 'Wear Jewelry Everyday', the founders have tried to make a very distinctive positioning for Zariin as a go-to label for everyday jewelry.

Mamta shares, "Zariin is a brand romancing the East and the West, in subtle, nuanced ways such that it appeals to the global woman. Using the Indian techniques and artisanal craftsmanship, blending it with the aesthetics of the contemporary West, the brand has taken a unique approach to design which spells Modern Indian."

Fashion advocates look at Zariin as striking a fine balance between culturally inspired detailed designs and minimalism. The brand is known for its signature look of raw, uncut gemstones dipped in 22kt gold, an approach that was taken in defiance of the prevailing industry standard of polished, smooth and perfect looking crystals and stones.

The intense desire to put Indian craftsmanship on the globe as a hallmark of innovative design, quality and wearable sustainable fashion was what made the sister duo start this brand.

Vidhi adds, "10 years back, Indian jewelry landscape was very skewed- with fine jewelry and fast fashion jewelry covering the whole spectrum. We wanted to craft a bridge jewelry label that will be synonymous with both high quality and fashion. We had the vision to launch a label that will inspire women to make jewelry as part of their everyday sartorial self-expression, associate it as a piece of pleasure, memories, and hold on to for their next generation too." There are several B-town celebrities like Sonam Kapoor, Deepika Padukone, Nargis Fakhri, Priyanka Chopra, Sara Ali Khan have been spotted adorning Zariin. Internationally, Zariin has dressed the cast of All My Children.

Jewels to co-ordinate with outfits in the summer

Pair the right necklace with the outfit

Pairing jewelry with different necklines can be hard sometimes especially when our summer wardrobes are full of different silhouettes. Different necklines suit different types of necklaces. A general rule for open necklines, is that you want the necklace to fill the open space and match the neckline of the top or the dress. For high necklines it's all about balance, you want to choose a necklace that balances out the neckline of the garment.

You must always be the Focal Point

One thing that must always be kept in mind is that the jewelry should never overshadow the person. When you're pairing bold jewelry, remember to keep the size of the piece and the layout. For instance, if you have a small framed face you don't want to get oversized earrings

that would overshadow your entire face taking the focus away from you. Even medium sized earrings would help you make a bold statement while also making your face look elongated.

Less is More

We all know layering can be very stylish with clothing and jewelry, but there are times when having on six or seven bracelets isn't going to be fitting for what you're doing. Over-accessorizing would take away from the outfit and more importantly be uncomfortable in this heat. Light and simple pieces would be ideal for a day out with friends while layering would look great if you're hitting the club.

Jewellery that Goes with Multiple Outfits

Having a few jewelry pieces for special occasions is always nice but we always need those staple pieces that can be paired with multiple outfits we wait to wear in summers. Whenever you're

Mamta Gupta and Vidhi Gupta, the sister duo behind the handcrafted brand shares with us about the brand and ways to co-ordinate your jewels with your outfit this summer



Mamta Gupta and Vidhi Gupta

and jewelry. You can even experiment with wearing multiple earring styles if you have more than one pair of ear piercings or want to combine ear cuffs with other earrings.

Add a Subtle Bling

An easy way to effortlessly glam up your outfit with an elegant design, cuff bracelets can easily accentuate your minimal or complete your look when paired with other jewelry. Be sure to factor in the length of your sleeves in your outfit. Different bracelets will mesh best with different lengths, and long sleeves will obviously make most bracelets tougher to wear in style.

Jewelry for Prints

With the first signs of Spring we pull out our printed dresses and tops. Floral prints especially can challenge to accessorize but that shouldn't give us an excuse for eliminating jewelry completely. Selecting one colour from the print and accentuating it with jewelry could easily solve that problem.

Chain link essentials

A stylish link necklace goes a long way in your jewellery collection as it never goes out of style, always remains relevant and works as a really stylish canvas to hold all your charms and create a truly personal piece of jewellery that reflects a bit of you and your journey. The best part about the link necklace is that not only does it look fabulous with the interesting charms but also looks good on its own.

shopping for jewelry, be sure to look for pieces that could be paired together with several options in your wardrobe as well as with each other. This way one can make different looks even while repeating the same outfits.

Jewellery to Match your Skin Tone

Your jewelry should not only match your outfit but also bring out the natural hues in your skin. Choosing different stone colours and metal options help in bringing back the focus to your face. One must carefully seek jewelry on the basis of their undertones. Warm tones look good in yellows and rose golds whereas cool undertones look good in light or white metals.

Balance the Outfit with a long Necklace

A long necklace is a great way to balance out a look that might otherwise be boxy or shapeless. Loose summer clothing can make one appear shorter or wider than they really are. A long necklace can help add harmony to the look.

Creating Layers

Experimenting with contrasting length, shapes and textures. Be it rings, necklaces or bangles. With the temperature rising, we pull out our favorite sleeveless tops and dresses. Layering in summers is the best way to create an entire look out of a tank top

Aditi Rao Hydari Stands Up Against Street Harassment, With L'Oréal Paris

This International Anti Street Harassment Week 11th-17th April 2021, Aditi Rao Hydari, actress and L'Oréal Paris brand ambassador, proudly stands with L'Oréal Paris to raise her voice against street harassment.

Via a social media post on her official Instagram page, Aditi asked her followers to take the training and StandUp Against Street Harassment.

In her video, Aditi shares, "StandUp is a program that is designed towards creating awareness and imparting training to combat street harassment."

Sadly, street harassment is something that we all have been through, whether as bystanders or as victims and I know that it makes me very angry, it makes me feel very helpless and I am sure it does that to you as well.

So, recently I went through this training program and I was lucky to have this opportunity. It is called the Stand-Up 5 D's training created by L'Oréal Paris in partnership with Hollaback! internationally and Breakthrough in India.

It has really opened my eyes and showed me how easy it is and how we have such effective tools so readily available to us - which is basically our own mind - our presence of mind.

So that we can effectively and confidently combat street harassment. I would really recommend that each one of us goes through this training program.

It is simple, effective, it builds so much confidence and it gives us an

amazing solution to help someone and to help ourselves.

So spread the word, tell your friends, tell everyone. Because I think this one is an essential. Let us help combat street harassment effectively".

Aditi urges everyone to stand up against street harassment and take the L'Oréal Paris StandUp training at: www.standup-india.com



Footwear to co-ordinate with palazzo pants

Naturally, you want the emphasis to be firmly on your palazzos, but there's no doubt that finding the right shoes to wear with palazzo pants gives the finishing touch. Although it may seem that your shoes are less important because they'll be mostly hidden under the wide legs of your palazzos, it's actually even more important to pick the right footwear if you only catch a fleeting glimpse.

Elegant high heels are always a great choice, as they accent the length of your legs and the shapeliness of your feet. A summer outfit begs for strappy sandals, whilst classic heeled court shoes work wonderfully for a formal occasion. Mid-height heels also look good; cork mules retain the retro theme for a vintage ensemble and low sandals are a comfortable option for a semi-casual theme. But don't discount flat shoes either. A pair of espadrilles can totally make a sailor-style palazzo ensemble and Adidas sneakers give laid-back chic to a casual outfit. So why wait any longer? The palazzo pants style is most definitely for everyone and finding the right look for you is just a matter of looking around at what's on offer and making your choice.



FASHIONISTA

World Hemophilia Day

Nicking your finger with a knife while chopping some tomatoes for a salad is just a nuisance for most of us we utter a choice word or two, rinse the cut, apply a disinfectant and maybe a band-aid, and then proceed to go on with our lives.

The same goes for, say, tripping and falling—most of us will just get up and keep on going, not giving the situation any more thought and barely noticing the bruise that may appear afterward. Unfortunately, there are people whose very lives may be put in danger because of such seemingly minor accidents: hemophiliacs.

Hemophilia affects approximately 400,000 people worldwide, many of whom are not fully aware of their condition or are not getting the treatment they need. Because a relatively small percentage of the world's population suffers from hemophilia, many people are not aware just how serious this condition is and how much more difficult and dangerous it makes the lives of those who have it. And this is where World Hemophilia Day comes in.

Hemophilia was first discovered in the 10th century, when physi-

cians started to take a serious interest in people, especially males, who were bleeding to death after sustaining only minor injuries. At that time, it was called Ab-ul-casis. Unfortunately, due to the limited technology of the day, it was impossible to research the condition properly.

Numerous famous historical figures are thought to have had hemophilia, especially members of the European royal families, and it was often treated with aspirin which thinned the blood of the hemophiliac further, causing the symptoms to worsen.

Then, in 1803, Dr. John Conrad Otto of Philadelphia began to study people he called, "bleeders" more extensively, recognizing it to be a hereditary illness that was most often passed onto males from by their

healthy mothers. In 1937, hemophilia was officially divided into two types: A and B. Though no cure for hemophilia has been invented till this day, the sickness can be controlled by administering clotting factors on a regular basis in order to avoid spontaneous bleeding episodes.

World Hemophilia Day was created by the World Federation of Hemophilia in 1989, and the date it's celebrated on, April 17th, was chosen in honour of the founder of the organization's birthday, Frank Schnabel. The day's purpose is to raise awareness about the disease as well as other bleeding disorders and also to raise money for the treatment of those who cannot afford it.

Numerous events are organized every year on World Hemophilia day, filled with educational presentations and other events that promote an awareness of the disease



and those who suffer from it. If you are unable to attend, you could consider making a donation to the World Federation of Hemophilia to help support their fight against this debilitating condition, especially in the poorest parts of the world. Another thing you could do is find the World Federation of Hemophilia's Facebook page and proceed to share some of the many infographics they post in order to help your Facebook friends become more informed as well. The same goes for Twitter—follow the World Federation of Hemophilia, and retweet their tweets about this day. It may not seem like much at first glance, but social media has proven itself to be incredibly powerful on many occasions, especially when it comes to getting the word out about an important cause. Even the smallest of gestures can make a world of difference!

Haircare tips for hair breakage

For many women, there are few things more alarming than a noticeably sparser hairline or lacklustre locks that seem to have lost their volume. While it's normal to lose anywhere from 50 to 100 strands of hair a day, more than that can indicate an issue.

If you've noticed your hair seems to be on the thinner side lately, try using some of the tips below to remedy the problem. If you don't start seeing results within a few months, a simple blood test by your doctor can determine if the hair loss is caused by an underlying health condition.

Avoid hairstyles that pull on the hairline

Tight ponytails, cornrows, braids, and anything else that pulls on the small hairs that make up your hairline can cause hair loss. The stress caused by these tight hairstyles pulls too strongly on the delicate hairs of your hairline and hair loss/thinning can occur. If you do need to put your hair up in a ponytail, use an elastic that doesn't have metal. It helps ensure your hair won't get tangled in the elastic and pull out your hair when removing your ponytail.

Ditch hair tools that use high heat

Heat is always hard on hair. It causes bonds within the hair strands to fracture, causing brittle hair that breaks and falls out. If you decide to use a hair straightener or curling iron, make sure not to leave it on one area of your hair for too long and move it every ten seconds or so. Also keep in mind that if you hear sizzling or burn your fingers, the heat setting is too high and you are also burning your hair. Try to let your hair dry naturally as often



as possible and when you do use styling tools, make sure to use a heat-protecting spray that will lessen the damage the tools are inflicting on your hair.

Be wary of chemical processing

Just as heat is very harmful to the hair, so are a variety of chemical processing treatments offered by salons. Chemically straightening your hair, bleaching, and lightening your hair can all cause damage to the hair shaft, weakening the hair and causing hair loss. Always try to stick to your natural style and colour as closely as possible if you are experiencing hair loss or thinning or the problem will just get worse. If you regularly use chemical processing, make sure you treat your hair to a deep-conditioning treatment at least once a week for optimal results.

Students turn teachers for underprivileged kids in Covid times

NEW DELHI

AT a time when an outbreak of coronavirus has forced the school students to stay at home and continue their studies online, children of labourers and daily wage workers have no choice but to skip their studies as they can merely afford a smartphone or 24 hours Internet connectivity. Keeping this in mind some Delhi Samaritans, who themselves are students, have started teaching these children.

"Yamuna Khadar Pathshala" runs under a flyover at the banks of river Yamuna in Delhi's Mayapuri Vihar, Phase-I. Around 250 students from the nearby slums every day come here to continue their studies offline.

This 'under the flyover' school is being run by six teachers who are also students. One of these teachers is Panna Lal, a 12th pass and has done a one-year computer course while another one is Devender, a law student. The third teacher is Deepak Chaudhary, who is doing M.A. and has done a two-year computer diploma. Fourth is Rupam, a B.A. student, fifth is Mukesh, a Class 12th pass and holds a one-year computer diploma, and the last one is Dev Pal who manages all the activities in this school.

These people are running the school for those children, who do not have much money nor any other system to pursue studies in these corona times. The parents of these children are daily wage wagers,



labourers or rickshaw pullers, etc. who toil hard every day to meet their basic requirements.

Panna Lal told IANS, "I have been teaching children since a year ago. There are some problems here due to which children are unable to study properly, and their parents also cannot afford smartphones."

Dev Pal, who manages everything in the "Yamuna Khadar Pathshala", told IANS: "We were planning to start this school in March last year but could not implement the idea due to enforcement of the lockdown. Then we decided to start online classes but this idea could also not work in absence of electricity and smartphones."

"After some time we began physically

teaching students from Nursery to Class 10. We have a total of six teachers to teach these students," said Dev Pal.

He further said: "We never pressurise children for a fee. They give us some money as per their convenience."

"All the teachers who teach here are students themselves. We have requested many to help us meet the basic requirements. Thereafter, we also urged people to at least send a teacher here for our help if they cannot give money, but no one helped," said Dev Pal. According to Dev Pal, the teachers here have also faced similar adversities in their lives. They aim to make these children succeed in life. However, they also have to earn a livelihood.

Yogi to set up 1K-bed facility to cope with Covid rush

LUCKNOW

UTTAR Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has decided that the state government will set up a temporary 1,000-bed Covid hospital, possibly at the site where the Defence Expo was held last year.

Addressing a virtual meeting of Team 11 on Friday, the Chief Minister asked officials to work out the modalities in this regard without further delay.

Meanwhile, Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who is MP from Lucknow, has spoken to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and requested him to provide space to defence authorities for setting up makeshift hospitals.

Lucknow is witnessing a surge in Covid cases and the city's medical infrastructure is inadequate to face the medical crisis.



Diwakar Tripathi, representative of Rajnath Singh, confirmed that the defence minister has requested the chief minister to provide banquet halls and open space in the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan or the BBD Academy to teams of the Defence Research

and Development Organization (DRDO) for raising the medical infrastructure on its own cost and provide beds and oxygen to patients.

"Since the DRDO already has a chain of command and military hospitals in and around the city

as well as the expert medical manpower, it can immediately intervene provided the district administration gives it space for setting up makeshift hospitals," he said.

The chief minister has also announced that there will be a total closure in the state on Sunday so as to enable sanitization and fogging on a large-scale. All shops and establishments will remain closed and public movement will be allowed only in emergency conditions. The chief minister directed all government and private labs to work at optimum level. The OPD services in all hospitals and medical facilities have been stopped and patients can interact with doctors through telemedicine facilities. The Arogya Melas have also been suspended till May 15.

Rlys operating 140 spl trains to clear extra rush

NEW DELHI

KEEPING in view the additional rush at several stations, the Indian Railways has started 140 trains to clear the extra rush which will run till May, officials said on Friday.

Addressing a press conference, Suneet Sharma, CEO and Chairman of the Railway Board said, "A very special day for Indian Railways as you are aware that today the first train ran from VT to Thane, a distance of 34 km on April 16, 1853. Since that day railways have come miles forward."

Sharma said that the railways will run all the required trains.

"We are running 1,490 trains till date. And we are ready to run more trains whichever is required in any part of the country," he said.

He said currently railways is operating 1,490 special trains, 5,397 suburban train services. "We are also running 28 clone



trains on highly patronised trains, 947 passenger trains," he said, adding that 70 per cent of the train services have been restored. "To clear extra rush across the country, the railways is operating 140 additional trains," the Chairman said.

He said that 140 special trains will make 483 trips between April and May.

Citing the figures of the additional trains operating in several

states, he said, Central Railway is operating 85 special trains which will complete 284 trips, Western Railway is operating 28 trains for 152 trips, Northern Railway is operating 15 special trains for 19 trips, East Central Railways is operating two special trains for four trips, North Eastern Railway is operating nine trains for 14 trips and North Central Railways is operating one train for 10 trips.

BJP councillor found dead in car, family claims murder

MEERUT

A BJP councillor has been found dead in his car with a bullet wound. Manish Chaudhary's body was found on the driver's seat in Kankerkhara. A country-made pistol, a bottle of liquor and a glass were also lying by his side in the SUV, police said.

Manish Chaudhary a.k.a. Mintu, 38, had hit the headlines in 2018 after a video in which he was seen thrashing a police officer went viral. A BJP ward member of Meerut Municipal Corporation, Chaudhary had served a jail term for thrashing a sub-inspector in his restaurant three years ago. The policeman had come for lunch with a woman lawyer when an argument had broken out over the delay in serving the food.

It was then that Chaudhary had allegedly attacked the policeman after an argument. The video of the incident was widely shared on social media platforms. Chaudhary was later booked and sent to jail. On Thursday, police claimed that



Chaudhary shot himself dead after speaking to a relative over the phone. Chaudhary's brother-in-law, Kuldeep Dhama, has filed a police complaint alleging murder.

"My brother-in-law had left home on Thursday evening. He had to settle some property deal and was carrying Rs 9 lakh in cash and some gold jewellery. He was fine and in good health. It seems someone has killed him," Dhama told reporters. SP (city) Vineet Bhatnagar said, "Prima facie, it is a case of suicide which can be corroborated by an audio clip which he had sent to a relative that points towards his desire to end his life. But we are probing the matter. Forensic teams have collected the samples and post mortem examination report is awaited."

SINHA'S TENURE AS CBI CHIEF WAS CONTROVERSIAL, DESPITE LEGACY

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

ON Friday morning, Ranjit Sinha, a 1974 batch IPS officer of the Bihar cadre and former Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), breathed his last at his residence here. His stint as CBI chief was marred by several controversies as he had to face the heat from the Supreme Court repeatedly between 2012-14.

Sinha, a native of Bihar's Siwan was 68. He had tested positive for Covid on Thursday, according to CBI sources.

He breathed his last at his residence in south Delhi's Hauz Khas area on Friday morning around 4 a.m.

He served in several positions during his career. During his career, Sinha headed the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), the Railway Protection Force and served at senior positions in the CBI in Patna and Delhi before his appointment as the CBI chief in



December 2012.

However, Sinha's tenure was marred by several controversies. It was during his stint as the CBI chief that the Supreme Court had slammed Sinha in May 2013 for compromising the agency's autonomy by sharing the probe report in the coal scam with then law minister Ashwini Kumar and government officials in violation of its order. This had prompted the court to denounce the premier agency as a "caged parrot".

Although the court did not take any action against Sinha, the controversy led to the resignation of then law minister Ashwini Kumar and additional solicitor

general Haren Rawal who had informed the court that the report was not shown to anyone else before being submitted before the court. Sinha kept a low profile during the 40 years of his service, but during his stint as the CBI Director he had a brush with several controversies.

In a rare instance, the CBI started probing its own former director after a visitor's diary surfaced that showed Sinha regularly meeting coal and 2G scam accused at his official residence.

The visitor's diary also revealed that Sinha had met Moin Qureshi, a meat exporter being probed by the ED and other agencies, over 70 times at his residence in 15 months.

Taking note of the diary, the Supreme Court issued notice to Sinha in September 2014, directing him to explain why he had privately met some of the key accused in the coal and 2G allocation scam at his official residence.

The Supreme Court in an un-

precedented order in November 2014 directed Sinha to completely keep off the 2G case as it found prima facie "credible" the charges that he had attempted to help the accused in the scam.

"We direct the CBI director not to interfere in the 2G scam investigation or prosecution. He will recuse himself from the case," the Supreme Court had said then.

Sinha had rejected the allegations in an affidavit that he submitted to the Supreme court.

In his affidavit filed before the top court, Sinha argued that as a Z-category protectee, he got security cover from the Delhi Police and it was the police which maintained a register to record his movements and another to log the entry of their own personnel.

Sinha faced another setback when the CBI booked him in April 2017 under the Prevention of Corruption Act for allegedly scuttling and influencing the probe in the coal scam case.

Weekend curfew in Raj on Sunday

JAIPUR

RAJASTHAN Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot announced a weekend curfew in the state from 6 pm on April 16 to 5 am on April 19, in view of rising COVID-19 cases. The chief minister took to Twitter to announce the fresh restrictions and appealed to people to follow COVID-19-appropriate behaviour at all times. The decision comes on day that saw Rajasthan register 33 COVID-19 deaths and a record 6,658 new cases of the disease. Banking and LPG services, and fruit, vegetable and milk vendors are exempted from the weekend curfew. Gehlot warned that if strict steps are not taken in time, the situation may worsen like some other states which are witnessing a massive surge in the infections. Election-related activities in Sahara (Bhilwara), Sujangarh (Churu) and Rajsamand assembly constituencies, where bypolls will be held on Saturday, are also be exempted.

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SINCE 1981

మీ కలలకు సాకారం

సరైన సమయంలో చక్కని నిర్ణయం మంచి ఫలితాలను అందించింది

నా ఎంపిక కపిల్ చిట్స్ ఇప్పటికీ వెన్నంటి ఉంది.



‘Disastrous’ times indeed!

Can human agents ever be justifiably held morally responsible for the outcomes of natural disasters? And if so, what is the nature of such responsibility ascriptions and why are they important? What would be our natural response to such a question? Negative? The very notion of a natural disaster seems to suggest that natural disasters are “natural” precisely because they are not man-made. Natural disaster is the object of attempts at prediction and control, not of interpretation.

Explanations for natural disasters formulated in terms of God’s purposes are now “generally confined to fundamentalist sects and hapless victims”. Although natural disasters are no longer understood, at least by most of

the public, as justified responses by supernatural powers to human wickedness, natural disasters can still be seen as belonging to the domain of morality, albeit in a different sense. Not as divine punishments for human misdeeds, but as something that at least sometimes can be aggravated or alleviated by human choices.

Once it becomes recognised that humans may be in a position to exert influence on the outcomes of at least some natural disasters, a space opens up for the moral evaluation of the actions of those involved. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his letter to Voltaire of 18 August, 1756, in which he discussed Voltaire’s “Poem on the Lisbon Disaster”, wrote the following: [I]t was hardly nature who assembled there

twenty-thousand houses of six or seven stories.

If the residents of this large city had been more evenly dispersed and less densely housed, the losses would have been fewer or perhaps none at all. Everyone would have fled at the first shock, and would have been seen two days later, twenty leagues away and as happy as if nothing had happened. For me, I see everywhere that the misfortunes nature imposes upon us is much less cruel than those that we please to add”. India reported 216,850 coronavirus disease (Covid-19) cases on April 16, the highest single-day spike so far since the pandemic broke out. The single-day spike comes a day after 200,739 Covid-19 cases were recorded on April 15.

With this, India’s Covid tally has shot up to 14,287,740 cases. Last week India replaced Brazil as the second worst-hit nation in terms of total

Covid-19 cases; now it has the second highest active cases too. India also witnessed 1,183 fatalities due to Covid-19 in a single day. The death toll from the deadly infection stands at 174,335. Maharashtra reported 61,695 new coronavirus cases and 349 deaths in the last 24 hours. West Bengal, where massive election rallies were organized recently even as the second wave rose, recorded the highest single-day spike of 6,769 cases and Delhi 16,699.

Delhi recorded 17,282 fresh cases of Covid -19 on April 14, the highest single-day surge in the national capital since the onset of the pandemic, while over 100 fatalities were reported. The five most affected states by total cases are Maharashtra (3,578,160), Kerala (1,189,175), Karnataka (1,094,912), Tamil Nadu (954,948), and Andhra Pradesh (937,049). Do we need to discuss this further when “we keep adding disasters” as Rousseau pointed out?



Private school teachers in a bind

M SOMASEKHAR PRASAD

IT is heartening to know that the Telangana CM has understood the plight and penury of teachers working in private schools and colleges and has decided to give them some succour till educational institutions in the State are reopened. It may be recalled here that a couple of young teachers have committed suicide when they had lost jobs following the closure of schools in Telangana for more than a year and most of these teachers have not been paid salaries for the last 10 months. It is in this background that the decision of KCR to give Rs 2000 and 25 kg of rice per month to each teacher is really laudable.

In fact the fate and plight of all the teachers working in private schools throughout the country is almost one and the same! According to one survey there are about 4 Lakh private unaided schools in the country and about 20 lakh teachers are working in them. Most of these teachers have lost their only wherewithal since the closure of schools with effect from March 2020. Since then many of them have been thrown into the streets, while some have taken up jobs in roadside tiffin centres, malls. With help from students, and friends, some teachers have started small time businesses, just to keep the fire burning at home. But, alas, who can understand their humiliation, stress, penury, and ennui!

In fact the fate and plight of all the teachers working in private schools throughout the country is almost one and the same! According to one survey there are about four lakh private unaided schools in the country and about 20 lakh teachers are working in them. Most of these teachers have lost their only wherewithal since the closure of schools with effect from March 2020. Since then many of them have been thrown into the streets, while some have taken up jobs in roadside tiffin centres, malls. With help from students and friends, some teachers have started small time businesses, just to keep the fire burning at home. But, alas, who can understand their humiliation, stress, penury, and ennui!

It is a pity that most teachers are young, well educated, poor, but even in normal times, they are compelled to work for peanuts and exploited by the managements of schools and colleges. Their employers are really very ‘imaginative’ in their ways and schemes of ‘using’ these “educated, skilled labour”. For the managements, these teachers are a part of ‘unorganized work force’. I wish here to talk about only a couple of ways in which school managements “squeeze them in” at all times.

In most private schools, teachers are to be at the beck and call of their employers always. They must be ready to stoop down to any levels only to please the ‘master’. They continue in the service as long as they stay in the good books of the management. In my service, I have seen many well qualified private school teachers doing shopping, running errands and in some cases even attending to domestic chores, all for the sake of their master. Of course the master pays these teachers’ at will’.

The fate of ‘private teachers’ in aided institutions is no better. Here one thing I have to make clear. In aided schools and colleges you find two kinds of teachers. Teachers working in aided posts are paid regular salaries by the State government on par with teachers in government schools. Teachers working in unaided posts are paid meager amounts as salaries by the Managements. In many cases when teachers working in aided posts are ‘allowed’ by the management to go on personal leave or on Sabbatical leave, private teachers step into their shoes.

Here is the rub. These teachers are expected to get remunerations fixed by the government on par with part-time teachers working in government institutions. Alas, such payments do not often take place. These teachers work even for small amounts only in the fond hope of getting appointed in aided posts one day or getting their services regularised by the government.

Teachers in private schools often face all isms like regionalism, nepotism, casteism. They also bear things like humiliation, hard work, step-motherly treatment and above all the Damocles sword of job uncertainty because they have no other choice and government recruitments take place once in a blue moon.

To the credit of managements, I must say that there are really some good Managements who are fair and who go by the rule book. I was selected in 1991 along with some of my friends by the then AP College Service Commission for appointment as Degree College Lecturer and allotted to an aided college. While the management readily took me into their fold, some of my friends were rejected and sent back by their managements. In my 25 years of service there, our management treated me fairly well and gave all things due to me.

We all know that the need of the hour is to streamline the valuable services of teachers in private schools because these schools, like private companies in our economy, play a vital role in our education system. The Jagan government has already initiated steps in that direction. After all, these teachers expect some fair treatment from their master, steady income, social recognition, and above all support and security in bad times from the government. And CM KCR deserves approbation for his initiative in this regard. It is hoped that other CMs also take a cue from him and give their mite for the cause of private teachers at large.

(The author is retired HOD, Department of English)

All of us responsible for this spike in Covid cases



ALL this resulted in the current variant of coronavirus to spread fast forcing many states like Maharashtra and Delhi to go in for Corona curfew. The virus this time was affecting young adults and children below 10 years of age.

Second wave of Corona will start receding by end of April or maximum by May say astrologers. Sounds music to ears. But then don’t blame the astrologers who predicted so on the eve of Ugadi or the committee of experts drawn from IIT and ISI who also said that it will reach peak between April 15 and 20 before it starts waning.

While the astrological predictions are based on the stellar movement, the expert’s predictions are based on a super model which they had developed to study the pandemic sweeping across the country based on Indian conditions. They said the number of spike in cases indicates a sharp slope, but when it starts receding, it would be very fast and the slope would be much sharper. In fact, it could be a dramatic reduction. Let’s pray and hope so.

But then, this prediction comes with a word of caution. This number may again start rising and push us into third wave if proper practices of wearing a mask to protect us, (not to please the policeman or escape from fine of Rs 1000) disinfecting premises, keeping hands clean, tracing, testing, and following quarantine procedures strictly are not followed. One should not say “Mask kaiku, Corona mar gaya na, Scientists ne bol diya.”

When the pandemic played havoc with the country last year, this group of experts predicted that by February 2021 the pandemic would almost disappear from country. Yes, to a great extent they were right. The number of cases had drastically come down. All sectors of economy except hospitality were back in full

operation. The fear of Corona was gone and both the political executive across the country and the people concluded that all is over and started ignoring all health protocols. The political parties went ahead with elections from Lok Sabha to State Assemblies and local body polls as if Corona never existed. They never bothered to follow the Covid-19 protocols.

All this resulted in the current variant of coronavirus to spread fast forcing many states like Maharashtra and Delhi to go in for Corona curfew. The virus this time was affecting young adults and children below 10 years of age. According to medical experts, these youngsters seem to be having a new strain and are suffering from 104 degrees Fahrenheit temperature, body ache and are suffering from breathlessness and restlessness.

The Centre and State governments need to be blamed for the sudden spike in cases as they delayed taking firm decisions to stop the increase in cases for the sake of their political gains. They seem to be thinking governments are by the people of the people but not for the people. They perhaps feel people are for them and dole out some cash incentives in form of note for vote and freebies and they can come to power or retain power. “Wahi hoga jo Manjor-e- Khuda hota hai,” lets bother more on decimating Opposition or defeat the ruling party seems to be attitude of all political parties.

Sermons and lectures from the level of Prime Minister to the state chief ministers on Corona management has begun now as the election fever has come down. But it is like holding leaves after you burn your hand. It also looks ridiculous that the in some States including the two Telugu States, governments consider holding urban local body polls as more important than containing Covid.

In Telangana hours after the government decided to close schools, the SEC announced the poll schedule. Interestingly, Government decided to promote Class X students without examination and postpone exams for Intermediate students but does not want to lose money form pubs and bars. It sounds funny



The fear of Corona was gone and both the political executive across the country and the people concluded that all is over and started ignoring all health protocols. The political parties went ahead with elections from Lok Sabha to State Assemblies and local body polls as if Corona never existed. They never bothered to follow the Covid-19 protocols

that the government issues guidelines asking pubs and bars to follow protocols like wearing masks and sanitise hands. When will our leaders start thinking logically?

It hardly makes any sense to send SOS to Centre saying that there is shortage of vaccine or oxygen or medicines when the disaster has struck. There should be something called foresight and advance planning in any kind of management. But in India, all advance planning is towards coming to power and retaining power not real welfare of people.

No point boasting about welfare measures taken by their governments. Real welfare should be in form of ensuring that the country has a healthy human resource and not the one which keeps looking for cash doles from the government. That amounts to promoting slavery not empowering the poor.

We find that during election campaigns, chief ministers accuse the Centre of failing to help the states and claim that all intelligence lies only with state-level leaders and hence next time it will be their ‘sarkar’ in New Delhi. But when it comes to crisis management in their own States, they turn a blind eye to recommendations like going in for limited lockdown in hotspots, where volume of cases are very high along with micro plan which entails extensive testing of people and also extensive contact tracing

by raising all kinds of doubts on the efficacy of the vaccine. The social media run by political parties also did not bother to promote vaccination.

It’s time the governments and the people realise that there is need to take these precautions at least for one year, restrict community participation and citizens should continue to follow social distancing. People should get themselves tested. All these efforts will help in preventing people from contracting the virus. These precautions will also prevent us from more waves. The virus has not gone away, it is still lurking.

It is time the bureaucracy shows courage and gives correct and timely advice to the political executive on the steps the government needs to take to contain spread of such deadly virus or for that matter any infection. They should realise they are IAS not ‘Ayya Yes’. They need to take the lead and convince the political bosses that its time to revise the action plans and on what issues the government needs to focus most. Let’s hope once again the officialdom will rise to the occasion. May be some former bureaucrats of yesteryears should try to narrate challenging situations they faced during their tenure and how they advised the then governments. They should become role models for the present genre of officials.

All this is necessary because, it is difficult to give an exact time period as to when this viral infection will go, it seems, the growth in cases will flatten by the end of July or beginning of August. A decline will come to this viral infection, but it does not mean that people should drop their guard.

Statistics indicate that large number of cases are in 10 cities. One should not take things easy thinking that the number is much less compared to other countries like Europe, Spain, Italy or any such country. Study by expert committees show that 70 to 80 per cent of the cases are from areas where people in lower socio-economic status live. These sections live in small places and there is lot of mixing of people. Government needs to lay special attention in all such areas and identify cases at an early stage.

LETTERS

Votebank politics and Covid

It is amusing that the Modi government impose heavy penalties on mask violators, including those travel alone inside the vehicles, but permits events of Kumbh mela, election campaigns and other human mass gathering events without any restrictions (April 16). It is clear that our leaders, ruling as well as opposition, are bothered about vote bank politics rather than beating the pandemic in true spirit. No wonder Covid daily cases have crossed two lakh mark and still growing.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao,
Hyderabad

II

The other day we saw the incandescent flames of funeral pyres on the banks of the River Narmada near Bharuch in Gujarat and realised the seriousness of the Covid-19 situation. The visuals of several bodies being cremated on a single pyre for speedy disposal elsewhere in the country spread sombreness. The gloom is deepening as the second wave of the pandemic is showing no sign of abating, but surging towards a peak and taking its toll on our country.

The reality of the pandemic sinks deeply into our consciousness when we read newspapers and watch news channels and absorb every detail of “the

biggest news story of our times”. That hospitals are facing medical oxygen shortage and they are forced to discharge patients makes grim news. The problem of slow vaccination is compounded by the scrapping of planned vaccination camps due to vaccine shortage. We must accept the “human factor” in the second wave and our share of the blame for creating the conditions conducive to it. This is not to conceal the fact the new variants are proving to be more infectious and virulent. Our national response to the pandemic has been, at best, very mixed. It is nobody’s case that no steps have been taken to ameliorate the situation. The flip side to the handling of the Covid-19 crisis pertains to ignorance, lack of awareness and fatalism. Most people do not seem to realize that the coronavirus is around looking for access to the respiratory tract in the human body.

The deadly virus must be chuckling at election meetings and religious events and the human folly behind them. Crowded election rallies and mass gatherings, as in Haridwar as part of Kumbh Mela, facilitate the rapid spread of the disease and imperil lives. Disregarding the advice not to risk attending political and religious events without observing the Covid-19 norms is a recipe for the transmission of the disease. One may be devout, but relying on God for protection from a pandemic without taking precautions is inadvisable as it is irrational. Combating a pandemic takes a lot of doing. At this point in time we have to pull our socks up to free the country from the grip of the second wave of the pandemic.

G David Milton, Maruthancode,
Tamil Nadu

III

THE Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee’s urging the Election Commission to club the remaining phases of polls to one in order to minimise the risk of Covid spread sounds logical. As the country sees unimaginable high and fast surge of new cases daily, touching two lakh mark every day, there should be a review of polls calendar. With four phases of polls still left, it would be more risky to go according to stipulated plan. If they are clubbed and finished in one go, the administration will be free to focus on covid war. The Election Commission should take a call before it’s too late.

Dr D V G Sankararao, Nellimarla

None is bothered about students

EDUCATION system in India is in dire straits. The postponement or cancellation of public examinations frequently is any indication. The governments at the Centre and in the respective States are taking drastic steps to cancel the examination leaving the students future hanging. The future of the students will be bleak if the governments take such wrong steps continuously. The government framing rules while giving permissions to filmmaking, boarding trains, loitering in public places. They have given free permission to worship god of their choice. And the devotees dip in the Ganga in large numbers during ‘Kumbh Mela’. But not a single restriction had been promulgated. The Centre had given permissions to

cinema theatres to run shows with limited viewers, the States to liquor shops to drink freely. The Election commission notified polling dates. The political parties conducting rallies and stage shows, where mad rush attending it and the possibility of pandemic destruction will cause of concern. India has 130 crore population. Despite many number of police, paramilitary and other monitoring cells and heavy men and machinery in states as well as at the Centre we have failed to conduct examinations. It is not because of students not interesting to face the examinations, but because of the Centre and states not showing any interest to conduct them.

Velcheru Nageswara Rao,
Vizianagaram

Rapid results

Now, certified laboratories will have to send RT-PCR results on WhatsApp within 24 hours. There have been many cases where delay in positive results resulted in severe lungs damage, so earliest report is need of the hour. Earlier, there was a delay in patients getting Covid-19 positive results and on it SP Bhandarkar, amicus curiae appearing in the suo motu PIL suggested that the reports of the patients, whether positive or negative, shall be immediately sent to the patients on WhatsApp and hard copies of the reports shall also be made available to the patients. If these directions are not complied with by the laboratories, the authorities will be free to take appropriate action against the concerned laboratories.

Anushka Panwar, Ujjain

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Corporate hospitals told to cancel elective surgeries

MOHSIN ALI
HYDERABAD

AMID the surge in Covid-19 cases, the Health department has directed corporate hospitals in the State to cancel all elective surgeries for the next four weeks, as there is a dire need of beds for Corona patients.

Looking at the spike in Corona positive cases, the department said the virus situation was turning worse in its second spell. "All private hospitals are suggested to provide beds for infected patients and elective surgeries must be cancelled", its directive stated.

Director of Public Health G Srinivas Rao said: "the Coronavirus is spreading rapidly in the State. The beds are to meet with the demand as the number of patients is going high. It may continue for six more weeks. As many as 20,000 beds have been arranged across the State and almost all are occupied. More beds are required to accommodate patients, if the cases increase. I request hospitals not to admit patients for surgeries unless it's an emergency".

Meanwhile, the government is planning to increase 41,000 extra beds throughout the State in the wake of the surge. Despite having 20,000 beds for treatment of infected in both government and private hospitals, they are not sufficient. More beds are required to felicitate the patients.

The government plans to control the virus to save lives. There is a dearth of beds in the State and if Covid-19 patients are to be treated, others with comorbidities may get infected easily. To avoid such a situation surgeries must be avoided for a few weeks, a department official stated.

IIT-H innovates with hygiene products

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

UNION Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal on Friday has launched 'Nishank' world's first affordable and long-lasting hygiene product DuroKea Series, developed by Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IIT-H) researchers during an online event.

This new product is an antimicrobial technology, priced at Rs 189, kills 99.99 per cent of germs instantly and leaves behind the long-lasting protective nanoscale coating up to 35 days till the next wash.

Expressing delight over the novel innovation the Union Minister said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given us a powerful tool of Aatmanibhar Bharat, Shashakt Bharat and Shreshtha Bharat. "The IIT, Hyderabad being a young institute is making a mark by its remarkable research. Durokea Product launch is one such important step to establish IIT Hyderabad in the world and bring laurels to the nation," the Minister lauded.

Voluntary groups jump into action as Covid cases spike

Services include free online doctors' consultation, home delivery of oxygen cylinders, last rites, free food delivery and free ambulance

MEGHNA NATH
HYDERABAD

WITH a spike in Covid cases, voluntary groups once again resumed their services, including free online doctors' consultation, home delivery of oxygen cylinders, last rites, free food delivery and free ambulance.

Even as the second wave struck hard this month, observing that there is a lot of strain on the health infrastructure and need to ease the pain of many citizens, city-based NGOs like Helping Hand Foundation (HFF), Feed the Needy and several others have once again resumed their services.

Mujtaba Hasan Askari, the founder of Helping Hand Foundation said, "Once again there is a rise in Covid cases just like last year, we have seen people suffer-



ing due to lack of treatment. This year to avoid any such incidents, we have once again resumed our services." The organization has started online doctor consultations round-the-clock and home delivery of oxygen cylinders, pulse oximeters, and medicines. It has also started ambulance support for emergencies and funerals for needy persons from the first week of April.

Once again, many hospitals are restricting the non-Covid patients from visiting hospitals. For these people, the NGO has started nursing on-call services to monitor vitals and injectables on a case-to-case basis. Citizens in need can contact the helpline

number 8790679505 and 7893191193. Last year the NGO helped 8,500 Covid-19 cases.

An ambulance has been especially dedicated to the transport of Covid dead patients to the graveyard by 'Feed the Needy'—an NGO. It resumed service in the second week of April and by now has performed five cremation. "During the first wave we performed 210 cremations, we are soon planning to resume our free ambulance service from April 17," said Sai Teja, member of the NGO.

Prasanna, founder of Every Pulse Foundation, said, "Recently we received many calls from the Covid-affected families,



especially those who are not financially strong, asking us to provide food packets and grocery kits. So, we have planned to resume our service from next week." Her NGO plans to distribute food packets to around 300 Covid positive patients who are in home isolation. During the first wave they served to 1300 plus people with food packets.

CM LAUNCHES AP-AMUL PROJECT IN GUNTUR DIST



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy virtually launches AP-Amul Project in Guntur district

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy launched AP Amul Project in Guntur district virtually from camp office here on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said the project was started with an MoU signed between Amul and the state government on July 21 to give a fillip to the empowerment of women self-help groups by encouraging the milk cooperatives in government sector. The AP Amul Palavelluva Project was started on December 2 and milk is being collected in 400 villages in Chittoor, Kadapa and Prakasam districts. He said the AP Amul project will start in Guntur and milk collection started in 129 villages in the district and also in 174 villages in Chittoor district on Friday.

The Chief Minister said the women in 400 villages are getting Rs 5-7 more than the existing price per litre and added

- The cooperative begins collection of milk in 129 villages in Guntur and 174 villages in Chittoor district
- Chief Minister who virtually launched the project in Guntur district, says women in 400 villages are getting Rs 5-7 more than the existing price per litre
- States that to strengthen Amul and benefit women dairy farmers, 9,899 villages across the State will be brought under milk production through AP-Amul project

that milk is being collected in some villages of his own Pulivendula constituency. He said Amul has been paying remunerative price in the market as it stands eighth in the IFCN's rankings and it is cooperative unit and the stakeholders are dairy farmers across the state. He said Amul, which is a cooperative movement, pays more than the existing price per litre and the profit earned would be distributed among the stakeholders every six months.

The Chief Minister said Amul products have been getting remunerative prices as the highest level of processing of milk is be-

ing conducted in Amul and chocolates and ice creams are produced as the processed foods and are being exported foreign countries. He said 41,44,000 litre milk was collected from 10,871 women dairy farmers in 400 villages of Chittoor, Kadapa and Prakasam districts from December 2 and Rs 18.46 crore has been paid and added that Amul has paid Rs 3.52 crore more than the existing price benefiting women dairy farmers.

The Chief Minister said to strengthen Amul and benefit women dairy farmers, through AP-Amul project, 9899 villages across the state will be brought

under milk production, where Bulk Milk Cooling Units (BMCU) and Automatic Milk Collection Units (AMCU) will be set up at a cost Rs 4,000 crore. The Chief Minister said quality animal feed will be supplied to dairy farmers through Rythu Bharosa Kendras in coming days.

The Chief Minister said he is committed for empowerment of the women and listed out the women-oriented welfare schemes and programmes in being implemented in the state.

Minister for fisheries and animal husbandry Dr Seediri Appalaraju, agriculture special chief secretary Poonam Malakondaiah, APDDCF MD A Babu were present on the occasion. GCMMF (Amul) MD R S Sodhi, Sabarkanta o-operative Society MD Dr B M Patel, home minister Mekathoti Sucharitha, MLA Vidadala Rajani and a large number of women dairy farmers from various villages participated in videoconference.

Covid-19 service activities

- Governor asks Red Cross Society to look for volunteers
- All eligible tribal people need to get vaccinated
- Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan sanctions Rs 1 lakh to urban units & Rs 50,000 to rural units

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

GOVERNOR Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan on Friday asked the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), Telangana branch, to intensify its effort to reach out to more people during the Covid-19 crisis. "As the second wave of Covid-19 is more effective, it's time that IRCS should increase its activities. Volunteers must take up a wide variety of service activities, she added.

The Governor, who is president of the IRCS TS unit, reviewed the functioning of all 33 district units through a video conference from Pondicherry, where she's holding an additional charge as Lt. Governor.

"The district units need to come up with innovative initiatives to reach out to the needy. It is a bounden duty of the IRCS units to help, motivate and facilitate vaccination of tribal and other vulnerable people in their respective areas," she added.

Dr Soundararajan an-

nounced a financial assistance of Rs 1 lakh each to the IRCS urban units of Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy, Medchal-Malkajgiri and Warangal (Urban) districts and sanctioned Rs 50,000 each to all the remaining district units.

"The amount needs to be used to facilitate transportation of tribal people and other under-privileged sections to vaccination centres. Ensuring all eligible tribals need to get vaccinated along with slum-dwellers in the State should be a top priority," the Governor added.

Dr Soundararajan called for increasing enrollment of active number of volunteers. At least 1,000 to 1,500 active volunteers must be there in each district to carry out the service activities during this pandemic period. The IRCS units should submit district-wise reports detailing the number of masks distributed, people motivated and facilitated to get vaccinated, blood donation camps organised, volunteers enrolled and other activities initiated, the Governor stated. "Motivating public to strictly follow the Covid-appropriate behaviour and to get vaccinated are vital in containing the pandemic outbreak from further escalation," she said.

All the district units' representatives appraised the Governor of the activities during the video conference. Secretary to Governor K. Surendra Mohan, joint secretaries and other senior officials of the Raj Bhavan were present.

FICCI urges AP govt not to go for another lockdown

President of the State body says lockdown will push the economy further into crisis

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

APPRECIATING the efforts of the state government in containing the spread of Covid-19 in the state and ramping up the healthcare infrastructure to manage this unprecedented crisis caused by the pandemic, Uday Shankar, president of the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), in a letter to Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy said another lockdown, even partial one, will push the economy into a downward spiral.

Referring to the lockdown last year, he said that though unavoidable at that time, it had exacted a huge cost on Indian economy and livelihoods of the people. As the economy has barely begun to turnaround from the impact of the lockdowns, FICCI strongly suggests that we should avoid introducing another lockdown or even a partial lockdown in the State.

Stating that it is imperative that the country needs to break the chain of Covid spread, he suggested certain measures to be taken in the state on an emergent basis including ramping up Covid testing by using private labs, sensitising the population about the Covid appropriate behaviour like wearing masks, physical distancing, personal hygiene, involving volunteers from schools, colleges and the NGOs, imposing penalties for violation of compliance to Covid protocol and others.

He recalled that the FICCI has represented to the Union government to open up the vaccination for all the people above 18 years of age to give a massive push to the vaccination drive as there is no shortage of vaccines and the inoculation capacity can be increased with the participation of the private sector. He said that the state government will have to play a major role to encourage people to come forward for vaccination. Vaccination camps with the help of Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) will also help push the vaccination drive.

Pay compensation to rain-hit farmers

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE Telangana Rythu Sangham on Friday demanded the TRS government to pay compensation to farmers who lost crops in the recent untimely rains in several districts.

Sangham president Teegala Sagar and general secretary Pesaragayala Janga Reddy said in a statement that the heavy crop loss of paddy, chilli, cotton and groundnut in many areas of the State was causing concern. Besides, they said, many transformers and poles were damaged in the rain. The two leaders wanted the government to immediately assess the crop loss and compensate the distressed farmers. Also, they called for extending crop insurance to the affected ryots and waive their crop loans. The leaders appealed to the government to arrange purchase by the government agencies of the damages grains.

VP condoles Kakarla's demise

HYDERABAD

VICE-PRESIDENT M Venkaiah Naidu on Friday expressed profound grief on the passing away of renowned radiologist Dr Kakarla Subba Rao. In a Facebook post, he called Rao as an excellent hospital administrator who was known for his integrity, professionalism, hard work and discipline.

"I am deeply saddened to learn about the passing away of renowned radiologist, Dr. Kakarla Subba Rao Garu. A Padma Shri recipient, Dr. Kakarla, as he was popularly known, contributed richly to the field of medicine. He is widely credited with the development of the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) into a reputed super specialty hospital when he was its director.

Dr Kakarla was also an excellent hospital administrator and known for his integrity, professionalism, hard work and discipline. He was dedicated to his profession.

Focus on jabs, testing: CM to officials

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy said the only weapon against Covid-19 is vaccination and directed the officials to focus on vaccination, tests and preparedness of hospitals.

In a video conference held with district collectors and SPs on prevailing pandemic situation and vaccination, the Chief Minister, praising the services of all from collectors and SPs to staff of village/ ward secretariats for working with dedication for last one year, said the Covid cases were increasing and they should work with same spirit again. He said vaccination was the only perma-

nent solution and added that the government was trying to get more doses to the state as the regulatory authority on vaccines is Central government.

The Chief Minister said imposing lockdown has worsened financial situation and people suffered a lot and Covid should be controlled without imposing lockdown this time. He directed the officials to focus on controlling Covid through focused testing. Testing the primary contacts of those who have tested positive for Covid is called focused testing. He said to prepare PHCs, sub-centres to collect samples for testing. He said composition of 'positivity cases' was 62 per cent in urban areas and 38 per cent in rural areas. However

the mortality rate is higher in rural areas. Deaths in positive cases are higher in rural areas as they are going to the hospitals too late.

He asked them to create awareness on Covid-19 using volunteers, Asha workers and ANMs and conduct tests to the people identified with symptoms during survey. He directed the district collectors to hold review meetings with joint collectors every day on the situation and preparedness of hospitals.

The Chief Minister said 108 hospitals are empanelled for Covid treatment and out of 15,669 beds in those hospitals, 4,889 beds are occupied and directed the officials to increase the availability of beds in the hospitals.

He instructed the officials to ensure oxygen facilities, infrastructure, food quality in hospitals, sanitation, medication, doctors, para medical staff are adequate in hospitals as it's the responsibility of the government. He said 13,500 beds are available in Covid care centres and they should be increased to 50,000 and the patients with no separate room for isolation in their house should be shifted to Covid care center.

The Chief Minister said volunteers, ANMs and Asha workers should regularly monitor the conditions of patients in home isolation.

Patients should be provided with bed or Covid kit within three hours of the request. He said COVID treatment should

Monsoon to be normal this year: IMD

NEW DELHI

THE Southwest monsoon, which brings nearly 75 per cent of rainfall to the country, is expected to be normal this year, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Friday. The Long Period Average (LPA) will be 98 per cent with an error margin of plus and minus 5 per cent, said M Rajeevan, secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Rainfall in Odisha, Jharkhand, eastern Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya is likely to be below normal, but normal or above normal in the rest of the country, he said while releasing the first Long Range Forecast for the four-month rainfall period from June to September. "The monsoon will be 98 per cent of the LPA, which is normal rainfall. It is a really good news for the country and will help India have a good agriculture output," Rajeevan said at a virtual press conference. The LPA, the average of the season's rainfall

across the country from 1961-2010, is 88 cm. The news augurs well for economy, battered due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Southwest monsoon is one of the primary drivers of the country's economy, which is largely based on agriculture and its allied activities. Large parts of the country rely on the four-month rainfall season for agriculture and also for filling reservoirs.

This is the first time the IMD has made a specific forecast on spatial distribution. Rajeevan said the IMD will also issue month-wise forecasts during the next four months and also for the homogenous regions of the country --- IMD's four divisions --- the Northwest India, East and Northeast India, Central India and South Peninsula. The country has recorded above normal rainfall for the last two rainfall seasons. The La Nina and El Nino factors major influences on the Indian monsoon. The former is associated with the cooling of the Pacific waters and brings good rainfall

while the latter is linked to the heating of Pacific waters and could lead to deficient precipitation. "There are less chances of formation of an El Nino," Rajeevan said. He said in the recent years, the year after La Nina has usually seen a normal rainfall season. The Indian Dipole is another major influence on the outcome of the monsoon.

A negative IOD is associated with the heating of the Indian Ocean waters and a positive IOD is linked to the cooling of Indian Ocean waters. The latest global model forecast indicates that neutral ENSO (El Nino Southern Oscillation) conditions are likely to continue over the equatorial Pacific and negative IOD conditions are likely to develop over the Indian Ocean during the ensuing monsoon season, IMD Director General M Mohapatra said. "La-Nina is favoured through March-May with 80 per cent chances of a transition to ENSO-neutral in April-June 2021 and continuing through the fall of 2021,"



Rainfall in Odisha, Jharkhand, eastern Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya is likely to be below normal, but normal or above normal in the rest of the country

WINDOWS

Cannabis grown in Dombivali flat

MUMBAI: The Narcotics Control Bureau raided a flat in Dombivali in neighboring Thane district and seized cannabis being cultivated in a flat using a method in which plants are grown with using soil, also called hydroponic farming, an official said on Friday. The drug was being cultivated a two bedroom-hall-kitchen (BHK) flat owned by one Rehan Khan, who is based in Saudi Arabia and was financing the operation, the official added. "After the raid on Thursday, we have seized pH regulators, plant nutrients, clay pebbles, water pumps, air circulation systems, carbon dioxide gas cylinders, photosynthesis lighting systems etc from the flat.



A school situated near Argora chowk, with a board displaying its name changed to 'Corona Universal School', in an attempt to impart coronavirus awareness among children, in Ranchi on Friday; (Right) Covid-19 patients share a common bed at the casualty ward, as shortage of bed increased due to rising cases, at Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) hospital, in Ranchi on Friday



A boy during the ongoing holy fasting month of 'Ramadan', at Jama Masjid in New Delhi on Friday

Girl student held for smuggling gold

LUCKNOW: A 22-year-old female student from Kolkata was arrested by customs sleuths at Lucknow airport for smuggling gold worth Rs 1.13 crore. The student, whose father is a wholesale dealer in rice, was returning from Dubai on an Indigo flight which landed in Lucknow on April 13.

According to Deputy Commissioner, Customs, Niharika Lakha, "The female student was trying to smuggle 2,318 grams of gold which she had concealed in white polythene inside her underwear."

DELHI, MUMBAI

WITH India in the grip of a second Covid-19 wave, the country may see 1,750 coronavirus related deaths per day, rising to approximately 2,320 by the first week of June, a report of the Lancet Covid-19 Commission by India Task Force members said.

The report, titled Managing Indias second Covid-19 wave: Urgent steps, highlights the key points of the second wave of pandemic. The report also recommends steps that should be taken now to help slow down the spread of infection.

The overall Case Fatality Ratio since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020 has been reported to be around 1.3%. The CFR among patients who have contracted the virus since the beginning of 2021 is far less at 0.87%. Provisionally, it appears that CFR is lower in the second wave. In a major development, the Haj Committee of India (HCI) has said that no Indian Muslims shall be allowed to go for the annual Haj pilgrimage unless they have taken the two vaccine doses.

The HCI CEO Maqsood Ahmed Khan made the announcement late on Thursday following the latest directives from the Saudi Arabian Health Ministry and the Indian Consulate-General in Jeddah.

Accordingly, he advised those who have applied for the Haj 2021 to take the first dose of the vaccine on their own now so they can be administered the second dose before departure.

'INDIA MAY SEE 2,320 DEATHS PER DAY'

No Haj without two vaccine doses: Panel Union minister Javadekar tests positive

5 WB candidates hit by virus

At least five candidates of different parties contesting the ongoing assembly election in West Bengal have tested positive for COVID-19, a health department official said on Friday. Out of the five candidates who tested positive, three are from the Trinamool Congress (TMC), and one each from the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and the BJ, he said. RSP's Jangipur candidate, 73-year-old Pradip Kumar Nandi, tested positive on Wednesday and is now in home isolation, the official said. BJP's candidate for Matigara-Naxalbari seat Anandamoy Barman (38), TMC's Goalpokhar nominee Mohammed Ghulam Rabbani, Tapan candidate Kalpana Kisku, and Jalpaiguri candidate Dr. Pradip Kumar Barma have tested COVID-19 positive.

However, Khan made it clear that there is no official communication on the status of the Haj pilgrimage yet from the Saudi Arabian authorities so far and the entire process would be subject to their approval.

Crematoriums not working in Patna

Bihar runs short of crematoriums. The Centre meanwhile, continues to focus on the Bengal elections with Union Home Minister and BJP leader Amit Shah visiting Tehatta in Nadia district. Shah had earlier claimed that the Maharashtra government was lying about a shortage of Covid vaccinations. Rajkumar, in charge of the Patna Nagar Nigam crematorium says, "Around 10-12 bodies including 6-7 COVID-19 bodies have been brought here today. Today, the number of bodies brought here is less as compared to other days. We have been working for nearly 24 hours." District Magistrate, Patna, says, "We have written to Patna Municipal Corporation to repair and make functional.

A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking vaccination for all above the age of 18 years because of a sudden upsurge in coronavirus cases across the country. The petition stated that the adminis-

ICSE defers class 10, 12 exams

The ICSE deferred the board exams of classes 10 and 12 in view of a rise in COVID-19 cases across the country. In light of the nationwide surge in coronavirus cases, the class 10 and 12 exams which were to be held from May 4 have been deferred, the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations' chief executive and secretary Gerry Arathoon said. "We will closely monitor the situation and review it in the first week of June to take a final decision on conduct of examination," he said. "While class 12 exams will be conducted at a later stage, class 10 students will get an option to either appear in offline exams later or get evaluated on basis of fair and unbiased criteria to be developed by board."

tration of the vaccine in itself takes between six to eight weeks for both the doses and hence by the time the vaccine reaches the age group of 18 years and above, the virus would have spread rapidly and may give rise to a situation.

Meanwhile, Congress leaders Randeep Surjewala and Digvijaya Singh tested positive for Covid19 on Friday. Karnataka CM B S Yediyurappa tested positive for second time in eight months

Union minister Prakash Javadekar on Friday said that he has tested positive for COVID-19 and urged those who came in contact with him in the last two-three days to get themselves tested.

Taking a dig at the government, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said its strategy to fight the pandemic consisted of imposing a 'Tughlaqi lockdown', ringing bells and singing praises to the Lord. The Congress-led opposition has been criticising the government over its handling of the pandemic and the vaccination drive, while the Centre has maintained that its timely steps have been instrumental in fighting COVID-19.

In a tweet in Hindi, Gandhi said, "The Central government's COVID-19 strategy -- Stage 1- Impose a Tughlaqi lockdown, Stage 2- Ring bells, Stage 3- Sing praises to the Lord." The Congress in the past also has compared some of the government's decisions to those taken by Delhi Sultanate ruler Muhammad bin Tughlaq, to allege that they were arbitrary and not well thought out. The party has also taken swipes at the government over its 'taali-thaali' call last year in which people across India clapped, rang bells, blew conch shells and beat metal plates in solidarity with health workers fighting the novel coronavirus.

Ex-CBI chief Ranjit Sinha dies

NEW DELHI

FORMER Director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Ranjit Sinha passed away early Friday morning at the age of 68 years.

It is understood that he was confirmed positive for coronavirus on Thursday night and breathed his last at 4.30 am on Friday, the officials said.

Sinha, a 1974-batch officer of the Bihar cadre and who had cracked the coveted UPSC examination at the age of 21, had taken over as the CBI chief in 2012. He had previously headed the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) force, the Railway Protection Force and served at senior positions in the CBI in Patna and Delhi during his four-decade-long career in police service.



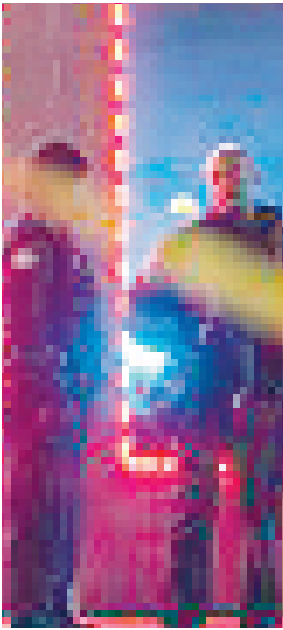
"DG and all ranks of ITBP express their deepest condolences on the sad demise of Sh Ranjit Sinha, former DG ITBP today. He served the force from September 1, 2011, to December 19, 2012, as DG and earlier as ADG and will always be remembered for his professional acumen and exceptional leadership. May his soul rest in peace," the ITBP said in a statement.

An MPhil from the Indian Institute of Public Administration, Sinha was an avid reader and writer and a regular contributor on police-related issues in various journals and magazines.

A recipient of the Police Medal for Meritorious Service and the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service, Sinha served as SSP in Ranchi, Madhubani and Saharsa districts and also as DIG of Naxal-affected Magadh Range in Bihar.

Kerala nun found dead inside convent well

KOCHI: A 42-year-old Catholic nun was found dead inside the well of the St Joseph convent at Kureepuzha in this south Kerala district on Friday, police said. The other inmates noticed the body of Mable Joseph, a native of Karunagapally, inside the well of the sprawling convent campus in the morning. They carried out a search after she failed to turn up for the usual morning prayers. Police said prima facie it was a suspected case of suicide and other details could be known only after the post-mortem and investigation. A suicide note, suspected to be written by the deceased nun, was recovered from her room, they said. 'As per the note, no one was responsible for her death and she was ending her life due to health issues. Police said an investigation is already on into the incident.



8 dead in US shootout

INDIANAPOLIS

At least eight people were killed after a gunman opened fire at a FedEx facility in Indianapolis late Thursday before also killing himself, police said. Multiple other people were taken to hospitals with injuries, police said. The shooting was reported shortly after 11 p.m. and officers arrived to an active shooter incident, Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department spokeswoman Officer Genae Cook told reporters.

She said the gunman killed himself at the scene. Authorities found eight bodies during a search, she added. That number did not include the gunman, whose motive and connection to the facility were unclear.

Cook said an investigation was underway.

"This is a tragedy," she said.

FedEx CEO Frederick W. Smith said the eight killed were FedEx employees. "This is a devastating day, and words are hard to describe the emotions we all feel," Smith said in a statement. "I want to express my deepest sympathies to the families, friends, and co-workers of those team members," he said, adding that counselors were on site at the facility to provide support.

Five people were taken to hospitals, including one person in critical condition, according to police. Two others were treated at the scene, the department said Friday morning in a statement.

The mask is for Covid what the condom was for HIV, say experts

NEW DELHI

INDIA for the second day in a row recorded a single-day spike of over two lakh Covid cases. The massive spurt in Covid cases has put states with high infection rates like Maharashtra, Delhi, and Uttar Pradesh under pressure to impose a complete lockdown to break the chain of transmission.

However, a section of noted scientists believes that instead of preventing people from having any social contacts, it is advisable to take steps to make such contacts safe.

Dr Thekkekara Jacob John, noted virologist and veteran vaccine researcher, uses HIV analogy to get his point across to people and the government.

"What did you want when HIV came? 'no sex' or 'safe sex' i.e. sex with a condom? People chose sex with condoms after a lot of persuasion. So, wearing a mask is a remedy, not the lockdown," explains Dr John.

Even at the time of the first countrywide lockdown imposed in March last year, he had opposed it because he believes the absence of social contact is detrimental to the mental health of the people since human beings are social animals.

"We cannot live without social interaction. We are social animals. So why adopt a measure which makes people helpless to break or disobey? It is better that we should make them realize that universal mask-wearing makes social contact safe," Dr John said.

Professor Vasanthapuram Ravi, a noted virolo-



gist, who is on the advisory board of the Sputnik V vaccine, agrees that complete lockdown is not a solution and it is impractical too.

Dr Ravi was Dean (Basic Sciences) at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), and worked extensively when the HIV virus spread during the late 80s and 90s. "Force can't change people's behaviour. During HIV days, people were not ready to wear condoms like today they are not ready to wear masks," he said adding that the only way was to educate people about safe sex rather than telling them to have no sex.

Many health experts on HIV say that many people still don't use a condom and have unsafe sex but the government keeps on emphasizing the need for it even today.

"I think partial restrictions are acceptable like a speed-breaker on the road to help slow the transmission. However, I don't support any step that will hamper economic activity," Dr Ravi said.

He also believes that if people don't wear masks, vaccination is the only way to slow down the progress of the virus.

Another virus scientist Professor Ramaswamy Pitchappan—now a visiting professor at the School of Biological Sciences, Madurai Kamaraj University—advocates continuous efforts to encourage people to adopt appropriate Covid behaviour rather than imposing a lockdown.

"Lockdown would be an economic disaster. It may not serve the purpose. Everything should be allowed to function with reasonable restrictions," Prof Pitchappan said.

AMARAVATI SATURDAY 17 APRIL 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Hyundai's exports

Hyundai Motor India Ltd. (HMITL) has announced their leadership role in exporting passenger vehicles from India. The company exported 1,04,342 units between April 20 to March 21 and surpassed the three million vehicle export milestone earlier in 2020, exporting to 88 countries. Additionally, Hyundai became the leading exporter of SUVs with over two lakh units of Creta and Venue exported to overseas markets including Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Nepal. S S Kim, MD & CEO, Hyundai Motor India Ltd, said: "Despite numerous challenges emerging out of the global pandemic, uncertainty in various markets, restriction on imports and disruption in supply-chain, HMITL has continued to drive operational excellence to ensure customer satisfaction. An export of 1,04,342 units in FY21 stands testament to our indomitable spirit."

Virtual gallery launched

Art for Freedom which is part of the larger #DNAFightsRape initiative, unveiled Grand Virtual Art for Freedom Gallery with diverse and bold art forms including, paintings, posters etc. The initiative is aimed at stopping victim shaming and blaming. Voices have come together in compelling stories. The theme effectively captures real life stories of sexual offence, child abuse, human trafficking, domestic violence, marital rape, accounting for this heinous crime. Dr Pinky Anand, Sr Advocate, Supreme Court of India, commented, "It is unfortunate that multiple rapes continue to be reported every day in India and in most cases the perpetrator is known to the victim. We need to ask what encourages them? This initiative will go a long way in creating sensitivity in people to change old mindsets through art".

GMR launches Hyd AeroCity

Ultra-modern unique business district to be hub for business, entertainment, retail and hospitality

HYDERABAD

GMR Group on Friday announced launch of GMR AeroCity Hyderabad as part of its vision to provide world-class infrastructure in India. GMR AeroCity Hyderabad is unfolding a landmark urban form that is attractive, and sustainable. Being developed as an urban landscape with an international airport at its core, it brings speed, agility and connectivity as unique business propositions.

Spread across 1,500 acres, GMRAeroCity Hyderabad is proposed to be an integrated mixed-use development, which includes key ports and establishments, such as, Business Park, Retail Park, Aerospace and Industrial Park, Logistics Park, and Hospitality to begin with. It also provides complete living and working experience, with support infrastructure including schools, healthcare, rental accommodation, leisure and entertainment.

Identifying the gap in quality leisure, retail, fun and entertainment avenues, GMR Group is conceptualising a lifestyle destination retail project "GMR Interchange" to enable live/work/play at the GMR AeroCity Hyderabad campus. Various entertainment avenues that are proposed include a cinema and a family en-



Spanning around 1 million sqft of leasable area, spread over four Towers (being developed in phases, with Tower 1 fully occupied and Tower 2 ready for occupancy), GMR AeroCity Hyderabad has been seamlessly designed for the future business corridor

tertainment centre to be part of the Interchange project. A Hospitality district is also being planned to cater to the multitude of demand coming from various users of AeroCity.

GMR Business Park housed in GMRAeroCity Hyderabad would offer varied office real-estate solutions like ready to move-in Grade-A offices and built-to-suit campuses. It offers best in class infrastructural support for the prospective and existing businesses such as, redundancies built in telecom, power and IT infrastructure for 24/7 operations;

dedicated power link-up with the State grid for reliable power supply, round-the-clock three-tier security system comprising RAXA, State police and CISF, express connectivity with the city; pollution-free and well-planned ecosystem. Spanning around 1 million sq.ft of leasable area, spread over four Towers (being developed in phases, with Tower 1 fully occupied and Tower 2 ready for occupancy), GMR AeroCity Hyderabad has been seamlessly designed for the future business corridor. The Business Park is an ideal choice for

DR, BCP sites, Grade A offices, network planning offices, sales office, R&D etc.

The facilities such as, food court, gymnasium, retail bank branch, proposed health centre and an airport public plaza will ensure that employees have all social amenities within their office campus making it a highly enriching work environment for them. Well connected with an eight-lane express way and an elevated corridor with the primary and secondary business districts of Hyderabad, GMR Business Park is strategically located with unparalleled local and global connectivity. In addition, the Airport is currently connected by more than 150 buses round the clock, and soon will be connected via an express Metro system to the city.

PRK Hospital, Affordplan tie up to launch health card

HANS BUSINESS
HYDERABAD

AFFORDPLAN Swasth and PRK Hospital have collaborated on a healthcare savings card for Hyderabad residents to make hospital facilities more affordable and accessible to patient families in need.

The Affordplan Swasth card offers customers complete access to all the hospital services at PRK Hospital with financial benefits and a full range of healthcare financing options for their entire family. Affordplan Swasth is a Yes Bank pre-

paid card with a digital wallet that enables OPD (Out-patient Department) services, lab tests, purchase of medicines and goal-based EMI savings for all IPD (Inpatient Department) treatments. Equipped with a chip-enabled card, customers will also enjoy additional benefits in the form of instant cashback, exclusive hospital offers and discounts on preferred brands through the Affordplan Swasth partner tie-ups. Affordplan Swasth has already partnered with many hospitals in Bangalore and Hyderabad, delivering financial benefits to patients.

US ban hitting Covishield output

MUMBAI

SERUM Institute of India (SII) CEO Adar Poonawalla on Friday said the US needs to lift its embargo on raw material exports to help ramp up vaccine production. SII is currently manufacturing Covishield, developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University.

The vaccine is not only being used in India, but exported to a number of countries. Poonawalla had earlier admitted that SII has been facing problems in sending out required number of batches of vaccines due to the bureaucratic and government-related hurdles.

China's GDP hits all-time high

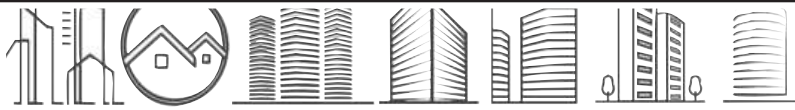
K J M VARMA
BEIJING

CHINA's GDP jumped a record 18.3 per cent in the first quarter of 2021, riding on strong domestic and foreign demand and aided by recovery from a low base in early 2020 when Covid-19 stalled the world's second-largest economy, according to statistics released on Friday. The gross domestic product (GDP) reached 24.93 trillion yuan (about \$3.82 trillion) in Q1, data released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said. This is the highest quarterly growth rate since China first began publishing GDP data in 1993.



The double-digit growth puts the average Q1 growth of 2020 and 2021 at 5 per cent from the 2019 level, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. In the first three months, China saw a steady industrial production rebound, improvement in market sales, recovery in fixed-asset investment, and noticeable momentum in foreign trade of goods, it said. China's economy, which was the

first to be hit by the coronavirus pandemic and early to recover from its impact, grew 2.3 per cent in 2020, registering the lowest annual growth rate in 45 years. The GDP of the world's second-largest economy grew by 2.3 per cent expanding to \$15.42 trillion in 2020, according to the data released by the NBS said. In the local currency, the GDP exceeded the 100 trillion yuan (\$15.42 trillion) threshold to 101.5986 trillion yuan. Early this month, the IMF increased China's GDP projection to 8.4 per cent for this year, a 10-year high but cautioned that the growth is unbalanced and private consumption has not recovered as fast.



REAL CORNER



Property prices in Vizag scare home buyers

- Residential properties see 10-30% rise in prices in last six months
- Real estate deals speed up in Vizag with fear of further hike
- Credai, Naredco urge govt to cut taxes, hold land rates for affordable houses

N SHARATH CHOWDARY

DESPITE slowdown in the country's economy, property prices surged 10-30 per cent in Visakhapatnam. Real estate experts attribute this to executive-capital tag to the city, ongoing infrastructural developments, shortage of land availability and rise in the rates of raw materials such as cement and steel used in construction of houses. As per market rates, the residential plots in Tagarapavalasa, Anandapuram, Pendurthi, Kurmannapalem and Lankelapalem suburbs of Visakhapatnam, which cost around Rs 20,000 to Rs 40,000 per square yard a few months ago, are now priced in the range of 25,000 to Rs 50,000 per square yard.

Similarly, the flats in newly constructed apartments at Madhurawada, PM Palem and Murali Nagar witnessed 30 per cent rise in prices, while properties in Gopalapatnam, Sujatha Nagar, Chinnamushidiwada, Sheelanagar and



Scarcity of land and increased rates of raw materials have led to property price growth across the State. Covid-19 pandemic stressed the need for own homes. Work from home culture also created further demand to upgrade houses

— Raja Srinivas, State president of Credai AP Chapter

Achyutapuram have also seen 20-25 per cent price hike. Though the increased property rates encourage the investor community, it is a big burden for the first-time home buyers. Along with skyrocketing land rates, direct and indirect taxes are continuously on upswing. All these had a cascading effect adding to the woes of middle-class home buyers.

The rates of cement and steel have almost doubled in the past few months and there had been at least 25 per cent rise in the prices of electric coils, PVC pipes, paints and hardware items.

"The cost of a cement bag has increased from Rs 225 to Rs 394, while steel prices rose from Rs 35,000 per tonne to Rs 65,000 per tonne during the last six months. Ultimately, the price burden will fall on the end-user," says B Srinivasa Rao, President, Confederation of Real Estate Developers Association (Credai) Vizag Chapter.

Though builders have not raised the prices already committed to their customers, the new buyers are likely to bear the brunt, he adds. Meanwhile, the plan of YS Jaganmohan Reddy-led government to make Vizag the Exec-

utive capital of the State has led to a fear of further rise in property prices in the port city. The number of registrations scaled up to 37,524 during August 2020 - February 2021 from 32,521 in the corresponding six-month period of previous year. It is not the same in other cities of the State. There is a huge unsold inventory in the real estate markets of Vijayawada, Tirupati and Rajahmundry. Owing to current situation of cash crunch, the realtors are unable to complete their projects in time.

To save the construction sector, the representatives of real estate bodies urge the State government to freeze the land rates and reduce the taxes. AP government increases land rates every year in the month of August. National Real Estate Development Council (Naredco) State General Secretary GSS Prasad urged the state government to maintain status quo this year. He says, "Due to impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, States like Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have decided not to hike the land rates. However, AP government has not yet announced any relief to realty sector." The members of Credai Vijayawada chapter also requested AP government to reduce the registration stamp duty to 2 per cent from existing 7.5 per cent. It will not only give a breather to the real estate fraternity, but also help the first time home buyers, they say.

Land value in metros to rise 10-15%: JLL

MUMBAI

AS several cities add metro rail to their public transport facilities or extend their existing networks, a JLL report said that land value within 500 metre of upcoming metro corridors is expected to increase by 10-15 per cent, according to a JLL report.

Noting that India was introduced to the metro rail as an alternative mode of transport three decades, the report said: "Since then, the advantages of the metro rail system have increased many-folds. Primarily it has been the enhanced connectivity to the suburbs of the city, thus enabling distribution of the city population to a larger extent of land resulting to congestion reduction in the city."

Covering a total of 760.62 km across India with another 578.34 km under construction, the past two decades has seen a tremendous growth of the metro rail. Cities including Kochi, Chennai, Bengaluru, Nagpur and Nashik have seen significant expansion of new metro lines, which was highlighted by the Finance Minister in the Union Budget hearing in January 2021.

Further, two new technologies including MetroLite and MetroNeo are being planned to pro-

vide affordable connectivity options in tier II cities and peripheral parts of tier I cities.

"The real estate market has seen a steady growth along the metro corridors, owing to increase in developments alongside the routes. Furthermore, on an average, the land value within 500 metre of metro corridors has increased by 15-20 per cent, especially in residential and commercial areas," said A. Shankar, Head - Strategic Consulting and Valuation Advisory, India, JLL.

He further said that it has been observed that appreciation in land value has been on a rise after the metro operation and increase by 2-5 per cent annually over other locations, compared to the construction and planning phase.

The deployment of metro corridor directly impacts the real estate sector as it increases the land value, land use change and densification alongside the metro corridor. Mass transit systems such as metros and monorails significantly contribute towards solving traffic problems, the report said.

Thus, projects which are planned around the vicinity witness an increased urban real estate value, since consumers are willing to pay more for convenience, it said.

Luxury home sales down 8% in Hyderabad

NEW DELHI

SALES of luxury housing units in Hyderabad witnessed an eight per cent downfall among the top markets from 1,455 units in February 2020 to 1,337 units in February 2021, revealed a PropEquity report. It noted that the luxury home sales witnessed an increase in most of the top markets in February. The sales of luxury houses increased 54 per cent in Delhi-NCR on a year-on-year basis in February. A total of 1,095 luxury units were sold in Delhi-NCR during the month under review, compared to 709 units sold during the same period of last year.

Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) and Pune witnessed the rise in home sales by 13 per cent, eight per cent, seven per cent, 37 per cent and 12 per cent, respectively during the same period. "Housing market has been improving over the last few quarters and our data has suggested that home sales will continue to see growth in 2021. India is also undertaking the largest vaccine drive for Covid-19 and as we cover more and more population, we will witness a decent rise in demand," said Samir Jasuja, MD and Founder of PropEquity.

Indian Premier League

Sunrisers fret over right line-up against high-flying Mumbai

CHENNAI

AFTER successive losses in their first two matches in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL), SunRisers Hyderabad (SRH) will face defending champions Mumbai Indians (MI) in their third game, desperately looking for a win.

MI, meanwhile, have won one of the two matches they have played so far.

All eyes will be on whether SRH will play Kiwi batsman Kane Williamson, who did not feature in either of the team's first two matches.

SRH batsmen have made a hash of things thus far, especially in their previous game against Royal Challengers Bangalore, which they lost from a position of strength while chasing a modest target.

There have already been calls for including Williamson, with former India cricketers Virender Sehwag and Sanjay Manjrekar saying that he is required in the SRH line-up.

With MI boasting of bowlers like Trent Boult and Jasprit Bumrah, SRH will need a batsman who can bat long and ensure that others play around him. Additionally, captain and opener David Warner's battle with Boult could decide the course of the match.

Another keenly contested battle will be between SRH leg-spinner Rashid Khan and the MI middle and lower order batting.

Rashid has a knack of reading the pitch well, like he did in the last match in which he put the skids on RCB batting along with

Jason Holder and others.

MI will present a different challenge since they have power-hitters in their middle and lower order. The fact that they have failed in both the matches, in the loss to the Bangalore franchise and in the win over Kolkata Knight Riders, they will be desperate to do well against SRH.

It will also be interesting to see if SRH field seamer Sandeep Sharma, who has the ability to swing the ball early on. Both Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Holder did a great job with the new ball against RCB and their bowling against Rohit Sharma and Quinton de Kock will be one to watch out for. The pitch in Chennai has aided the spinners and has slowed down as the game has progressed. Teams batting first could again have an edge over their opponent.

SRH lost both their games while chasing, while MI's lone victory came while defending a target.

(IANS)

SQUADS

Mumbai Indians

Rohit Sharma (captain), Adam Milne, Aditya Tare, Anmolpreet Singh, Anukul Roy, Arjun Tendulkar, Chris Lynn, Dhawal Kularni, Hardik Pandya, Ishan Kishan (wicketkeeper), James Neesham, Jasprit Bumrah, Jayant Yadav, Kieron Pollard, Krunal Pandya, Marco Jansen, Mohsin Khan, Nathan Coulter-Nile, Piyush Chawla, Quinton De Kock (wicket-keeper), Rahul Chahar, Saurabh Tiwary, Suryakumar Yadav, Trent Boult, Yuvraj Singh.

SunRisers Hyderabad:

David Warner (captain), Abhishek Sharma, Basil Thampi, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Jonny Bairstow (wicketkeeper), Kane Williamson, Manish Pandey, Mohammad Nabi, Rashid Khan, Sandeep Sharma, Shahbaz Nadeem, Shreevats Goswami, Siddharth Kaul, Khaleel Ahmed, T Natarajan, Vijay Shankar, Wriddhiman Saha (wicket-keeper), Abdul Samad, Jason Roy, Jason Holder, Priyam



POINTS TABLE

Team	Played	Won	Lost	Tied	Net RR	Pts
1 RCB	2	2	0	0	+0.175	4
2 MI	2	1	1	0	+0.225	2
3 PBKS	1	1	0	0	+0.200	2
4 DC	2	1	1	0	+0.195	2
5 RR	2	1	1	0	+0.052	2
6 KKR	2	1	1	0	+0.000	2
7 SRH	2	0	2	0	-0.400	0
8 CSK	1	0	1	0	-0.779	0

Hoping to be fit and ready within the week: Williamson

CHENNAI

STAR New Zealand batsman Kane Williamson, who missed Sunrisers Hyderabad's first two IPL matches due to elbow injury is recovering well and is expected to attain full match-fitness "within a week".

The 30-year-old Williamson, a vital cog in SRH's middle order, suffered a small tear in his left elbow tendon and was ruled out of the home ODI series against Bangladesh in March ahead of the IPL.

However, the New Zealand captain on Friday said his "recovery is going really well". "...you know I have been focussed to get pain free as quickly as possible and we are certainly tracking really nicely and hoping to be fit and ready within the week," Williamson said in a video posted by SRH in twitter.

"It's been a bit of a balance between practice and rehab and sort of things. But for the most part, the progression is been really good. So pretty optimistic about being close to full fitness very soon."

Batting at number four, Williamson had scored 317 runs in 11 innings to take SRH to the play-offs last season in UAE. All eyes are once again on his return with Sunrisers losing both

their matches this season, primarily due to their inept middle-order.

Williamson had recently won his fourth Sir

Djokovic falls, Nadal beats Dimitrov at Monte Carlo

ROQUEBRUNE-CAP-MARTIN (FRANCE)

NOVAK Djokovic admitted he played an "awful" match against Dan Evans at the Monte Carlo Masters as Rafael Nadal advanced with ease to the quarter-finals.

World number one Djokovic, playing in his first tournament since winning a ninth Australian Open in February, suffered his first defeat of 2021 on Thursday, DPA reported.

Evans, who had never before reached the last eight of a Masters 1000 tournament, won 6-4 7-5 with a performance that belied his relative lack of success on clay.

The 30-year-old Briton will now meet David Goffin, who surprised fifth seed Alexander Zverev 6-4 7-6 (9-7). "To be honest, this has been probably one of the worst matches and performances from my side I can recall in the last years," said Djokovic. "I don't

want to take anything away from his win, but from my side, I just felt awful on the court overall. Just nothing worked. It's one of those days."

Saying he felt "completely the opposite" to Wednesday's win over Jannik Sinner, Djokovic added: "Just was obviously very, very windy, tough to play in these kinds of conditions against a guy like Evans who makes you move. He's very unpredictable with his shots. He dismantled my game."

Eleven-time Monte Carlo champion Nadal had no such problems in his match as he dismissed Grigor Dimitrov 6-1 6-1 in 55 minutes.

Nadal, who boasts a 14-1 career record against the Bulgarian, did not face a break point in either set against his off-colour opponent.

Dimitrov started the match with three double faults in his opening service game and was 4-0 down in each set.

Stokes out for 12 weeks, leaves India for surgery

NEW DELHI: England and Rajasthan Royals (RR) all-rounder Ben Stokes will fly home on Friday from India and will be out of action for 12 weeks after sustaining a finger injury. CT scan and repeat X-ray conducted on Thursday showed that Stokes has fractured his left index finger. He will have a surgery in Leeds on Monday.

The injury occurred during RR's opening match against Punjab Kings on Monday when he completed a catch in the deep to see off West Indies batsman Chris Gayle.

Apart from missing the entire IPL season, Stokes is now also set to miss England's Test series against New Zealand which starts on June 2. He had initially intended to stay with RR for the rest of the season to provide support. Stokes was already one of many England and NZ players who could have missed the first Test of the series had their respective IPL teams reached knock-out stages of the tournament. (IANS)

I was praying inside, Morris can you get a six: Samson

MUMBAI

RAJASTHAN Royals (RR) skipper Sanju Samson said he never believed his team would be able to beat Delhi Capitals (DC) after they were five down for 42 while facing a target of 148 to win.

"To be very honest, I thought that it was tough from 40 (42) for 5. We had Miller and Morris, but I thought it was tough. I think the boys did really well to get over the line," he said after the match.

"I was praying inside, Morris can you please get one six," he added before saying that he was justified in denying him strike and sending him back on the last ball of the previous match against Punjab Kings and opting to face it himself.

"I always sit back and review my game, but if I got that match 100 times, I would never take that single." His opposite number, the Delhi Capitals captain Rishabh Pant blamed the dew.

"The bowlers did a good job at the start, but we let them get over us in the end. We could have bowled a bit better. It's part and parcel of the game and dew played a big role in the

I know I am paid to slog: Morris

MUMBAI: A few days after he was denied strike on the last ball of the match against Punjab Kings as his captain Sanju Samson thought he won't be able to clear the boundary, Rajasthan Royals (RR) all-rounder Chris Morris proved he is no muck with the bat as he led RR to a fascinating three-wicket win over Delhi Capitals.

Morris, who hit an unbeaten 18-ball 36 laden with four sixes, however said he had no regrets on being denied strike although his reaction in Monday's match after being sent back by Samson was one of bemusement and a sarcastic smile. "I was going to run back no matter what to sacrifice because Sanju was hitting it so sweetly. Sanju was hitting it like a dream, I wouldn't have been too upset if he had hit the last ball for a six," said Morris about the incident in Monday's game.

Morris, who was bought for Rs 16.25 crore at the IPL mini-auction, said that he knows he is being paid to hit big. "There are guys who get paid to bat and there are guys who get paid to slog, I know what I am. I am a slogger that swings everything I can, I play so much golf," he added.

RR had earlier restricted DC to 147/8 in 20 overs and the right-handed batsman and right-arm bowler from South Africa said that he would have taken that target before the start of the match.

"If we had to chase 140-odd when we got here, we would have taken it, so happy to get over the line...it's quite nice to know that we can win a game from anywhere after being down in the dumps. That's T20 cricket," he added.



end," Pant said. "We were 15-20 runs short. But at least there is

something to gain from this match. Hopefully if something like this happens we can pull it off. In the second innings, there was much more dew, so the slower ball wasn't stopping." (IANS)

Youth World Boxing Championships: Arundhati, Chanu in quarterFinals

NEW DELHI: Khelo India Games gold-medallist Arundhati Choudhary (69kg) and Babyrojisana Chanu (51kg) advanced to the quarterfinals, while three others from the country also notched up opening-round wins at the youth world championships for men and women in Kielce, Poland. However, it was curtains for Vikas (52kg) and Arshi Khanam (54kg), who lost their second-round contests on Thursday. The winners, apart from Arundhati and Chanu, were Akash Gorkha (60kg), Sumit (69kg) and Gitika (48kg). Arundhati, a three-time gold winner at Khelo India Games, got the better of Colombia's Deyaneira Casas Jerez, winning 5-0 to set up a last-eight stage clash against Ukraine's Anna Sezko, who got a first-round bye. Chanu, a product of the legendary M C Mary Kom's academy in Imphal, defeated Estonia's Diana Gorisnaja to make the last-eight stage. (PTI)

Asian Wrestling C'ship: Maiden gold medals for Vinesh, Anshu

ALMATY: Dominating the proceedings in a depleted field, Olympic-bound wrestlers Vinesh Phogat and Anshu Malik won their maiden Asian Championship titles after comfortable triumphs in their respective summit clashes here on Friday. There was no stopping Vinesh in the absence of the Chinese and Japanese rivals as she cruised to the title without losing a point in the 53kg category. Vinesh has notched up seven podium finishes at the Asian meet over the years, including three silver medals before this edition. Also standing on top of the podium was Divya Kakran (72kg) while Sakshi Malik (65kg) settled for a silver medal, a performance which should boost her confidence after enduring a long wretched run. India has a rich haul of seven medals from the women's event as the country won four gold, a silver and two bronze medals in this edition. Sarita Mor (59kg) had won gold while Seema Bisla (50kg) and Pooja (76kg) settled for bronze medals on Thursday. Young Sonam Malik (62kg) unfortunately could not compete due to an injury. She also bagged Olympic quota along with Anshu recently.

United, Arsenal through to Europa League last four

LONDON

EDINSON Cavani set Manchester United on course for a comfortable victory against Granada as Ole Gunnar Sol-skjaer's side reached the Europa League semi-finals for the second successive season.

Arsenal turned on the style to ease past Slavia Prague and set up a Europa League semi-final tie against former head coach Unai Emery's Villarreal.

With the tie finely-poised following a 1-1 home draw a week ago, the Gunners put in one of their best showings under Mikel Arteta to win 4-0 in Prague, DPA reported.

Marcus Rashford's fine goal and a late Bruno Fernandes penalty in Spain last week put the Red Devils in control of the quarter-final tie heading into Thursday's reverse fixture at an empty Old Trafford.

United extinguished any hope of a remarkable Granada turnaround when veteran Cavani volleyed home in the sixth minute, with Jesus Vallejo's late own goal wrapping up a 2-0 win on the night, 4-0 on aggregate. The reward is a mouth-watering semi-final clash against Roma and a reunion with Chris Smalling and Henrikh Mkhitaryan -- starters when United won the Europa League in 2017.



Manchester players celebrate after the Europa League quarters against Granada at the Old Trafford stadium, in Manchester on Thursday

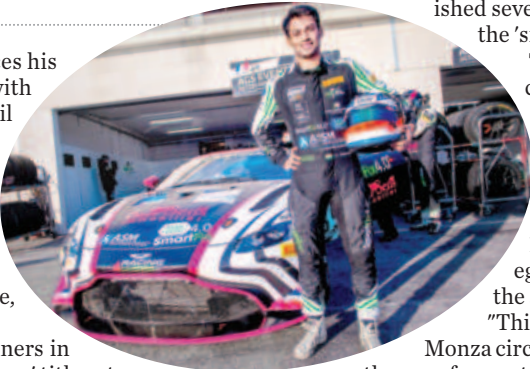
Rabindra geared up for European GT4 season

MONZA (ITALY)

INDIA'S Akhil Rabindra commences his 2021 European GT4 Series season with AGS Events Racing Team, from April 16-18.

The 24-year-old Bengaluru racer -- the only Indian in the European GT4 Championship this season -- will drive an Aston Martin Racing V8 Vantage GT4 in the 'silver category'. He will be joined by French team-mate, Hugo Conde, for the 2021 season.

AGS Events Racing were the winners in the teams' title and Silver Cup Drivers' title categories in the season finale at Circuit Paul Ricard in 2020. The team would look to extend their winning streak this season with Rabindra and Conde behind the wheels. This will be Rabindra's second outing on the Monza circuit, his first being in 2019 for Pro Sport Performance where he finished seventh and eighth, respectively in the 'silver category'.






The opening race at the Monza circuit will host one of the largest grids this year with around 48 cars vying for the podium.

The grid will include 18 cars in the 'silver category', while 19 cars will be in the pro-am category. Another 11 cars will race in the amateur category.

"This will be my second time at the Monza circuit and I am looking forward to the race for my team AGS Events Racing Team.


Monza is a really fast track and is equally challenging, and I hope to better my performance here this time around," said Rabindra. The 2021 season of the European GT4 Championship comprises 12 races and six rounds spread over six countries. (IANS)





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