PIOUS INTENTIONS



Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable JR NTR TESTS POSITIVE FOR **CORONAVIRUS**

Page 12

VIJAYAWADA DELHI LUCKNOW

BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH

BHUBANESWAR RANCHI **DEHRADUN HYDERABAD**

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NEPAL PM OLI LOSES CONFIDENCE **VOTE AMID SURGING PANDEMIC**

epali Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli lost a confidence vote in part on Monday, the speaker said, lost a confidence vote in parliament pitching the country into political turmoil at a time when it is battling a major second wave of coronavirus infections. Oli's moderate communist party split from former Maoist rebels in March after differences cropped up over its power-sharing deal, wiping out their governing majority. Political parties will now try to cobble together a new ruling coalition.Parliament speaker

Agni Sapkota said that of 232 lawmakers present, 93 voted in

favour of Oli while 124 were against him and 15 did not vote.

WHATSAPP TO LIMIT FUNCTIONALITY FOR USERS NOT ACCEPTING ITS TERMS

hatsApp will not delete any account for not accepting its new privacy update, but users not agreeing to the controversial terms after "several weeks" will not be able to access their chat list, and eventually, will not be able to answer incoming phone or video calls over the app. Last week, the Facebookowned company had said users not accepting its privacy policy update by its May 15 deadline will not face deletion or lose functionality of their accounts on the said date. Whats App said

it is continuing to remind those who haven't had the chance to

MALICIOUS COVID VACCINE SMS SPREADING IN ANDROID PHONES

Emergency Response Team said in a public advisory on Saturday.

fake COVID-19 vaccine registration SMS that "maliciously" gains entry into a Ausers' Android phone leading to compromise of individual contact list is in circulation, the federal cyber security agency has alerted. The harmful SMS has been identified by at least five variants. "It has been reported that a fake SMS is in circulation that falsely claims to offer an app to let users register for COVID-19 vaccine in India." "The SMS carries a link that installs the malicious app on Android-based devices, which essentially spreads itself via SMS to victims' contacts," the Indian Computer

ASPIRANTS FOR POST OF CVC CHIEF **TO WRITE A 300-WORD ESSAY**

_he Centre has sought applications for the post of chief of anti-corruption watchdog CVC from eligible candidates who have to write a 300-word essay to explain their suitability for it. Incumbent Central Vigilance Commissioner Sanjay Kothari completes his term next month. Kothari joined the probity watchdog in April last year. "It is proposed to appoint the Central Vigilance Commissioner in the Central Vigilance Commission, against the vacancy due to arise in June, 2021, as the incumbent Central Vigilance Commissioner will demit office on completion of tenure," an order issued by the Personnel Ministry said.

11 die at RUIA hospital,

oxygen shortage blamed



Some leaders are focused on politics, not Covid



India fastest country globally to administer 17cr Covid vax doses

Sensex jumps 296

points; Nifty ends

above 14,900

Month & Paksham:

Panchangam

Chaitra & Krishna Paksha

Tithi: Amavasya: 12:28 am (Next Day)

Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start

Rahukalam: 03:24 pm - 05:00 pm

Yamagandam: 09:00 am - 10:36 am

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam : 06:06 pm - 07:54 pm

Abhijit Muhurtham : 11:47 am - 12:38 pm

VIJAYAWADA

Forecast: Mostly sunny

Weather

Varjyam: 07:15 am - 09:04 am

Gulika: 12:12 pm - 01:48 pm

any important work)

Nakshatram: Bharani: 11:31 pm

AP may purchase vaccine from abroad to overcome shortage

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Pointing out that on average, only 19 lakh doses of vaccine per month are being supplied to AP, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Monday asked officials to look at the option of going for global tenders to purchase the required number of doses.

Jagan pointed out that even if the Centre supplies one crore doses per month, it would take at least six months to complete the vaccination process in the state.

The Chief Minister was addressing a review meeting on the prevailing Covid situation and vaccination during which he asked officials to strengthen the '104' helpline number. He also directed officials to make a maximum number of mock calls to monitor its services.

The Chief Minister also said the Central government will decide on the number of doses of vaccine to be sold to states and the latter will buy the sanctioned quota.

Despite being aware that production of vaccine and their availability was not in the control of the State government, some vested politicians and a section of the media are propagating false infor-mation against the State govern-

With 'vaccine politics' taking cen-

terstage in Andhra Pradesh since

the last few days — both ruling YSRCP and Opposition TDP are

trading barbs over procuring vac-

cine doses from the manufacturers

-, the Central Government on

Monday said vaccine allocation is

being done as per population of 18-44 age on pro rata basis.

Supreme Court in an ongoing suo motu case over the Covid situation

came as a temporary reprieve to the

Jaganmohan Reddy government from the onslaught of the opposi-

Though the states are procuring

the vaccines from the manufactur-

ers, the Central Government has, in

consultation with the vaccine man-

ufacturers, determined the pro-

rata population of each state in the

age group of 18-44 and each state will procure only that quantity.

An affidavit filed by Centre in

SNV SUDHIR



ment with regard to vaccination and creating tension and fear among the people," Jagan said.
The officials informed the Chief

Minister that the state has received a total of 60,60,400 doses of Covishield, of which 43,99,802 were administered under the first dose and 16,87,315 under the second dose, totalling 60,87,117 doses.

Similarly, the state received a total 12,89,560 doses of Covaxin, of

Though states are

procuring vaccines,

quantity each state

As per the available two crore doses of both Covishield and

Covaxin for the month of May,

Andhra Pradesh can only avail

13,35,630 doses. Of these 13,35,630,

Covishield doses are 9,91,700 and

opened the gates and said from

May 1 onwards state governments

can directly procure vaccine doses

from the manufacturers -- Serum

Institute and Bharat Biotech to

inoculate their population, Andhra

Pradesh has been facing severe

shortage of supply in the vaccine

While the Centre last month

3,43,930 are Covaxin.

can purchase from

the Centre has

determined the

manufacturers.

AP to get only 13.3 L doses for May

which 9,23,296 doses were administered as the first dose and 2,90,047 doses as the second dose. A total of 12,13,343 Covaxin doses were administered. To that extent, a total of 73,49,960 doses of Covishield and Covaxin were received of which 53,23,098 doses were administered under the first dose and 19,77,362 vaccines under the second dose.

TS stops ambulances from AP on border

PNS n Vijayawada

The Telangana state government has imposed restrictions on entry of Covid-19 patients from Andhra Pradesh.

On Monday, TS police turned away ambulances at the police check post at Ramapuram in Kodad Mandal on the Vijayawada Hyderabad National

Highway and at Pullur tollgate in Kurnool district. According to sources, the

TS police took up thorough checks and sent back several private ambulances with patients from AP, saying Covid patients were not allowed into Telangana without prior permission.

only by treating India as one

unit and considering the question on a pan-India basis." said

The Union government also

told Supreme Court that it was

critical to note that under the

new strategy, the vaccination effort of the GoI will continue

to serve the priority group iden-tified by National Expert Group

on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 (NEGVAC), i.e. those

above 45 years of age and persons with comorbidities under

government has come under fire

from the general public and oppo-

the Centre.

45 years of age.

sition parties alike.

Allocation strategy to check bargaining

power of states: Centre

The Centre also said that dis-

tribution of the vaccine amongst

the states was based on equitable

and rational criteria to eliminate

and possibility of difference in

bargaining power of one state and have a detrimental impact

on the resident of the other state.

essential and this discipline is

mandatory so as to have uni-

form vaccination throughout the country. This historical

endeavour can be successful

doses from both the manufactur-

ing companies. Long queues and

jostling are witnessed at all vaccine

centres across the state and the state

This exercise is absolutely

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Cong puts off party president election, **courtesy Covid**

S BHANU PRAKASH

At least 11 people passed away

and five were in a critical condi-

tion, allegedly due to inadequate

oxygen supply at SVR RUIA Government General Hospital

According to reports avail-

able, the oxygen pressure began

in Tirupati on Monday.

PNS NEW DELHI

The Congress Working Comm ittee unanimously decided on Monday to defer the crucial election to the post of party president until the COVID-19 situation in

the country improves, sources said. After a section of leaders had last year pressed for an organisational overhaul, the Congress had decided to hold elections for the new party president by Juneend and its central election authority chaired by Madhusudan Mistry proposed June 23 for the

exercise. The CWC, the apex decision-making body of the Congress which met in the backdrop of the recent drubbing in four assembly polls, considered the schedule for electing the AICC president prepared by the party's election

authority. However, top Congress leaders at the meeting were of the view that holding the election right now would not be proper as the coronavirus situation in the country was very grim, the sources said.

Ex-DGP of undivided

breathed their last.

AP dead PNS NEW DELHI

Former Director General of Police of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh B Prasada Rao died in the USA on Monday, police sources said.

dipping at around 7.30 pm on

An oxygen tanker that was sup-

posed to reach the hospital by

afternoon arrived late in the

evening. By the time adequate

supply of oxygen was restored,

about 20 minutes later, as many

as 10 Covid-19 positive patients

"Deeply saddened over the untimely demise of Prasad Rao, IPS retd and former DGP, AP. He breathed his last in the USA early this morning. Our prayers are with his family, friends, near &

peace," Expressing grief,

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao, in a statement, conveyed his condolences to members of the

AP Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy also condoled the death of the former police

The 1979 batch IPS officer was the last DGP of the undivided Andhra

May his soul rest Telangana police said in its official twitter account.

bereaved family.

Pradesh from 2013 to 2014.

TDP's lies on vaccines creating panic: Sajjala

Government Advisor (Public Affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy on Monday came down heavily on TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu and a section of media, accusing them of spreading falsehood on procurement of vaccines.

Sajjala said that the Central Government has clearly stated in its affidavit filed in the Supreme Court regarding essential supplies and services that a national task force is monitoring vaccine allocations and vaccines are being

Speaking to the media at YSRCP

Temp: 34 Humidity: 58% **Sunrise:** 05:46 am supplied to the states based on **Sunset: 06:39 pm** Central Government guidelines. Current Weather Conditions Updated may 10, 2021 5:00 PM central office here, Sajjala said the

a section of media on vaccination has created panic among the people leading to mad rush at vaccination centres resulting in further spread of the virus.

He said though the Ministers and officials are publicising

media are spreading misinformation making people risk their lives out of fear. He termed the propaganda of Naidu as treason and suggested the

intellectuals and civil society to react on it and file cases against

facts daily on supply of vaccination, oxygen and medicines, the TDP and the yellow

The Indian Navy has stepped up its Covid relief Operation

INS Airavat docks at Vizag with oxygen tanks

PNS VIJAYAWADA

As part of the ongoing Op Samudra Setu' II to support the nation's fight against Covid-19, INS Airavat arrived in Visakhapatnam on Monday with eight cryogenic oxygen tanks and other critical Covid medical supplies, including 3,898 oxygen cylin-

ders from Singapore.

The ship departed from Singapore on May 5 with oxygen tanks and cylinders sourced through various agencies in coordination with the High Commission of India.

INS Airavat is part of nine ships that have been deployed for Covid relief Operation 'Samudra Setu' II for shipment of Liquid Medical Oxygen and associated medical equipment from friendly foreign countries in the Persian Gulf and southeast Asia.

Samudra Setu II with ships from



all three Naval Commands in Mumbai, Visakhapatnam and Kochi, deployed for shipment of Liquid Medical Oxygen and associated medical equipment from Eastern Naval Command (ENC),

friendly foreign countries. On the Eastern Seaboard, Indian Naval Ship Airavat belonging to Vizag headquartered departed Singapore on last Thursday while INS Jalashwa remains deployed in the region, standing by to embark medical stores at short notice.

Some leaders are focused on politics, not Covid

¬he general tendency in politics in India is to sling mud on others to escape responsibility instead of finding a scientific solution to a crisis.

This is due to politics gaining precedence over adminis-

What is annoying is State Governments, when faced with a crisis like that of Covid-19, instead of putting the health machinery in the state on the highest state of alert, try to do politics in spite of the fact that the Indian statute is

federal in spirit.

Instead of working with team spirit and solving the problem by taking part in meetings convened by Union Government authorities, states express helplessness and shift the blame to the Centre. Some don't even hesitate to move court against the Centre. This is the situation in the country.

The fact is that there is no oxygen shortage in the country — the problem is transporting oxygen to places where it is required since there are not enough cryogenic tankers. States with plants are not willing to supply oxygen to other states.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked the Chief Ministers not to stop the tankers on their way to other states. The MHA also released certain guidelines in this regard. The Centre has deployed special trains and Indian Air Force planes to transport oxygen on a war-

footing.

Besides the problems in oxygen transportation, lack of adequate maintenance of oxygen stocks is posing problems. Only a few states are able to maintain oxygen stocks prop-

For example, MP is a bigger state compared to Delhi.

Instead of working with team spirit and solving the problem by taking part in meetings convened by Central authorities, states express helplessness and shift the blame to the Centre. Some don't even hesitate to move court against the Centre.

There is no single oxygen plant in MP. In spite of it, the MP government is able to save lives with the available oxygen. This is attributed to streamlining the medical oxygen availability.

The MP Government constituted a team with four top officials.

One officer — P Narahari of Telangana — is made incharge of oxygen supply and transport. He is successful ensuring there are no hiccups in supply and transport of oxygen. The team has set up an oxygen control room linking all districts. An oxygen emergency number is dedicated and it was given to district and nodal officers.

The control room has officers to receive calls day and night. IAS and IPS officers monitor activities of the control room and are ready to face any emergency situation. Because of the efficiency of

the team, MP is able to manage with less oxygen compared to Delhi. Till April 1, MP received only 180 trucks of oxygen. But, through its internal

resources, MP succeeded in

Continued from Page 1

A total of 1,33,07,889 people

over the age of 45 have regis-

tered for vaccination, of whom

41,08,917 were given the first dose and 13,35,744 both doses.
They said the Central

Government said it would sup-

ply 9,17,850 doses of vaccine

for the first 15 days of this month, of which 7,65,360 doses

are given so far, with 1,52,490

rush at vaccination centres

and added that ANMs and

Asha workers should be clear-

ly informed on vaccination

details so that lengthy queues are avoided. He said people

should be informed that every-

one would receive the vaccine

free of cost by the government.

officials to complete the second

dose of vaccine to people who

are above 45 years and take the

first dose and later focus on

administering the first dose of

vaccine to people above 45 years as they are more vulner-

able to Covid. Health profes-

sionals requested the Chief

Minister to treat fever as Covid

The Chief Minister advised

Jagan said there should be no

doses yet to be released.

Y SATYA KUMAR **BJP National Secretary**

mobilising 680 MT of oxygen till May 6.

However, a small state like Delhi moved court seeking allotment of 900 MT. But MP proved that such high quantities of oxygen are not needed, provided an efficient oxygen audit is put in place.

Though there is spurt in Covid-19 cases in MP, efficient oxygen audit helped reduce deaths due to oxygen requesting oxygen supply shortage. requesting oxygen supply

Adoption of best management methods **SPEAKING** and strong political will modern amenities have been set up in the would rule out probcountry lems due to oxygen

shortage.

The need of the hour is appointing efficient officers in vantage positions and reviewing the situation regularly. Maintaining cordial relations with Centre and efficient officials will help solve crisis situations.

For example DRDO chairman Satish Reddy who acted with alacrity, responding to oxygen needs of a hospital in Nellore, and got it supplied from ISRO.

Two days after Satish Reddy started helping the hospital with oxygen supply, AP principal health secretary AK Singhal wrote to the Centre

AP may purchase vaccine from abroad to ...

Reddy's supervision, a number of Covid care hospitals with

The DRDO acted with speed and set up oxygen plants in important hospitals and ruled out any scope for

To arrest wastage of oxygen from cylinder leaks, DRDO has put in place regulatory systems. DRDO laboratories have supplied over 1000 cylinders to hospitals across the coun-

shortage.

Meanwhile, the nuclear medicine research wing of the DRDO has developed 2-DG to treat Covid and started production.

The CMs of Telugu states, instead of using officials efficiently, are using them to play politics like foisting cases against political rivals, resorting to victimisation measures

At a time Covid is creating havoc, the AP government's initiating action against Amara Raja Batteries and Sangam Dairy indicates the mind of the rulers.

The way the Government of Telangana used officials to dismiss the Health Minister from the State Cabinet reflects the style of functioning of the modern day dictators in a democratic setup.

It's high time the CMs

introspect and use all their resources to check Covid spread.

In such a scenario, state leaders would not mind even if people were to die in large numbers due to Covid.

If they think that the people would forgive their omissions and commissions if they abuse Modi, they are completely at fault.

AP records 14,986 new cases, 84 deaths

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Coronavirus caseload crossed the 13 lakh mark in Andhra Pradesh as 14,986 fresh cases were reported from 60,124 tests in the 24 hours ending 9 am on Monday. The last one-lakh cases

came in a span of five days after the state crossed the 12lakh mark on May 5.

TDP's lies on

panic: Šajjala

Continued from Page 1

He said cases will also be filed

on a section of media spread-

ing false information with

Sajjala slammed the Opposition parties for not

being responsible during the

pandemic and distorting facts

for their personal interests.

Minister and officials are

running from pillar to post to

contain Covid by increasing

bed availability, supply of

oxygen, recruiting doctors

and medical staff and writing

letters to the Central govern-

ment for more vaccines, TDP

and a section of media are

indulging in cheap politics.

Minister will write to the

Centre requesting for deli-

censing of Covaxin vaccine

He said the state govern-

ment has brought Covid

treatment under Arogyasri

and is providing free treat-

ment to lakhs of people.

Sajjala reminded that Rs 600

crore of pending arrears of

Arogyasri of the previous

government was cleared by

the present government.

VIJAYAWADA

CHICKEN

Dressed/With Skin

Broiler at Farm

RATES ₹/100

VIJAYAWADA

HYDERABAD

RETAIL PRICE

VISAKHAPATNAM 355

Without Skin

RATES ₹/KG

BULLION RATES

₹ Rs.48, 670(10 gm)

₹ 76, 500 (1kg)

₹164

₹186

426

446

and increase production.

Sajjala said the Chief

vaccines

creating

vested interests.

The state saw 16,167

Covid-19 patients recovering from the infection while another 84 succumbed in 24 hours, according to the latest bulletin. The gross positives now mounted to 13,02,589 while the total recoveries touched 11,04,431. The over-

all toll increased to 8,791. The state now has 1,89,367 active cases, according to the bulletin. East Godavari district reported 2,352 fresh cases in a day. Six districts

West Godavari and Guntur

added between 1,200 and 1,700 new cases each while another six reported less than 1,000 each.

districts logged 12 fresh Covid-19 fatalities each, East Godavari 10, Visakhapatnam nine, SPS Nellore and Vizianagaram eight each, Chittoor and Kurnool six each, Krishna and Srikakulam four each, Anantapur three and Kadapa two in 24 hours.

AP to get only 13.3 L doses for May

Continued from Page 1

The TDP has been accusing the YSRCP government of failing miserably in securing sufficient doses from the companies despite the Centre allowing direct procurement.

abu Naidu has said that the state government had shown tokenism by writing letters to the manufacturing companies instead of making advance payments. Naidu pointed out that the Government has allocated a meagre Rs 45 crore for purchase of vaccines.

In response to Naidu's remarks, YSRCP general secretary and Government Advisor Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy said that the Leader of the Opposition was indulging in politics even over vaccines. He said vaccine supply was being monitored and decided by the Centre. The Centre on Monday told the Supreme Court that based on the

manufacturers and Central Drug Laboratory (CDL) cleared doses projected to be available with them, the quantity of doses available for "other than Government of India Channel" was worked out on state wise population of 18 to 44 years "pro-rata".

monthly production of vaccine

'Though the states are procuring the vaccines from the manufacturers, the Central Government has, in consultation with the vaccine manufacturers, determined the prorata population of each state in the age group of 18-44 and each state will procure only that quantity so that there is no disparity in availability of vaccines between the states inter-se either based upon difference in their bargaining power or otherwise. Each State is informed by the Central Government in writing about the number of vaccines it would receive for the month of May 2021," said the Centre in the affidavit.

Jagan said there should be no rush at vaccination centres and added that ANMs and Asha workers should be clearly informed on vaccination

details so that

lengthy queues

are avoided.

symptom and provide medication immediately and the later directed the officials to take necessary action in this regard. The Chief Minister said the

vaccination programme is under the control of the Central Government and even if the state wants to buy vaccines directly from the manufacturers, the Centre is instructing them on the number of doses to be sold to the states and added that the current situation on vaccination was needed to be explained to

TS stops ambulances from AP on border

Continued from Page 1

Some of the Covid-19 patients are moving to some corporate hospitals in Telangana, as AP govern-ment recognises them for the treatment, including treatment under Arogyasri scheme. Several ambulances were stopped at the borders in Krishna and Guntur districts, which connect AP with Telangana.

Following the stoppage of ambulances at the border, AP officials tried to contact their Telangana counterparts to allow the vehicles entry, but

AP officials said that they resent the TS decision as Hyderabad remains the common capital for both the states till 2024, as per the AP Reorganisation Act 2014. An official from the

Health department said that it was unacceptable of TS to stop the ambulances from AP entry.

BIP state general secretary S Vishnuvardhan Reddy too reminded the TS government that it cannot ignore the fact that Hyderabad remains the common capital for both AP and TS.

'Hyderabad is a medical hub and stopping Covid patients by blocking ambulances coming from Andhra Pradesh for emergency services at the Telangana border is not wise," Vishnuvardhan Reddy said.

He said that the people of Andhra Pradesh also have the right to use the infrastructure in the joint capital for another three years and the TS government should deal with the issue with humanity and allow patients to get treatment in Hyderabad.

Meanwhile, the Guntur police department informed

the people that they were advised to go to Telangana state in private ambulances for treatment only after obtaining permission in advance from the hospital.

One should obtain prior consent/certification from the management of the release.

the management of the relevant hospitals providing treatment that they are ready to treat the patient and that the bed in their hospital was also ready for the patient, a communication said.

A few netizens took to Twitter saying "At the Andhra – Telangana border in Nalgonda district, #Telangana police set up checkpoints to restrict the entry of ambulances and vehicles carrying patients. This move comes in the wake of severe bed crunch in hospitals across the state due to the second wave. No official word on this".

11 die at RUIA... Continued from Page 1

According to reports, six of the

deceased were undergoing treatment in ward No 1, 2 and 3, while four of the dead were in the ICU.

As news spread of the deaths of patients, an angry mob, allegedly comprising relatives of the deceased, vandalised the furniture in the ICU and in the hospital wards. Some protested in front of the hospital.

Sensing danger, duty doctors and nurses fled from the hos-

The police, knowing about the situation, rushed to the hospital and tried to calm down the protesters.

Meanwhile, efforts to contact the hospital superintendent

TS hospitals report more

PNS HYDERABAD

Government and private hospitals in Telangana are reporting a rise in the number of black fungus cases among

A private hospital in the city found at least 18 patients suffering from mucormycosis, a deadly fungal infection, and a silent killer.

In the state-run Chest hospital, two cases of black fungus were reported, of which one patient succumbed to the infection in the past month. Mucormycosis cases were

also reported at Gandhi Hospital in the first Covid-19

Till February this year, Gandhi Hospital witnessed about 10 patients with mucormycosis, and the num-

ber may go up.
Continental Hospital said that it has detected the infection in five patients. While the Telangana government is yet to officially announce the number, a doctor whose hospital reported 18 cases estimates that there are at least 300-400 cases in both the Telugu speak-

Several studies from around the world have indicated that secondary fungal infections among critically ill Covid positive patients are in the range of 5 percent to 23 percent while mortality rate among these fungus infected patients increases to 53 percent from 31 percent in non-infected Covid positive patients.

Dr. K Rambabu, Sr ENT Consultant, Apollo Hospitals, said, "Working at tertiary care centre in last one month we

have seen more than 50 mucormycosis cases, out of which 16 patients are making good progress, six have succumbed to the infection and the remaining are fighting in ICU s and wards. Treatment includes aggressive surgery/radical debridement exenteration of affected/blind eye, long term follow up along

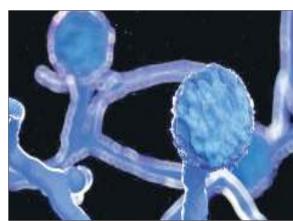
with antifungal medications. Patients are recovering from Covid but succumbing to such aggressive diseases that can be avoided by early recognition, the doctor said.

Watch out for facial pain, headache, nasal congestion, redness of eve, discoloration of skin color on face or in mouth and immediately rush to the

one-sided facial or eye pain, decreased sensation over cheeks, blood-stained nasal discharge, among others are symptoms of mucormycosis infection and such cases should be reported immediately for medical attention. Such patients will be administered with certain antifungal drugs or a surgical debridement will be performed depending on the condition to reduce the disease burden," said Dr Dushyanth Ganesuni, Consultant, ENT, Head & Neck

One of the major reasons for the exponential rise in cases in Covid patients is the excessive

symptoms is dangerous. Such a practice will affect the



immune system and could lead to secondary to infections like mucormycosis. Hence, even for conditions like fevers, cold, cough, it is suggested one seeks medical advice before resorting to any form of self-medication," added Dr Dushyanth Ganesuni.

Apart from surgery, prolonged anti-fungal treatment plays a major role in curing the patient. Cost of such medicines runs into lakhs for prescribed quantity and duration.

A M Nagaraju said, "My 65year-old father is suffering with rhino orbital mucormycosis which involves multiple surgeries and aggressive medication. He is admitted at Maa ENT Hospital and would need another Rs 25 lakh for treatment. We have spent Rs 5 lakh already."

Several citizens from other states are heading to Hyderabad for treatment.

Mucormycosis cases were treated primarily in big corporate hospitals and most of the smaller hospitals used to refer such cases to these hospitals.

Dr Madhav, ENT Surgeon

Apollo Hospitals, "The problem in the supply chain is not just about a huge spike in demand for medicines and pharma companies unable to ramp up the production. It was a clear-cut system, where corporate hospitals used to request the pharma firms for medication, and they used to cater to the needs of these hospitals through their strong pharma supply chain. Now with Covid entering the battlefield: literally this whole system has been disrupted. Every corporate hospital in India is working above its full capacity. Thus, the patients being treated for Covid in smaller hospitals infected once Mucormycosis are not able to find any hospital beds in the corporate hospitals. The toughest challenge with Mucor is the need for treatment at least within 48 hours."

Cong puts off party president election, courtesy Covid

Continued from Page 1

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot proposed that there should be no election to the post of Congress president in view of the COVID-19 situation and senior party leader Ghulam Nabi Azad seconded

Azad, a prominent member of the group of 23 leaders who had demanded organisational elections, said at the meeting that no one in the party was seeking an election right now and it should be postponed, the sources said. "In view of the nationwide

emergent conditions prevailing

on account of unprecedented

Corona pandemic, the CWC

was unanimous that all our

energies should be channelised

towards saving every life and

helping every COVID affected

"CWC, therefore, unanimously resolved to defer the elections temporarily in the midst of these challenging times," said a resolution passed at the meeting. Mistry had earlier proposed

that the election be held on June 23 and counting on June 24. He proposed that the notification for the election be issued on June 1 and nominations be accepted between June 2 and 7. Asked till when the election

has been deferred, Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said it has been put off temporarily till the next twothree months by when the situation is expected to improve. Sonia Gandhi took over as

the interim Congress president

in August 2019 after Rahul

Gandhi resigned in the wake of the party's Lok Sabha debacle in May 2019.

There have been demands from a section of the Congress leaders for having a full-time and active party president and an organisational overhaul. A letter to Sonia Gandhi by

a group of 23 leaders including Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma, Bhupinder Hooda, Prithviraj Cĥavan, Kapil Sibal, Manish Tewari and Mukul Wasnik, raising these issues had triggered a storm in the party in August last year. The CWC had in its meet-

ing on January 22 decided that the process for electing a Congress president would be completed by June-end and had asked Mistry to prepare a schedule.

hospital, he said. "Swelling around the eyes,

Surgeon and Laryngologist, Continental Hospitals. usage of steroids.
"Unjustified and self-pre-

scribed use of antibiotics and steroids to treat Covid-19

Rahul S B said, "My fatherin-law developed mucormycosis in Bidar and we shifted him to Hyderabad hospital for treatment".

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DGP: Apply for e-pass only in emergencies

PNS VIJAYAWADA

DGP Gautam D Sawang on Monday advised the people to obtain e-passes only for emergency situa-

As per the instructions of the state government, arrangements have been made to issue e-passes and the DGP office has released the details of WhatsApp numbers and email ids of each district to issue the passes.
The DGP said while

lockdown was enforced strictly in the state, people can avail the e-pass facility only in an emergency to travel from one place to another after providing proper reason and proof.

PSA 02 plants for AP soon

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Monday instructed officials to prepare an action plan on setting up PSA oxygen plants in community and teaching hospitals on priority

The officials informed the Chief Minister during a review meeting on Covid-19 that there are 47,644 beds in 638 Covid hospitals, of which 39,271 beds are occupied. They said that 24,645 people were being treated under Arogyasri Scheme while another 15,000 were in Covid care centres.
There are 6,789 ICU beds of which 6,317 beds are occupied.

Responding to this, the Chief Minister asked the officials to increase availability of beds in districts with more Covid cases. He said there should be immediate response once a call is received to '104'



helpline number and bed should be allotted to the patient without fail. He added that patients who don't require hospitalisation should be sent

The Chief Minister said there should be no negligence in operations of '104' helpline number and patients who call

to Covid care centres.

'104' should definitely receive assistance

He said German hanger tents should be set up in pre determined hospitals for immediate medical help and for the convenience of people waiting outside of the hospitals. Jagan said Arogya Mitras should be available in every be displayed for lodging complaints or filing grievances.
The Chief Minister also

instructed them to curb black marketing of Remdesivir injections and directed the officials to conduct an audit on their usage in government and private hospitals. He said to ensure patients are not extorted in the name of injections.

The Chief Minister instructed the DGP to submit a report

ed the DGP to submit a report every day from every district on implementation of curfew. The officials informed the Chief Minister that the govern-ment has approved recruit-ment of 20,793 people for containing Covid of which 17,901 people have been 17,901 people have been recruited. They said 3,500 MBBS final year students are being recruited on a temporary basis to provide better treatment to patients in Covid

Vax slips to streamline process

PNS VIJAYAWADA

On Monday, there was a huge footfall of second dose beneficiaries at the vaccination centres who only came to know that the vaccination process was suspended for two days leading to chaos.

People started thronging to the centres from early hours and after a long wait at about 9 am they came to know that there is no vaccination for the day. Senior citizens have to face a tough time with no proper communication from the authorities about the vaccination process.

The state government has paused the vaccination process at all the vaccination centres for two days — on Monday and Tuesday — across the

The government has decided to issue vaccine slips similar to voter slips to seconddose beneficiaries. Slips will be



at their homes mentioning the time they will be vaccinat-

Earlier, people could visit the nearest vaccination centre, register and take the vaccine. This led to a heavy rush of the people at the vaccination centre, which had become a tough task for the staff to manage.

Keeping the increasing number of people visiting the vaccination centres in view, the government has evolved a new scheme to avoid rush. The gov-

ernment is planning to distribute slips to the people at their doorstep, on the lines of voter

slips.
With the data available on the names of the people who have taken first dose of vaccine, the government plans to send slips to them at their doorstep through the volunteers and other staff. Once the second dose is administered, the government plans to go for the first dose for the remain-

Govt has failed Covid-hit: TDP

PNS VIJAYAWADA

TDP Telugu Mahila AP President Vangalapudi Anitha on Monday accused the YSRCP Government of totally failing to instil con-fidence among the people in the fight against the deadly second wave of Covid-19 epidemic in Andhra Pradesh.

Anitha termed it as pathetic that the infected patients were still unable to get oxygen supply to save their lives in the State. The Government was still unable to provide hospital beds, ventilators and medicines. Painful scenes were being witnessed at the hospitals with the Covid positive patients being forced to lie side by side with dead bodies as they avail treat-

In a statement here, the TDP leader asserted that the Chief Minister has masterminded the fabricated case booked against Leader case booked against Leader of the Opposition N Chandrababu Naidu only to cover up his failures. Instead of reducing the suffering of Covid patients and the general public, the CM was focusing all his attention on political victimisation. Anitha alleged

timisation, Anitha alleged. She said the Government was behaving very negligently and arrogantly even in the supply of vaccines. There were wide fears whether the people would be able to get the second dose in time. Only to save itself from all these failures, the Government hatched the conspiracy to book the N440K case against the

An exemplary life in public service - A tribute to Dr B Prasada Rao

Words can never convey the intensity of grief one experiences when an exemplary public servant, an outstanding police officer, a role model and inspiration to lakhs of people, suddenly leaves us forever. The death of B Prasada Rao, an officer of the 1979 batch IPS, is a shock and a great loss to everyone whose lives he had touched during his life and career.

Prasada Rao was the rarest of rare IPS officers. He was the embodiment of an ideal public servant by virtue of his character, temperament, sincerity, passion, integrity, and competence. Humane in heart and soul, authentic in and out, humble to a fault, with profound empathy for fellow human beings, he

stood tall and strong.

During my long stint as
Finance Secretary, I came to know Prasada Rao as an outstanding professional with a passionate commitment to public service. He was a role model not only to All-India Service and IPS officers but to every public servant who shares a concern for the society and seeks to make it a better place for all.

Eloquent in articulating the needs of the police force, he successfully persuaded the government to sanction the much-needed benefits to the police force, including additional posts, recruitment, promotions, increased remuneration for home guards, regular payment of TA/DA. He was a natural leader, not by command and control, but by his personal and professional example. He was the epitome of the ideal police officer or for that matter any public servant. On May 31, 2014, a couple

of days before Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated, he, as the DGP, organised a get-together of all AIS officers and non-IPS police officers, who were exhausted after managing agitations, elec-

tions, state reorganisation etc. It was a unique and unprecedented event with bonhomie, camaraderie,



goodwill, and inter-service fraternity. That was the first and perhaps the last time that senior officials of all services came together and celebrated the fraternal kinship in the service of the state.

His professional career would be the envy of any IPS officer; SP of three major districts, DIG of two important ranges, head of Vizag and Hyderabad city Police Commissionerate, head of ACB, DGP, home secretary, and head of police force (HoPF). A police professional of the highest order, he was an epitome of quiet efficiency, who excelled in all his postings.

Post-bifurcation, when he was transferred from the post of HoPF to that of home secretary, I was surprised to see him unaffected, unruffled, with the calm composure of a yogi. He was grateful for the opportunity he had to work for the welfare of the police force of both the Telugu

He was the embodiment of humility, simplicity, grace, and above all empathy. He used his authority and power to protect the weak and help those who would not receive justice in the usual course. He tried to enhance and empower his colleagues and subordinates. It's inconceivable for him to talk ill of anyone, let

alone indulge in gossip.

Bayyarapu Prasada Rao, eldest of three siblings, was born in Sanivarapet of West Godavari district, where his father started his career as a police constable. My wife's cousin, who was his schoolmate and remained one of his

closest friends, says 'Prasada Rao was a very sincere, hardworking, and highly disciplined student who consistently stood at the top of his class throughout their schooling in Kolluru of Guntur dis-

While his friends gravitated to engineering, Prasada Rao pursued his passion in physics, first in Andhra Loyola College and later postgraduate studies in LIT graduate studies in IIT Madras. Thereafter he joined IPS with a strong commitment to public service.

Even while he was breathlessly busy policing, he continued to pursue his passion for quantum physics that finally earned him the doctorate for his research on Wave-Particle Duality. One of the few DGPs to obtain a PhD while leading a large police

Despite his scholarship, serious research and his mastery of the English language, he was almost shy about his extraordinary talents.

On the day of his retirement, he was euphoric. He said he would devote his entire time to advanced research. He had a fully equipped laboratory at home; his focus was on Quantum physics, dynamics of light, Big Bang theory, etc.

He told me once that he had more than enough empirical data to contest some of the theories of Albert Einstein. He continued to pursue his passions as a researcher, teacher, mentor and continued to engage in public service.

In the end, it seems to have been his heart, generous and full of compassion that he kept in good form through a lifetime of rigorous exercise, that let him down. We agreed to meet after his return from the USA. It's heartbreaking to think that would never happen. I will miss his smile, his wise counsel, his gentle warmth, his tender affection.

> Dr PV Ramesh Former Member of the Indian Administrative Service

Lokesh grieves death of volunteer

PNS VIJAYAWADA

TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh on Monday held the negligence Government responsible for the death of a Covid infected pregnant volunteer at the Kakinada Government General Hospital. Lokesh said that if the

Government took remedial measures upon his demand for improvement of services, the volunteer's death could have been prevented Instead of providing life-

saving medical services to the needy patients, the Government filed a case for questioning its failures, he In a statement here, the

TDP MLC said that volunteer Lakshmi belonging to Ramanaiapeta in Kakinada town was seven months pregnant.

She was admitted to the GGH after she tested positive for Coronavirus. She deplored her pitiable condition in a selfie video and narrated her problems as no medical care was being extended to her.

Lokesh said that she was not given any medical attention even though the District Collector has issued orders for the same.



Lakshmi succumbed to the virus along with the unborn baby. Was it not the Government's responsibility for the untimely death of the pregnant volunteer along with her baby in the womb? Lokesh asked.

Meanwhile, TDP leaders demanded the YSRCP Government to take up the issue of the stopping of the AP ambulances with the Telangana Government.

"It should not be forgotten that Hyderabad would remain the joint capital of the Telugu States till 2024 as per the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014. The AP patients had a right to go anywhere in the country to get better treatment for their ill health," they said.

Importing vaccines depends on Centre's nod: Singhal

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Medical and Health Principal Secretary Anil Kumar Singhal on Monday said the State govcure vaccines from abroad if the Central government allows

During his media briefing, Singhal said the state government has decided to procure any Covid vaccine from abroad, including Sputnik V, for which it would also call for a global tender. However, he reminded that Central government approvals were mandatory for purchasing vaccines from abroad.

The Principal Secretary informed that the vaccination process was in progress for those above 45 years of age and the Central government has also agreed to the state government's request to vac-

cinate people in this age group.

During the vaccination process tents, chairs and drinking water will be provided to the beneficiaries at vaccination centres and information will be given to the second dose recipients through SMS and by the vol-

unteers, he said. Singhal said that the state government was ready to pay Rs 1,600 crore for the purchase of 4 crore vaccines required for the people of AP, but this is not practically possible due to



Central government regulations. He said 50 percent of the vaccines produced by various companies would have to be given to the Central government. The remaining doses will have to be procured by the respective states as per the quota prescribed by the Centre. He said the Centre has approved purchase of 17 lakh Covishield and Covaxin vaccines till May and the state government had also paid for

these doses. Singhal said as long as the stocks are available, those above 45 years of age will be administered the second dose and the remaining doses will be administered to the first dose people as per the direction of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy. The Chief Minister said that beds should be set up in the premises of hospitals where there is a

shortage of beds and in nearpermanent buildings if

The Chief Minister will hold a review meeting with district collectors on Tuesday. The Group of Ministers meeting was scheduled for Wednesday. Authorities have instructed collectors to take steps to ensure that committee meetings take place twice a week, said Singhal. He said that so far, the Centre has provided 73,49,960 doses to the state, of which 73,00,463 have been administered. While 9.17,850 doses were allocated in the first week of May, 7,65,365 vaccines were already received and have been administered. Another 1,52,490 doses are expected to be received soon. Of the 16,85630 doses purchased by the state government, 4,93,930

Pushpa Srivani, husband test positive

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister Pamula Pushpa Srivani on Monday tested positive for the deadly Covid-19 and was being treated at a hospital

Visakhapatnam. Sources said that Srivani's husband Parikshit Raju, who is also president of the YSRCP Araku Lok Sabha constituency, also tested positive.

Pushpa Srivani was elected to AP Assembly on the YSRCP ticket in 2019 from Kurupam Assembly

constituency in Vizianagaram district. Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had made her the Deputy Chief Minister holding the portfolio of Tribal Welfare since June 2019. Pushpa Srivani was active during the first phase of the Covid 19 when the lockdown was imposed across the state.

Pay in advance, buy vax, suggests TDP

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Leader of the Opposition N Chandrababu Naidu along with TDP leaders on Monday strongly objected to the YSRCP Government not coming forward to buy the required quantities of Covid vaccine even though all other States were making advance bookings to the Serum Institute of India to save the lives of their respective people.

The TDP leaders said the ruling YSRCP was hatching a conspiracy to blame Naidu even for the vaccine crisis. "AP got Rs 2,876 crore grant from the 15th Finance Commission in April and May. There was higher revenue from increased taxes and borrowings. Still, the May 5 Cabinet meeting allocated just Rs 45 crore for vaccine purchase which exposed lack of any concern for the safety of the people's lives," Naidu alleged.

He said that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy was allocating paltry funds to fight the epidemic while giving top



priority to schemes that would bring huge commissions. "The CM should stop caste-based conspiracies. The Government should immediately place advance orders just like other States like Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, etc,"

Naidu demanded. The TDP leaders said that the Serum Institute of India has already issued a press release saying that 50 percent of vaccines would be sold to the States as per the Centre's instructions. "But, Ministers from AP are claiming that the Chief Minister has written to the Centre. Once the vaccine is supplied by the Centre, it would be given to the AP people. This is nothing but shirking responsibility on part of the government," they said.

Immunity-booster decoction can do harm too

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

It is said that everything is bad. Nothing is more perfect than necessary. Then, even if they are food and drink items, consuming too much can prove to be harmful. If you want to keep your body healthy, then consume as much as is necessary, otherwise it can cause harm

rather than benefits. There is fear inside the coronavirus epidemic. Everyone is taking various measures to keep themselves healthy. To increase immunity, many people are drinking daily brew. Immunity is strengthened by drinking decoction. Drinking decoction is very important in



Ayurveda. People are advised to drink decoction to avoid seasonal diseases. But do you know that drinking too much brew can also be harmful for

If you drink decoction every

day in an affair to increase immunity, it can also cause harm to you. Experts believe that it depends on a person's health, age, season and the ingredients of making the decoction. Whether or not decoction. If you are drinking decoction every day and you are having some problems, then stop immediately and seek the advice of a doctor.

Government Ayurvedic College vice-principal Dr Uma Srinivas has advised people against consuming decoctions as it would pose other health problems to them and advocates that people should not do anything without proper awareness

The health professional said that the people should try home remedies and suggests them to use Ayurvedic health tips and techniques. She said that there are many drugs

available in Ayurvedic medicine to improve immunity, which is essential in the combat against the Coronavirus.

Mostly hot tasseer items are used to make the decoction. In which hot ingredients like black pepper, cinnamon, turmeric, Giloy, Ashwagandha, cardamom and dry ginger are added. All these things produce heat in the body. If you use them more during the summer season then it can be harmful for your body. If you have phlegm disorder then you can drink brew regularly. By doing this, the phlegm ends. But people with Pitta and Vata dosĥa should avoid hot

14-day quarantine must for passengers from AP to Delhi

from the state of Andhra

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

People arriving in the national capital from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana twill have to undergo 14 days of manda-tory institutional quarantine, said an order issued by the Delhi government. This order is applicable for people travelling by flights, trains, buses or cars.

'All persons arriving

Pradesh and Telangana in NCT of Delhi by airlines, trains, buses, cars, trucks or any other mode of transportation shall have to undergo mandatory government institutional quarantine or paid quarantine for 14 days at facilities established by the concerned district magistrate," stated the order. However, those who

Coronavirus vaccine or carry a negative RT-PCR test report not older than 72 hours prior to undertaking the journey, will be required to be home quarantined for seven days, it said. People who have received the two doses will have to present the vaccination certificate,

have been administered

both doses of any

VACCINATION CENTRES BECOMING COVID HOTSPOTS



S BHANU PRAKASH

The Covid vaccination centres were turning out to be the Covid hotspots as people flocking in huge numbers to the Urban Public Health Centres (UPHCs) in Tirupati as the people were least bothered about the corona regula-Though the health department has made it clear that due to the limited stock of Covid vaccine priority was being given to people who need to take the second dose, the people were thronging to the health centres even for the first dose. Heavy rush was witnessed at the vaccination centres violating the covid-19

protocols particularly failing

even in maintaining the social distance.

The people, who waited outside the urban health centres in the division, stormed into the centres at once soon after the opening of gates causing a stampede-like situation. The situation at the vaccination canters appears to be one of the hotspots for the spreading of Covid. The police and the health department staff were helpless in controlling the mob at the UPHCs. Many youngsters were also visiting these centres for vaccination without getting any time slot on the Cowin website.

"It almost took three hours for me in the queue line to reach the main entrance of the UPHC. The police stopped us

because of a heavy crowd. People are pushing each other and no one is bothered to maintain physical distance and not even wearing masks properly. There is every possibility for corona spreading here," Rajendra, a resident of Bairagipettada said.

Hari Krishna, a resident of Padmavathipuram feared that his friend, who took his second dose vaccine standing in the queue line was infected by corona. He was now in the home quarantine. The officials concerned should take measures to maintain physical distance at the UHCs, he requested.

District Collector M Harinaryana told PNS that the first dose of vaccination drive would resume from June 1. As many as 1.22 Lakh people were yet to be given the second dose in the district and at present, there was a stock of 24,000 units for the second dose.

The Collector said that the second dose of vaccination would be given priority in the whole month of May and time slots would be allotted depending upon the dates of the first dose. Slips would be sent to the houses by the ward volunteers. He appealed to the public not to become panic and strictly adhere to the Covid protocols.

GMC offers free funeral of Covid victims

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The Guntur Municipal Corporation has announced to perform the funerals free of cost for the deaths due to Covid. The GMC has taken a decision to this effect for those who died while receiving treatment within the municipal limits. Mayor Shivanaga Manohar Naidu and GMC commissioner Challa Anuradha said at a press conference at the municipal office on Monday said they have inspected several crematoriums in Guntur at the field level and most of the people from all parts of the district were succumbing to the Covid

A Covid care centre was set up

with all facilities at the Koneru

Lakshmaiah University (KLU)

boys' hostel at Thadepalli

Gundimeda for the conve-

nience of the people, Mangalagiri MLA Alla

Ramakrishna Reddy said on

Monday. He said in a state-

ment said people who were

tested positive could admit

into the KLU Covid care

The people with Covid symptoms could contact the

doctor at the nearest Primary

Health Centre and report on

the patient's health condition.

Then, they could go to KLU

and taken admission in the

hospital, he said. The MLA

explained that anyone could

admit to the KLU Covid care

center from anywhere in the

center.

while undergoing treatment in Guntur. The Mayor further said that there was no rule that the bodies should take to their native villages for the last rites. Most of the bodies of the corona victims were being buried in the city itself. Hence, for the convenience of the relatives, the GMC has decided to conduct the funerals free of cost.

He also said they had inspected the crematorium at Koritepadu and found that the Vaikunthathamam was charging a huge amount for the funerals. The corporation also received several complaints about the exorbitant prices charged at the crematoriums. Show-cause notices

Covid care centre set up in KLU:

MLA Alla Ramakrishna Reddy

would be issued to the committees that were collecting the huge amount, he said. He warned that the Vaikuntadhamam committees would be dissolved if they did not get a proper reply to the notices. The corporation has agreed to bear the cost of the funeral in all the Hindu, Muslim and Christian ceme teries in the city. The Mayor appealed to the people to complain to the municipality if they demanded more fees at the crematoriums. The family members of the deceased or someone could contact the toll-free numbers 91770 01859, 91770 01882 for free burial,

COVID EFFECT

Concern over children becoming orphans

K BALASOURY

The coronavirus devastation left many families in dire straits and children were becoming orphans causing great concern for the past two months in West Godavari dis-

There were many instances where children have become orphans after the parents were falling prey to the corona pandemic. The pathetic scenes in some families were heartrending. A teacher's family in Tallakattupalli of Kukkanur mandal was an ample example of how the corona disturbed human lives. Naga Durga, a teacher who hails from Buttaigudem, was living in the village for the past two years. Her husband Ramesh was working in the village secretariat and she was working as headmistress in the high school in Kukunuru. Ramesh lost his mother during the first wave of corona last year after she tested positive for corona. Ramesh also succumbed to the corona later. Naga Durga also

she was undergoing treatment on Friday, leaving her twin kids as orphans. A pall of gloom descended in the area as none was left in the family to take care of little kids Nikhil and Nihar, who were studying the first standard.

Meanwhile, in another incident Suryaprakasa Rao (41), a software engineer from Jangareddygudem died on Friday night in Chennai after he was inflicted with Covid-19. Unfortunately, his two brothers Subrahmanyam(38) and Ramakrishna (41) and his mother Lakshmi (60) died of Covid in April and May respectively. The corona pandemic claimed the lives of all the four members of a family in just two months. The griefstricken villagers have no words to express as the corona was crushing the human lives within no time. The villagers said it was the government's responsibility to identify such families and orphaned children and provide them with all assistance required to lead a better life. Otherwise, they may become anti-social elements.



Timpany school chairman Ken Gnanakan is no more

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

Timpany group of schools chairman Dr Ken Gnanakan (82) passed away on Sunday after a massive heart attack. Dr Gnanakan was the founder and chancellor of ACTS Group of Institutions, a social organization with a focus on education.

90-year-old Etasi Timpany School, as well as the Chairman of the International Council for Higher Education, Switzerland. He was also the vice-president of the Global Challenges Forum (GCF), Switzerland and served as an advisor to the United Nations Institute of Training and

Research (UNITAR), Geneva. He taught in India and other parts of the world on varied subjects such as management, environment, education, entrepreneurship, theology and philosophy. Gnanakan was married to Prema and they have two chil-

dren - Santosh and Anupa. An alumni of Timpany and student leader Samavam Hemantha Kumar, M S Naidu and students Saanvi and Gnanakan.

Hemantha said Gnanakan was a great philanthropist as he gave Rs 13 crores in the form of a discount on school fee for nearly 9,000 students by helping the parents during the Covid pandemic last year. The children, parents and school staff who attended the Yavat Temple at school expressed their deep condo-



Teachers, caretakers of home isolation Covid patients

VASIREDDY RAVICHANDRA

In the wake of the surge in second wave Covid cases in the state, the government decided to depute teachers as caretakers for corona patients who were in home isolation. The teachers would call the corona patients over the phone and enquire about their well-being. They would submit reports from time to time to the district expressed hope that they would be able to take precautionary measures by knowing more accurate information on the patients' health condition.

About 80 per cent of people with corona infection were staying in the home isolation. The people with moderate symptoms were admitted to Covid Care Centers while those with severe symptoms were admitted to the Covid hospitals. In fact, the role of those who were in home isolation was crucial in preventing and controlling the spreading of the Covid virus.

become difficult for the volunteers and health workers to locate them and give suggestions to the corona positive patients in the house quaran-



Since the number of cases tine. In a bid to take control of District Administration has taken steps to further strengthen the home isolation process by keeping abreast of the health condition of the corona posi-

Apart from it, the teachers were assigned responsibilities as caretakers. Each teacher would be assigned, one corona patient. Based on their phone numbers, they constantly monitor their health status for 14 days and report the situation to the district administration through a Google spreadsheet.

Lakshanarao said that many community would take up the ered from the coronavirus and the advice and suggestions from the teachers' experience would be very useful to the corona victims.

"We welcome these responsibilities given by the government at the time of corona catastrophe," FATTO chairman Basavalinga Rao said. At the same time, he requested the government to recognize the teachers as the frontline war-State president of the

Federation of Municipal Somarauthu Teachers Teachers' MLC K S Ramakrishna said the teachers' task as a social responsibility. Hiring teachers as caretakers for corona-affected people of home isolation was a good outcome as the corona was rapidly spreading.



Mohan Raju takes charge as AD of I&PR

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Tanneeru Mohan Raju was appointed as the Assistant Director of Information and Public Relations (I&PR) for Prakasam District. I & PR State Commissioner Vijay Kumar Reddy issued orders to this effect on Monday.

Incumbent Additional Director K Malliswar was going on long leave, Mohan Raju was appointed in the place of Malliswar. Mohan Raju was serving as PRO in Markapuram and was appointed as additional incharge as Additional Director of Information and Public Relations of Prakasam District to serve from Ongole.

Raju on Monday took charge from Mallishwar. The information department offi-cers and staff congratulated on the occasion.

Two arrested in Kadapa mine explosion case

PNS KADAPA

In connection with the explosion at the limestone mine on May 8 in which 10 workers were killed near Mamillapalli in Kalasapadu mandal of Kadapa district, the police arrested two persons and produced them before the court on Monday.

Kadapa district SP Anburajan informed the media here on Monday that Nageshwara Reddy, who operated the mine at Kalasapadu since 2013 through

GPA and Raghunath Reddy, who had supplied explosives from a magazine company belonging to Pulivendula were arrested and produced before the court on Monday, he said.

The SP said 10 were killed when the explosion occurred while unloading 20 boxes containing 1000 gelatin sticks at the mine in a vehicle from Pulivendula Magazine company. He said it was initially known that the mine where the incident took place had no environmental per-

mission and they have no permits to blow explosives at the mine. Notices were also issued to the owners of the mine and they would also be questioned. However, Anburajan said he had directed the authorities to cancel the license for the mine.

It was learnt that while one C Kasturibai secured the mining lease in 2001 till November 1, 2021, it was being operated by C Nageswara Reddy under a general power of attorney since December 2013

CM Jagan trying to assassinate Babu, alleges B Tech Ravi

PNS KADAPA

MLC and TDP state spokesperson B Tech Ravi has lashed out at Chief Minister Jaganmohan Reddy alleging that he was trying to 'assassinate' Opposition leader Chandrababu Naidu. In a statement on Monday B

Tech Ravi demanded that a case should be registered against Jaganmohan Reddy for attempting to murder as it was appearing that Jagan was planning to assassinate Naidu by infecting him with the coronavirus. He alleged that they planned to infect Chandrababu with the corona as in the case of

Dhulipalla Narendra, who tested positive for corona after his arrest and fighting for life. As a responsible Opposition leader, Naidu took initiative to create awareness among the people about the virus, but the Cabinet ministers had stooped to the level of local leaders and prompted common men to file cases against him. Stating that Sajjala had announced that the issue of the vaccine was the subject of the Centre and treatment was the issue of the state government, then why Jagan had failed to ask the Prime Minister during the review meeting for more vaccine stocks, he asked.

Three of a family killed in road accident

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Three members of a family were killed in a hit and run accident that took place near the Jocil company in Phirangipuram mandal of Guntur district on Monday. The victims include a couple and their son.

The accident occurred when a speeding car hit the

The police identified the deceased as Sheikh Chinna Hussain (50), Sheikh Noor Jaha (45) and Sheikh Hussain (25) of Thallur village. The car hit the two-wheeler while they were going to sleep in a temple in Amravati. The bodies were shifted to

the mortuary of Guntur Government Hospital for postmortem. Police registered a case and are investigating.



Horticulture farmers in EG badly hit due to Covid

DHV SAMBASIVA RAO KAKINADA

The second wave of the corona pandemic was leaving a trail of estruction in human lives and as well as economic growth in the rural areas. The horticulture crops, which were the major source of income after paddy cultivation in East Godavari district, were hitting the backbone of the farmers. Many farmers raised coconut, mango and banana plantations to a huge extent and they usually face threat from huge gales at the time of mango harvest especially during the summer. The farmers of coconut and banana would also face threat from mon-

keys as they create a great loss. Now, the corona pandemic caused a worry for farmers as they could not move from their houses to guard their fields. In East Godavari district, mango has been cultivated in 15,363 hectares.

coconut in 54,000 hectares and banana on 13,000 hectares. The corona indirectly caused huge loss to coconut farmers as demand for coconut has declined as temples were shut down due to Covid. In a bid to reduce the losses, the horticulture authorities were advising farmers to sell the tender coconuts which have huge demand in the summer. Each coconut was currently priced at Rs 25. However, there was no market for dry coconuts. The horticulture department has already provided storage houses to 600 farmers to convert coconuts into boll kopra (Kuridi - dried coconut) to store coconut for about six months, which has a good demand. The Department of Horticulture wrote a letter to the Central Government-run NAFED seek-

ing support for farmers. Deputy Director of horticulture department Rammohan Rao said earlier NAFED had set up coconut



Rammohan Rao, Deputy Director, Horticulture

purchasing counters at Ambajipeta, Mamidikuduru, Rajolu, Kothapet and Amalapuram in Konaseema through the Oil Fed. Hence, the NAFED was requested to set up these centres again because of the Covid.

As far as bananas were concerned, it was cultivated in 13,000hectares in the district. At present, bananas were being sold at Rs 9

to Rs 10 per kg through the support price of it was only Rs 8 per kg. It was currently exported from the district to Orissa and Bengal as well as from VisaKhapatnam to Vijayawada in the state. The deputy director said that all the farmers and traders who want permits to go to outside the state could contact the Horticultural Assistant in the village secretariats.

Similarly, another major horticultural crop was mango. So far 30 per cent were sold locally after they were fully ripe. The mango was also likely to be exported to Orissa, West Bengal, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Jharkhand, he said. He, however, said that 60 per cent of the mango crop was likely to be harvested from May 15 to June 15, adding that farmers should be a little more careful. He, however, said that exports were not up to

level due to the corona





India fastest country globally to administer 17cr Covid vax doses

India is the fastest country globally to administer 17 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses, the Union Health Ministry said on

China took 119 days while the US took 115 days for reaching the same landmark. The vaccination drive in India was rolled out on January 16 with healthcare workers getting inoculated and vaccination of frontline workers started from February 2. Subsequently, it was opened for different age groups. The cumulative number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in the country has crossed the landmark of 17 crore.

A total of 17,01,76,603 vaccine doses have been administered through 24,70,799 sessions, according to the provisional report till 7 am.

These include 95,47,102 healthcare workers (HCWs) who have taken the first dose



taken the second dose and

20,31,854 beneficiaries in the

age-group of 18-44 age group

who have taken the first dose.

65,61,851 beneficiaries aged

Besidies, 5,51,79,217 and

45 to 60 years have been administered the first and second dose respectively, while 5,36,74,082 and 1,49,83,217 beneficiaries above 60 years have received the first and second dose.

Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Bihar and More than 6.8 lakh vaccination doses were administered in a span of 24 hours

Andhra Pradesh account for 66.79 per cent of the cumulative doses given so far in the country. The ministry said 2,46,269 beneficiaries of the age group 18-44 years received their first dose of COVID vaccine in a span of 24 hours and cumulatively 20,31,854 across 30 states and UTs so far.

More than 6.8 lakh vaccination doses were administered in a span of 24 hours.

As on Day-114 of the vaccination drive (May 9), 6,89,652 vaccine doses were given. Across 5,685 sessions, 4,05,325 beneficiaries were vaccinated for the first dose and 2,84,327 beneficiaries received their second dose of vaccine, the

Hosptials directed not to refuse admission to Covid patients for lack of valid ID

All Central and state government hospitals managing covid patients have been directed to ensure that no patient is refused admission due to lack of a valid identity card and a positive test report for coronavirus, the Centre has told the Supreme Court.

In an affidavit on the points raised by the top court, Covid Care Centre (CCC) for mild cases the Centre submitted that the Ministry of and Health Family Welfare

ments regarding the policy of setting up three-tier Health infrastructure for appropriate management of suspect/ confirmed covid-19

has intimated all

state govern-

As the vaccination of the entire country is not possible in one stretch due to the very suddenness of the pandemic and limited availability of vaccine doses, the vulnerability is the prime consideration, it

The Centre's affidavit was submitted late Sunday night in a suo motu case by the apex court for ensuring essential supplies and services during the covid-19 pandemic.

It further said that the guidance document issued in this regard on April 7, 2020, envisages/mandates setting up of

> and these have been set up in hostels, hotels, schools, stadiums and lodges, both public and private. Functional hospitals like Community

Health Centres (CHCs), which may be handling regular, non-Covid cases may also be designated as COVID Care Centres as a last resort. Dedicated Covid Health Centre (DCHC) that shall offer care for all cases that have been clinically assigned as

'States must ensure clamp down on black marketing of drugs'



ensure special teams at different levels to "mercilessly clamp down" on hoarding and black marketing of drugs during the COVID-19 pandemic and send a clear message that "trading in human miseries" shall not be

tolerated, the Centre has told the Supreme Court. In an affidavit filed in the apex court, the Centre has said the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) had communicated to all state drugs controllers (SDCs) that there should be zero tolerance to any kind of hoarding or black marketing of drugs and also to instruct their enforcement staff to keep strict vigil and take stringent action. It said the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has requested the state governments to take all necessary measures to stop black marketing or hoarding of drugs under the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, The Essential Commodities Act and other applicable rules and regulations. "The question of black-marketing is essentially dealt with sternly by use of police administration and local state administration. Law and order being a state subject all state governments must ensure special teams at state, district and taluka levels to mercilessly clamp down on any illegal hoarding or black marketing and send a clear message that trading in human miseries shall not be tolerated under any circumstances," the Centre has said

INDIA CORNER

Fake call centre targeting US citizens busted; 3 held

Police have busted a fake call centre being operated from Ahmedabad and targeting US citizens on the pretext of providing them quick loans, and arrested three persons in this connection, officials said on Monday. Based on a specific tip-off, a cyber crime team raided the call centre



located in Jagatpur area on Sunday and nabbed the trio, identified as Bharatsinh Mandola (35), Akhilesh Nair (23) and Ajay Sonavane (28), all residents of Ahmedabad. The accused used to call unsuspecting Americans by identifying themselves as representatives of the 'USA Speedy Cash Loan Centre' and lure people by offering them quick loans, a release by the cyber crime branch said. To win the trust of people and project their firm as genuine, they used to make calls using a specialised software, and persons on the other side would see a US telecom number on their phone screen rather than an Indian number, it said. Once the victims expressed willingness to take loan, the accused would tell them that the loan could not be dis-

Strict measures taken to curb Covid spread: West Bengal CM

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday asserted that strict measures have been taken to control the spread of COVID-19 in the state, while also lockdown, if imposed, will hamper livelihood of people. She urged the central



government to facilitate free-of-cost vaccination for all. "We have taken strict measures, a total lockdown will hamper livelihood of people," Banerjee said, addressing a press conference at the state secretariat following the first cabinet meeting of her newly formed government. The CM further said that her government has sought three crore vaccine doses from the Centre for West Bengal, of which one crore will be distributed among private hospitals.

Vistara to start Delhi-Tokyo flights from June 16

Vistara said on Monday it will start flights on the Delhi-Tokyo route from June 16 under the air bubble arrangement formed between India and Japan.



capital cities, said its statement. Vistara's announcement comes at a time when India and its aviation sector have been badly hit by the second wave of coronavirus infections. During the last few weeks, several countries such as Australia, the US and the UK have restricted travel to and from India Vistara said it will use its Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft with three-class cabin configuration to serve the Delhi-Tokyo route. "Vistara has also trained its cabin crew in the Japanese language to extend the warmth of true Indian hospitality to travellers from Japan," the airline's statement noted.

Count of active Covid cases falling in Uttar Pradesh

he number of active COVID-19 cases in Uttar Pradesh is showing a downward trend and the recovery rate in the state has improved, an official Monday. The highest single-day spike of over 38,000 infections was reported on April 24, and

since then, there has been a



steady decline, he added. "With test, trace and treat strategy, the state machinery is conducting an average of over two lakh tests daily. With this aggressive approach, the number of active cases, which was around 3.10 lakh on April 30, has come down to about 2.33 lakh now, a fall of nearly 77,000 in nine days (till Sunday)," the official said. The number of people recovering from the disease is increasing every day. According to the spokesperson, 23,333 new cases of the coronavirus were reported in the state on Sunday, while the number of recoveries was 34,636. There are currently 2,33,981 active cases of the disease in the state, and the number of people who have recuperated stands at 12,54,045. According to the spokesperson, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has described the decline in the active case and the improved recovery rate as satisfactory and instructed the 'Team-9' to further increase the state's testing capacity.

43 TMC legislators sworn-in as ministers at low-key ceremony

PNS KOLKATA

At least 43 members of the third cabinet of the Mamata Banerjee-government were on Monday sworn-in as ministers during a low-key ceremony at the Raj Bhawan, amid the raging Covid-19 pandemic. Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar administered the oath of office and secrecy to the ministers.

Three TMC leaders Amit Mitra, Bratya Basu and Rathin Ghosh were sworn-in virtually. Mitra is unwell and both Basu and Ghosh are recuperating from Covid-19.

Other elected legislators like Partha Chatterjee, Subrata Mukherjee, Firhad Hakim and Sadhan Pande also took oath at the ceremony, where Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was present along with other state government officials.

Three Indian Navy warships are bringing to India on Monday 80 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 20 cryogenic oxygen tanks, 3,150 cylinders and a large amount of other medical supplies from abroad as the country reels under a severe second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

The medical supplies being brought by the ships included 900 oxygen-filled cylinders and 10,000 rapid antigen COVID-19 test kits, 54 oxygen concentrators, 450 PPE (personal protective equipment) kits, Indian Navy spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal

Indian Navy ship Airavat is reaching Visakhapatnam from Singapore carrying eight cryogenic oxygen tanks each having a capacity of 20 metric tonnes of oxygen and other supplies. Another warship, INS



Covid: Indian Navy brings large amount

Kolkata, is arriving at New Mangalore port carrying 40 metric tonnes of liquid oxygen, 400 Oxygen cylinders and 47 oxygen concentrators from Qatar and Kuwait, Commander Madhwal said.

INS Trikand is reaching Mumbai with 40 tonnes of oxygen from Qatar, he said.

Last week, the Indian Navy deployed nine warships to bring liquid medical oxygen and other supplies from sever-al countries in Persian Gulf and south-east Asia.

The Navy said it has stepped up its efforts as ships from all three naval commands in Mumbai, Visakhapatnam and Kochi were deployed to bring oxygen and other medical equipment under operation 'Samudra Setu II'.

Last year, Indian Navy had launched Operation Samudra Setu as part of the Vande Bharat evacuation mission under which it brought back to India around 4,000 stranded Indians from Maldives, Sri Lanka and Iran.

As India battles a devastating second wave of coronavirus pandemic, countries around the world have sent medical supplies including oxygenrelated equipment to help it tide over the situation.

The leading countries that have supplied assistance to India included the US, Russia, France, Germany, Australia, Ireland, Belgium, Romania, Luxembourg, Singapore, Portugal, Sweden, New Zealand, Kuwait and

Over 1.8 cr vaccinated in Maha so far

PNS MUMBAI

A total of 1,80,88,042 people have so far received COVID-19 vaccine doses in Maharashtra, the state government said on Monday. On Sunday, 1,10,448

beneficiaries received the jabs in the state, it said. According to an official statement, 4,36,302 individuals aged between 18 and 44 years received the vaccine doses in the state till Sunday since the inoculation drive for this age group began on May 1.

So far, 11,27,341 health care workers have been administered the first dose of the vaccine, while 6,68,901 of them have got their second dose.

Tharoor's swipe at govt over foreign aid

PNS NEW DELHI

Taking a dig at the government over foreign aid in the wake of the COVID-19 second wave, senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Monday said 'Naya Bharat' is one where a virtue is made out of the sympathy earned by failures and "govern-mental apathy that led us to needing it" is denied or glossed

In his tweet attacking the Centre, Tharoor tagged External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's tweet on the aid of oxygen, Remdesivir vials and other COVID-19-related medical assistance India is getting from various countries.

"From US to Singapore, Germany to Thailand. The

world continues to stand with India," Jaishankar had tweeted Sunday. In a swipe at the government, Tharoor said, "Naya Bharat - Where we make a virtue out of the sympathy earned by our failures and deny or gloss over the governmental apathy that led to us needing it."

He used the hashtag

'Parmatmanirbharta', in a dig at the government initiative of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

As India reels under a calamitous second wave of the coronavirus infection, it has received large amounts of medical supplies from a significant number of countries, including the US, Russia, France, Germany, the UK, Ireland, Belgium, Romania, Singapore, Sweden and Kuwait.

Aim to make Assam a top state: CM

PNS GUWAHATI

Newly sworn-in Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday said the aim of his government is to make the state one of the top five in India in the next five

"We will start working from tomorrow to achieve this objective," Sarma told reporters here after taking

The NEDA convenor said the prime focus of the second BJP govern-ment in Assam will be to control the COVID-19 pandemic, fulfil all poll promises and make the state free from the annual flood havoc

"The COVID-19 situation in Assam is alarming. Our daily cases have crossed the 5,000-mark. In our cabinet meeting tomorrow, we will discuss it from all perspectives, and take measures,' Sarma said.

Covaxin doses unavailable for second day in Mumbai

Vaccination centres in Mumbai did not administer Covaxin for the second consecutive day on Monday because of lack of stock, leaving citizens fuming as\ many of them are due for their second dose of the vaccine against COVID-19.

Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), through its Twitter handle, released a list if 105 vaccination centres that would be functional on Monday, but informed that these would be administering only the Covishield vaccine.

On Sunday also, the BMC had not administered Covaxin to the beneficiaries due to unavailability of the vaccine.

Several citizens expressed anger and frustration at the state of affairs as many of them are due for their second dose since they had taken the first jab over 42 days back.

As per the government guidelines, the recommended gap between two doses of Covaxin is four-six weeks and for Covishield the suggested interval is four-eight weeks. Local resident Rupesh

Lingayat took to Twitter to express his frustration. "My father took 1st dose of

Covaxin, now it is impossible to get 2nd dose of Covaxin and its been 43 days since took 1st dose. He is 63. Please help," he tweeted. Another resident Param Sampat also tweeted that his sister had got a booking on Saturday for 3-5 pm slot, but when she reached at 2.45 pm, authorities told her they were out of stock gave her a token for Monday.

Today when she reached at 8, she was denied a vaccine. This is absolutely irresponsible," he tweeted. The BMC's executive health officer, Mangala

immunogenic response following

the second dose of either of the two

mRNA vaccines -- made by Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech --

for 658 transplant recipients, none

98 of the 658 study participants --15 per cent -- had detectable anti-

bodies to SARS-CoV-2 at 21 days



calls or text messages on the lack of Covaxin doses in the

Gomare, did not respond to

According to a BMC report, a total of 1,76,505 people have been administered Covaxin doses in the city, including 1,20,167 who have received the first dose and 56,338 who have got the second dose as

Till Sunday evening, 27,00,431 people were vaccinated in Mumbai against COVID-19. These included 20,52,963 beneficiaries who have taken the first dose and 6,47,468 people who have received their second dose, the report said.

Transplant recipients vulnerable even after vaccination: Study

PNS NEW DELHI

Although two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine confer some protection for people who have received solid organ transplants, it's still not enough to enable them to dispense with masks, physical distancing and other safety measures, according to a study.

This is a follow-up study to an earlier one in which the researchers reported that only 17 per cent of the participating transplant recipients produced sufficient antibodies after just one dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine regimen.

"While there was an increase in those with detectable antibodies after the second shot, the number

of transplant recipients in our second study whose antibody levels reached high enough levels to ward off infection was still well below than in people with healthy immune systems," said study lead author Brian Boyarsky from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in the

"Based on our findings, we recommend that transplant recipients and other immunocompromised patients continue to practice strict COVID-19 safety precautions, even after vaccination," Boyarsky said.

The researchers noted that people who receive solid organ transplants, such as hearts, lungs and kidneys, often must take drugs to suppress their immune systems and



Such regimens may interfere with a transplant recipient's ability to make antibodies to foreign sub-

stances, including the protective

cines, they said.

The latest study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), evaluated this

This was comparable to the 17 per cent reported in the March study looking at immune response after only one vaccine dose.

after the first vaccine dose.

At 29 days following the second dose, the number of participants with detectable antibodies rose to 357 out of 658 -- 54 per cent, the researchers said.

of whom had a prior diagnosis of After both vaccine doses were administered, 301 out of 658 par-The participants completed their ticipants -- 46 per cent -- had no two-dose regimen between December 16, 2020, and March 13, detectable antibody at all while 259 -- 39 per cent -- only produced antibodies after the second shot, The researchers found that only they said.

The researchers also found that among the participants, the most likely to develop an antibody response were younger, did not take immunosuppressive regimens including anti-metabolite

drugs and received the Moderna

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- PAPER WITH PASSION

Hope floats

Can Mamata's win spur the Opposition into unity? More importantly, will the Congress be the nucleus?

The resounding victory of Mamata Banerjee against the BJP's concerted effort to wrest power in West Bengal has allowed the languid Opposition to dream afresh of an anti-BJP alliance well in time for 2024. Such buoyed spirits were seen in the past, too, but the current one stands out. One, the West Bengal victory following the neverseen-before hype created by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah left a strong message in its wake. Two, the satraps hailed Mamata, but of greater import was a congratulatory tweet by JD(U) parliamentary board chairman Upendra Kushwaha about Mamata breaching the BJP's "chakravyuh" (a circular, military formation). The tweet by the BJP's ruling ally in Bihar caused its own ripples and raised eyebrows. Three, Shiv



Sena's Sanjay Raut took the narrative forward not only by asserting that the shrivelling Congress continued to be the "soul" of any Opposition alliance, but also by presenting Maharashtra's Maha Vikas Aghadi as a model of a political alliance against the BJP at the national level. The positive reception to Mamata's victory in the Opposition-ruled States will not automatically lead to a common national front; it merely points to such a possibility. There are many pre-conditions to be met first: The next round of Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, for example. Can the SP and the BSP reach an electoral understanding? Will the Left, AAP and even the Trinamool Congress allow a straight fight

between the Congress and the Akali Dal and/or the BJP in Punjab? Both States will test the Opposition's resolve, while the UP result will be the clincher.

The regional leaders are coming to terms with their shared problems of one-upmanship, a Congress snapping at their heels and a BJP trying to poach their brood. Will the prospect of a united fight against the BJP prompt them to adopt the jointly-at-the-Centreand-severally-in-States formula of decentralised unity? One way to find out is for them to overcome the COVID-19 challenge by opening two-way communication channels among themselves. The Congress cannot automatically stake claim to be the "soul" just because its leadership may favour a default principle that the index of Opposition unity will work in its favour and it can seek the top post by getting most seats in the Opposition camp. It has shown maturity to be the junior-most partner in Maharashtra. It may believe that the satrap's inability to leave their States for a national role for fear of political backstabbing will leave the Congress as a default alternative. The MVA model has worked because the Shiv Sena, NCP and the Congress were compelled to bury their differences. Noticeably, the Sena did not interfere with the Anil Deshmukh case and left it to the NCP to sort it out. Also, all the partners fared reasonably well in the State elections without having to be a drag on the alliance. The question therefore is: Should the Opposition search for a leader first or an alliance? To date, six Prime Ministers have come from the Congress and an equal number from the formerly Congress but non-BJP fold. Who can break the tie?

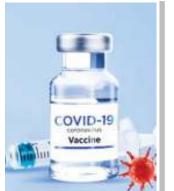


A man blows a conch shell as part of an exercise to strengthen his lungs, near Taj Mahal

In the slow lane

Experts say that vaccinating all against COVID is the only way out but the drive is spluttering

he world applauded us for supplying indigenous COVID vaccines under the "Vaccine" Maitri" initiative. Well, that was before the second wave hit home. When it comes to dealing with the pandemic in our own backyard, our vaccination efforts run into a wall of challenges — from manufacturing to pricing to supply chain bottlenecks. Several States had expressed inability to start the vaccination drive for 18-44 years, citing shortage of vaccines. The situation hasn't improved yet; if anything, inequable vaccine prices have only exacerbated it. No doubt, there exists a wide demand-and-supply gap and India needs to ramp up its vaccine production capacity manifold. While the nation faces



a vaccine deficit, how logical is it for the Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) to plan to pump 240 million pounds (₹2,400 crore) for making vaccines in the United Kingdom? This huge amount should have ideally been spent on increasing the production capacity in India. In the looming shadow of a more lethal third wave, achieving herd immunity seems to be the only way out. However, going by the current pace - India fares poorly on the index of percentage vaccination achieving herd immunity is easier said than done.

Since most of the predictions by our scientists with respect to the nature and peak of the second wave have fallen flat, there is no point relying on their predictions

on the timing and intensity of the third wave. Adding to these woes are disturbing reports that a "black fungus" is maiming those who have recovered from COVID. The rare infection, called "Mucormycosis", has an overall mortality rate of 50 per cent. Doctors believe it may be triggered by the use of steroids that are given as life-saving drugs to critically ill COVID patients. If that is true, fighting SARS-CoV-2 virus and its variants is not the only challenge that we face. We must also get ready to face the fungal infection that severely damages our skin, lungs and brain. The crisis is certainly deepening as the Government's best efforts to contain the pandemic notwithstanding, the desired results are nowhere in sight. The Centre has claimed in the Supreme Court that its vaccine policy is "just, equitable and non-discriminatory" and there is no need for the courts to interfere. However, this explanation doesn't agree with the situation on the ground. Far from reaching even the halfway point in the fight against COVID, the Government must employ sincere, coordinated and gigantic efforts to deal with the crisis.

Apocalypse and the leadership



The handling of the pandemic, both by the Centre and the States, since the first wave leaves much to be desired

espite the darkness and the chaos that currently engulf us, one can say with certainty that this, too, shall pass. Undoubtedly, the cost has been tragically unconscionable, and nothing could have prepared us for the trauma and heartbreak that confronts us on a daily basis.

The fact is that we had expected to be overwhelmed by the pandemic's impact during the first wave, given the state of our health infrastructure and the Government's apathy. Especially, since the latter's complete focus was on Donald Trump's visit, the opposition to the Citizen's Amendment Act and the Delhi riots. For reasons that we still do not fully understand, that did not happen and we got away lightly, believing for some reason that our generally poor standard of hygiene and prevalence of disease had made us immune to the virus. Clearly a combination of inverse snobbery, arrogance and complacency gripped us, allowing us to forsake common sense and ignore basic science in an effort to quickly regain our prepandemic lives. Suffice it to say, the handling

of the first wave by those mandated to do so was apathetic in the initial stages and panicstricken subsequently, especially after they saw it decimate Europe, the US and South America. We locked ourselves in, at a moment's notice, without any consideration for our less fortunate brethren, the daily wage earners, whose livelihoods disappeared overnight. The inability of the State to anticipate the consequences or mitigate their suffering resulted in the largest migration of population seen since Partition. The migrants attempted to get back to the safety of their villages, treks on foot involving thousands of kilometres for some.

To compound their misery the Centre as well as most State Governments responded, as the Governments here invariably do, with inherent savagery, totally bereft of empathy or compassion. As a result, thousands died by the wayside. The Government

was seemingly unaware that even in the tragedy that was Partition, the fledgling Government of the time utilised the military to establish the Military Évacuation Organisation to coordinate the movement of all refugees and helped them reach their destinations in relative safety.

In complete contrast, despite the grave nature of the threat confronting the Government, the military remained a mere bystander, utilised for such "critical" tasks as serenading hospital staff and other frontline workers by showering hospitals and police memorials with flowers from helicopters! Even now, there are allegations that the military has been used to establish field hospitals in the constituencies of a few VIP politicians.

Clearly, in hindsight, it was not our systems and processes in place to deal with just such a contingency that were found wanting, as Kerala showed us, but the lackadaisical approach of most Ministers and bureaucrats whose responsibility it was to ensure their implementation. They, in their wisdom, or rather the lack of it, treated the NDMA's detailed

LETTERS TO TH



THE HANDLING OF THE FIRST WAVE BY THOSE MANDATED TO DO SO WAS APATHETIC IN THE INITIAL STAGES AND PANIC-STRICKEN SUBSEQUENTLY, **ESPECIALLY AFTER** THEY SAW IT DECIMATE EUROPE, THE US AND SOUTH AMERICA

belief that we had put the pandemic behind us ensured that the Narendra Modi Government took its eyes off the ball, even going so far as to ignore advice, received in early March from its own advisory group, on the likelihood of a second wave impacting us with even more ferocity. As a result, it didn't bother to make up for the infrastructural and procedural deficiencies observed earlier but, worse, refused to hold accountable for acts of omission and commission those responsible for the lapses and delays that led to unnecessary and avoidable deaths of thousands. In short, it was a Government more focused on garnering power and prestige than ensuring the well-being of its citizens. An uncaring civil society, a divided and defunct Opposition spearheaded by a pro-Government media pre-

ions to handle the problems.

Inherent arrogance and a

ratives and bold-faced lies. While Modi may have excellent reasons for not venturing outside his bio-bubble at the Race Course Road, prefer-

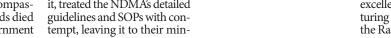
them to cover up their mis-

deeds and perpetuate false nar-

ring to lead from within, he should note that leaders need to be seen, otherwise they are redundant. Interestingly, such an absence in a war zone on the part of a military leader would result in his immediate removal from command, probably on grounds of incompetence, if not sheer cowardice.

Whatever the spin this Government may attempt to push, Modi has been completely shorn off all the gloss and charisma he earlier projected. His unwillingness to take responsibility for the disaster implies that he lacks the moral fibre. The question that arises is if he will do the right thing and fall upon his sword. One way or the other, we will know the answer soon. But let us be totally clear that his reputation is done and dusted, forever connected to his handling of the pandemic and what it has wrought. As party in the death throes and a the Bard, insightful as ever, wrote: "The evil that men do ferred to remain silent on these lives after them; the good is issues. By doing so, we enabled off interred with their bones

> (The writer is a military veteran, who is a Visiting Fellow with the Observer Research Foundation and Senior Visiting Fellow with The Peninsula Foundation, Chennai. The views expressed are personal.)



THE PM HAS FAILED TO HANDLE COVID CRISI

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi faces growing criticism across the political spectrum for holding large election rallies as the country's health system reels under the deadly wave of COVID-19, forcing the citizens to beg for oxygen and hospital beds. Modi, at a campaign rally in West Bengal, said he has never seen such huge crowds at any event. Leaders of key States lashed out at Modi as the Congress and the Left called off campaigning in West Bengal due to the virus surge. Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, whose State includes India's financial centre, tried calling Modi to address the shortages of oxygen and the drug Remdesivir but was told the PM was too busy addressing rallies. India now has the world's fastest-growing COVID-19 caseload, leaving it behind only the US in terms of total numbers.

The growing gap between Modi's optimism in fighting the virus and the reality on the ground is particularly evident in

Delhi, among the worst hit in India. Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

GOVT MUST TAP ONLINE EDUCATION POTENTIAL

Sir — Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, degree colleges and universities have resorted to complete online methods of conducting semester examinations. They also believe that online examinations are the way forward because the pandemic has made it difficult to conduct offline examinations. In addition, the use of advanced technology and digital software has made it easier to conduct examinations virtually, do complete assessment and declare results faster. Till now, degree colleges conducted the last two semester examinations online after the COVID-19 pandemic hit India in March, 2020. Currently, degree colleges, the University of Mumbai (MU) and major universities in Maharashtra are conducting the final-year last semester examinations online.

With the second wave of COVID-19 lashing the country, the Government has closed the schools and colleges to contain the spread of the virus. Classes are suspend-

Govt must help prison inmates



ery few in the Government — the Centre and the States — would have given a second thought to the plight of the inmates in India's overcrowded prisons, especially in relation to the pandemic. In the times of distress, it is only the Supreme Court that the hapless inmates can turn to for some type of succour. The top court of the land had, in 2020, freed prisoners, nearly 60,000 of them, on interim bail to decongest the prisons. Subsequently, 90 per cent of them returned. The SC has again ordered that those released on parole during the first phase of the pandemic be freed on a repeat parole for 90 days.

postponed indefinitely. The new academic year which began late, but with lots of hopes for the students, was disrupted once again. The online education has once again acquired a new urgency during this period. C K Subramaniam | Mumbai

THE ASSAM CM MUST ACT URGENTLY

Sir — This refers to the editorial 'Fair deal?' (May 10). The elevation of Himanta Biswa Sarma as the Chief Minister of Assam has been an inevitable choice for the BJP's top brass. Ever since he crossed over to the BJP from the Congress in 2014, he has been instrumental in increasing the BJP's footprint not just in Assam but throughout the Northeast. As the convener of the North East Democratic Alliance, Sarma has been BJP's main troubleshooter and strategist in the region. Even when ed and examinations are either cancelled or the party in Assam was hit by anti-CAA

According to the apex court, it is important to save the lives of the prisoners and the personnel guarding and interacting with them. Obviously, because States cannot have one rule for the public and another for the prisoners. it is not as if every person would jump at the

idea of going home albeit for a short period.

Fear, anxiety and apprehension rule many prisoners. Those hesitant to spend a brief period with their loved ones need to be tested in the prison premises and taken care of. Also, the law enforcers would do well to avoid unnecessary arrests during the pandemic. In the case of Arnesh Kumar versus the State of Bihar, the SC had ruled that arrests should be an exception in cases where the offences are punishable with less than seven years' imprisonment. Quite understandable, because 'humane attitude' should be the cornerstone of criminal jurisprudence. Several verdicts of higher courts have advised the subordinate courts to bear in mind that Article 21 of the Constitution speaks about protection of life, and public liberty, is a fundamental right of a citizen

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

protests and COVID crisis last year, it was Sarma who was at the forefront of navigating the troubled waters for BJP.

With a huge political clout, Sarma has played a big role in changing the political calculus of Assam by engineering an unspoken electoral alliance between Assamese and Bengali Hindu voters of the State. All of this has seen Sarma achieve a bigger stature than Sonowal in Assam. And with most new MLAs in BJP supporting Sarma, it would have been risky for the party central leadership to overlook him for the CM's post.

However, Sarma takes over at a challenging time for Assam. With the rising number of cases, Sarma clearly has his task cut out and must hit the ground running. N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

> Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The Government's repeated chestthumping at receiving foreign aid is pathetic. Had GOI done its job. it wouldn't have come

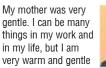


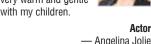


Russia consistently defends international law. At the same time. we will steadfastly defend our national

interests and ensure the security of our people

> Russian President Vladimir Putin





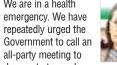


I think we've already seen plans for the T20 World Cup to move out of India...and they're going to be ultra-

James Neesham

cautious about that sort of a thing **New Zealand cricketer**

We are in a health emergency. We have repeatedly urged the



Congress interim president

— Sonia Gandhi

FIRST COLUMN INDIA'S PATH TO CARBON NEUTRALITY

A decarbonised economy will also be knowledge-based and knowledge-driven



SANJAY GUPTA

s the Glasgow Conference of the Parties (GoP) meeting draws near, there is considerable discussion and speculation on India's Anear, there is considerable discussion and operations future commitments and plans; not just on further reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions but to offer a date by when the country would achieve carbon neutrality or net-zero emissions. While India is the only G-20 country on track to meet its Paris Climate Agreement goals, it is also being projected as a big emitter. With recent date announcements made by China, the EU and the USA to achieve carbon neutrality, both the domestic and international climate community are now looking to India to declare its deadline.

There are two issues to consider. One, is it in India's medium and long-term interests to become a carbon neutral economy, gradually moving towards decarbonisation of all the sectors? As the past experience of economic history shows, countries and economies that adopted newer technologies and approaches have benefited socially, economically and in geostrategic terms. The difference between a "future" green economy and non-green economy will be the same as an industrialised and non-industrialised economy in the current



scenario. Further, the Global Commission on Adaptation avers that investments in adaptation consistently deliver higher returns and create more jobs than traditional investments. Second, should the country declare a date for achieving the net-zero carbon emissions status, what should be that date? Given the current global mood, it will be strategic for India to declare its intent on achieving carbon neutrality but only on its own terms. The path to India's green economy should not emerge out of Paris or Glasgow but rather out of every village, town and city in the country. Its net-zero emissions date should be a time band such as from 2065-2085. The later date should be offered as a more likely target. However, if there is adequate green finance made available, supported by development and availability of appropriate technologies, the earlier date of 2065 or thereabouts could be possible. What can India hope from countries that are less than supportive of a Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver on COVID-19 vaccines and medicines to avert an ongoing global tragedy? How much support will the same set of rich countries provide to India and other developing countries to address a "wicked" problem such as climate change?

India will have to forge its own unique path towards decarbonisation. It has achieved immensely in areas such as energy efficiency and solar power. By 2030, it aims to install 450 gigawatt of renewable energy capacity, far exceeding its Paris targets. But these are low-hanging fruits compared to the long and arduous path ahead. The process to achieve carbon neutrality will be integrated and interconnected across geographies, people and multiple sectors of the economy. Inclusion of the voice and choice of the socioeconomically underprivileged and climate-vulnerable groups will be critical to success of the "green" transition and inclusive growth. Farmers will need to adapt, innovate and improvise to achieve climate resiliency while also attaining higher productivity and profitability. India should proactively seek Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in green technologies for that is what it will take to obtain access, not just international climate negotiations that have largely ignored the needs and aspirations of the developing countries. The list of current and future technologies will be long but each one will need to be judged and imbibed based on its social relevance, economic viability and the ability to solve critical problems. A decarbonised economy will also be a knowledge-based and knowledge-driven economy.

(The writer is an independent consultant and expert in climate issues. The views expressed are personal.)

NEP: A bundle of pious intentions



UTTAM GUPTA

The Government should avoid overambitious targets that will result in gross underutilisation or even scrapping of the assets already created

n yet another attempt to improve the power sector, the Modi Government has come up with a new draft National Electricity Policy (NEP), the major objectives being to promote clean energy such as power based on renewable and gas without debunking coal; revitalise power distribution companies (discoms) and developing an efficient market for electricity distribution.

All the three objectives are laudable. These are crucial to development of an efficient, competitive and sustainable power sector to meet the needs of the economy on a high growth trajectory while at the same time, meeting the environment goals (especially India's commitments under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change). What is being done on ground zero to achieve these goals?

At present, India has a total generation capacity of about 360 GW (one gigawatt equals 1000 megawatts or MW) including 63 per cent based on fossil fuels, of which coal alone accounts for 54 per cent and nearly 22 per cent based on renewable energy, viz., solar, wind, bio-mass, small hydro, etc. and gas-based capacity accounting for another seven per cent. However, only 50 per cent of this installed capacity is currently utilised.

This has to do with indiscriminate setting up of capacity on coal (to some extent on gas) much before Prime Minister Narendra Modi started giv-ing a boost to the renewable energy sector. Many of those plants were set up without ascertaining whether or not power produced by them would find any takers (the promoters could not even sign power purchase agreements or PPAs) while others did not even have fuel supply tie-ups (several gas-based plants fall in this category). Many coalbased plants have been impacted by availability of much cheaper power, at about ₹2.4 per unit from renewable-based plants (against ₹5 to ₹ 66 per unit from coal) prompting Discoms not to buy power from the former. In turn, renewable-based plants of those plants were set up without ascertaining from the former. In turn, renewable-based plants are affected as some State Governments (for instance, Andhra Pradesh) are not honoring

Meanwhile, Modi has more than doubled the original goal of renewable-based power capacity from 175 GW by 2022 to 450 GW by 2030.

The current capacity being 80 GW, to reach the scaled up target, the country will need to add 370 GW. Plus an additional 50 GW from coalbased projects already under implementation, the total capacity will go up to 780 GW by 2030. Against this, the projected demand being about 320 GW (on the basis of an average six per cent annual Gross Domestic Product growth), this would imply utilisation of mere 40 per cent.

The Government should avoid over-ambitious targets which will result in gross under utilisation en scrapping assets already created.

It overarching focus should be on ensuring optimum utilisation of every megawatt of capacity created and viability of all efficiently run power generation plants. This brings us to the second objective, namely revitalising Discoms. In this regard, the Modi Government has taken numerous steps, the latest being the ₹300,000 crore electricity distribution reform program unveiled by the Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, in the Union Budget for 2021-22.

Christened 'Reforms-Linked, Result-Based Scheme for Distribution' (RLRBSD), the scheme



AT THE ROOT OF PERSISTENT AND INCREASING LOSSES OF DISCOMS ARE THE ORDERS ISSUED BY GOVERNMENTS TO SELL ELECTRICITY TO SOME PREFERRED CONSUMERS VIZ, POOR HOUSEHOLDS AND FARMERS, EITHER AT A FRACTION OF THE COST OF PURCHASE, TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION, OR EVEN FREE. ON THE UNITS SOLD TO THESE GROUPS, THESE COMPANIES INCUR COLOSSAL UNDER-RECOVERY. THIS IS

AGGRAVATED BY

AT&C LOSSES — MOST OF IT PLAIN

The writer is

New-Delhi based policy

analyst. The views

expressed are personal.



scheme aims at reducing AT&C losses to 12-15 per cent and ACS-ARR gap to 'nil' by 2025.

When viewed in the backdrop of Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY), launched in November 2015, wherein the targets were missed by a huge margin, this scheme does not inspire. Under UDAY, Discoms were required to reduce AT&C losses from 20.7 per cent during 2015-16 to 15 per cent by 2018-19. Further, they were to reduce the ACS-ARR gap from ₹0.59 per unit during 2015-16 to

'zero' by 2018-19. Simultaneously, Government gave them a financial restructuring package (FRP) under which their entire debt of about ₹400,000 crore

was condoned. This led to a dranatic impact on their losses which declined from ₹52,000 crore during 2015-16 to a low of ₹17,000 crore during 2017-18. However, Discoms did little to set their house in order.

During 2019-20, their AT&C losses were 18.9 per cent against the 15 per cent target for 2018-19. The ACS-ARR gap during 2019-20, stood at ₹0.42 per unit against target of 'zero' for 2018-19.

During 2020-21, discoms reported a staggering loss of ₹58,000

Correspondingly, their debt galloped to about ₹450,000 crore by the end of 2020-21 and is estimated to reach ₹600,000 crore mark by the end of current fiscal. The collateral damage is a pile-up of their dues to power generators to over ₹150,000 crore (current). This is despite a special loan of ₹90,000 crore promised by Nirmala Sitharappan under 'Atmonishar Sitharaman under 'Átmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' in May 2020 (the loan amount has since been raised to ₹130,000 crore).

Against this backdrop, the latest talk, of achieving those targets which should have been achieved by 2018-19 by March 2025 under RLRBSD, is laughable.

At the root of persistent and increasing losses of Discoms are the orders issued by State Governments to sell electricity to some preferred consumers viz., poor households and farmers, either at a fraction of the cost of purchase, transmission and distribution, or even free. On the units sold to these groups, these companies incur colossal underrecovery. This is aggravated by

Inflated tariff allowed to generators under purchase agreements adds to the revenue shortfall. Unless, these three fundamental factors are addressed, any other attempt to revitalise Discoms - as intended in the NEP - will be a non-starter.

As for developing an efficient market for electricity distribution as promised in the policy - it is easier said than done. When an overwhelming share of power generated in the country is procured by

Discoms under PPAs (mostly under long-term contracts), distributed by them at tariff controlled by States/owners of Discoms (regulatory commissions merely approve what is proposed by them) and a mere five per cent of the electricity is traded, it will take ages before one can hope to see 'efficient' and 'competitive markets.

Meanwhile, under the draft Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2021, in sync with the intent to develop an efficient market under NEP, Modi Government proposes to de-license the distribution business, bring in competition, and give the consumer power to choose supplier. If only the States give subsidies directly to farmers and households, rein in power theft and improve efficiencies in purchase, wheeling and distribution, will help in revitalising the Discoms.

In view of the entire distribution network viz., transmission lines, feeder lines, transformers etc that caters to households, industries etc in an area being owned and controlled by the Discoms, any talk of letting private license is a mis-AT&C losses - most of it plain theft. nomer. Instead of indulging in such rhetoric Modi will do well to get States resolve the basics.

If only the States give subsidies directly to farmers and households (instead of riding piggy back on Discoms), rein in power theft and improve efficiencies in purchase, wheeling and distribution, this will help in revitalising the Discoms and also give relief to industries which are currently paying exorbitant charges for cross-subsidising the preferred customers.

NT**COUNTER**POINT

THE PM IS TAKING EVERY STEP TO SAVE LIVES. TODAY, MOST OF THE COUNTRIES ARE STANDING WITH US DUE TO HIS EFFORTS. - UNION MINISTER





THE GOI'S REPEATED CHEST-THUMPING AT RECEIVING FOREIGN AID IS PATHETIC. HAD IT DONE ITS JOB. THINGS WOULDN'T HAVE COME TO SUCH A PASS. — CONGRESS LEADER

RAHUL GANDHI

States vote for new economy; will Mamata lead the Oppn?

ANURAG THAKUR

The West Bengal Chief Minister has virtually challenged the dazzling development model that has put India's public sector on sale

he recent Assembly election results reflect more than politics. Indian voters have larger issues and economy is at the core of their concern. Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal have separately endorsed a new economic course for the nation.

The eastern State definitely remains at the centre of attention. A hawai-chappal wearing and white sari-clad Mamata Banerjee has virtually challenged the dazzling development model that has put India's public sector on sale and is engaged in a visual extravaganza of over ₹30,000 crore (in reality possibly over ₹50,000 crore) to change Delhi's central vista. Nobody explains why that should be a priority instead of creating a strong healthcare sector and hospitals capable of producing their own oxygen.



SHIVAJI SARKAR

The writer is a senior

expressed are personal.

Mamata for women, youth BJP. The people are pitted Duare sarkar (Government at the doorstep), the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK's) welfare ments and others with a target policies in Tamil Nadu or the Left alliance in Kerala, when studied closely, virtually refutes the "aggressive privatised development" model of the Centre. All these States have voted against farm Bills that seek to create large house monopolies, junk scrapping policy of poor man's vehicles, high fuel prices, fares, tolls, taxes and so-called user charges. The vote endorses that the country has more poverty to address than create cosmetic central vista that serves none but a few, big corporate houses. They have together rejected 'Manmohanomics' — that ended up in a political disaster for its proponent, the

Populist largesse of Congress, and its follower, the against the disinvestment of prime banks, LIC, financial institutions, defence establishof ₹1.75 lakh crore in 2021-22. This is lower than ₹2.1 lakh crore it hoped to garner through divestment in 2020-21; an admission of failure of the Government bid. This failed economic concept is rejected now by the voters.

While in Tamil Nadu the change was inevitable, Kerala not very surprisingly voted for the Left front, following people's perception that the Government was delivering. The voters equally perceived that the Congress-led UDF was incapable of opposing the BJP's onslaught for privatisation, now a national concern. So, the LDF has returned with

a bigger mandate. numbers of votes for BJP to The massive vote surge in 38.13 per cent from 40.2 per ful to Netaji, but is also blatant-



West Bengal for the Trinamool Congress was not possible if the people did not perceive the Centre's economic policies as a grave threat. The Left-Congress, the TMC and even a section of the BJP voted for economic policy changes that, ironically, Mamata Banerjee symbolises. The 47.93 per cent votes for TMC up from 43.3 per cent in 2019 and reduced numbers of votes for BJP to

cent in 2019 says a lot. The loss of all other parties was a gain for the TMC. It has also busted the myth that West Bengal votes along communal lines. The wash out of the Left and Congress for its alliance with the highly communalised ISF is enough testimony. This also proves that West Bengal votes for social and economic issues and rejects any polarisation, barring some exceptions, either for Furfura or Ram. Another noticeable aspect is the vote for Netaji Ŝubhas Chandra Bose whose anniversary the BJP celebrated as Parakaram Diwas and Mamata as Deshnayak Diwas.

Surprisingly, nobody pointed out this incongruity which Mamata aptly encashed with a heightened nationalistic presentation - a message went out strong that the Centre is not only disrespect-

houses. No wonder that some days later the Rafael bribery charge revived as an issue following a French Government exposure. India is not against private companies. Many have contributed significantly; many enjoy people's trust and have set standards. The nation, however, is against overt domineering by any group. The present elections have exposed that. The country wants privatisation neither at the cost of the public sector nor does it want to get it enslaved to any private player.

In the UP's panchayat elections, the BJP gets only 580 against Samajwadi Party (SP) 782, Bahujan Samaj Party(BSP) 361, Congress' 61 and 1266 others. So, will this election lead to an overt cry for economic changes? The rightist centrist party is too inclined towards the corporates and

ly promoting some private may not bring about the changes. But the opposition though too has its corporate connections and may try to forge an alliance to clinch a political change. Its leadership is not yet obvious. Mamata may emerge as one but her all-India acceptability may not be easy.

Some like Ákhilesh Yadav have spoken for her. Either way, a change of guard may be inevitable. The combine would have to come out with a new economic policy - against privatisation and for strengthening the people's economy; one may call it socialist or by any other name. It has to be contrary to a centrist, aggressive privatisation that the present rulers are trying to dispense. India is at the threshold of an economic and political change. It may gel before the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections next year.



Sensex jumps 296 points; Nifty ends above 14,900

Most of key sectoral indices traded in green.

supported market's rally. in the country," Modi

noted.

Elsewhere in Asia,

bourses in Shanghai,

Tokyo and Seoul ended on

PNS MUMBAI

Extending its gains for the fourth consecutive session, equity benchmark Sensex surged about 296 points to recapture the key 49,500level on Monday, led by intense buying in pharma

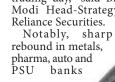
and energy stocks. At the closing bell, the 30share BSE index quoted 295.94 points or 0.60 per cent higher at 49,502.41. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty jumped 119.20 points or 0.80 per cent to

14,942.35. L&T was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying over 4 per cent, followed by Dr Reddy's, Sun Pharma,

PowerGrid, ONGC and On the other hand,

Cement, UltraTech Reliance Infosvs. Industries and HCL Tech were among the laggards.

"Domestic equities continued to defy concerns of rising COVID-19 cases and extended mobility restrictions by several states by extending gains for the fourth consecutive trading day," said Binod Modi Head-Strategy at Reliance Securities. Notably, sharp





Gold gains Rs 179; silver up by Rs 826

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold in the national capital on Monday rose by Rs 179 to Rs 47,452 per 10 gram helped by strong buying in the glob-al precious metal, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 47,273 per 10 gram. Silver also jumped Rs 826 to Rs 71,541 per kg, from Rs 70,715

Honda earmarks Rs 6.5 cr to support relief efforts

PNS NEW DELHI

Honda India Foundation, the corporate social responsibility arm of all Honda group companies in India, on Monday said it has earmarked Rs 6.5 crore to support the government's ongoing efforts against Covid. The foundation is closely working with government authorities in Harvana, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat and has earmarked a sum of Rs 6.5 crore towards the relief measures. "This second wave of impacted all of us adversely. At ative that more individuals COVID-19 pandemic has this hour of need, it is imperations come for-



ment and the industry can help families as they tide through this calamity," Honda India Foundation Chairman Atsushi Ogata said in a statement. The foundation is working with various stakeholders to ensure that on-ground efforts can run seamlessly, he added. "It is time to stand together for each other, with the belief that we will sail through this," Ogata

ward to help in cohesion and

we do our best for the commu-

nity we operate in and for the

country, at large. "We hope

that these efforts by the govern-

Bharat Biotech begins direct supply of Covaxin to 14 states

PNS NEW DELHI

Bharat Biotech has commenced direct supply of its COVID-19 vaccine 'Covaxin' to 14 states, including Delhi and Maharashtra, with effect from May 1, according to the company's Joint Managing Director Suchitra Ella.

The Hyderabad-based firm has started supplying its COVID-19 treatment vaccine to the states based on the allocations received by the central government. "Bharat Biotech confirms direct supplies of COVAXIN to the following state govt's since 1/5/21, based on the allocations received by GoI. Requests have been



will be processed for distribution based on availability of stocks 24x7," Ella tweeted.

The company is supplying vaccines to Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

On April 29, Bharat Biotech announced a cut in the price of 'Covaxin' for states to Rs 400 per dose from the earlier Rs

SSWL wins orders worth Rs 54 cr from US

wheels for the US and EU car-

avan trailer market, US mobile

home and US truck trailer

PNS NEW DELHI

Auto components maker Steel Strips Wheels Ltd (SSWL) on Monday said it has bagged orders worth around Rs 54 crore from the US and Europe.

The company has received

export orders of over 5,25,000

at over USD 7.25 million (about Rs 54 crore), it added. SSWL will complete execu-

market, SSWL said in a reguity are anticipated in coming latory filing. The new orders are valued months from similar customer

tion of the orders by early July 2021 from its Chennai and Dappar plants, the company said. "Orders of similar capacbase as businesses continue to recover rapidly," the company

DBS announces aid worth Rs 10 cr for relief efforts

Singaporean lender DBS, which operates a whollyowned subsidiary in the country, on Monday said it is pumping COVID relief aid worth over Rs 10 crore into India including three cryogenic oxygen cylinder tanks.

Foreign banks operate in India either as a wholly-owned subsidiary or through branch

Singapore High Commission in India and High Commission of India based in Singapore to import three cryogenic oxygen tanks having capacity of 20,000 litres each to support the ongoing relief efforts, an official statement said.

The tanks will be donated via the Singapore Red Cross to India and will be deployed for use through the Ministry of Health, India, the statement

It has partnered with 'Doctors For You' to support the setting-up of a 300-bed oxygen equipped facility in Mumbai, along with the installation of mini oxygen plants, procurement of oxygen concentrators, and provision of medical personnel, the bank said. Similarly, a tie-up with 'United Way Mumbai' is aimed at facilitating ICU unit beds

and equipment, oxygen con-

medical supplies to enhance existing capacity at public healthcare facilities in Mumbai and Pune, it said.

Additionally, its employees across Asia have started a fundraising initiative to donate funds towards healthcare support and vaccination for the underprivileged through GiveIndia, the statement said, adding that the bank will make a matching contribution.

Economic activity down in April, May: Fitch

Q4 earnings
PNS NEW DELHI

UltraTech

shares decline

over 2 pc after

Shares of UltraTech Cement on Monday dipped over 2 per cent after the company reported a 45.2 per cent decline in consolidated net profit for the fourth quarter ended March 2021.

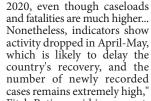
On NSE, it went lower by 2.34 per cent to Rs 6,330. Aditya Birla Group firm

UltraTech Cement on Friday reported a 45.2 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 1,774.13 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2021 on account of reversal of deferred tax liabil-



tions that the latest wave of COVID-19 infections will add to risks among financial institutions (FIs) and anticipates that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may introduce additional measures to support the financial sector if indications of economic stress mount.

"We expect the shock to economic activity from the latest wave of the pandemic in India to be less severe than in



Fitch Ratings said in a report. It said currently authorities are implementing lockdowns

more narrowly, and companies and individuals have adjusted behaviour in ways that cushion the effects.

"There is a risk that disruption could persist longer and spread further than our baseline case assumes, particularly if lockdowns are introduced in more regions, or nationwide," it added

India is facing the world's worst outbreak of COVID-19 cases with more than 3 lakh new daily COVID-19 cases being reported for two weeks now and the new cases reached more than 4 lakh new daily cases over the weekend.

Over 2.46 lakh people in India have died from the virus infection. Public health system is buckling under the weight of surging infections and deaths with several parts of the country reporting shortage of hospital beds, medical oxygen, medicines and vaccines.

"India's slow pace of vaccination means that the country could remain vulnerable to further waves of the pandemic even once the current surge subsides. Just 9.4 per cent of the population had received at least one vaccine dose as of 5 May, according to figures from Our World in Data," it added. Fitch had last month said that the surge in COVID-19 cases could add to headwinds facing India's banks and nonbank financial institutions (NBFIs) if it led to a resurgence in asset quality pressures. The

latest data suggest that this risk is mounting, the agency said. "There are growing indications that India's latest wave of COVID-19 infections will add to risks among FIs by sapping near-term momentum from the economic recovery," it said.

The measures announced by RBI on May 5 will provide some relief to financial institutions in the next 12-24 months, but largely at the expense of postponing the recognition and resolution of underlying asset-quality problems.

Total vehicle registrations slips 30 pc to 1.52 cr units

The total vehicle registrations in India fell by 29.85 per cent to 1,52,71,519 units in financial year 2020-21, the lowest in the last eight years, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said on Monday.

Total vehicle registrations were at 2,17,68,502 units in fiscal year 2019-20.

All categories of vehicles, except tractors were in red in FY21 with two-wheeler (2W), three-wheeler (3W), commercial vehicles (CV) and passenger vehicles (PV) falling by 31.51 per cent, 64.12 per cent, 49.05 per cent and 13.96 per cent respectively -- the lowest in last eight years and way below the FY13 levels, FADA said in a statement.

Passenger vehicles (PV) registrations were at 23,86,316 units last fiscal, as against 27,73,514 units in FY20, down 13.96 per cent, while those of two-wheelers dipped 31.51 per cent to 1,15,33,336 units as compared to 1,68,38,965 units in the previous fiscal.

Three-wheeler registrations in FY21 were down 64.12 per

Cipla inks pact with Eli Lilly to



cent at 2,58,174 units, as compared to 7,19,594 per cent in FY20, while CV registrations were at 4,48,914 units as against 8,81,114 units, a decline of 49.05 per cent, FADA said.

Tractor registrations, however, grew by 16.11 per cent last fiscal at 6,44,779 units as compared to 5,55,315 units in 2019-20, it added. As for April 2021, FADA

said since India was under complete lockdown in April 2020 and not a single vehicle could be sold, a year-on-year comparison is not possible.

When compared to the previous month of March, FADA said in April 2021 total vehicle registrations were down 28.15

per cent at 11,85,374 units versus 16,49,678 units.

PV registrations were down 25.33 per cent at 2,08,883 units in April, as against 2,79,745 units in March this year, while those of 2W declined by 27.63 per cent at 8,65,134 units, as against 11,95,445 in the previous month, it added.

Registrations of CV were at 51,436 units in April as compared to 67,372 units in March, down 23.65 per cent. Tractor registrations also witnessed a dip of 44.58 per cent last month at 38,285 units, as compared to 69,082 units in March this year, the automotive deal-

MONEY MATTERS

Covid drug PNS NEW DELHI

produce, sell

Drug major Cipla on Monday said it has inked a pact with US-based Eli Lilly and Company to manufacture and produce baricitinib in the country for the treatment of COVID-19.

The Mumbai-based company said it has signed a royalty-free, nonexclusive voluntary licensing agreement with Eli Lilly for baricitinib.

Baricitinib has already received a restricted emergency use approval by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), Ministry of Health, India, for use in combination with remdesivir for the treatment of suspected or laboratory confirmed COVID-19 in hospitalised adults requiring supplemechanical ventilation, or extracorporeal memoxygenation



Vivimed Labs gets DGHS nod to manufacture, market Favipiravir



New Delhi, May 10 (PTI) Drug firm Vivimed Labs on Monday said it has received approval from the Director General of Health Services (DGHS) to manufacture and market Favipiravir tablets in India, used for the treatment of mild to moderate cases of COVID-19. Labs in receipt of Government of

India (DGHS) approval to manufacture and market Favipiravir tablets in the strengths of 200 mg and 400 mg under Vivimed's own brand name 'Favulous' across India, the company said in a regulatory filing It is used for the treatment of mild to moderate cases of COVID-19. Favipiravir is one of the leading oral anti-viral treatment approved in various countries for the potential treatment of patients with mild to moderate COVID-19 disease. Ramesh Krishnamurthy, CEO of Vivimed Labs said, "With huge spike in COVID-19 cases being reported daily in India, there is an urgent need to provide more treatment options to healthcare professionals."

Isuzu launches BS-VI compliant versions of V-Cross and mu-X



Isuzu Motors India on Monday said it has launched BS-VI compliant versions of V-Cross and mu-X range in the country, priced between lakh (ex-showroom Delhi) The company said it has also introduced a new model Hi-Lander, tagged at Rs 17.04

lakh.The V-Cross trim with automatic transmission and two-wheel drive system is priced at Rs 20.06 lakh, while the four-wheel-drive variant with manual transmission is tagged at Rs 21.07 lakh.The four-wheel-drive version with automatic transmission is priced at Rs 24.59 lakh. Similarly, the BS-VI compliant version of its seven-seater SUV mu-X, which comes with a two-wheel drive mated with automatic transmission is tagged at Rs 33.37 lakh. The four-wheeldrive trim with automatic transmission is priced at Rs 35.34 lakh.

Greenply Industries to set up Rs 75-crore plant in UP



Monday said it will invest at least Rs 75 crore to set up a plywood and allied products manufacturing unit in Uttar Pradesh. The company's board at its meeting held on May 10 approved setting up of a new unit at Sandila Industrial Area

in Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh for manufacturing of plywood and its allied products through a wholly-owned subsidiary in India, it said in a regulatory filing. The incorporation of the wholly-owned subsidiary has also been approved by the board, it added. Investment required to set up the plant is approximately Rs 75 crore (excluding cost of land and licence of approximately Rs 40 crore), it said, adding the plant is expected to be operational by the fourth quarter of 2021-22. The new project would be financed through debt and equity, the

Zydus Wellness Q4 net profit surges 92.6 pc to Rs 133 cr



ydus Wellness on Monday reported a 92.66 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 133.13 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2021 on account of robust sales. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 69.10 crore for the corresponding period of the previous fiscal, Zydus Wellness said

in a BSE filing. Consolidated sales of the company stood at Rs 600.75 crore for the quarter under consideration. It was Rs 484.76 crore a year ago, it added. For the fiscal year ended March this year, the company posted a net profit of Rs 118.73 crore as against Rs 141.72 crore for the previous fiscal year, Zydus Wellness said. Consolidated sales of the company for 2020-21 stood at Rs 1,853.66 crore. It was Rs 1,734.19 crore in the year-ago period, it added. Five of its brands, Glucon-D, Sugar-Free, EverYuth Scrub, Peel Off Face Mask and Nycil maintained their leadership positions in their respective categories as of March 2021, Zydus Wellness said

what's brewing?

BIG B URGES PEOPLE GLOBALLY To HELP INDIA FIGHT COVID IN 7 team worked '7 days round the clock' amid the pandemic TO HELP INDIA FIGHT COVID



ctor Amitabh Bachchan shared a mini glimpse from the Vax Live event on his social media where he could be seen

India in fighting the deadly second wave of Covid-19. The event also emphasised the importance of vaccina-"Namaskar, this is Amitabh

Bachchan. My country India is battling with the sudden surge of the second wave of Covid 19. As a global citizen I appeal to all global citizens to rise up, speak to your governments, pharmaceutical companies and ask them to donate, to give, to extend a helping hand, to the public that needs it the most. Every effort counts. As Mahatma Gandhiji said: 'In a gentle way you can shake the world'. thank you," he was heard say-

avirus. In the video, which he

shared on his Twitter handle,

the veteran actor urged glob-al citizens to rise and help

ing.
Along with sharing the video, Bachchan also tweeted "Privileged to be a part of the concert .. and the fight for India ..'

The second wave of coronavirus has infected many people, and

the number of Covid-19 positive cases has been rapidly rising. In Bollywood too, a number of celebrities like Kangana Ranaut, Arjun Rampal, Manish Malhotra among others got infected within a span of a few weeks.

On the work front, Amitabh Bachchan was recently cast for the Indian adaptation of The Intern opposite Deepika Padukone. Apart from that, he has films like Jhund, Brahmastra, Goodbye, May Day, and several others in the pipeline.



Gal Gadot confirms Joss Whedon threatened

going to do? I could lose my house!' So I told the studio and I told the industry, 'We're going back. We're going to get everyone back to work. We're going to start shooting in the summer. And we're going to figure out how to do it safely."

Naturally, the job was not easy, not by a long shot. Cruise added, "It was seven days a week, it was around the clock, just dealing with a lot of high emotions with

people, and helping them through it," Cruise says. There was social distancing, there were masks, there were bubbles of crew members one make-up artist for every two actors, plus heads of departments staying in hotel rooms on their own, driving to set, shooting the scene, and then returning to the hotel until needed - and pods of five people, ready to quarantine if anyone within one contracted the virus."

According to media reports, it has been a struggle to keep trespassers out of the Mission Impossible sets. "The set is so large and open that it has been impossible to close it all off. So trespassers have been getting in and attempting to scale the rigs and equipment set up for the stunts. It is a health-and-safety nightmare. Police were called to one incident last week and then Tom was forced to take action when it happened again," a source told a news agency. "This time two intruders were spotted clambering up the set, leading to security rushing to get them down. Extra security might have to be drafted in. Along with it being a safety nightmare, Tom and the team don't want any delays to filming."

In the film, Ethan Hunt

and his allies face a new enemy who is endangering the world. Mission Impossible 7 is scheduled to be released on May 27, 2022.

Kangana 'eagerly waiting' to be banned on Instagram

ened to 'demolish' Covid-19, actor Kangana Ranaut has now said that it will be a 'badge of honour' for her to be banned by the photo-sharing platform. She added that she will remember herself as one who dared to ask ques-

tions and 'made them

fter Instagram

deleted her post in

which she threat-

uncomfortable'. Taking to Instagram Stories on Monday, Kangana wrote, "On Instagram everybody is a victim of capitalism an entire generation of youth eaten up by the termite of capitalism and consumerism their indifference and disdain for the nation and its crisis is appalling, lack of human values empathy and nationalism makes them ugly shallow and

useless.... this platform never

appealed to me and I am eagerly waiting to be banned here, it will be a badge of honour."

requesting the world to help

The 78-year-actor was part

India in fighting the deadly

of the Vax Live global event

which was about the coron-

wave of coronavirus.

"When I look back I will remember I did not fit in I made them uncomfortable I asked questions and pushed them to go beyond buying and selling when you look back what will you see your-self as? Meek obedient sheep in a herd waiting to exploit or get exploited?" she added.

On Sunday, Kangana said that she might not last on Instagram for 'more than a week', after her post announcing her Covid-19 diagnosis was taken down.

Instagram has deleted my post where I threatened to demolish Covid because some were hurt. Matlab terrorists and communists sympathisers suna tha twitter pe lekin (I had heard of terrorist sympathisers on Twitter but) Covid fan club awesome... It's been two days here on insta but don't think will last here more than a week," she wrote on Instagram Stories, adding several laughing

emoiis.

and communist

Earlier this month, Kangana's Twitter account was permanently suspended after her incendiary posts on the recent West Bengal assembly election results and their after



n the yet-untitled seventh *Mission*:

Impossible movie,

Tom Cruise will

once again don the hat of IMF

operative Ethan Hunt who is

on another of his world-sav-

ing trips.
While speaking to a news agency, Cruise has opened up

about the experience of

shooting the seventh itera-

tion in the iconic action-spy-thriller series during Covid-

19. Not only these movies are

big-scale shoots full of elabo-

death-defying stunts, they are also set in multiple countries,

How did Cruise and the

team achieve all that amid a

said, "I've produced 30 to 40

movies. I am responsible for

thousands, of jobs. All my

friends in the industry, people that are in distri-

bution, and my crew

were like, 'What are we

thousands, if not tens of

global pandemic? Cruise

rate practical effects and

in actual locations.

threatened her career while they were working together on the set of 2017's *Justice* League. This revelation comes in the wake of more than a year of reports talking about Whedon's less than ideal behaviour on the

sets of the movie.

In an interview with Israel's N12 News, Gadot said, "What I had with Joss basically is that he kind of threatened my career and said if I did something he would make my career miserable. I handled it

on the spot." While there were various reports circulating that Whedon misbehaved with Gadot, but this was the first time the actor herself has con-



firmed it.

One report in The Hollywood Reporter had said that Gadot had concerns with the direction the movie and her character was taking. The report also said Whedon disparaged Patty Jenkins, Wonder Woman's director.

Ray Fisher, who played the role of Victor Stone or Cyborg, was the first actor to open up about Whedon's alleged misconduct with cast members. On July last year, he tweeted, "Joss . Wheadon's on-set treat-

of Justice League was gross, abusive, unprofessional, and completely unacceptable. He was enabled, in many ways, by Geoff Johns and Jon Berg. Accountability>Entertainm

ment of the cast and crew

Johns and Berg were two of the producers on Justice League. Joss Whedon was also accused by various cast members of Buffy the Vampire Slayer. In February this year, Charisma Carpenter, who

played the role of Cordelia

Chase, said Whedon has a "history of creating toxic and hostile work environments.

Following Fisher's accu-sations, Warner Bros conducted an investigation and later said remedial action was taken. Though not disclosed, it is said that Whedon losing the HBO fantasy series The Nevers was part of it.

Whedon was brought to Justice League by Warner Bros executives as they did not like the darker tone Zack Snyder's original cut had. When Snyder had to leave the project altogether due to a personal tragedy, Whedon was handed the reins and he went on to do

extensive reshoots. The finished version that hit theatres in 2017 was said to be his cut of the movie. The film was panned by critics and was also a commercial disaster and also derailed the DCEU.

ARCHIE







CALVIN AND HOBBES





SPEED BUMP

HOBBES AND I ARE GOING ON AN ARCHAFOLOGICAL EXPEDITION





GARFIELD

NANCY







REALITY CHECK





CROSSWORD









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out to for a meal

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ACROSS

8 Wanders

10 Office tables

14 Gets closer to

17 Go by bike

13 He wrote the play

19 Somewhere to go

6 A maker of horseshoes

"Romeo and Juliet

- 2 Divisions in a play 3 Second-hand
- 4 Comes first in a race 5 Spoke very quietly 7 People in jail.



9 Manufacturer

12 Something left

after a fire

17 Be concerned

18 Metal containers

for drink, food

15 As well

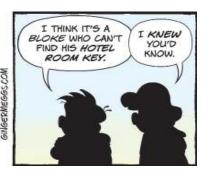
16 Male deer

11 The other side in a war

GINGER MEGGS







exactly once. The sum of all numbers in

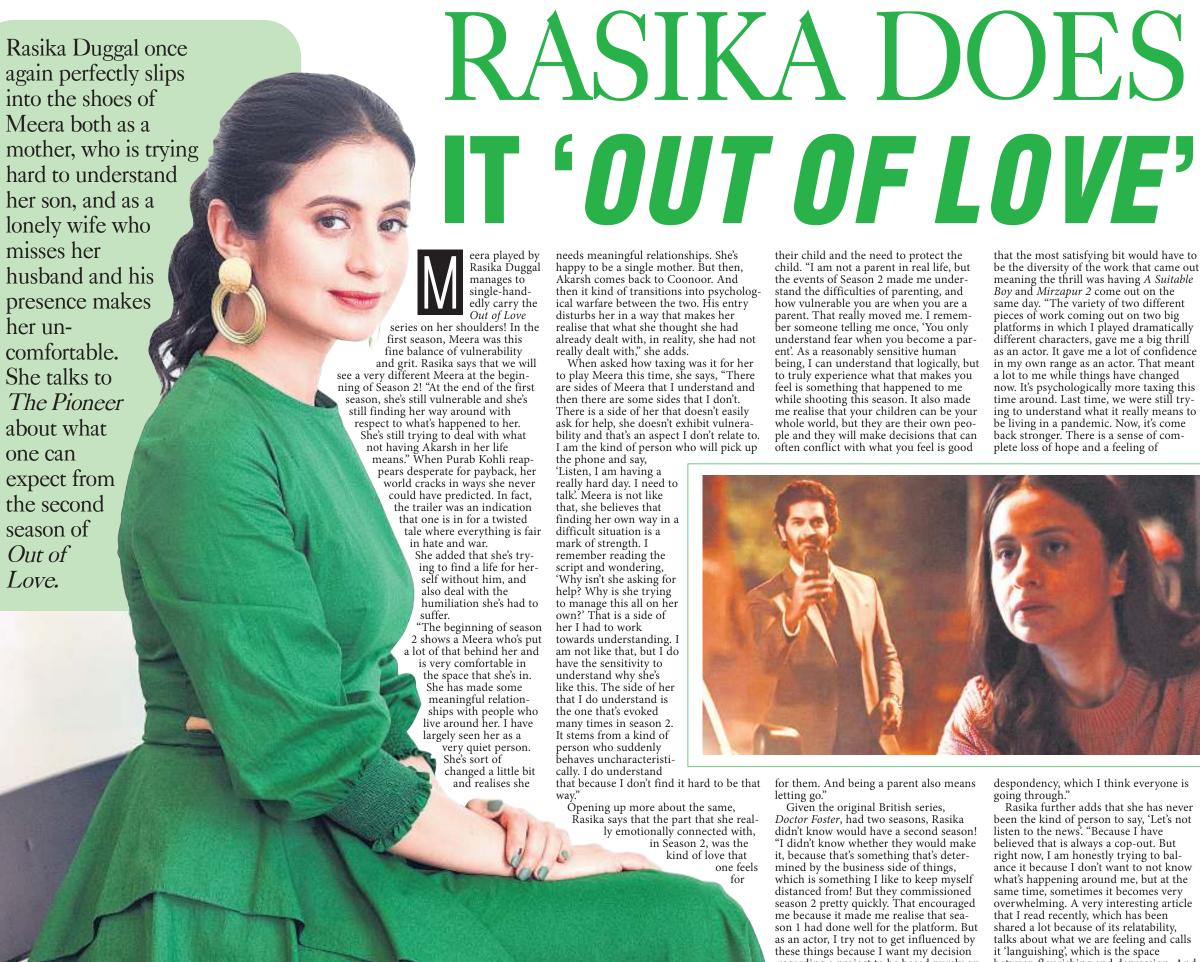
Tiayawada

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> Tuesday May 11, 2021



needs meaningful relationships. She's happy to be a single mother. But then, Akarsh comes back to Coonoor. And then it kind of transitions into psychological warfare between the two. His entry disturbs her in a way that makes her realise that what she thought she had

When asked how taxing was it for her to play Meera this time, she says, "There are sides of Meera that I understand and then there are some sides that I don't. There is a side of her that doesn't easily ask for help, she doesn't exhibit vulnerability and that's an aspect I don't relate to. I am the kind of person who will pick up

Opening up more about the same, Rasika says that the part that she real-ly emotionally connected with,

in Season 2, was the kind of love that

their child and the need to protect the child. "I am not a parent in real life, but the events of Season 2 made me understand the difficulties of parenting, and how vulnerable you are when you are a parent. That really moved me. I remember someone telling me once, 'You only understand fear when you become a parent'. As a reasonably sensitive human being, I can understand that logically, but to truly experience what that makes you feel is something that happened to me while shooting this season. It also made me realise that your children can be your whole world, but they are their own people and they will make decisions that can often conflict with what you feel is good

that the most satisfying bit would have to be the diversity of the work that came out meaning the thrill was having *A Suitable* Boy and Mirzapur 2 come out on the same day. "The variety of two different pieces of work coming out on two big platforms in which I played dramatically different characters, gave me a big thrill as an actor. It gave me a lot of confidence in my own range as an actor. That meant a lot to me while things have changed now. It's psychologically more taxing this time around. Last time, we were still trying to understand what it really means to be living in a pandemic. Now, it's come back stronger. There is a sense of complete loss of hope and a feeling of



for them. And being a parent also means letting go."

Given the original British series,

Doctor Foster, had two seasons, Rasika didn't know would have a second season! "I didn't know whether they would make it, because that's something that's determined by the business side of things, which is something I like to keep myself distanced from! But they commissioned season 2 pretty quickly. That encouraged me because it made me realise that season 1 had done well for the platform. Bu as an actor, I try not to get influenced by these things because I want my decision regarding a project to be based purely on my instincts as an actor," she shares. She has done some impactful work

over the last one year. When asked about the most fulfilling and creatively satisfy-ing bit about that journey, she asserted

despondency, which I think everyone is going through."

Rasika further adds that she has never

been the kind of person to say, 'Let's not listen to the news'. "Because I have believed that is always a cop-out. But right now, I am honestly trying to balance it because I don't want to not know what's happening around me, but at the same time, sometimes it becomes very overwhelming. A very interesting article that I read recently, which has been shared a lot because of its relatabilit talks about what we are feeling and calls it 'languishing', which is the space between flourishing and depression. And it's okay to accept that there are some days when I am 'languishing."

The idea that work is coming out and the satisfaction that she has been a part of creating something, keeps her going!

USE YOUR sense of scent



ave you always wished you could make your own perfume? The right mix of not-tooloud fragrances and a humble amount of this one strong vanilla or rose, etc.? Well, read on to know

how that's possible now! Indie perfumers like the 160-year-old Lucknow-based perfume house Isak are quintessentially Indian! Since many clients are staying at home and ordering online despite the vaccine, the artisanal perfumery house decided to think out of the box. The result was a box. Isak's do-it-yourself (DIY) perfumery kit aims to turn customers into perfumers at home. The little lab of olfactory experimentation is both fun and educative. It is a

home-delivered rediscovery affair for making both unisex perfumes and gender-orient-

ed fragrances! "It's important to get as close as possible to a customer's perfume preferences, and who knows it better than the customer?" asks Vidushi Vijayvergiya, a descendant of Isak founder Chhunnamal Vijayvergiya. Vidushi had been looking to create legacy handicraft perfumes of her own. "Perfumery is heavy art. It requires time, expertise and study. We created a test group to shortlist ingredients and identified the ones that were simple to understand, memorise and connect to. Some of them are bergamot, lavender, vanilla, rose, citrus, aquatic, and oriental. The activity allows you to understand the art of making perfumes by testing out the top, middle and base notes in the box," she says. After pursuing her MBA from SCMHRD, Pune, and Luxury Management course from IIM-Ahmedabad, she spent time in Europe researching innovations in perfumery. It helped her

understand the world mar-

Decently priced, the DIY box contains 12 ingredients, box contains 12 ingredients, two glass beakers, two empty spray bottles with labels, droppers, smell strips, and coffee beans. With it comes a workbook with notes and formula sheets, in addition to instructions that guide you through every step of the fragrant process.

Vidushi wishes people

were more receptive towards Indian fragrances. They have confidence in international brands, despite the domestic market showing enormous potential. "Having said that, social media has been a boon for us. It allows us to tell our story and educate customers about new products," she



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shortpasses

BABAR ICC PLAYER OF MONTH DUBAI: Pakistan skipper Babar Azam and Australian women's team wicketkeeper Alyssa Healy were on Monday declared the ICC players of the month for their stellar performances during the month of April.

WEST BROM RELEGATED LONDON: West Brom was relegated after one

season back in the Premier League after losing 3-1 at Arsenal, ending Sam Allardyce's record of never having taken a side down from England's top division as a manager.

VIRAT, ISHANT GET FIRST DOSE

MUMBAI: India captain Virat Kohli and senior pacer Ishant Sharma on Monday received their first dose of Covid-19 vaccination. While Kohli. who now lives in Mumbai, posted a photo on instagram, Ishant and his wife Pratima, a former India hoopster, also uploaded their selfie infront of a vaccination centre.

VARUN, WARRIER BACK HOME

NEW DELHI: KKR leg-spinner Varun Chakravarthy and pacer Sandeep Warrier, who were the first to test +ve for Covid-19 in the currently-suspended IPL's bio-bubble, have returned to their respective home cities after completing 10 days of mandatory isolation.

CAVANI EXTENDS MAN UTD STAY MANCHESTER: Edinson Cavani has agreed to extend his contract by one year and will remain with Man United until June 2022.

GORETZKA COULD MISS EUROS MUNICH: Bayern Munich midfielder Leon Goretzka will be ruled out for the rest of the season and could miss the start of Euro 2020

after picking up a thigh injury.

SRH OWNERS DONATE ₹30 CR NEW DELHI: Owners of IPL team Sunrisers Hyderabad, Sun TV, on Monday donated ₹30 crore towards Covid-19 relief work being undertaken by the state and central Governments along with various NGOs

SHAFALI TO PLAY FOR BIRMINGHAM NEW DELHI: India's teen batting sensation

Shafali Verma is set to play for Birmingham Phoenix in the inaugural edition of The Hundred and might also turn up for a Sydney franchise in the Women's Big bash League.

SINNER SETS UP NADAL CLASH

ROME: Jannik Sinner booked a second-round showdown with nine-time champion Rafael Nadal at the Italian Open after a 6-2, 6-4 win over Frenchman Ugo Humbert on Monday.

BACH'S JAPAN VISIT POSTPONED TOKYO: IOC chief Thomas Bach has been

forced to postpone a visit to Japan, organisers said on Monday, after a coronavirus state of emergency was extended less than three months before the Tokyo Games.

FLICK AGREED GERMAN DEAL

BERLIN: Hansi Flick, who is stepping down as Bayern Munich coach at the end of this season, will take over the German national team after this summer's Euro, a German newspaper reported on Monday.

MEDVEDEV RETAKES 2ND SPOT

PARIS: Daniil Medvedev reclaimed the world number two spot from Rafael Nadal in the latest ATP rankings released on Monday, with no Americans in the top 30 for the first time.

MURRAY TO COMPETE AT QUEEN'S LONDON: Andy Murray will warm up for this year's championship at Queen's, where he has lifted the trophy five times.

lexander Zverev recovered

Afrom a set down to defeat

Matteo Berrettini 6-7 (8/10), 6-

4, 6-3 and win the Madrid

Open for a second time on

Sunday as he clinched a fourth

recorded his third consecutive

top-10 victory this week, having

eliminated five-time Madrid

champion Rafael Nadal and

Dominic Thiem to reach the

Zverev, last year's US Open

The German fifth seed

AFP MADRID

Masters 1000 title.

final.

ew Zealand all-rounder Jimmy Neesham doesn't think that there is any chance of the remaining 31 matches of Indian Premier League happening in

cases inside the bio-bubble. He also has serious doubts whether India would be able to host the 16-team T20 World Cup later

India this year, after the tournament

got postponed due to Covid-19

this vear Both IPL and T20 World Cup are set to be re-scheduled to the United Arab Emirates.

"If it did start up again, I doubt the IPL would be in India again,"

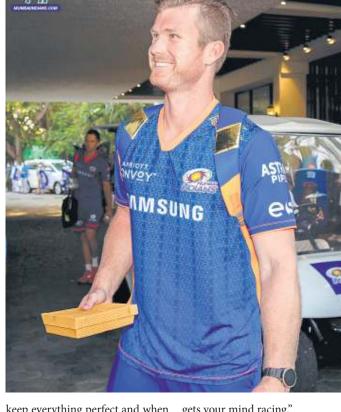
said Neesham told Newshub. "I think we've already seen plans for the T20 World Cup to move out of India later in the year and they're going to be ultra-cautious about that sort of thing," said Neesham, who was playing for Mumbai Indians in the now suspended league.

Neesham feels the bio-security lapses could be due to the fact that the teams were travelling across the

"Even though we were flying on chartered planes, we have to go through customs, hand your details over to people, walk through terminals, so there were always going to be pinch-points there," he said.

Neesham said that it is difficult to comprehend how the bubble was 'We obviously don't know yet

exactly how teams were infiltrated, but... It's such a difficult prospect to



RBI Kehta Hai...

Jaankaar Baniye,

Satark Rahiye!

keep everything perfect and when you've got so many guys that are close to each other, there are going to be social interactions after games.

"Once one team has it, you start looking back through your last week at who you talked to and who vou shook hands with. It certainly

gets your mind racing.'

However Neesham isn't averse to the idea of going back to India again and playing the IPL if it resumes.

"For me, I signed up for the IPL knowing what it might be like. I felt like it was an obligation — I made

had any thoughts of pulling out individually before the tournament

"Guys will have different opinions on that, but it's my job, I'm a professional and you have plenty of times you tour countries you're not that keen on going to, but it's about getting on the field and getting the job done.

"I would sign up again, especially once vaccinations start rolling out. I don't think anyone really predicted how quickly it would all come crashing down over there and how quickly we would be on the first plane out."

The IPL was suspended last Tuesday after four players and two coaches from four different teams tested positive for the dreaded disease within a space of 48 hours.

"To be honest, I wasn't expecting it to get called off. I think, when you've got so many teams in different bubbles, the expectation was that there would always be some cases at some point during the tournament," Neesham said.

'We thought teams might have to lock down and miss a couple of games, like we've seen in other organisations, like the NBA. The show must go on.

"The thing that was so shocking was how quickly it came up in so many different teams at the same time and we didn't really have an option in the end."

Neesham said they were "not out of the woods yet" and may develop symptoms in the coming

Poms won't force quarantining IPL stars back for NZ series

AFP ■ LONDON

Team director Ashley Giles says England have no plans to "rush" their IPL stars back for next month's Test series against New Zealand and could introduce new faces to cope with a packed sched-

The suspension of the IPL because of the devastating coronavirus outbreak in India has left England with a potentially larger player pool than they envisaged for the two-Test series against New Zealand.

Among those currently serving quarantine periods are Jos Buttler, Chris Woakes and Sam Curran, all of whom have Test contracts

with England. They could be available for County Championship matches starting on May 20 before joining the England 'bubble' ahead of the first Test against New Zealand Lord's, which begins on June

But even if

contention, England may have to call up fresh reinforcements given Ben Stokes and Dom Sibley are currently injured, while fast bowler Jofra Archer has only recently returned to action with Sussex's 2nd XI.

"All these guys (returning from the IPL) are currently in quarantine and have had a number of spells in quarantine and bubbles," Giles said on Monday.

"We need to look after them, with the amount of cricket they've got coming up. We're not going to rush or force them back into

"Chris Silverwood (the England coach) will work with each and every one of them, as will our medical teams on what's best for their progress.'

After the New Zealand series, England have five Tests at home to India before travelling to Australia later this year in a bid to regain the Ashes. England also have numerous white-ball commitments, including the planned T20 World Cup

in India.

the trio are

Pak seal series

 $P_{\mbox{\scriptsize Monday}}^{\mbox{\scriptsize akistan}}$ quickly took the one wicket it needed on Monday for another innings victory over struggling

Zimbabwe in the second Test and a 2-0 series sweep. It took only five overs on Day 4 for Shaheen Shah Afridi to end it by having Luke Jongwe caught behind by wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan for 37.

Pakistan won by an innings and 147 runs at Harare Sports Club to go with the innings and 116-run win in the first Test at the same venue.

Pakistan also claimed a slice of history with Afridi's 5-52 making him the third Pakistan bowler in the Test to take a five-wicket haul. He and Nauman Ali (5-86) took five each in the second innings after Hasan Ali's five in

It's the first time Pakistan has had three bowlers with five wickets in a match, and the first time it has happened in Tests since 1993.

Pakistan bat again. The home team added only 11 more

Zimbabwe continued on 220-9 in its second innings, on the brink of defeat and still 158 runs short of making

runs to be all out for 231.

Malinga could return No point in comparing yourself to play World T20

Lasith Malinga could return to the national team for the T20 World Cup, said the national selection committee chair-

Wickramasinghe. "We will talk to Lasith soon. He is in our plans for the forthcoming T20 tours, including the T20 World Cup coming up in October," said

Wickramasinghe. With back-to-back T20 World Cups scheduled in 2021 and 2022, Sri Lanka would need an experienced bowler like Malinga to marshal the attack.

"Lasith is in our plans. We always should not forget that he is one of the greatest bowlers in our country even in

Kandy: Sri Lanka fast bowler his present form. His records speak for that. There are two back-to-back T20 World Cups that are coming up, this year and next year. We are going to discuss our plans with him when we meet him in the next

Wickramasinghe added. Malinga said he is "looking forward" to meeting the selectors.

"I have retired from both Test and ODI cricket but not from T20s. I am keen to know how the selection committee is going to get the services of a senior player like me for the national side. In my career, I have proved on many occasions that I can come back after a long break and perform well for my country," he said.

with anyone: Nagwaswalla PTI ■ NEW DELHI eft-arm pacer Arzan

LNagwaswalla, who will fly to the UK with the Indian team as a stand-by player, says shutting down comparisons, staying patient and focussing on routine played a key role in yielding the desired outcome for him. Only a few Parsi cricketers

have made the cut for the national team and Nagwaswalla is hoping to join the list after his stellar performance for Gujarat has placed him at the doorstep of the Indian team.

"The grind in domestic cricket has helped me understand the importance of routine. How to practice, how to bowl during practice and how to focus on the process and keep following the same, without

thinking too much about the result," Nagwaswalla told bcci.tv.

"If you follow the process correctly, you will surely get the desired outcome. In addition to that, it is important to be patient. There is no point comparing yourself with anyone and ponder over why someone else is selected and not me," the 23year-old added.

The left-arm pacer was Gujarat's leading wicket-taker with 41 scalps in the 2019-20 season when his side made the Ranji Trophy semifinals.

The youngster said he was mighty impressed with the way the Indian team played and won in Australia and he just can't wait to see the senior players in flesh and bone, whom he has so far watched only on TV.

"I am excited to meet and

see all the cricketers jinko abhee tak bass TV par India ke liye achha karte hue dekhaa hai. They have secured some big wins against Australia and England recently. So, I am looking forward to learning as much

as I can from all of them."

"I am very excited to meet this team. Despite the injuries, we went on to win the series in Australia. I just can't wait to witness the team which has such a strong self-belief," Nagwaswalla

He is also a big fan of the team's bowling coach Bharat

"Under Bharat Arun sir, our fast bowling has seen a great transformation. We have a superb bench strength. I am sure I will get to learn a lot from Bharat Arun sir."

AC Milan push Juve out of top 4

A C Milan pushed Juventus out of the Serie A top four with a 3-0 win at Allianz Stadium on Sunday which increases their hopes of Champions League football for the first time since 2014.

Brahim Diaz put Milan ahead just before the break with Ante Rebic and Fikayo Tomori adding two more in the second half after Franck Kessie had missed a penalty.

Milan move up to third, equal on 72 points with second-placed Atalanta, with Napoli a further two points behind in fourth and the final Champions League berth.

Juventus are now fifth, one point behind the top four with three games left to play, including next weekend's clash with newly-crowned champions Inter Milan.

"We had a great game, a victory over a direct rival at said Milan coach Stefano Pioli whose side lost 3-1 to Juve in this moment in the champithe San Siro in January.



onship is very important,"

"We still have to fight. But I have a very young team, that is maturing as this evening

Neymar was on target the day after signing his contract extension but Paris Saint-Germain were held to a 1-1 draw at Rennes on Sunday that leaves Lille a step closer to a remarkable Ligue 1 title tri-

PSG led at half-time after Neymar converted a controversial penalty award, but they were pegged back in the second half as Serhou Guirassy

headed in the equaliser. Presnel Kimpembe was later sent off for Mauricio Pochettino's side, who could not get back to winning ways on their return to domestic action following their

Champions League semi-final exit against Manchester City. PSG are now three points adrift of Ligue 1 leaders Lille, who know they will be champions for the first time since 2011 by taking four points from their remaining two matches of the season.

Real salvage dramatic draw

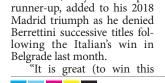
Madrid: Eden Hazard's 94thminute equaliser salvaged Real Madrid a dramatic 2-2 draw against Sevilla on Sunday as an extraordinary penalty decision swung La Liga's title race back in Atletico Madrid's favour. Zidane's side had levelled

through Marco Asensio midway through the second half and thought they had a penalty when Karim Benzema was brought down after rounding Sevilla goalkeeper Yassine Bono.

But VAR prompted referee to check an Eder Militao handball a few seconds before, with a huge decision seeing Madrid's penalty cancelled and a spot-kick awarded to Sevilla instead.

Ivan Rakitic converted and while Madrid still managed to hit back in injury time, Toni Kroos' shot deflecting in off Eden Hazard's foot, the draw hands the advantage back to Atletico at the end of another dramatic weekend in the

Spanish title race. AFP



"It is great (to win this and I just want to enjoy this one."



Zverev wins Madrid title

last three finals I played at Masters 1000 events," Zverev said. "This is definitely special

Zverev is now targeting a second Rome title at the Foro Italico this week. He captured his first Masters there in 2017 before also winning in Montreal later that year. Rome is also an event I like

and enjoy, so I hope I can perform in the same way as I did here and we will see how it goes there. I feel awesome," said Zverev. After Rome, the German

star will target a maiden Grand Slam title at Roland Garros. However, he has yet to get beyond the quarter-finals in

"To play well at Roland Garros, you have to play well during the season on clay. In that sense, it's (Sunday's win) important to me," said Zverev.

tollywood

JOURNALIST AND ACTOR TNR DIES OF COVID

YouTube host, film journalist, and character actor TNR aka Thummala

Narsimha Reddy passed away on Monday morning in Hyderabad due to Covidrelated complications.

He had been battling covid

for a while and was admitted to a private hospital in Malkajgiri. His health deteriorated after his oxygen levels dropped, despite being under the supervision of expert doctors.

TNR set a new trend in Tollywood with his unique style of interviews with film personalities and also reviews on his iDream Channel. Recently, he even started acting in films and featured in some pivotal roles in quite a number of films like *Nene* Raju Nene Mantri, Subrahmanyapuram, Falaknuma Das, George Reddy, Savaari, HIT, Uma Maheswara Ugra Roopasya, and Jathi Ratnalu.

Actor Nani expressed his condolences on social media. He wrote, "Shocked to hear that TNR *gaaru* passed away .. have seen few of his interviews and he was the best when it came to his research and ability to get his guests to speak their heart out . Condolences and strength to the family."

Expressing his condolences, producer Bandla Ganesh wrote, "Shocked to hear that my friend TNR passed away .. Condolences and strength to the family."



Director Maruthi too expressed his shock upon hearing the demise of TNR. On his Twitter page, he wrote, "Unbelievable and shocking. It's very hard to digest and painful to know my friend TNR is no more. My deepest Condolences to their family. #corona show some mercy. We can't take this any more."

Calling TNR as a "soft spo-

ken gentleman," F3 director Anil Ravipudi tweeted, "It's really Disturbing to hear that TNR's sudden demise..He is such a soft spoken gentle-man... We miss you sir.. #RIP. My deepest Condolences and strength to the family."

Following TNR's demise, a video of his asking people to stay home and safe during the lockdown is now going

viral. In the video, TNR is seen accepting the #StayHome challenge and he added that by being home, he got to spend the best time with family, reading books, watching movies, and many productive things.

"Like they say 'Search for good even in bad and in these challenging times, I learned a good habit. I started doing Pranayamam and

Yoga. I'm practising it daily and even got my kids to do it. By staying at home, teach your kids good things and also teach them to do their own work so that in future, they can face any challenge and will learn to be independent," TNR said in the video. The video has several comments lamenting the passing away of such a genuine per-

Jr NTR tests positive for coronavirus

he coronavirus pandemic has taken a heavy toll on not only common people but also celebrities. Many of them tested positive and while a few of them recovered, a few lost their precious lives.

Actor Jr NTR announced that he tested positive for coronavirus on Monday. The actor and his family members are currently under home quarantine, following all the Covid-19 protocols. In a tweet, Jr NTR also urged his fans to not worry about his health.

Aravinda

Sametha

who've come into contact with me over the last few days to pl get tested. Stay safe. (sic)" On the professional front, Jr NTR is working on the magnum opus RRR - Ranam Roudram Rudhiram with director SS Rajamouli. The film, which marks his first collaboration with Ram Charan, is slated for an October 13 release in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, and Hindi.

Raghava star tweeted, "I've tested positive for Covid19. Plz

don't worry, I'm doing absolutely fine. My family & I have isolat-ed ourselves & we're following

all protocols under the supervision of doctors. I request those

After finishing RRR, NTR will join hands with director Koratala Siva for a social drama. him a speedy recovery.



What is Radhe Shyam's connection to covid treatment?

second wave has resulted in the loss of many precious lives and there is a growing resentment that the government authorities have failed and the health system collapsed totally. Under these circumstances, people are left wondering what is Prabhas' film *Radhe Shyam* got to do with covid treatment.

It is known that Prabhas' Radhe Shyam directed by Radha Krishna Kumar is a romantic period entertainer with a 1970s Italian backdrop. The makers who shot important scenes in Italy couldn't complete the remaining due to the first wave. At that time, they erected an extravagant hospital set in a studio in

mantled the set after they wrapped the shoot.

Now art director Ravinder Reddy revealed that they have donated the hospital set to a private hospital for the treatment of coronavirus patients. He said he found that hospitals are in short of beds and so he decided to donate 50 custom beds, stretchers, personal protective equipment, medical equipment stands, and oxygen cylinders. The gesture has earned the praise of many on the inter-

Besides Prabhas, Radhe Shyam also stars Pooja Hegde, Sachin Khedekar, Bhagyashree, Priyadarshi, Kunaal Roy Kapur, Jagapathi Babu, and Jayaram. The film is scheduled for a worldwide release on July 30

Chiranjeevi-Prabhas sensation on cards



he stardom and facilitating of Mega Star Chiranjeevi and Young Rebel Star Prabhas is unmatched. While Chiranjeevi has been the undisputed emperor of the Tollywood kingdom, Prabhas turned Baahubali to attain



imagine how it would be if Mega Star Chiranjeevi and Young Rebel Star Prabhas share screen presence. The thought itself drives everyone crazy.

Even before one could get to the terms, rumours have spread on social media that Young Rebel Star Prabhas

soon. It is known that Prabhas is starring in the high octane action entertainar under the direction of Prashant Neel.

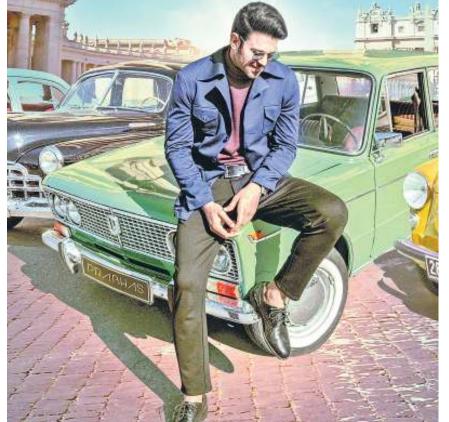
Sources say Prashant created a powerful role of a God Father and he is planning to cast Mega Star Chiranjeevi in it. This increased the speculation as Chiranjeevi and Prabhas' were recently seen posing for a photo.

However, the excitement of

the fans turned futile as the Mega compound made it clear that no one approached Mega Star Chiranieevi for a role in Salaar and Chiranjeevi will not do special roles in other stars' films but others can very well

But this still means Prabhas can share screen presence







he moment Mahesh Babu confirmed his project with star director Rajamouli, speculations increased about the film's backdrop and how Rajamouli would present Mahesh Babu on the silver screen. Some speculated that Rajamouli would show Mahesh Babu as Lord Rama and the film will be on Ramavana.

Another rumour spread that Rajamouli will show Mahesh Babu as a stylish action hero on the lines of Hollywood stars. Some even said that the film would be an action entertainer and Mahesh will be seen as a cowboy!

Now reports have been coming in that Mahesh and Rajamouli's project could be an action entertainer. The film's storyline is said to have an African jungle backdrop.

The buzz is that Rajamouli's father Vijayendra Prasad is penning a powerful script for the story. There will be extensive usage is graphics and VFX and the film would be shot in the exotic locations of African jungles. Currently, Rajamouli is busy with RRR multi starrer with Ram Charan and

next to have an African jungle? NTR, while Mahesh Babu is busy with Sarkaaru Vaari Paata and projects with Anil Raavipudi, Parthu with Trivikram Srinivas.



Allu Arjun's Pushpa stroke for national fame

llu Arjun has been reinventing himself with each passing film and created a niche for himself with his expressions and emotions, leaving aside his stylish dances and stunning stunts. After Ala Vaikuntapurramuloo.. his stakes increased and he decided to race ahead of his contemporaries.

He is currently working on Pushpa with Sukumar and the remarkable transformation for his role is already becoming the talking point. Allu Arjun convinced Sukumar to turn the film into a pan-India film. Now he is said to have convinced Sukumar to release the film in two parts. Many feel this is a strategic move by Allu Arjun to capture the pan-India

The upcoming enter-



RRR with NTK and Ram Charan is a period entertainer with patriotic flavour while Prabhas' Radhe Shyam is a period romantic entertainer. Allu Arjun feels *Pushpa is* an action entertainer on the lines of KGF and it could drive movie lovers across the country crazy. Allu Arjun plays the role of a lorry driver, while Rashmika Mandanna plays his wife in *Pushpa* which revolves around red sandalwood smuggling.