

**OPINION 6**  
**POLITICS OF**  
**DEFLECTION**
**WORLD 8**  
**SURPRISED THAT BIDEN PICKED**  
**'DISRESPECTFUL' KAMALA: TRUMP**
**SPORT 12**  
**CSK EXPECT DHONI TO**  
**PLAY UNTIL 2022**
**Published From**  
**DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR**  
**RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH**  
**DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA**
**Late City Vol. 9 Issue 222**  
**\*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable**
**RAIPUR, THURSDAY AUGUST 13, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3**

# the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

**SARA PENS A**  
**SPECIAL NOTE**  
**FOR MOM**  
**10 VIVACITY**

## Dance of death & destruction in Bengaluru

**Irked at FB post by Cong MLA's relative, mob runs riots, torch police station, MLA's house; 3 killed, SDPI leader among 110 held**
**PTI ■ BENGALURU**

Three people were killed after police opened fire to quell a mob that went on a rampage in a locality Bengaluru irked over a Facebook post put out by a Congress MLA's relative, with the Government terming the violence as a "well-planned act".

"Three people have been arrested in connection with the rioting at Pulakeshi Nagar here. Scores, including around 50 policemen, were injured in the violence that erupted on Tuesday night and continued till the wee hours of Wednesday, apparently triggered by the online post."

SDPI leader Muzamil Pasha has been arrested by Bengaluru Police for his role in the mob violence. Curfew has been imposed in the affected areas in and around the affected areas, DJ Halli and KG Halli.

Pulakeshi Nagar MLA Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy's



Police and residents walk past charred remains of vehicles vandalised by a mob over a FB post by a relative of a Congress MLA in Bengaluru on Wednesday

### ACTIONS-REACTIONS

■ About 50 cop injured in attack

■ The manner in which the riots were perpetrated shows that it was a well planned act and was intended to spread to other parts of the city. These are traitors, said Revenue Minister Ashoka

■ The Government has decided to recover losses caused to public property from the rioters

■ Naveen, a nephew of the MLA, who allegedly put out the social media post, has been arrested

residence and a police station at DJ Halli were among those targeted by the angry mob. The house of the MLA, who was not at home at the time, was set on fire by the rioters.

"The manner in which the riots were perpetrated shows that it was a well planned act and was intended to spread to other parts of the city. These are traitors," Revenue Minister Ashoka told reporters after meeting Congress MLA in his office at Vidhana Soudha. The Minister said the

MLA's house was completely damaged, belongings, including sarees and jewels, were looted and the rest, including vehicles, were set on fire

"It is clear from the intensity of vandalism that the intention was to attack and finish off Srinivasa Murthy. It has to be investigated whether any corporator or anti-social elements from within the state and outside were involved," Ashoka said.

Tourism Minister CT Ravi said, "It is clear and evident that yesterday's violent attack was carried out by a Muslim mob in a pre-planned manner."

Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai said six companies of the Central Reserve Police Force are being dispatched to the violence-hit areas of Bengaluru.

Three companies from Hyderabad and three from Chennai will be deployed in DG Halli and KG Halli police station limits, he told reporters at Udipi before leaving for Bengaluru.

He said the situation is now under control and additional police forces are deployed in

the area. Rapid action force and the "Garuda" force are also being deployed, the Minister added.

Meanwhile, the State Government on Wednesday announced that a district magistrate would conduct an enquiry into the violence.

The Government also decided to recover losses caused to public property during the violence from the rioters.

BJP MP Shobha Karandlaje who visited Pulakeshinagar, in a tweet said, "PHI-SDPI conspired this violence, they targeted only Hindu houses & burnt public properties."

I strongly condemn this behaviour of a communal elements & urge @CMofKarnataka to take stringent actions against the culprits."

Pant said Naveen, said to be a nephew of the legislator, who allegedly put out the social media post has been arrested.

Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa said the "attack on the residence of the MLA, the police station and rioting are condemnable."

## India among 20 nations for Sputnik V

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

India, Brazil, Mexico, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are among the 20 countries from Asia, Latin America and West Asia which have shown interest in Russian vaccine "Sputnik V" the first registered vaccine for coronavirus disease in the world.

A Russian website dedicated to the "world's first registered Covid-19 vaccine" has claimed that India along with 20 other countries have shown interest in getting the vaccine.

"At least 20 countries had expressed interest in obtaining the Sputnik V, including UAE, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Philippines, Brazil, Mexico and India," the statement said.

Dismissing experts concern over rapid approval of the coronavirus vaccine, Russia on Wednesday announced that the first batch of the Russian vaccine against coronavirus is expected to be released within two weeks. Russia also said it already received foreign requests for a billion doses.

"Within two weeks, the first batch of the vaccine will be released," Russian Health Minister Mikhail Murashko announced on Wednesday. Murashko said that vaccination against coronavirus will be

**Covid-19**  
**IN INDIA**  
**TOTAL**  
**CASES: 23,94,738**  
**DEATHS: 47,130**  
**RECOVERED: 16,92,157**  
**ACTIVE: 6,54,977**



voluntary for everybody, including healthcare workers. The vaccine that is being developed by Gamaleya Center enjoys the support of the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF).

RDIF plans to conduct Phase 3 clinical trials in different countries, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Brazil, India and the Philippines, and start mass production in other countries in partnership with local sovereign wealth funds, including India, South Korea and Brazil, Saudi Arabia.

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	5,48,313	18,650	3,81,843
Tamil Nadu	3,14,520	5,278	2,56,313
Andhra Pradesh	2,54,146	2,296	1,61,425
Karnataka	1,96,494	3,511	1,12,633
Delhi	1,48,504	4,153	1,33,405
Uttar Pradesh	1,36,238	2,230	84,661
West Bengal	1,04,326	2,203	76,120
Bihar	90,553	474	60,068
Telangana	84,544	654	61,294
Gujarat	74,390	2,713	57,493
Assam	69,000	161	45,074
Rajasthan	56,100	822	41,648
Odisha	50,672	358	36,479
Haryana	44,024	503	36,694
Madhya Pradesh	41,604	1,048	31,239
Kerala	38,144	127	24,922

## No improvement in Pranab's condition

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The condition of former President Pranab Mukherjee continues to be critical and he remains on ventilator support, the Army's Research and Referral hospital said on Wednesday. He was

admitted to the hospital in Delhi cantonment on August 10 and was operated for removal of a clot in the brain.

The 84-year-old had also tested positive for Covid-19 prior to the surgery on Monday.

## IAF wants negative scene from Kargil Girl deleted

**Writes to Central Board of Film Certification**
**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Taking exception to its role in the film *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl* made by Dharma Productions owned by Karan Johar, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has written to the Central Board of Film Certification in this regard.

The IAF in its letter has complained that as per initial understanding the production house had agreed to depict the IAF authentically and make all efforts to ensure that the film helps to inspire the next generation of IAF officers.

However, the trailer of the movie showed that certain scenes and dialogues were found to portray the IAF in an "undue negative light," the letter said.

It also said in the aim to glorify the screen character of Ex-Flt Lt Gunjan Saxena, M/s Dharma Productions presented some situations that are misleading and portray an inappropriate work culture espe-

cially against women in the IAF.

The story of the movie is based on the first Indian Air Force woman pilot who was part of the 1999 Kargil war. Gunjan was the first woman helicopter pilot to fly in a combat zone and was involved in the evacuation of injured soldiers. She was awarded the gallantry Shaurya Vir Award for displaying courage during the war.

The IAF in its letter said the Service has always ensured an equal opportunity to both male and female personnel and the organisation is gender neutral. The IAF has also annexed the summary of the script, which are considered objectionable due to the presentation of incorrect gender

bias with the letter.

It also said Dharma Productions was informed about the objectionable portion of the movie and was advised to delete/modify the same. However, the production house has not deleted the scenes but it proposed a media plan in the run-up to the release and inserted a disclaimer in the movie.

The IAF stated that it feels that a mere media plan and disclaimer would not be adequate to prevent the presentation of incorrect facts about the IAF.

"In view of the above, the issue of grant of NOC for the release of the movie will be considered after deleting or suitably modifying the scenes in order to cater to the observations mentioned," the IAF stated.

Incidentally, about a fortnight back, the Defence Ministry had written to the CBF, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to advise production houses to obtain No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Defence Ministry before the telecast of any film, documentary or web series on military.

## CAPSULE

**CONG LEADER RAJIV TYAGI DIES OF HEART ATTACK**

New Delhi: Congress leader and spokesperson Rajiv Tyagi passed away on Wednesday after suffering a heart attack.

**UNION MINISTER NAIK TESTS COVID POSITIVE**

New Delhi: Union Minister Shripad Naik on Wednesday said he has tested positive for coronavirus infection and has opted for home isolation. The Minister of State for AYUSH and Defence said he is asymptomatic and added his vitals are within normal limits.

**COP ON DUTY DIES AS BUILDING ROOF CAVES IN**

New Delhi: A 49-year-old Assistant Sub-Inspector of Delhi Police died and his colleague was injured when the roof of a building in north Delhi where they were on duty collapsed, officials said on Wednesday.

**1,113 COVID-19 CASES, 14 DEATHS IN DELHI ON WED**

New Delhi: Delhi recorded 1,113 fresh coronavirus cases taking the caseload to over 1.48 lakh, while the death toll has risen to 4,153, authorities said on Wednesday. According to a Delhi Government health bulletin, 18,894 samples were tested for COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, of which 6,472 were RT-PCR tests and 12,422 rapid antigen.

## Forgive, forget, move on: Gehlot to MLAs on rebels going off hook

**Rajasthan CM says resentment among loyalists is natural**
**PNS ■ JAISALMER/JAIPUR**

"Forgive, forget and move on," this is how Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Wednesday tried to pacify MLAs, some of whom are upset over the return of rebel legislators to the party fold without facing any action.

Talking to reporters in Jaipur, Gehlot said he had urged the MLAs to bear with the development, while acknowledging that it was "natural" for them to be upset.

"It is natural for them to be upset. The way this episode happened, they had to stay in hotels," he said on Wednesday, in an apparent reference to the previous evening's Congress Legislature Party meeting in Jaipur.

"I have exhorted them that in the interest of the country, State, people of the State and for saving democracy, sometimes

we have to bear this," he said. "Forgive and forget and move on in the interest of the country, the State, the people of the State and democracy. Democracy is under threat. This was a fight to save democracy, in which our MLAs gave their support," he said.

He said more than 100 MLAs stayed together for such a long time, which is a big thing in itself and had never happened in the history of the country.

The CM said all MLAs, including those who have "returned" now, will work together to fulfill the commitments made to the people of the State.

The MLAs in the Gehlot camp were on Wednesday flown back to Jaipur from Jaisalmer, where they were together at another hotel.

They were taken straight from the airport to the Fairmont hotel on the outskirts of the city, where they had stayed before being moved to Jaisalmer. The MLAs—most by from the Congress and some allies—are expected to remain

there till the Assembly meets on August 14.

The Congress crisis in Rajasthan ended with the intervention of the top leadership of Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra who met rebel leader Pilot earlier this week.

Pilot had openly rebelled against Gehlot last month along with 18 other Congress MLAs. He was then sacked as Deputy Chief Minister and the party's Rajasthan chief.

At earlier Congress Legislature Party meetings, the loyalist MLAs had called for disciplinary action against the dissenters who defied party whips by demanding a change in the leadership in the State.

In Jaipur, as the loyalist MLAs headed to the Fairmont hotel, Transport Minister Pratap Singh Khachariya confirmed that they are not happy with the turn of events.

Yes, several MLAs said they are upset and saying this is their right," he said, while reminding that a decision has already been taken by the party high command.

## Covid-19 kills five, 438 fresh cases detected in C'garh

**STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR**

Five deaths of Covid-19 positive patients were reported from across Chhattisgarh even as 438 fresh cases were detected on Wednesday.

Also, 269 Covid-19 patients were discharged from hospitals upon their recovery, officials said.

A 51-year-old man from Urla in Raipur was admitted in AIIMS Raipur on August 10. He had diabetes, high blood pressure and other complications. He was detected Covid positive and died on Tuesday, the officials said.

A 50-year-old man from Bhalai with breathing trouble was admitted in a private hospital and then referred to AIIMS Raipur on August 7. He tested Covid positive and died on Wednesday.

A 65-year-old man from Mahavir Chowk locality in Raipur was admitted in AIIMS Raipur with fever and breathing

trouble on August 8. He too tested Covid positive and died on Wednesday, the officials said.

A 45-year-old woman from Devendra Nagar in Raipur was admitted in AIIMS Raipur with breathing trouble. She had pneumonia and gastroenteritis and was found Covid positive. She also died on Wednesday.

A 59-year-old man from Bhalai was admitted with breathing problem in Sector-9 hospital in Raipur. He tested Covid positive and was found Covid positive. He was found Covid positive. He was found Covid positive.

With these deaths, the total fatality among Covid positive patients has climbed to 109 in Chhattisgarh.

So far, 13,498 persons have been found Covid positive in the state, of which 9,508 were discharged on their recovery, while currently there are 3,881 active Covid cases in Chhattisgarh.

## Joe Biden names Indian-origin Kamala Harris as running mate

**Surprised that Biden picked 'disrespectful' Kamala: Trump**
**KPTI ■ WASHINGTON**

In a major breakthrough for Indian-Americans in US politics, Joe Biden has picked Senator Kamala Devi Harris as his running mate to woo the Black voters and the influential Indian diaspora who could play a key role in his bid to defeat Donald Trump in the presidential election.

Reacting to the nomination of Harris, President Trump said he was "a little surprised" that he (Biden) picked her. She was very disrespectful to Joe Biden and it's hard to pick somebody that's disrespectful."

By naming the 55-year-old lawyer and moderate Democratic politician from California as his vice-presi-



dential candidate in the November 3 election, Biden made history by selecting the first Black woman to compete on a major party's presidential ticket.

Harris, whose father is from Jamaica and mother an Indian, is currently the Senator from California.

The 77-year-old former vice-president, made the announcement in a text message to his supporters on Tuesday, ending days of suspense. It came about a week ahead of his virtual Democratic National Convention that would formally nominate

Biden as the party's candidate for the presidential election, challenging incumbent President Trump, a Republican.

"Joe Biden here. I've chosen Kamala Harris as my running mate."

Together, with you, we're going to beat Trump. Add your name to welcome her to the team," Biden said in his message.

Biden said Harris will be the best partner for him to finally get the country back on track. He described her as "a fearless fighter" and "one of the country's finest public servants."

# Plans afoot to rope in hotels for Covid patients in Chandigarh

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

With the hospitals in Chandigarh overwhelmed by patients as COVID-19 cases are rapidly increasing in the city, the UT Administration is roping in three CITCO hotels, James Hotel in Sector 17 and community centres for mild to moderate positive patients. Apart from this, the Administration has also sent a request to the Centre to procure more ventilators.

Till Wednesday evening, the city had reported a total of 1751 positive cases including 700 active cases.

Manoj Parida, Adviser to UT Administrator told The Pioneer, "Keeping in view the surge in COVID-19 cases, the Administration has decided to rope in three CITCO hotels, James Hotel and community centres as COVID care centres for mild to moderate positive patients. Earlier also, hotels were listed as quarantine centres in the city."

In our COVID-19 contingency plan, James Plaza with 270 beds was included as COVID-care centre for confirmed asymptomatic and mild cases and it will be utilized once COVID-19 cases in James Hotel will be provided on a payment basis to those



patients who can afford. As far as community centres are concerned, we will utilize the community centres which are not surrounded by residential areas as COVID care centres considering the concerns raised by residents earlier," he said.

It is planned that each COVID care centre will have at least one Ayush doctor and one allopathic doctor 24x7 in three shifts.

Parida further said, "The COVID-19 dedicated NHE, PGIMER is nearing full capacity as the critical care beds are also occupied by patients from other states. The Sector 48 Hospital can accommodate 100 critical patients and we are making arrangements for more facilities in existing healthcare

centres for critical care." The NHE, PGIMER is a 200-bedded treatment facility for critical COVID patients. The patients admitted in NHE belong to Chandigarh, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal and Uttar Pradesh.

More than 150 COVID-19 positive patients were undergoing treatment at NHE. PGIMER till the evening. The ICU beds are already occupied in the PGIMER. Apart from this, COVID patients were admitted in Sood Dhamshala, Dhanwantari Hospital, Sector 32 and Sector 48 Hospital.

On the requirement of ventilators in the city, Parida said, we have requested the Health Ministry to procure more ventilators. The city with a population of 12 lakh and a peak of COVID-19 pandemic in the future, a COVID-19 contingency plan estimating preparations for management of about 3600 active cases of virus on the worst day of the spread in the city, had been prepared by UT Administration.

With continuous surge in the cases, the Administration is now estimating the city to reach 2500 positive cases in the next fortnight and putting in place arrangements considering the same. 700 cases have been reported in the month of August so far.

The Administration's contingency plan has listed out a next fortnight and putting in place arrangements considering the same. 700 cases have been reported in the month of August so far.

Bandore, BJP president JP Nadda, Kiran Kher had said, "HelpMyCity, PGI & other hospitals are under immense pressure. If medical facilities are not allowed in various parts of the city there will be fatalities due to #nobs. I urge the Administration to take necessary action (sic)."

Estimating Chandigarh's population as 12 lakh and a peak of COVID-19 pandemic in the future, a COVID-19 contingency plan estimating preparations for management of about 3600 active cases of virus on the worst day of the spread in the city, had been prepared by UT Administration.

With continuous surge in the cases, the Administration is now estimating the city to reach 2500 positive cases in the next fortnight and putting in place arrangements considering the same. 700 cases have been reported in the month of August so far.

The Administration's contingency plan has listed out a next fortnight and putting in place arrangements considering the same. 700 cases have been reported in the month of August so far.

The Administration's contingency plan has listed out a next fortnight and putting in place arrangements considering the same. 700 cases have been reported in the month of August so far.

## 81 FRESH CASES IN CHANDIGARH

The union territory of Chandigarh continued to witness a surge in COVID-19 cases with 81 fresh infections reported on Wednesday. The total tally of positive cases crossed 1700-mark and stood at 1751 till the evening. There were 700 active cases in the city.

In the month of August till now, the city has reported 700 positive cases with the highest single-day spike of 89 cases reported on August 9.

A 34 years old male, resident of Sector 21, who had committed suicide at home by hanging himself on August 19 was tested COVID-19 positive post death," stated Chandigarh Health Department's evening bulletin. "He was sampled after his death on August 19 at GMSH-16. He was reported positive on August 11," the bulletin stated.

The positive cases were reported from Sector 7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 27, 28, 30, 35, 37, 43, 44, 49, Dadamajra, Hallomajra, Ramdara, Dhanas, PGIMER, Manimajra, Mauni Jagran and Raipur Khurd. Four healthcare workers and a student from PGIMER, six healthcare workers and a student from GMSH-16, 32 were tested positive for COVID-19. Among others

# 39 deaths, high of 1,020 fresh cases in punjab

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

With 39 more succumbing to the deadly contagion on Wednesday, Punjab has registered the highest single-day spike, pushing the state's death toll to 675. The state also added 1,020 fresh cases in the past 24 hours, taking the state's COVID-19 tally to 26,909.

As many as 29 police personnel — including 11 from Sangrur, eight from Ludhiana, four from Gurdaspur, three from Kapurthala, two from Fazilka and one from Bathinda, besides 32 prisoners from Barnala have been tested positive.

As all 22 districts have reported fresh cases with three districts reporting cases in three-digit figure, 12 districts have reported deaths.

tested positive included an employee in BSNL Manimajra, an employee in Intelligence Bureau, an employee in Sector 39 Meteorological Department, a person with travel history of Punjab and contacts of already

Ludhiana with 13 deaths registered the highest figure, with Hoshiarpur reporting six deaths, four in Patiala, three each in Jalandhar and Amritsar, two each in Gurdaspur, Mohali, and Pathankot, and one each in Barnala, Bathinda, Fatehgarh Sahib, and Sangrur.

In just 12 days of August, the state has registered 10,790 cases (about 40 percent of the state's total 26,909), and 289 deaths (43 percent of the total casualties). In fact, the state has added over 7,000 fresh coronavirus cases to its tally in a week since August 6.

Among the districts, Ludhiana continued to register the highest number of cases. On Wednesday, the district reported 229 cases, followed by 130 in Jalandhar, 104

tested positive patients, according to the bulletin.

The recovery rate of COVID-19 patients was 58 percent on Wednesday. With eight patients recovering from COVID-19 on Wednesday, the

in SAS Nagar (Mohali), 85 in Amritsar, 70 in Patiala, 62 in Burela, 39 in Gurdaspur, 36 in Faridkot, 34 in Pathankot, 29 in Ferozepur, 23 in Pathankot, 24 in Ropar, 23 in Hoshiarpur, 22 each in Sangrur and Bathinda, 19 in Moga, 18 in Fatehgarh Sahib, 13 each in Fazilka and SBS Nagar (Navanshah), nine each in Muktsar and Tarn Taran, and three in Mansa. A total of 422 coronavirus patients were discharged after recovering from the infection, taking the total number of recoveries to 17,212 at the rate of 63.96 percent.

The state still has 9,022 active cases — accounting for 33.53 percent of the total cases — of which 10 patients are critical and on ventilator support out of 142 are on oxygen support.

total recovered patients were 1023, the bulletin added. 19141 samples of city residents have been tested till date for COVID-19. The city has so far reported 26 COVID-19 related fatalities.

## 797 more Covid -19 cases in Haryana, total cases cross 44k

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana's Covid-19 infection tally on Wednesday shot up to 44,024 with 797 more people testing positive for the virus, while the death toll rose to 503 with three more fatalities, according to an official bulletin.

On the day, 612 patients of the disease were reported from different hospitals of the state. With 113 fresh cases, Faridabad's Covid-19 tally now stood at 10,517, highest in the State, followed by Gurugram at 9952 with 98 new cases on the day.

Out of three, two fatalities were reported from Faridabad while one from Gurugram. The number of active cases increased to 6827, as per bulletin. The districts that reported fresh cases included Sirsa (100), Rewari (57), Sonapat (31), Ambala (65), Mahendergarh (60), Panchkula (36) among others.

Class XII students of 621 new patients, a total of 36,694 have been discharged from different hospitals of the State so far. The maximum number of 162 patients recovered from Faridabad district on Wednesday.

## Punjab Health Minister bans transfers, leave until Sep 30

Chandigarh: In view of rising cases of coronavirus in Punjab, the state Health and Family Welfare Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu on Wednesday issued orders for complete ban on departmental transfers and leave till September 30, 2020, with immediate effect.

Sidhu said that the decision has been taken keeping in view the present situation of COVID-19. "It has been observed that all officers, medical or para-medical staff have to be remained present at their stations to deal with fight against corona in a more efficient manner. No leave will be given

Leave will be given only in case of maternity leave and child care leave due to urgent reasons

to any officer or employee during this period and leave will be given only in case of maternity leave and child care leave due to urgent reasons. Sidhu said that apart from the regular officers or employees, this order would be applicable to all the employees working on contract or outsourcing basis in various wings or institutions of Health and Family Welfare Dept. PNS

## Haryana Govt sets target of ₹10k crore investment and employment opportunity for 1 L youth: Dushyant

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala on Wednesday said that to create employment opportunities for one lakh youth, the Government has set a target of investment of about Rs 10,000 crore in seven 'Special Economic Zones' in the State.

He said that better infrastructure has been prepared to promote industries in the state, so that maximum foreign investment can be brought to Haryana. Discussions regarding investment have been held with many multinational companies including Enterprise Singapore, Flipkart, GLS Films, IKEA, ATL Group, Sembcorp Singapore, and DCM Textiles among others through



During the discussions, representatives of the mentioned companies evinced great interest, he added.

Dushyant said that the environment for setting up industries in Haryana with foreign investment is conducive. In terms of Ease of Doing Business, Haryana ranks first in North India and third in the country and Haryana Government aims to take

the state to the top. He said that 34 industrial estates have been developed by Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSIIDC) to set up industries in the state, including more than 1100 different industrial plots are available at IMT Faridabad, Bawal, Manesar, Panipat, and Gurugram.

He said that Haryana is leading in the field of Capital Goods Manufacturing in the country. In Bawal and Manesar region are playing an important role. Apart from this, main industrial corridors are being developed on Delhi-Mumbai and Amritsar-Kolkata Expressway and Kundli-Manesar-Palwal Expressway which will cover the entire state and connect industrial units to hubs and ports.

# Govt launches 'Punjab Smart Connect Scheme'

## SMARTPHONES GIVEN TO STUDENTS

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Taking a major digital leap forward, Punjab's Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh and his Cabinet colleagues on Wednesday handed over smart phones to Class XII students in the state-wide launch of Congress Government's Rs 92 crore 'Punjab Smart Connect Scheme'.

The Chief Minister personally handed over smart phones to six Class XII students in a symbolic gesture at a simple event at Punjab Civil Secretariat, while simultaneous distribution of phones was done at 26 places by various ministers, MLAs, and others across the State to kickstart the scheme.

Each Minister personally handed over 20 phones each to various districts to mark the launch of the scheme, which marked the fulfillment of

another major poll promise of the Congress Government in the State.

The scheme, for which Rs 100 crore was allocated in the State budget for 2017-18, is benefiting a total of 1,74,015 Class XII students in government schools in the first phase, to be completed by November 2020.

Of these, 87,395 are boys and 86,620 are girls, with majority in the OBC and SC, ST categories. The bulk of the students - 1,11,857, are from rural areas, and the remaining in urban government schools.

Capt Amarinder, who launched the scheme on the auspicious occasion of Jannamastami and International Youth Day through video conferencing at the Secretariat, said that people everywhere in the province are excited by the election manifesto and it was, thus, his duty to ensure the implementation of each one of them.

"When the Congress listed smart phones as a poll promise, it was to provide global connectivity and empower the poor youth who could not afford them," said Capt Amarinder, adding that in the present situation of COVID-19, these phones had assumed a bigger importance as they had become a necessity for education continuity.

"It is the money of the people of Punjab which the Government is spending in the advancement of the youth," he said, adding that the phones were planned to be distributed in March but the process got delayed due to the COVID crisis.

The Chief Minister said that he wanted Punjab's students to be abreast with the latest technology which they can use effectively for their education, and a quiz on the theme of elephant conservation in India," he added.

"Gone are the days of chalk and boards," he said, adding that the Government schools, which had seen a major transformation over the

past couple of years, needed to be supported through technological initiatives by the State Government.

The smart phone being distributed under the scheme was a good functional phone, which also looks smart, he said, adding that it will become a major tool for the education of the students. Capt Amarinder congratulated the students on this occasion and also greeted them on the occasion of the International Youth Day and Jannamastami.

Pointing out that the Smart Connect scheme was in line with the Chief Minister's vision, as manifest in the party's poll manifesto, Education Minister Vijay Inder Singh said that it would help government school students download course material and old papers etc to prepare for their Board exams.

Industry Minister Sunder Sham Arora said that his department, which was entrusted with the task of purchase, had bought one of the best smart phones in the market. "The scheme would prove

to be a boon to the needy students, in particular, in government schools which are at a disadvantage vis-à-vis private schools in terms of access to technology, especially amid the COVID pandemic, which has necessitated a shift to online education," he said.

Youth Affairs Minister Rana Gurmeet Singh Sodhi said that after farm loan waiver and seamless procurement, among other things, the Chief Minister had now fulfilled another major promise of the State Government. "The government has done this despite the acute financial crisis in the state," he said, ridiculing the Opposition's criticism on this count.

Punjab Congress president Sunil Jakhar said that the scheme would break the barriers of poverty, with even SC/ST and OBC students getting access to online education.

The smart phones had become a necessity in these pandemic times, he said, adding that making youngsters tech-savvy was also a major step towards

making them employable.

"SAD-BJP government of the past had promised computers, laptops, tablets etc but had failed to deliver on its promise, as had the BJP-led government at the Centre," he said.

Punjab Youth Congress (PYC) president Birender Dhillon said that the fulfilment of this promise inspite of the prevailing economic crisis in the State had once again shown that Capt Amarinder believed in delivering on what he says — a characteristic which distinguishes him from other politicians.

Going forward, the Industry Department would be procuring more phones, through Punjab Infotech, and the distribution will be undertaken through M/s Lava, which has been selected as implementation partner to deliver and distribute smart phones to youth in the State. The department of Sports and Youth Services is the administrative department.

## CAPT VERSUS BAJWA: Air grievances at party forum only: Cong to Punjab leaders

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

As the ongoing ego tussle between Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh and Congress' Rajya Sabha MP Partap Singh Bajwa, the Congress party has asked its leaders to air their grievances at the 'party forum only'.

"Everyone who has grievances against anybody should speak to party leaders and raise the issue in party forums. Speaking to the press is not acceptable," said the Congress in-charge of Punjab party affairs, Manoj Kumar.

Notably, Bajwa has all along been attacking his own party's government in Punjab over the several issues, with latest being the recent hooch tragedy, which claimed more than 100 lives. He, along with Congress Minister-in-Charge, MP Shamsar Singh Dulla, had met the Governor and demanded a CBI inquiry or an

ED probe into the incidents. He has also sought the removal of Capt Amarinder as the Punjab Chief Minister. Congress leader Sunil Jakhar has already written to the party leadership and sought Bajwa's removal. It has been learnt that the matter has been referred to the disciplinary committee headed by former Defence Minister, K. Manoj Kumar. The committee would further fuel the feud between the Punjab Government's recent decision to withdraw Bajwa's state police security, which the MP has alleged is out of vendetta.

"Security is given to a person for protection of his life and should not be a tool to browbeat into submission. In any case, this trick will not work with me," he had stated.

Since 2013, the differences between Bajwa and Capt Amarinder have been widening. The Punjab Government replaced Patiala Royal after two consecutive losses in the polls.

# WORLD ELEPHANT DAY: Hry Wildlife seeks help of social media for public awareness

MANOJ KUMAR ■ CHANDIGARH

Due to ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the Punjab Department of Forest and Wildlife in Haryana took help of social media to spread public awareness about the plight of elephants, share knowledge and positive solutions for the better care and management of captive and wild elephants, to mark the World Elephant Day on Wednesday, Panchkula Divisional Forest officer (Wildlife) Shyam Sunder Sharma said.

Talking to The Pioneer over the phone, he said, "It is very important to raise awareness among general masses, particularly students, about the problems faced by pachyderms in the Country and the World." The DFO (Wildlife) officer said that as per the direction of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, there has been a ban on public gathering

to contain the outbreak of Covid-19. In view of this, the department of wildlife has not allowed any public awareness programme on 'World Elephant Day' but officials were engaged in spreading awareness about positive solutions for the better care and management of captive and wild elephants through social media.

Along with this, wildlife officials were imparted training about improvements in the welfare of wild animals and prevention on illegal poaching and trade in ivory, conserving elephant habitats, providing better treatment for captive elephants and reintroducing captive elephants into sanctuaries among others. "Last year, a public awareness programme was held on cruelty against elephants to mark the 'World Elephant Day'. About 60 students of Navodaya Vidyalaya, Yamunanagar had participated

in the programme and pledged never to take joy rides on elephants. The students had placed various serious messages about the immediate threats to elephants. The programme also included a painting, and slogan competition, and a quiz on the theme of elephant conservation in India," he added.

Sharma said that the State wildlife department has four rescued female elephants, namely Chanchal, Jungle, Laxmi, and Lilly. These elephants were rescued from persons who had illegally possessed them. Chanchal and Lilly were rescued from Karnal while Lilly from Sirsa and Jungle from Kurukshetra. In 2018, Delhi Forest and Wildlife department rescued an elephant named Moti which was illegally possessed by a person, sent to Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary in Haryana.

The number of 'migrant



wild elephants" is changing each year. A couple of elephants from the Rajaji National Park had been frequently visiting the Kalesar National Park, spread over 11570 acres every year.

The number of 'migrant wild elephants' has gone to four. Wild Elephants roam Kalesar and adjoining Rajaji National Park and Tiger Reserve spread across Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. The Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary was declared a National Park in December, 2003.

The DFO further said that the elephant is loved, revered and respected by people across India, yet the future of the species is threatened by the escalation of poaching across the species, human-elephant conflict and mistreatment of elephants in captivity. "Working towards better protection for wild elephants, improving enforcement policies to prevent the illegal poaching and trade in ivory, and conserving elephant habitats, are imperative for saving the elephant. The aim of the day is to sensitise people about better treatment of captive elephants and against the illegal poaching and trade in the jumbos for ivory," he added.

Another Wildlife department officer said, "World Elephant Day which was observed for the first time on August 12, 2012, is an annual global event celebrated across the world, dedicated to the preservation and protection of elephants. On August 12, 2016, India formally adopted

the "World Elephant Day" to help conserve and protect elephants in the country and improve their welfare."

He said that the Indian elephant has been a victim of severe habitat loss, cruelty in private custody and poaching for its tusks. It is important that its habitat is secured to minimize its conflict with people. "Strict enforcement of laws to stop poaching as well as cooperation with other countries is sought to reduce the demand for ivory in national and international markets. Elephant conservation in India needs support of all stakeholders. The elephant has been accorded the highest possible protection under the Indian wildlife law through its listing under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 of India. This means that hunting/trading this species can attract rigorous imprisonment of up to seven years and fine."



# Brown sugar valued at ₹1.46 cr seized

**STAFF REPORTER ■ MAHASAMUND**

Police in Chhattisgarh's Mahasamund district on Wednesday claimed to have busted an inter-state drug peddling racket and seized from a man brown sugar valued at ₹1.46 crore.

An automatic pistol and two magazines were seized from the accused, Shankarlal Vaishan of Jodhpur in Rajasthan, police said.

Vaishan was arrested near the river turning on the Raipur-Mahasamund road on a tip off with the contraband (brown sugar), Mahasamund Superintendent of Police Prafull Thakur said.



Police had received information that a man was trying to find buyers for brown sugar and carrying a large amount on a two-wheeler. He was heading toward Mahasamund, the officer said.

Accordingly, a police team nabbed him. An automatic pistol of 7.6 mm, 2 magazines, two live bullets and 730 grams of brown sugar were seized from his possession. The market value of seized brown sugar is ₹1.46 crore, the police said.

Vaishan was said to be running an inter-state drug racket with his friends. He used to live at Kansairam Nagar, Telibandha Raipur.

# Booklet on how to be safe from wild elephants

**STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR**

Chhattisgarh Minister of Forest, Housing and Environment, Mohammed Akbar on Wednesday released a booklet, 'Guidelines for Safety from Wild Elephants', in a bid to educate the people on how to avoid human-animal conflict.

The booklet in Hindi has been published jointly by the Forest Department and Vasundhara Prakriti Sanrakshan Samiti. The event took place at the Minister's official residence here.

Addressing the event, the Minister said the booklet, with pictures, will be effective in minimizing the human-elephant conflict -- and also protect the animals, humans, property and crops.

According to an official statement, the guidelines emphasize that elephants are a peaceful, social and intelligent



animal. By understanding their behavior and habits, the human-elephant conflict can be brought down.

The booklet says that information about elephants' presence in an area should be provided to the Forest Department. In case of broken power cables or swinging low lying wires, the Forest and Electricity

departments should be immediately informed. Chief Conservator of Forest Rakesh Chaturvedi and other officials were present.

The booklet comes just when Chhattisgarh has witnessed a string of deaths of elephants due to various reasons. The elephants have also killed unsuspecting villagers.

# Covid-19 positive commits suicide at AIIMS Raipur



**STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR**

A 65-year-old COVID-19 patient undergoing treatment at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) allegedly committed suicide by jumping off the second floor of the building in Chhattisgarh's capital Raipur, police said on Wednesday.

The incident took place in the C Block of the institute on the night of Tuesday and Wednesday, said Bharat Bareth, the Station House Officer of Amanka police station.

A resident of the city's Lalpur locality, the man was admitted to

AIIMS on August 7. On finding some behavioural abnormalities, the patient was sent for psychiatric consultancy, he said.

The patient allegedly jumped from the window of a bathroom on the second floor of the building. He was rushed to the Emergency ward where he succumbed to his injuries at around 2 am, the officer said.

No suicide note has been recovered. A probe is underway to ascertain the reason behind the incident.

Last week, a Covid-19 patient had allegedly hanged himself inside a toilet at a Covid care centre in Janjigir-Champa district.

# Raman Singh's wife tests Covid +ve

**STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR**

Veena Singh, wife of former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Dr Raman Singh, on Wednesday tested positive for Covid-19 and was admitted in a hospital, triggering concerns from Governor Anusuiya UIkey, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel and leaders across the political spectrum.

BJP national Vice President Raman Singh tweeted in the evening that his wife has tested corona positive.

"My other family members will go for isolation and conduct test for Covid-19," he tweeted. He urged all those who were in touch with his family members to go for isolation and undergo the test as well.

In a tweet, Chief Minister Baghel wished Veena Singh early recovery.

According to an official statement, Baghel telephonically



spoke to Raman Singh to know the health of Veena Singh and the treatment being extended to her. He also interacted with private hospital Director Dr Sandeep

Dave regarding Veena Singh. Governor Anusuiya UIkey also expressed concern over the health of Veena Singh and wished her early recovery.

# Four Naxalites killed in C'garh

**STAFF REPORTER ■ SUKMA**

Four Naxalites were killed in a gun battle with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on Wednesday morning, police said.

The clash took place in a forest in the Jagugunda police station area around 9.30 am when joint teams of security forces were on an anti-Naxalite operation. Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundaraj P said.

Acting on inputs about the presence of Maoists in the interior areas of Jagugunda, security forces, including the District Reserve Guard (DRG), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and its elite unit Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA), went after the Naxalites.

When one of the patrolling teams was in the forest near

Phulampur village, located over 450 km from Raipur, an exchange of fire broke out between the two sides, the official said. After the guns fell silent, bodies of four male Naxalites were found at the spot along with a .303 rifle, a huge cache of country-made weapons and explosive material, he said. A search operation was underway in the area.

Phulampur village, located over 450 km from Raipur, an exchange of fire broke out between the two sides, the official said.

After the guns fell silent, bodies of four male Naxalites were found at the spot along with a .303 rifle, a huge cache of country-made weapons and explosive material, he said. A search operation was underway in the area.



Two children, Pritha and Rudra, are dressed as 'Radha' and 'Krishna' on the occasion of Krishna Janmashtami in the capital Raipur as part of religious events held on Wednesday. Pioneer Photo

# Sudha Mishra donates ₹10L to Regional Cancer Centre

**STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR**

Sudha Mishra, on the occasion of her 77th birthday, donated ₹10 lakh to the Regional Cancer Centre based at Raipur's Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Medical College Hospital, the biggest in Chhattisgarh.

The Director, Regional Cancer Centre, and Radiotherapy Department Director Professor and Head of Department Dr Vivek Choudhary collected the donation from her Katora Talab based residence. Cancer department



oncology surgeon Dr and oncology physician Dr Ashtutosh Gupta Pradeep Chandrakar were

also present.

Sudha Mishra said that her donation is in memory of her late husband Chandrakant Mishra for the welfare of the cancer patients. She pointed out that her husband died due to cancer. She also stated that in her will, she has made provision for social donation.

As a mark of respect for Sudha Mishra, Dr Vivek felicitated her with a shawl, shreefal and Citation of Thanks.

Lions Club facilitated the event during which Club President Dr Vipul Dutta and Secretary Dr Arvind Neral were present.

# Health Dept issues appointment list of 70 specialist doctors

**RAIPUR:** Chhattisgarh's Health and Family Welfare Department has issued the appointment orders of 70 specialist doctors and 6 MBBS doctors for different government hospitals across the state. The order from Rajendra Singh Gaur, Additional Secretary in the department, on Tuesday states that the appointment has been made for all Medical Colleges attached hospitals, DKS Super Speciality Hospital in Raipur, various district hospitals and mother-child hospitals in the state. The appointment has been made from the new batch of specialist doctors who appeared for final year examination held in June 2020 for Post-Graduation MD, MS and Diploma programme.

In addition, six graduate doctors (MMBS) have also been posted in different district hospitals. Health and Family Welfare Minister T.S. Singh Deo said the department will now get a new bigger team to fight Covid-19 in the state.

# Monsoon session curtailed because Govt is scared: BJP

**STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR**

By limiting the Monsoon Session of the Chhattisgarh assembly for four days, the BJP said on Wednesday that the government feels threatened over its failures and so wanted to avoid a meaningful discussion in the House.

BJP MLA and spokesperson Shivratna Sharma said in a statement that the state government is trying to cover up its disastrous performance in all sectors.

With guilt feeling after the release of a survey which shows the nose-diving appeal of the government, fear has



gripped those in authority and the ruling Congress party, Sharma said. Sharma said the state is reeling under financial crises due to loans and the state schemes have failed. Quarantine centres and Covid hospitals are reporting deaths. The test results are pending even after the death of suspected Covid-19 patients.

The situation has reached such a state that the cremation of deceased Covid positive patients is not conducted even after two-three days.

Sharma also objected to the ban on the media from reporting the session. He demanded that the government should make alternative arrangements for media reporting of the assembly.

# Criminals must fear you, Sahu tells police



**STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR**

The police should work in such a way that criminals should fear them while the common man must give them due respect, Chhattisgarh Home and Public Works Minister Tamradhwa Sahu said on Wednesday.

Sahu was holding a review meeting of the newly

**Minister directed the police officials to remain alert, adding that crimes can be resolved if timely action by police is ensured**

constituted district Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi police personnel at the office of the Collector.

An official statement said the Minister directed the police officials to remain alert, adding that crimes can be resolved if timely action by police is ensured.

This will further help to enforce respect among the people for police. The police should respect and be sympa-

thetic towards the common man, he added.

Sahu added that now police have a key additional role to play during the Covid-19 pandemic. He said the government is making all efforts to increase the number of staff at police stations. He told the police to strictly enforce the traffic rules to reduce the number of road accidents.

Kota MLA Dr Remi Jogi was also present at the meeting.

## 2 desi LCH deployed in Leh to guard LAC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to further strengthen operational readiness at the volatile Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, two indigenously designed and produced light combat helicopter (LCH) are now deployed in Leh. They will back up the IAF efforts to secure the border and plug gaps if any at high altitude.

The helicopters manufactured by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) are there to be pushed into service to support the IAF at any spot at the border at short notice, HAL officials said on Wednesday.

"It is the lightest attack helicopter in the world designed and developed by the HAL to meet the specific and unique requirements of Indian Armed Forces reflecting the crucial role of HAL in Arma Nirbhar Bharat," said R. Madhavan, Chief Managing Director, HAL. Last week, Vice Chief of IAF, Air Marshal Harjit Singh Arora took part in one such operation in Ladakh along with HAL test pilot, Wing Commander Subash P. Jhoni (Retired) by taking-off from high altitude location to a forward area for a simulated attack on a high-altitude target.

This was followed by a landing at one of the most treacherous helipads in the region. The LCH successfully demonstrated its quick deployment prowess to forward locations in extreme temperatures,



the HAL said.

The IAF and Army together need around 160 LCHs and the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has approved an initial batch of 15 LCHs. The IAF has since issued the Request for Proposal (RFP) for 15 Limited Series Production (LSP) helicopters (10 for IAF and five for Army) and the HAL has submitted its response.

Technical evaluation and the price negotiations have been concluded and the order is expected shortly, the HAL said adding as a proactive measure it has launched production of LSPs in anticipation of orders at its Bengaluru facility.

The indigenously manufactured helicopter is a potent weapon platform with state-of-the-art systems and highly accurate weapons capable of hitting any type of target by day or night.

Other features of the LCH include its ability to operate in the complete area of Responsibility (AOR) and altitudes and has the ability to carry adequate weapon load at high altitudes under varied conditions.

The latest deployment comes in the backdrop of the five newly arrived Rafale fighter jets now undertaking practice sorties in Himachal Pradesh's mountainous terrain. The state shares LAC with China.

After the familiarisation sorties in the rugged mountain terrain of Himachal Pradesh, the Rafales are likely to conduct practice flights in Ladakh in the coming weeks, sources said. The Rafales came to India from France on July 29 and are now undergoing pace in Indian conditions. The jets are stationed at the Ambala air base.

Given the ongoing tension at the LAC with more than three-month old stand-offs and the Chinese increasing its military strength there, the IAF is also taken measures like deploying most of its frontline fighter jets at the forward bases all along the 4,000 km long LAC. They include SU-30s, Jaguars and MiG-29s.

The newly inducted Apache attack helicopters along with Chinook heavy lift transport regular sorties near the LAC in Ladakh.

## Covid-19 infection cases in paramilitary forces touch 17K mark

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Two of the biggest paramilitary forces—CRPF and BSF have surpassed the 5,000 mark in terms of Covid infection with both recording around 5,500 cases each. The two forces have recorded 42 deaths due to the pandemic.

Total Covid infection for the five paramilitary forces—CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP and SSB—have touched the 17,000 mark excluding the tally of infected personnel from the National Security Guards (NSG) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), both of which are deputationalist forces drawing personnel from the paramilitary ranks. As per the last count earlier this month, the NSG had reported around 500 cases of Covid infection besides about 100 in the NSG.

The combined death toll of the five paramilitary forces is 64 and 7,287 patients in the five forces continue to be active out of a tally of 16,961 Covid-19 infections. The combined death toll of the five paramilitary forces is 64 and 7,287 patients in the five forces continue to be active. The five paramilitary forces have added over 4,000 new cases of infection in their ranks in the last 10 days.

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has recorded a tally of 5,467 cases of which 2,846 are active, which is the highest number of infected personnel in a paramilitary force. As many as

2,597 patients had recovered and 24 personnel succumbed to the infection in the CRPF. The casualty figures of the CRPF are the highest among the paramilitary forces.

The Border Security Force (BSF) has reported 5,404 cases of Covid-19 in its ranks till date including 1,912 active patients and 3,474 personnel who have recovered from the viral infection besides 18 deaths.

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has reported 2,763 cases of Covid-19 infection. Out of the 2,763 cases, as many as 774 continue to be active while 1,989 have recovered. The paramilitary has suffered casualties of 15 personnel due to the disease induced by novel coronavirus.

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has reported 2,113 cases of Covid-19 infection including 1,170 active cases and 941 recoveries besides three deaths.

The Sashstra Seema Bal (SSB) has recorded 1,214 cases of the deadly disease out of which 885 continue to be active and 625 patients have recovered. It incurred loss of lives of four personnel due to the viral disease.

The CISF has reported 2,763 cases including 14 deaths and the SSB has 1,214 cases and four deaths.

As on August 1, the paramilitary forces, including NDRF and NSG had reported around 13,000 cases of Covid-19 infection.

## 121 cops get HM Medal for Excellence in Investigation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation for the year 2020 has been awarded to 121 Police personnel. Among the personnel receiving these awards, 15 are from CBI, 10 each are from Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra Police, eight are from Uttar Pradesh Police, seven each are from Kerala and West Bengal Police. 21 women police officers are also included in the medal list announced by Ministry of Home Affairs.

This medal was constituted in 2018 with the objective to promote high professional standards of investigation of crime and to recognise such outstanding service and commitment of our police personnel. India is proud of them!" tweeted Home



Minister Amit Shah. The recipients are from Constable to Deputy Commissioner of Police ranks. State Police, CBI, NIA personnel involved in the investigation duty are considered for this annual medal.

## Covid-19: SC seeks response from Centre on plea to ban disinfection tunnels

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has sought response from the Centre on a PIL seeking an immediate ban on use, installation, production and advertisement of disinfection tunnels set up to curb the spread of coronavirus.

A three-judge bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R. Subhash Reddy and M.R. Shah issued notices to the Ministry

**PIL by law student Gursimran Singh Narula**

of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare while seeking their replies.

"Issue notice to respondent Nos. 1 to 3... Counsel for the petitioner may serve a copy of the petition in the office of the

Solicitor General, who may issue instructions. List the matter after two weeks," the bench said.

The top court was hearing a PIL filed by law student Gursimran Singh Narula seeking ban on usage, installation, production, advertisement of disinfection tunnels involving spraying or fumigation of organic disinfectants for the purposes of disinfecting human beings.

## Rahul takes dig at 'Modi hai toh mumkin hai' over GDP prediction



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday took a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi citing BJP's election slogan "Modi hai toh mumkin hai" while attacking the Government over reported claims that India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth may be lowest since Independence.

Taking to Twitter, Rahul shared Infosys co-founder N.R. Narayana Murthy's purported remark that "GDP growth may hit the lowest point since 1947". "Modi hai toh mumkin hai," he tweeted.

Last week, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said India's real GDP will contract in the first half of FY21 as well as full financial year.

The former Congress chief has been vociferously targeting the Prime Minister and BJP-led government over several issues including the standoff with China's economic and COVID-19 handling.

Flagging fears that the country's GDP growth may even touch its lowest since Independence in the backdrop of coronavirus pandemic, Murthy on Monday said the economy should be brought back on track and people should be prepared to live with the pathogen. He also pitched for developing a new system that should allow every player in every sector of the country's economy to operate at full steam with suitable precautions.

"India's GDP is expected to shrink by at least five per cent. There is a fear that we may even reach the lowest GDP (growth) since independence, since 1947," Murthy said.

Couple of days ago, Rahul had hit out at the centre over the employment, accusing the Narendra Modi government of failing to meet its promises.

He accused the Narendra Modi government of failing to meet its promise of jobs for two crore people every year, and threatening policies that "destroyed India's economic structure" and left crores without jobs. He launched the "Rozgar Do" campaign and urged young people without jobs to raise their voices, speak out and "awaken the government from its slumber".

## Recovery rate crosses 70% for Covid-19 patients in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's Covid-19 recovery rate has crossed the 70 per cent mark Wednesday with 16,39,599 people having recovered from the disease so far in the country, while active cases comprise 27.64 per cent of the total caseload, the Union Health Ministry said.

The case fatality rate has further declined to 1.98 per cent, it said.

The highest single-day recoveries at 56,110 are the result of the successful implementation of effective containment strategy, aggressive and comprehensive testing coupled with standardised clinical management of the critical patients based on holistic standard of care approach, said the Ministry.

The coordinated efforts of the central, state and UT governments have resulted in continuously increasing average daily recoveries, it said.

"In the first week of July, the daily average recovered cases were at 15,000 which jumped to more than 50,000 in the first week of August," it said. "With more patients recovering and being discharged from hospitals and home isolation (in case of mild and moderate cases), the total recoveries have crossed the 16



lakh-mark and recovery rate has reached another high of 70.38 per cent," it added.

There are 6,43,948 active cases of coronavirus which is "actual caseload" of COVID-19 in the country and currently comprise 27.64 per cent of the total positive cases.

They are under active medical supervision. With a consistent and sustained increase in recoveries, the gap between recovered patients and active COVID-19 cases has reached nearly 10 lakh, the Ministry stated.

Focus on improved and effective clinical treatment in hospitals, use of non-invasive, improved and coordinated services of the ambulances for ferrying patients for prompt and timely treatment have resulted in seamless efficient patient management of Covid-19 patients.

India's 'test, track, treat' strategy has achieved another peak with 7,33,449 tests done in 24 hours on Tuesday. This has taken the cumulative tests to more than 2.6 crore. The tests per million has jumped to 18,852, it stated.

## States advised not to chart separate ways for procuring vaccine shots once ready

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The national expert group on vaccine administration for Covid-19 which met for the first time on Wednesday, deliberated on various issues pertaining to the procurement mechanisms for the vaccine has advised all the States not to chart separate pathways of procurement of the shots whenever they are ready.

The suggestion came to ensure the central control on the distribution of the vaccine and the States do not start purchasing the vaccine at their whims and fancies as had happened in the case of the purchase of rapid antigen testing kits, some of which were later found to be faulty.

"Some States had purchased the RT-PCR and rapid antigen kits which created lots of confusion. In the matter of vaccine, we need the process to be smooth and distribution is as per requirements," said a senior official who attended the meeting chaired by Niti Aayog Member, Dr. V. K. Paul, with the secretary Rajesh Bhushan as co-chair.

Three vaccine candidates are in different stages of human clinical trials in India - the Covid-19 vaccine candidate developed by University of Hyderabad, the vaccine developed by Pune-based Serum Institute of India, the inactivated virus vaccine by Bharat

Biotech and the DNA vaccine by Zydyus Cadila.

In the meeting the group deliberated on conceptualisation and implementation of the vaccine, the creation of a digital infrastructure for inventory management and delivery mechanism of the vaccine, including tracking of vaccination process with particular focus on last mile delivery.

The group also deliberated on the procurement mechanisms for Covid-19 vaccine, including both indigenous and international manufacturing along with guiding principles for prioritisation of population groups for vaccination.

They discussed broad parameters guiding the selection of the Covid-19 vaccine candidates for the country and sought inputs from the Standing Technical Sub-Committee of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI).

Besides this, it also discussed the financial resources required for procurement of the Covid-19 vaccine and various options for financing the same. Available options in terms of delivery platforms, cold chain and associated infrastructure for roll out of Covid-19 vaccination were also taken up.

India's support to its key neighbours and development partner countries for Covid-19 vaccines was also taken up.

## Govt misrepresented implications of Draft EIA Notification 2020: Ramesh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said that the draft Environment Impact Assessment notification is yet to be finalised, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh accused the Government of "misrepresenting" the implications of the 2020 draft.

"The Government's environmental regulatory framework and its impact on environment calling it 'fundamentally flawed'," Ramesh said in a letter to Javadekar, Ramesh's former Environment Minister, said the Standing Committee met on August 7 and was apprised by officials of the Draft EIA Notification 2020.

"I am compelled to say that you are misrepresenting the implications of the Draft EIA Notification, 2020, on our country's environmental regulatory framework and its impact on the environment," Ramesh said, adding that he has read his reply in conjunction with the present notification made by the officials, along with the feedback received from various stakeholders.

He suggested the Government to keep the Notification in abeyance until the Standing Committee has examined it. "The notification is fundamentally flawed and makes a mockery of the prime minister's many statements on the need to protect the environment and the public in this regard," he said.

"The Congress leader asked how can a subordinate legislation override the parent Act from which it is derived like the Draft EIA Notification 2020 does vis-a-vis the Environment Protection Act, 1986.

"Your claim that the clearance is not an ex post facto one as it is prospective in nature, and previous actions will be penalised is contrary to how it will actually play out in reality.

"If the clearance permits the illegally constructed portion of the project to remain or the illegal operating part of the project to continue, and there is no direction for demolition of the illegal portion or reduction of the illegally enhanced capacity -- then it is not a prospective clearance. It is being granted ex post facto, and this is contrary to the illegality committed by the project proponent," he said.

"It appears from the processes proposed in Clause 22 of the Draft Notification that the government's objective is to give all the violators an opportunity to regularise their illegal activities," he alleged.

# Covid-19 Impact: Patients with aplastic anemia at receiving end

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Poverty, Government apathy and Covid-19 have resulted in lockdown restricting travel proved fatal for little Kishan, a 11-year-old boy suffering from Aplastic anemia, a life-threatening blood disorder condition in which the bone marrow and stem cells do not produce enough blood cells.

Facing severe financial constraints and waiting timely medical aid, first at Sadarjung Hospital and then AIIMS, short Government hospitals in Delhi, Kishan's life was cut short March this year amid Covid-19 pandemic.

However, Kishan's is not a lone case. Dr Nita Radhakrishnan, paediatric haemato-oncologist at Super Speciality Paediatric Hospital, Noida, Uttar Pradesh says that as the deadly Coronavirus captured the attention of the nation in the most unprece-

dent manner, the non-Covid patients particularly those with the Aplastic anemia have suffered the most in the lockdown.

She gave instances of her two teenage patients who succumbed to blood disorder in the Covid catastrophe. "Manish (name change), a 17-year-old was suffering with on-and-off fever, gum bleeding, and menorrhagia for three months, he came to us in December last year just when Coronavirus had started spreading its tentacles from China to other parts of the world."

The boy was diagnosed with severe Aplastic anemia and was recommended requisite treatment like regular hospital visit for red cell transfusion before he could be given bone marrow transplant (BMT), a life saving treatment.

"However, while the family was not able to visit our hospital in Noida due to the covid-lockdown, no blood products



were available at the hospital near to the patient's locality. In want of blood, Manish could not survive more days.

13-year-old Suresh (name change) too faced similar fate. While Government funds could not be sanctioned for his BMT in time the boy could not visit the Noida hospital for further follow-up due to travel restrictions. Two weeks later, Suresh died due to hemorrhage at his native place, lamented the doctor.

Radhakrishnan. The scenario is gloomy for the patients afflicted with the disease as they need blood transfusion almost every 20 days.

A significant proportion of patients of aplastic anemia (around 30 per cent) die before any definitive treatment is initiated. A study by AIIMS based on a recent series of patients follow-up showed that out of 1501 patients diagnosed over last seven years, only 303 ie 20 per cent received the definitive treatment modalities through either BMT or IST with ATG and cyclosporine, says Dr Radhakrishnan in her case report.

"Aplastic anemia: Non-COVID casualties in the Covid-19 era," published in the latest edition of Indian Journal of Palliative Care.

The doctors have sought urgent intervention. Dr Radhakrishnan says that "as we await the peak of Covid-19 in our country and possibly sec-

ondary and tertiary waves thereafter, patients with aplastic anemia who are the sickest among all hematological illnesses would benefit greatly from urgent intervention from the Government to ensure timely treatment."

Aplastic anemia, there is mostly delay in diagnosis, delay in initiation of treatment due to monetary constraints, non-inclusion of the disease under government schemes such as Ayushman Bharat and NHM and delay in sanction of money from other Government schemes such as Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi, Chief

**A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF PATIENTS OF APLASTIC ANEMIA (AROUND 30 PER CENT) DIE BEFORE ANY DEFINITIVE TREATMENT IS INITIATED**

Minister and Prime Minister's relief fund. Due to lack of proper documents, she added. Delay means, risk of contracting fungal infections and increase in drug-resistant bacterial infections increase which further hamper the treatment, point out Dr Ravi Shankar and Dr Savitri Singh in the study.

Thou the Union Health Ministry, after few days of lockdown period, issued directions for continuing care for essential health services including reproductive and maternal health services, newborn care, severe malnutrition, and NCDs

including cancer care, palliative care, dialysis, and care of disabled, unfortunately those with aplastic anemia got ignored.

This despite the fact that these patients are at the highest risk of death following a break in the treatment of few weeks," notes Dr Radhakrishnan.

Because of the closure of offices and absence of staff, during the lockdown period, there was delay in sanction of urgent grants due to the lockdown of offices and inability in generating documents such as income certificate from the teshils.

"For instance, Suresh and Manish, both our patients received the Government grant after around 3-4 months of applying for the same. But both had died before they could reach the hospital for treatment," lamented the hematologist.



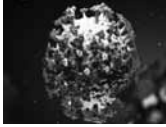
# TN: 5,871 +ve, 119 die on Wed

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Tamil Nadu on Wednesday diagnosed 5,871 new persons with Covid-19 while 119 patients succumbed to the pandemic during the 24 hours that ended at 6 pm on Wednesday, said a medical bulletin issued by the Department of Health.

There were 52,929 active cases as on Wednesday evening and over the State, 1,119 patients subjected to testing on Wednesday saw an increase as 69,697 persons were tested across the State thanks to the 133 laboratories.

Till Wednesday, the State has tested 3.14 lakh persons, of which 2.56 lakh has been cured of the pandemic.



Number of Covid-19 patients in the cluster involving Chennai, Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram and Tiruvallur districts remained high compared to other districts.

Chennai had 993 patients as on Wednesday while Chengalpattu had 439 patients. Kanchipuram (371) and Tiruvallur (407) did not show any signs of abatement of the pandemic.

# Jawan hurt as terrorists target QRT convoy on Srinagar-Baramulla highway

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In the run up to the Independence day celebrations in Kashmir valley, terrorists on Wednesday targeted a Quick Reaction Team (QRT) of the Indian Army along the Srinagar-Baramulla National Highway injuring one soldier.

High alert has already been sounded along the vulnerable stretches of different highways and interior road links across Jammu & Kashmir to prevent any major strike by terrorists or IED attack on security convoys in the coming days.

Quick reaction teams and sniffer dogs have been pressed into service along with road opening parties to thoroughly sanitise the road network ahead of the movement of security convoys.

Meanwhile, in another anti-

terrorist operation, the joint teams of the security forces eliminated a local commander of pro-Pakistan terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen while one jawan of the Indian Army sacrificed his life during the operation in Kamrazpora area of Pulwama.

The terrorist killed in the operation has been identified as Hizb-ul-Mujahideen commander Azaad Lalhari.

Police said, "Azaad Lalhari was involved in the killing of police head constable Anoop Singh on 22 May 2020 at Pichla Pulwama where he fired at a naka party."

At least six FIRs were registered against him for different terrorist related incidents of violence in the area.

According to Srinagar based Defence Spokesman, Col Rajesh Kalra, "Terrorists fired at a Quick

Reaction Team (QRT) of Indian Army on Wednesday. The QRT was moving from Baramulla towards Gulmarg on the Srinagar-Baramulla National Highway near Trumungd Hygam crossing. One Army soldier was injured. Search operation in progress."

Shouting details of Operation Kamrazpora, Pulwama, Col Kalra said, "One terrorist was killed. 01 AK along with grenades, pouches & other war like stores recovered. One soldier laid down his life in the line of duty."

He said the martyred army jawan has been identified as 25 year old Sowar Jilajet Yadav of Jaunpur district in Uttar Pradesh.

Before dispatching his mortal remains to his native village, Lt Gen BS Raju, Chinair Corps Commander and all ranks personnel of the brigade, expressed homage to the braveheart. He is survived by his wife, Punam Devi.

# Covid positive to virus negative for a price?

Operators' salary withheld

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

The Health Department has transformed the corona era into an opportunity for corruption. The data operators posted here are wrongly entering the name-address, mobile number after taking bribe from the people. ACM-2 Ranjit Singh has revealed the data operators posted at Deendayal Hospital to have a breach in records at the time of sampling of a jeweller's son. One month salary of three operators has been withheld. They have also been given notices. This action has caused panic in the health department.

The case related to a jeweller's son running a jewellery shop near Meenakshi Bridge. The family hails from Prayag Mill Compound. Saraf and his wife and one son underwent antigen test at Deendayal Hospital on August 4. In this test, husband and wife were found to be infected, while the son was found to be negative. On this, the couple was sent on home isolation and the son's sample was sent for RTPCR investigation. On

August 7, he was found positive with corona virus. It is said on this, the administration tried to find him based on the records, but the mobile number written in the record started going off. A person with that name was also not found at the address. On DM's order, ACM-2 Ranjit Singh started investigation. This made the data operators nervous and corrected the young man's name in the records. The young man was caught. During interrogation of the youth, it was revealed that the father had misnamed his son's name with the help of the data operators. He was sent to grand mother's house when the report came positive.

According to ACM-2, one month's salary of three data operators Shivam, Ravi and Tarun has been withheld. The matter is very serious. They have been given notices. All three are on contract. Along with this, two lab technicians Pushpendra and Omar have also been found to be doing negligent work in registering name, address and mobile number. The previous measure is for our safety against the pandemic. Testing should be done in a massive way and more rapid antigen kits will be purchased, Zoramthanga was quoted as saying by the official.

It was agreed at the meeting that the existing safety protocol will be enforced more strictly in the wake of the spurt in cases, the official said.

Funerals with maximum 50 people will henceforth be held either at church halls or community halls but not in private residences to ensure that social distancing is strictly followed, he said.

# Gold bars imported as Quans, alleges Kerala BJP chief

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Two serious allegations have been made by two prominent Opposition leaders in the State in Kerala against the CPI(M)-led Government. K Surendran, BJP State Chief alleged that the gold smuggling through diplomatic channel was the handiwork of gold sharks and not small fish. "Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan knows who are the persons behind the massive gold smuggling syndicate as many people in his office were associated with it," said Surendran while addressing a virtual rally at Palakkad.

Ramesh, Chennithala, leader of opposition, while addressing reporters at the State capital said that the situation in Kerala due to Covid-19 was pathetic because the Chief Minister and his council of Ministers failed to tackle the spread of the pandemic.

under the Higher Education Department had found that the consignment was brought to this office before it was sent to the gold shops in the State in Department Vehicles.

Surendra said that the gold smuggling through diplomatic channel was the handiwork of gold sharks and not small fish. "Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan knows who are the persons behind the massive gold smuggling syndicate as many people in his office were associated with it," said Surendran while addressing a virtual rally at Palakkad.

Ramesh, Chennithala, leader of opposition, while addressing reporters at the State capital said that the situation in Kerala due to Covid-19 was pathetic because the Chief Minister and his council of Ministers failed to tackle the spread of the pandemic.

# 1,212 new cases in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Kerala Government has managed to bring down the number of new coronavirus patients on Wednesday to 1,212 according to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

Being the media on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said that 880 persons were cured of the pandemic and discharged from hospitals. But out of the 1,212 persons tested positive on Wednesday, 1,068 contracted Covid-19 through local contact. 45 persons who tested positive failed to give the details of the source from where they contracted the pandemic," he said.

The Chief Minister said that though some regions showed abatement of the pandemic, situation in most districts remained critical.

"The superintendents of police in the districts are devising strategies to counter the pandemic and it will definitely bring down the Covid-19 in the State," said Vijayan.

He said 28,664 samples were tested during the last 24 hours while five persons succumbed to the pandemic. Thiruvananthapuram which tested 266 positive cases remained the district with the highest number of covid-19 patients.

According to Vijayan, Kerala continued to be the State with the best Covid-19 management and administration.

# People coming out to support three-language formula in TN

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Close on the heels of Prof E Balagurusamy, former Vice-Chancellor, Anna University, who lambasted the Tamil Nadu Government and the Dravidian parties for their opposition towards the three-language formula proposed by the Centre in its National Education Policy, more social activists, educationists and parents have come out questioning the propriety behind the resistance to introduce other languages in Tamil Nadu. An educationist has called for a referendum on the issue of introducing a three-language formula.

Vanathi Srinivasan, vice-president, Tamil Nadu BJP who has been fighting to get the impeded irrigation projects

in the State's fertile Kongu region going, charged the Dravidian politicians who play a major role in the government. "None of them send their children to Government Schools but to public schools which charge exorbitant fees where Hindi, Sanskrit are all compulsory. But these politicians make sure that Hindi is not taught in Government schools because they want to keep students from poor and rural families in perpetual ignorance," said Srinivasan.

An apolitical person like Vijayashree Ramesh, law activist, pointed out that Chennai is the headquarters of Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha because the founder, Mahatma Gandhi, wanted students in Tamil Nadu as well as other South Indian States to learn Hindi. "Interestingly, the

owners and proprietors of private schools which teach Hindi as a compulsory subject are the ones who are against the introduction of Hindi or three-language formula in the State. It is sad and shocking that students in Tamil Nadu do not get the opportunity to learn in Jawahar Nandiyala Vidyalaya. It is the position to Hindi by the Dravidian political parties, causing havoc in the lives of poor students in Tamil Nadu," said Ramesh.

Srinivasan said the opposition of Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami was only because of DMK president Stalin's opposition to Hindi. "Palaniswami fears that if he supports Hindi, he may lose out to Stalin in the race for Chief Minister's chair in the next assembly election," she said.

# Mizoram to boost Covid testing capacity

Aizawl: The Mizoram Government will purchase 10,000 more rapid antigen kits to boost the State's Covid-19 testing capacity. Chief Minister Zoramthanga said on Wednesday.

The Chief Minister made the announcement at a meeting with officials of the state government, NGOs, churches and doctors, according to an official.

Every citizen should take precautionary measures as community transmission can take place at any time.

The previous measure is for our safety against the pandemic. Testing should be done in a massive way and more rapid antigen kits will be purchased, Zoramthanga was quoted as saying by the official.

It was agreed at the meeting that the existing safety protocol will be enforced more strictly in the wake of the spurt in cases, the official said.

Funerals with maximum 50 people will henceforth be held either at church halls or community halls but not in private residences to ensure that social distancing is strictly followed, he said.

# 87 infected in Nagaland, tally rises to 3,118

Kohima: Nagaland on Wednesday reported 87 new Covid-19 cases while 129 people recovered from the virus in the state, an official of the Health department said.

With the 87 fresh cases, the state's Covid-19 tally has increased to 3,118 of which 1,991 are active cases as 1,113 people have recovered from the disease, eight have died and six have migrated to other states, the official said.

"87 new +ve cases of Covid-19 have been detected out of 614 samples tested. 48 in Dimapur, 35 in Kohima, 3 in Zunheboto & 2 in Wokha. Necessary contact tracing have been activated. Wear Mask, Keep Distance, Stay Safe," Nagaland Health Minister S Pangnyu Phom tweeted.

Additional Director, Health and Family Welfare, Dr Denis Hangsing said 129 Covid-19 patients tested negative for the virus on Wednesday, taking the total number of recovered people to 1,113.

This has improved the recovery rate of the state to 35.69 per cent from 32.49 per cent, he said.

On August 6 the state had reported the highest number of 134 recoveries. Nagaland reported the first three Covid-19 cases on May 25 while the highest single day spike was recorded on August 4 with 276 cases.

# Assam flood: 3 districts remain submerged

Guwahati: Dhemajai, Baksa and Morigaon Districts of Assam continued to remain submerged on Wednesday, an official of the Disaster Management Authority (DAMA) said.

At present, 14,205 people are suffering due to the deluge in these three districts while 7,009 hectares of cropland is affected, according to the official. Flooded State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA).

Dhemajai is the worst-hit district with 12,908 people affected, followed by Baksa where 1,000 people are suffering and Morigaon with 297 people hit by the calamity. On Wednesday, 13,800 persons were reported to be affected across the three districts.

The total number of people losing their lives in this year's flood and landslide stand at 136 across the state. Of them, 110 persons were killed in flood-related incidents and 26 died in landslides.

# Maha records spike with 344 deaths, 12,712 +ve cases

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Reaching the 300-fatality mark on the third occasion during the current month, Covid-19 claimed 344 more lives and left 12,712 others infected in various parts of Maharashtra on Wednesday.

Maharashtra, which had witnessed 334 pandemic deaths on August 5 and 390 deaths on August 9, recorded 344 deaths on Wednesday, thus taking the total number of deaths to 18,650.

With 12,712 fresh infections, the total number of infections in the state jumped to 5,48,313. Of the 344 deaths reported on Wednesday, Mumbai accounted for 50 deaths, followed by 41 deaths in Pune and 33 in Thane district.

Apart from deaths reported in Mumbai, Pune and Thane, there were 29 deaths in Nagpur, 28 deaths in Nashik, 19 in Kolhapur, 16 each in Jalgaon and Latur, 14 in Sangli, 13 in Palghar, 11 in Solapur, and 10 in Nanded, 8 deaths in Satara, 7 each in Parbhani and Osmanabad, 6 in Ahmednagar, 4 each in Nandurbar and Amravati, 3 each in Raigad, Dhule, Aurangabad and Jalna, 2 each in Ratnagiri, Beed, Akola and Gondia and death each in Hingoli, Yavatmal, Buldhana, Washim,

Bhandara and Chandrapur. In addition, two persons from other states died in Maharashtra.

With 50 fresh deaths, Mumbai's Covid-19 toll rose from 6,893 to 6,943, while the total number of infected cases rose by 1,132 to touch 126,356.

In a related development, as many as 13,408 patients were discharged from hospitals in the state after full recovery, taking the total number of patients discharged from various hospitals after full recovery since the second week of March this year to 3,81,843. The recovery rate went up to 69.64 per cent. The mortality rate in the state is 3.4 per cent. The state health authorities pegged the number of "active cases" in the state at 1,47,513.

Pune, which has emerged as the second worst-affected district in terms of spread of the pandemic, has recorded 19,628 infections and 2865 deaths till now.

With 10,839 new infections and 3125 deaths, Thane continued to be the third-worst hit district in Maharashtra.

Out of 29,887 samples sent to laboratories, 5,48,313 have tested positive (18.84 per cent) for COVID-19 until Wednesday.

Currently, 10,15,115 people are in home quarantine while 35,880 people are in institutional quarantine.

# Bengal reschedules lockdown days, Opposition sees politics

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Bengal Government on Wednesday rescheduled the bi-weekly lockdown dates for one day in the next two weeks, triggering criticism from the Opposition parties some of which called it a "Tughlaqi system at work" while others like the BJP attacked Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for "planning community-based political lockdown."

Under the new scheme there will be no lockdown on August 28. Earlier in order to break the corona chain the State Government had ordered lockdowns on August 20, 21, 27, 28 and 31 which was in addition to the two lockdowns in the first week of this month.

A Government circular said, "Several communications have been received citing difficulty to conduct of businesses and banking operations because of 2-days lockdown during Thursday and Friday in the last week of August 2020 followed by one-day lockdown on the following Monday."

This would lead to lockdowns for five consecutive days which would hamper banking services, officials said.

Hence "State Government has considered the requests for relaxation of lockdown as would be necessary and essential. Lockdown on Friday 28 August 2020...is hereby withdrawn and statewide complete lockdown shall now be observed on Thursday 20 August; Friday 21 August; Thursday 27 August and Monday 31 August," the order said.

Meanwhile, coming down heavily on the Government for running a "Tughlaqi system," Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Chowdhury said "it is difficult to understand how an elected government can work like this...". The Chief Minister has been on several occasions with her officers to plan out things in the presence of the media...in spite of so many qualified people including the Chief Minister working on the days they could not decide on the exact dates and had to change the days five times.

"It is ridiculous. More so because while the Government is struggling with scheduling and rescheduling the lockdown days the corona virus is attacking more and more people. The doctors are dying, nurses are doing, policemen are dying, the private hospitals have been left to loot the people at will and they are scheduling and rescheduling the lockdown days."

# 5-year-old girl raped, admitted in critical condition to Raj hospital

Kota: A five-year-old girl was admitted to hospital in a critical condition after she was raped allegedly by a 19-year-old man in Rajasthan's Baran district, police said on Wednesday.

The incident took place in Shahabad area on Tuesday evening, they said. According to Shahabad Circle Officer Kajomdal, the girl was profusely bleeding after the incident and was rushed to Baran district hospital on Tuesday night.

After she was referred to Jay Key Lon hospital in Kota, the officer said.

The girl underwent one surgery on Wednesday afternoon and there would be two more surgeries, he said. The accused in the case has been detained, said Shahabad SHO Harprasad Rana.

The girl, who belongs to a tribal community, had gone outside to attend nature's call at around 5 pm on Tuesday when the suspect, who was in an inebriated condition, allegedly attacked her, the station house officer said.

The girl underwent one surgery on Wednesday afternoon and there would be two more surgeries, he said. The accused in the case has been detained, said Shahabad SHO Harprasad Rana.

The girl, who belongs to a tribal community, had gone outside to attend nature's call at around 5 pm on Tuesday when the suspect, who was in an inebriated condition, allegedly attacked her, the station house officer said.

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF PSYCHIATRY**  
KANKE, RANCHI-834008 (JHARKHAND)

**NOTICE**

Director, Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi invites the applications for the posts of Senior Residents. Details of vacant posts are as under:

1. Senior Resident - 15 posts
- Psychiatry - 10 (Unreserved-04) (Reserved (Vertical) ST-01, SC-02 & OBC-03, (Horizontal) PH-1)
- Neurology - 04 (Unreserved-02, SC-01 & ST-01)
- Radio-diagnosis-01 (Unreserved)

Desirous candidates fulfilling the qualification may appear for the walk-in-interview with their application in the prescribed format giving full details of academic records and experience alongwith original and attested photocopy of the relevant documents with recent photograph on 04.09.2020 at 9.30 A.M. at this institute. Details can be seen on the institute's website [www.cipranchi.in](http://www.cipranchi.in)

Sd/-  
Director

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE						
SR. NO.	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / END (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1.	PWD BAR, HSAR	CONSTRUCTION OF GOVT. INDUSTRIAL TRAINING INSTITUTE AT BHAKANA IN DISTT. HSAR (POG. CCTV CAMERA SYSTEM ONLY) + 9 OTHER WORKS	13.08.2020 21.08.2020	36.70 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01662-225551 / pwd-eecd-hsara@hry.nic.in
2.	PWD BAR, BAHADURGARH	RENOVATION OF OFFICE BUILDING OF DISTRICT INDUSTRIES CENTRE AT BAHADURGARH IN PHALUK DISTT.	05.08.2020 27.08.2020	21.91 LAKHS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	0903133300 / pweedbar@bahadurgarh.hry.nic.in
3.	PWD BAR, HSAR	POG. MGP & ALLIED WORK IN CHC AT SEWAL IN DISTT. HSAR + 4 OTHER WORKS	13.08.2020 28.08.2020	77.72 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01662-225551 / pwd-eecd-hsara@hry.nic.in
4.	PWD BACHANWALGARH.	PROVIDING SECURITY GUARDING/FRONT DESK/HOUSE KEEPING SERVICES OF NIRMAL SANDED BUILDING IN SECTOR-34, CHANDIGARH WITH 10400 SQ. METER COVERED AREA FOR THE YEAR 2020-21 (1.E. FROM 01.07.2020 TO 31.03.2021) + 1 OTHER WORK	11.08.2020 31.08.2020	42.38 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	0172-2618279 / pweecd-chandigarh@hry.nic.in
5.	PWD BAR, SONPAT	IMPROVEMENT BY PROVIDING WIDENING & STRENGTHENING & 30MM THICK B.C. ON VARIOUS ROADS OF BARODA CONSTITUENCY IN PROVINCIAL DIVISION NO.1, SONPAT (ROAD-12: 6172, 6173, 6174, 6181, 2042, KILTO TO RUTHLA ROAD (VILLAGE BHANDAR) & 6174 HODODA TO KHANPUR KALAN (VILLAGE SHANDAR) ROAD (ROAD-12: 6174) IN SONPAT DISTT. (GROUP-1) + 3 OTHER WORKS	CLOSING DATE 21.08.2020	106.95 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	0130-244690 / pwe-espil-sonapat@hry.nic.in
6.	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA, SOHANA	REPLACING THE EXISTING PIPE CULVERTS WITH 1200MM HUE PIPE ON VARIOUS DRAINS OF BARODA CONSTITUENCY. + 4 OTHER WORKS	14.08.2020 20.08.2020	265 LACS	<a href="http://www.hid.gov.in">www.hid.gov.in</a>	Sarjeen Kumar Executive Engineer.
7.	FOREST DEPARTMENT DIVISION, PINORE, DISTT. PANICHLA	ESTABLISHMENT OF TEN HOST CHAMBERS (100 SQY) IN TWO BLOCKS WITH TWO HANGING CHAMBER (1000 SQY) AT SEKHRI (KUK)	07.08.2020 18.08.2020	2.15 CRORE	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01233-230726
8.	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT BAWAL	(TENDER NO. 2020/HRY/129038) OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF 1 NO. STP/ MPS 3.00 MLD STP AT NANGAL PARASUR ROAD, BAWAL TOWN DISTT. REWARI BASED ON HRRR TECHNOLOGY (FOR CIVIL WORKS, ELECT. & MECH. INSTALLATION, HORTICULTURE, WATCH & WARD ETC) AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERE TO) + 1 OTHER WORK	11.08.2020 18.08.2020	16.79 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01282-260592 eeabawal@gmail.com
9.	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT HARYANA YAMUNA NAGAR	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF UV-VISIBLE SPECTROPHOTOMETER, PH.COD.NO. TDS, TURBIDITY METER AND ION METER. COMPLETE IN ALL RESPECT AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERETO	11.08.2020 19.08.2020	8.07 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01732-237826 / ec2janpuri@pachayati.hry.nic.in
10.	PANCHAYATI RAJ PANIPAT	CONST. OF COMMUNITY CENTRE AT VILLAGE GARGI BHADOUR, BLOCK PANIPAT + 1 OTHER WORKS	14.08.2020 21.08.2020	35.65 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	8607392660
11.	PANCHAYATI RAJ JHAJRA	CONST. OF ONE C.CENTRE, ONE GENERAL CHAUPAL, ONE PIPE LINE AND 3 NOS. KUSTA (RE-STEADY)	10.08.2020 24.08.2020	120.74 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01251-254118 / preeengjr@hry.nic.in
12.	PANCHAYATI RAJ KULUSHKETHA	CONSTRUCTION OF VILLAGE KNOWLEDGE CENTERS.	11.08.2020 31.08.2020	383.20 LACS	<a href="https://tender.hry.nic.in">https://tender.hry.nic.in</a>	01744-251018/094161/91639 / preeengkrh@hry.nic.in
13.	PANCHAYATI RAJ, HSAR.	TENDER FOR CONSTRUCTION OF 11 NOS MULTI GYM WORKS 1 NO MULTI GYM 16 STATIONS 1 NO MULTI GYM 12 STATIONS 5 NO MULTI GYM 10 STATIONS 4 NO MULTI GYM 5 STATIONS	11.08.2020 24.08.2020	19.60 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	99672-511300 / preeenghkrh@hry.nic.in
14.	PANCHAYATI RAJ, ANBALA	CONST. OF BRICK PAVED RASTA AT VILLAGE KHATOLI, BLOCK ANBALA-II (RE-CALL)	06.08.2020 13.08.2020	18.70 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	0173-2551346 / preeenganb@hry.nic.in
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : <a href="http://www.haryanaeaprocurement.gov.in">www.haryanaeaprocurement.gov.in</a> or <a href="http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in">www.etenders.hry.nic.in</a>						RO NO. 82209

## Women legal heirs

SC allows daughters to claim their rights on parental property with retrospective effect in a landmark ruling



Giving hope to millions of women, who have traditionally been denied a share in their parental property owing to the cultural preference for a son and the idea of "keeping the wealth within the family", the Supreme Court has said that daughters now have a birthright to parental property with retrospective effect. In essence, this allows women to challenge past injustices, coercion and denials and claim restoration of their economic rights. A three-judge Bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra ruled that a Hindu woman's right to be a joint heir to the ancestral property does not depend on whether

her father was alive or not when an old segregatory law was amended in 2005. The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 gave Hindu women the right to be coparceners or joint legal heirs with men but did not clarify whether it could apply retrospectively. Not only does the ruling take away the gender bias from inheritance, one that has disempowered girls socially and led to their differential upbringing and value systems, the court also lauded daughters as more suitable and responsible heirs who deserve a share of parental legacy. "A son is a son till he takes him a wife... a daughter is a daughter all of her life," Justice Arun Mishra said while reading out the order. "A daughter remains a loving daughter throughout life," he added, emphasising the compassionate nature of women as care-givers. This also clears the decks for settling countless appeals on the issue that have been pending before different High Courts and subordinate courts on whether the amendment would be time-bound or not. Now that its applicability is crystal clear, this will not only open the floodgates for thousands of ancestral property-related disputes that had been put to rest but will also give women and their children, especially those who are not too well-heeled or financially independent, a fallback cushion. Traditionally, women have been denied a share in their fathers' property in the belief that a girl's share is given to her in the form of dowry and that one day she would inherit the property of her in-laws. Some enlightened families may have been reformist of their own accord but this has largely been the accepted social code. Yet it has been erroneous, for most women have been denied a share in the in-laws' ancestral property after the husband's death. Another drawback among women so far has been their poor or no legal awareness of their status as rightful stakeholders in family affairs. Even if they were aware of their rights, most women have been hesitant to claim their share in family estates as that would have meant going against their own flesh and blood for a piece of land or house. Plus, with most women in India brought up in a patriarchal society, they were made to believe that in case of a marriage going south or their single status, they would be supported by their father and in his absence, by the brother. Hence, most of them, over the years, have meekly given up their rights on property in exchange for this familial anchor. While mindset changes will only come with time, the ruling of the apex court unfetters those who are willing to stand up for their coparcenary rights.

It is no secret that access to property empowers women economically, provides them with a sense of security and self-worth and strengthens their decision-making powers. Research shows that ownership of property by women has reset the asymmetry in gender relations, resulting in reduced domestic violence, both physical and psychological. Owning assets also gives women caught in abusive relationships an exit route, which they might not have had otherwise, particularly if they are not financially independent. All in all, this judgment is a reassertion of the constitutional value of equality to women in personal law without any pre-conditions. However, one aspect that is being largely ignored in the media over the jubilation on this ruling is that there is a flip side, too. Coparcenary right is an undefined liability and any liability of the father, including the family debt and other dues, will be extended to daughters as well. So, it is not just about the right, it is about inheriting responsibility as well. Besides, what of women in other religious communities, who are governed by separate personal laws in several matters, including inheritance rights? While Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains are governed by laws on property rights codified in the amended Hindu Succession Act of 2005, Christians and Parsis are governed by the Indian Succession Act, 1925. Property rights of Muslims — both Shias and Sunnis — are yet to be codified. Till we uniformly address gender inequalities in the area of inheritance and have a representative civil rights framework for women across the spectrum, they would be subjected to abuse.

## Kamala blooms

Kamala Harris is the third woman to stand for Vice-President of the US. Can she do better than the earlier two?



Kamala Harris' selection as the running mate of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden is a momentous one. She is just the third woman to stand for Vice-President of the United States after Geraldine Ferrero in 1984 and Sarah Palin in 2008 but the first woman of colour to do so. This, four years after Donald Trump unexpectedly defeated Hillary Clinton, the first female US presidential candidate for the White House. In India, too, Harris' nomination is being celebrated since her mother was a Tamilian. Yet, it's not her origin but what she represents that might tilt the scales.

Biden has been less than charismatic and Harris' activism and focussed campaigns on the Afro-American cause give the Democrats a sales pitch to fall back upon, that of upholding civil rights. Not new really, but tested enough. And likely to find some resonance when race relations have taken centrestage following the killing of George Floyd by a White officer. Besides, the Black community has been the worst affected by Trump's selective pandemic management. In all issues, be it of race, gender, healthcare and law enforcement, Harris has maintained a centrist record. But her drive has helped her push walls so far. Which is why Trump made his discomfort very much visible by calling her "extraordinarily nasty." He also accused her of being "the meanest, most horrible" of all US Senators.

With the US extremely fractured today, Harris possibly stands the best chance ever of having a woman occupy one of the top offices. That said, everyone expected Hillary Clinton to win in a landslide in 2016 and we all saw what happened. With Biden's mental ability being questioned by many and Trump mobilising the Republican base, it would be fatal for the Democrats to take things for granted, particularly in some crucial battleground states which Trump snatched unexpectedly. While Harris was brought up single-handedly by her mother, after her parents divorced when she was five, and her father, the Jamaican-born economist Donald Harris, did extensive work in India, she identifies herself as a "Black" woman to build her political capital. Despite several in the Indian community urging her to recognise her heritage, she has consistently sought to downplay it. Incidentally, she is distantly related to India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. So while many in the Indian diaspora will celebrate her nomination, her politics is more often than not at variance with Indian interests. Indeed, she is as guilty as several other politicians of making some major policy flip-flops over the years. But with global geopolitics undergoing a sea change over the past few years and with China increasingly asserting itself, her views on India might change as well.

## Politics of defection

MLAs jumping ship and resort politics are condemnable. There's a lot that our elected representatives need to learn from what Gandhi had expected of them



J.S. RAJPUT

One can easily recall umpteen instances of MLAs changing their ideological and political loyalties for personal benefits. Known to them. Leaders who defect justify it as "the wish of the people." When the floor-crossing happened for the first time in Haryana, when an MLA switched party three times in a day, the term, *Aaya Ram Gaya Ram* (party-switching) gained prominence. The political discourse — right from the chaupals to the Central Hall of Parliament — but was brushed aside as an "aberration." Slowly but steadily, the practice gained ground. Who can forget Bhajan Lal, the former Chief Minister of Haryana, who migrated from the then newly-elected ruling party at the Centre, lock, stock and barrel and retained his position?

The practice was subsequently polished and upgraded by leaders of all hues. One could go on counting the number of luxury hotels that have been used by parties to house their MLAs on numerous occasions. What happened in Rajasthan says it all. The MLAs, who enjoyed a comfortable stay in hotels at different locations in Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat, were convinced that if they went to their home State and their constituencies, they would not be able to resist the temptation of lucrative offers that would be waiting outside to change hands.

What normally should be considered as a humiliating slur by any dignified individual is now taking shape as an "unwritten" but "acceptable" code across the board. It has become a parliamentary practice in Indian democracy. Every major political party has tried this on several occasions. One wonders how these MLAs would react if Mahatma Gandhi walked into their room and asked them, "*Kaise hain aap?*" (How are you?) The Rajasthan episode is almost over and nobody condemned the happenings, not even those who have risen on several occasions to express their concern regarding the attack on constitutional values. I find their silence amazing.

What is surprising is that those, who usually come up with joint statements expressing concerns about what they consider "Constitutional impropriety, an attack on secular values and ethical lapses," never come up to denigrate this unethical and immoral practice that makes fun of democracy and lowers the esteem of the elected representatives themselves. It is a shameless strategy that should not find a place in a vibrant, functional democracy.

Why isn't there all-round condemnation of the Rajasthan drama of



MLAs being herded from one hotel to the other — under strict State security — as unconstitutional, unethical and immoral? Even known groups of retired bureaucrats — who suddenly appear on the scene to showcase their concerns about the erosion of social cohesion, religious amity and constitutional propriety — never thought it fit to condemn this derogatory practice of herding of elected representatives. Do they find this practice to be in sync with the Constitutional framework and in consonance with moral and ethical considerations?

In 1922, Gandhi had written in a letter that Swaraj would not bring happiness to his people. He had said that four things would weigh heavily against it. Three of them were injustice, burden of administration and treachery of the rich. The fourth, that surprised me the most when I came to know about it, related to "defects of elections." He wrote that while told the Mahatma had studied the British election system very thoroughly. Gifted with a prophetic futuristic vision, he could anticipate the shape of things to come accurately.

I often wonder whether the MLAs in Rajasthan, who enjoyed a comfortable all-expenses-paid stay in luxury hotels, even remember that they are the inheritors of the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi. Lal

Bahadur Shastri, Rajendra Prasad and other stalwarts of the freedom struggle. These worthy elected representatives are, in fact, *panch parmeshwar* of democracy. They are occupying a seat, the incumbent of which is bound to the Constitution by an oath of affirmation. One wonders how many of them are aware of that eternal eye-opener sentence by Mahatma Gandhi: "If, instead of insisting on rights, everyone does his duty, there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind." Are such herded stays part of the duty of the elected representatives? Do they not realise that they are being presented in public as weaklings, who would not be able to resist monetary temptations if allowed to move out of the hotel?

If these worthies could sit together with their family members, including their children, and seek their opinion on being made a part of the "pliable group," one is confident they would get the right advice. No child would like his parent to be treated as a saleable commodity. Many of them may have read or attended speeches where references were made to a query put before Mahatma Gandhi: What is your message to the people? He replied, "My life is my message." Would our MLAs be in a position to tell their children that they could derive strength from their experi-

ences? It appears that everyone is right from the Chief Minister to the Speaker; the party in power to those in the Opposition; and all others who matter — have their interpretations of the Constitution and Constitutional propriety. It is worthwhile to recall that under the Government of India Act of 1935, elections were held in 1936-37 in various provinces and provincial Governments were formed. All Ministers of the then Congress Government had resigned in November 1939. Gandhi was ever vigilant, he consistently expressed his opinion on how legislators and Ministers should be performing their new duties and they should always think about the welfare of the people. He was, in a way, educating the legislators and Ministers in those days when his overarching presence on the scene itself was a deterrent against anyone breaking the norms: "The holding of any office in the Congress Government must be in the spirit of service, without the slightest expectation of personal gains."

Our distinguished legislators can ponder over Gandhi's thoughts: "There is a beauty and an art in simplicity which he who runs may see. It does not require money to be neat, clean and dignified. Pomp and pageantry are often synonymous with vulgarity." It is indeed a pity that our young ones are

witnessing a political world in which — exceptions apart — elected representatives, Ministers and legislators have forsaken the Gandhian philosophy, ideas and dreams. They are doing all this knowing it fully well that it would hurt the Mahatma's memory.

When reports emerge of legislators' assets multiplying by a factor of say 500, the common man's reaction is obvious — it would definitely be devoid of respect, confidence or a connect. In 1937-39, those who became legislators and Ministers were men and women who had entered the freedom struggle — not a political party but a national movement that offered only sacrifice, toil, sufferings and jail terms. Elections and legislative positions came just by chance. But allurements were still there and senior leaders were alert to guide and to "examine the utility value of the legislators."

And for the Ministers, the guiding verse was: "The Ministers are (the people's) servants. They can do nothing against the express wishes of the people. They will not stay in office a day longer than the people wish." There is much more for the legislators to ponder over. Are the Gandhian ideas totally out of bounds for those who still swear to be the inheritors of his legacy? If not, how could they ignore Gandhi's words and deeds? "This office-holding is a step towards either greater prestige or its total loss. If it is not to be a total loss, the Ministers and the legislators have to be watchful of their own personal and public conduct. They have to be, like Caesar's wife, above all parties in everything. They may not make private gains for themselves or their relatives or friends."

The least people expect from their legislators is that they do not surrender courage of conviction that a citizen can be proud of, particularly those who are in public life and are expected to enjoy the trust and confidence of their electors. They must ultimately be true to the people. They must not subordinate themselves to the whims and fancies of those who wish to retain power or gain power at any cost.

There is a lot for the elected representatives to whom Gandhi advised not to "arrogate to themselves greater knowledge than those experienced men who do not happen to occupy the ministerial chairs." Obviously, this applies equally to every elected person.

(The writer works in education and social cohesion)

## SOUNDBITE

I have known Harris for a long time. She is more than prepared for the job. She's spent her career defending our Constitution and fighting for folks who need a fair stake.

**Former US President**  
—Barack Obama

This whole insider vs outsider debate was not supposed to be an ugly witch-hunting battle. It was supposed to be debate, a conversation

**Actor**  
—Sandhya Mridul

With Harris as his political living will, he (Biden) is surrendering control of our nation to the radical mob with promises to raise taxes, cut police funding and appease socialist dictators.

**American consultant**  
—Katrina Pierson

Every cricketer goes through a rough patch. I am sure this break would have helped us both unwind and chat out a plan. It's a matter of time before we click.

**Indian cricketer**  
—Mithali Raj

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Clear old accounts

Sir — There are huge amounts in unclaimed deposits, post-offices and many of these account holders may have even died. There are chances of fraud happening, with unscrupulous persons staking claim to such deposits. The Department of Posts should send letters to account holders who have not operated their accounts in, say, the last three years and give them reasonable time to either renew or close them. If no response is received, all such unclaimed money may be frozen in some dead account which may be allowed to be withdrawn by legal heirs after careful verification.

**Madhus Agrawal**  
New Delhi

### Long road ahead

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Atmanirbhar raksha" (August 11). With a view to boost defence manufacturing in India, Defence Minister Rajendra Singh announced a ban on a range of defence imports. Defence manufacturing under the *Atmanirbhar Bharat* scheme

### Language discrimination

n the repeated invocation of culture in the National Education Policy (NEP) — the distaste of its frequent repetitions apart — one finds a long-term strategy to resurrect a particular culture in India. The civilisation that flourished between 3300 BCE and 1300 BCE in South Asia, popularly called the Harappan or the Indus Valley civilisation, is an important era in our recorded history. And 6000-7000 years after the Harappan civilisation waned, new cultures evolved with the arrival of the Eurasian Steppe pastoralist groups. A new language and lifestyle emerged. The Vedic culture and the ancient Harappan civilisation were unlike each other in every aspect. Researchers have converged on the view that the present-day gods, religion, literature and traditions in most of India are adaptations from the Brahminical Vedic culture, which was rooted in caste system and rituals, and not from the ancient Indus Valley civilisation. There are, therefore, reasons to doubt the loud advocacy of culture, heritage and traditions in the NEP.

The NEP professes, "the three-language formula will continue to be implemented while keeping in mind the Constitutional provisions, aspirations of the people, regions and the Union and the need to promote multi-lingualism as well as promote national unity." The catch here is, "the three languages learned by children will be the choices of States, regions and, of course, the students themselves



so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India." This eliminates English as the second language automatically as it is not treated as a language native to the country. Incidentally, both English and Hindustani (Hindi and Urdu) belong to the Indo-European language family. This prescription puts South India at a great disadvantage. English has been the link language for this region for over a century, though Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam are of the Dravidian language family. The phenomenal growth of the knowledge-based industry in the South is credited mostly to its proficiency in English. The three-language formula, with a prescription tagged to it, would be detrimental to economic growth.

**Haridasan Rajan**  
Kozhikode

the list of major arms exporters for 2015-2019 and 19th for 2019. Another grey area is the quality of products. The ammunition supplied by the Ordnance Factory had damaged tanks,

field guns and caused fatalities. The French company that manufactures Rafale fighter planes had expressed doubt about the manufacturing quality of Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL) during the defence deal. HAL-made Jaguar and Mirage-2000s have caused many fatalities. While defence manufacturing under *Atmanirbhar Bharat* looks ambitious to make India self-reliant in defence manufacturing, there's a long way to go. The Government must overcome existing challenges.

**Venu GS**  
Kollam

### Wake-up call

Sir — Back-to-back fire cases at COVID-19 facility centres are a wake-up call for the Government. All such tragic events have proved that those bearing the responsibility of safety regulations have paid lip service. Exemplary action is the need of the hour, or else such cases will continue to occur.

**Amam**  
Via email

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)



Freedom of speech and of the Press, both vital to the rule of law and the city's vibrancy, are under attack. China is extending to Hong Kong the regime of media regulation and repression that it applies on the mainland. Today, it's the media. Tomorrow, who knows who will be China's next targets. But Hong Kongers will respond then, too, by demonstrating solidarity creatively. (The NYT editorial)







## Trend Slazer

### Sara pens special note for mom

On turning 25, actor **SARA ALI KHAN** penned a special message for her mother **Amrita Singh**.

She shared a couple of throw-back pictures of Amrita on Instagram, which reflects her love for dogs.

"Quarter Century Ho Gayi!! From being a Pup Mommy to a Human Mommy... Love you Maa," Sara captioned the pictures.

Sara turned a year older on Wednesday, and she had a low-key celebration with her brother Ibrahim Ali Khan in Goa. Taking to Instagram, Sara posted a couple of pictures and videos from her birthday celebrations.

**'Have you ever noticed that it is the ones who haven't been loved who grow up to hate so**

**much? I believe in the emancipation of women but not at the cost of one's home. For in their emancipation, women are losing what has always made them emotionally superior to men — their tenderness and essential warmth of heart.'**

—Amitabh Bachchan

Actor-comedian **VIR DAS** all set to debut an unscripted home-grown comedy special, *Inside Out*, created from his 30 virtual shows during the lockdown.

Das said, "Week on week, the encouraging response kept pouring in and we knew there was enough material to make a special. We recorded all the virtual shows in advance. I decided to talk about our collective fears and give it a light touch. In such times when we don't know when is our next physical gig or shoot, we thought it'd be a way to work with the changing times. This isn't the new normal but this is a novel alternative, for now."

### Priyanka lauds Kamala Harris

Actor **PRIYANKA CHOPRA JONAS** has congratulated the US Democratic vice-presidential candidate **Kamala Harris** on becoming the first person of Indian descent to achieve that honour.

Priyanka took to Instagram and posted a picture of Harris.

"This is a historical, transformational, and proud moment for all women. All women of colour, all Black women, and all South Asian women. Congratulations on becoming the first Black woman and First Person of Indian descent to compete on a major US party's presidential ticket. #representationmatters. Ps. To my younger self: look how far we have come!" she wrote.

In the list of major events and people of 2020, a new name has been added — **Binod** — which has become the buzzword for netizens and social media users. The trend began after a video by the YouTube channel, **Slayy Point**, in which its creators **Abhyudaya Mohan** and **Gautami Kawale** are seen roasting the comments section of popular videos, went viral. Titled, *Why Indian Comments Section is Garbage*, it highlighted how even asinine and silly entries get hits and "likes". In this case, a user called **Binod** had simply typed in his name in the commentary chat and had still elicited seven likes. And then **Binod** trolled several notable social media handles with what can best be described as mumbo jumbo but still got noticed. So much so that it generated memes.

The **#Binod** memes so hogged the limelight that even brands like **Airtel**, **Paytm**, **Netflix** and **Tinder** didn't leave any stone unturned in making it their new marketing word. While the dating app tweeted, "Yes, **Binod** is on **Tinder**", the digital payment app changed its **Twitter** username from **Paytm** to **Binod** for a short period. Food-ordering app **Swiggy** tweeted, "We think **Binod** will be the first person to call and wish us at 12 tonight," celebrating its birthday. Reality show **Bigg Boss**' **Twitter** handle also posted, "Now who's saying **Binod** is a contestant this year?" Other handles such as **Mumbai Police**, **Nagpur Police** and **Jaipur Police** used the word for awareness of traffic rules and safety.

Well, it isn't the first time a bizarre trend has got unprecedented attention from netizens. Who wouldn't remember the viral *'Selfie Maine Le Li Aa'* by **Chhachak Pooja** or *'Hello friends, chut peelo'* or even trends like *#IHaveAJoke* and *#MyQuarantineInSixWords*? But why does such content grab attention? "Yes, there have been bizarre trends in the past. However, I think that things that strike a chord among the audience grabs their attention. For instance, **Binod** has just a 30-second presence in our video. Even then, not the rest of the video but 'Binod' grabbed eyeballs. It completely depends on the viewers. We present a platter but it could be just one thing that grabs their attention or it could be the entire video as well," says **Abhyudaya**, who never thought that after this video, rappers like that **DJ Snake** and **Honey Singh** would be using the term for comments.

With **Coronavirus** being the permanent trending hashtag on social media over the past few months, hashtag **Binod** certainly came as a clutter breaker and social disruptor. For **Gautami**, **Binod** became an "emotion" for people in lockdown, a byword for an alternate universe, or a flighty fun exercise to de-stress themselves. Says she, "If one is sad, s/he is using **Binod**. One is typing **Binod** to wish someone good morning! There's absolutely no head or toe to this. This has really been a clutter breaker as brands and celebrities too accepted 'Binod' to communicate. Personally, we really liked **Airtel India**'s tweet,



# AGENT BINOD

The term perhaps became more viral than the **Coronavirus**. Trend creators **ABHYUDAYA MOHAN** and **GAUTAMI KAWALE** of the YouTube channel, **Slayy Point**, explain how. By **TEAM VIVA**



"Receive every call with 'Haan #Binod bol'."

The YouTube video also took a dig at the outlandish comments to show how trashy they are, with the creative team pressing all the keys of the keyboard at once so that it typed random alphabets. The 100-word paragraph of alphabets was then posted in comments

of a video, which, in turn, surprisingly grabbed even more bizarre comments. Is this, then, the new theatre of the absurd? Says **Gautami**, "There's no formula or tutorial about how to go viral or how to start a trend. It depends on the audience, their preferences and likes and when we see the audience talking about it constantly, that's when the

content trends. I think platforms like **Twitter** and **YouTube** play a huge role in spurring the growth of such trends among the masses."

So why is it important to note what comments are being posted? Is it any kind of marketing strategy? **Abhyudaya** refuses. He says, "Well, no! It's not any kind of marketing strategy. **Binod**'s

comments were solely for entertainment because there is no such thing as trend marketing."

**Binod** even raided the Prime Minister's **Twitter** handle. What did the disruption mean? He adds, "We heard about it and checked PM's Live. People were commenting 'Binod' everywhere. We could then say that's the power of **Binod** (laughs). I think **Binod** for them came as a voice of licentiousness in these times of lockdown. We are overwhelmed that it's a trend and people are communicating through **Binod** rightfully, meaning that it's in the 'Janta's hands' (in hands of the citizens). We are just the medium."

Well, the **#Binod** raids have even reached the comments section of some international artists and **Nasa Live** sessions! But beyond grabbing eyeballs, a few laughs and generating some revenue for creators, is there any point to this dumbed down pursuit of time-kills?

## POWER OF THE YOUNG

Choreographer **ASHLEY LOBO** says that the **International Youth Day** this year has helped young people find balance without their peers and props at home.

By **TEAM VIVA**



For choreographer, **Ashley Lobo**, there is no energy as that of youth on his dance floor. He loves their moves, their hope, and the vibrancy they bring to any class. On **International Youth Day**, **Ashley** stressed that it is the youth which is embracing the 'new normal' and helping the not-so-savvy world adjust to the digital age, which has swamped all of us.

He says, "Being at home and not with their peer group is not how the youth would have ever imagined their lives but given their proximity to gadgets and the online world, they are doing a pretty good job. I miss their vibrancy in my studio since offline classes are stopped. But when youngsters dance, it is obvious that they like to be free and that spirit is visible in whatever they do."

The pandemic has affected youngsters profoundly, for better or for worse. Through videos and virtual means, youth across

the country have been expressing themselves in unique ways and it is believed that the performing arts are only helping to liberate them even more. For **Ashley**, in the art form of dance, there is, after all, no perfection, only being one with the self and realising one's true emotions and passion by dancing from the heart. "I have seen students over the years feel relaxed and happy after a dance session. This is because during the class, stress levels drop and the endorphins take over. This, in turn, makes the mind calm. It can be an extremely therapeutic and spiritual experience. When one dances, one connects to the music and to the self. In that one moment, you become one with yourself and the universe and that strain is the best mantra to get over the pandemic blues," adds he.

**Ashley**, who has choreographed for Bollywood films such as *Dhoom*, *Jab We Met*, *Cocktail*, and many others, feels it is important for the youngsters to be guided properly and the importance of discipline should be instilled early. "And then, be it a crisis, pandemic, or any other trouble, you will always see the young rise above and show the discipline in every facet of life," he says.

The current imbroglia which has stopped dancers worldwide from running riot on the dance floor and forced to channelise their energy online is seeing quite a bit of heft in the youth. Despite being confined to their homes and missing their friends, the youngsters are doing wonders with dance and the arts. "They will become stronger once this is all behind us because even now the youth in my online classes can find balance in dance through the turbulence of the global pandemic. That is the power of the young and restless," says **Ashley**.



## Shawn and The Boys

Gearing up for a more diabolical season two of the series, *The Boys*, it is all set to introduce an intriguing character — **Lampighter**, into the *Supes* universe. A former superstar and one of the original members of *The Seven*, **Lampighter** will be played by *X-Men* fame Canadian television and film actor, **Shawn Ashmore**.

Speaking on roping in **Shawn**, showrunner and executive producer, **Eric Kripke** said, "We were thrilled that **Shawn**, who is, let's be honest, an OG superhero, wanted to play the crucial part of **Lampighter**. He brings so much depth, menace, and world-weary humanity to this former member of *The Seven*. **Shawn** is a really good guy. We're grateful to have him join our bloody little family."

Having mysteriously been replaced by our very own **Starlight** (played by **Erin Moriarty**) in season one, the new season will unravel what truly happened with the fire inducing *Supes* and *The Boys* previously. Their tragic history will be in shambles as **Lampighter** enters again and dredges up painful memories, poke at their raw nerves and change everything.



*The Boys 2* will premiere on Amazon Prime Video with the first three episodes on September 4. New episodes will be available each Friday, culminating in an epic season finale on October 9. This season, the series will also have an after-show titled, *Prime Rewind: Inside The Boys* hosted by **Aisha Tyler**, which will debut on August 28.



# PEACE, PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY

A series of road and highway projects is on the cards to give impetus to growth in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. By ASHOK TANDON

Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, founder of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (predecessor of the present day Bharatiya Janata Party), sacrificed his life spearheading a nationwide Satyagrah (non-violent agitation) demanding complete integration of the state of Jammu & Kashmir into the Indian Union. Dr Mookerjee had defied the entry-permit order of the government on the J&K border on May 10, 1953 and courted arrest chanting: *Ek desh mein do vidhan, do pradhan aur do nishan nahin chahenge* (There can't be two constitutions, two prime ministers and two flags in one nation).

He was taken to Srinagar jail, where he died under mysterious circumstances on June 23, 1953. Little would have Dr Mookerjee then realised that his mission would be accomplished when a second generation party leader from Gujarat will lead the party.

The NDA government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 5, 2019, revoked the special status granted to the state of Jammu & Kashmir under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. It enabled people of the state to access all central government programmes and laws including right to reservation for disempowered, right to education and right to information, besides Minimum Wages Act and Minority Act.

The historic presidential order nullifying all the provisions of autonomy granted to the state was followed

by another landmark and strategically significant State Reorganisation Act, 2019, dividing the state into two Union Territories — Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Since then the NDA government, over the last one year, has been grappling with a series of challenges on various fronts, including border security, constructive engagement with international community on the J&K issue and domestic political resistance to converting the state into two union territories. And then there was stupendous challenge of fast-tracking all round development ensuring peace, prosperity and welfare of the people and providing corruption free governance in all the three regions.

The central government converted these challenges into an opportunity to undo the betrayal inflicted upon the people of J&K as well as Ladakh in the name of Article 370 by the family-run political parties who ruled the state for most of the last seven decades.

PM's personal appeal to the youth in the region, particularly the misguiding elements in the Kashmir valley, 'to be a part of this historic journey and walk together for a greater cause' has shown tangible results on the ground.

With both J&K and Ladakh as union territories (Jammu & Kashmir not permanently) directly under the centre, the Modi government unfolded an ambitious roadmap of peace and progress ushering in a new era of inclusive development and transpar-



ent governance in the entire region.

The Team-Modi adopted an integrated approach to build a state-of-the-art infrastructure and unleashed fast-track social welfare and employment generation schemes, especially among the Small, Medium & Micro Enterprises (MSME), including cottage, handicraft, handloom and horticulture enterprises.

Good quality all-weather roads and national highways enhancing the hitherto lacking inter-region and intra-region connectivity has gone a long way in promoting and creating fresh employment opportunities in the post-bifurcation period.

A region-wise performance audit of the promises made, over the last

one year, gives a fairly good account. Although a complete transformation in the landscape of this beautiful region will be on canvas once all the ongoing projects, especially several strategically important national highways, including tunnels in the tough terrains, become operational capable of coping with extreme weather conditions.

## KASHMIR

The Road Transport and Highways Ministry, with its arms like the NHAI and NHIDCL, in concert with the BRO and the state PWD, are currently engaged in completing a series of projects which will give impetus to growth and help the start-ups in establishing producer companies with focus on further development of sericulture, cold water fisheries, woodwork, cricket bats, saffron, handicrafts and horticulture products.

The ongoing projects include Srinagar-Jammu-Lakhanpur highway, the Qazigund-Banihal tunnel and Srinagar ring road.

## JAMMU

Jammu, with rapidly growing rail and road connectivity, including the Jammu ring road, is getting a huge boost to its economy with flourishing religious tourism and start-ups in businesses like wood grain work, mills, basmati rice trade, rice mills, carpets, electronic items and electric goods.

## LADAKH

Ladakh is witnessing an unprecedented boost to the infrastructure development with all-weather roads and highway network coming up in a big way in difficult terrains and strategic locations. Domestic and international tourism promotion has been given a big push.

Sky seems to be the limit of central financial packages to Ladakh resulting in a phenomenal growth in its farm-based economy through enhanced agriculture and livestock activities. An augmented irrigation facility for horticulture and cash crops has improved productivity putting additional money in farmers' pocket.

Last but not the least, the abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation of the state into two union territories has given the local communities in all three regions greater sense of participation in public discourse. It is discernible with the youth in the valley joining security forces and civil services and excelling in the field of education and sports.

Today there is greater awareness about women rights and girls education in the Himalayan region in Ladakh. People are coming forward to join hands with local administration in isolating anti-social elements and exposing Pakistan-sponsored attempts at radicalisation of youth.

(The author is a senior journalist and a member of Prasar Bharati Board.)



## DDA goes digital

In order to facilitate the public interface, Land Disposal department of Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is successfully implementing e-mutation (Online Mutation Application System) under the computerisation project 'IDLI System' for plotted properties.

Now, they are introducing two more public services namely e-conversion (online system for conversion from leasehold to freehold of plotted properties) and e-EOT (online application for extension of time).

In order to contain the spread of novel Coronavirus, this initiative will also help in applying and monitoring DDA's online public services without visiting offices. This service would be inaugurated and opened to public today by Anurag Jain, Vice Chairman, DDA. It will reduce the time of processing and bring in transparency. It will be easy to apply, process and monitor the property conversion and extension of time application online from anytime and anywhere.

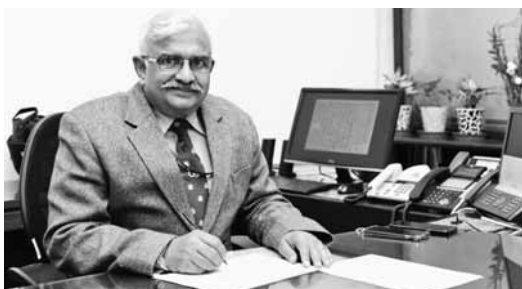
No offline application for conversion and EOT (extension of time) of plotted properties

will be entertained. It is the first end to end public service interface of DDA, which is conceptualised and executed by Subu R. Commissioner (Land Disposal) of DDA.

All the three services can be availed through single username and password.

For applying online conversion application, applicant have to register with DDA public services portal of Land Disposal department. An one time password will be sent on the registered email and mobile of the applicant for login. After that, applicant will fill applicant's detail, relation with allottee, property detail, uploading scanned copy of requisite documents and making online payment of initially conversion charges/processing fee. A registration ID of e-conversion and e-EOT will be sent through an auto generated e-mail for future reference. Stage wise alerts will be sent to applicant.

IDLI System is also working on e-restoration (restoration of cancelled lease of plotted properties) and e-appointment (online public appointment).



## GM Northern Railway holds performance review meeting

Rajiv Chaudhry, General Manager Northern & North Central Railways held a performance review meeting with the departmental heads of Northern Railway through video conferencing. Among other things special emphasis was given on train operations during the rainy season. The running of trains has its own challenges in the monsoons which includes water logging, inundation and collection of mud and pebbles on the tracks. He advised everyone to be active and vigilant to maintain top operational capabilities. He also added that in the checking of tracks, major and minor bridges and crossings

should be thoroughly checked by increasing patrolling.

He also called upon the concerned department to clear vegetation from the embankments and the Forest Department for tree chopping wherever required.

Indian Railways is focusing on increasing the mobility of the passenger and freight trains across the project. The sections have been defined in all zones where infrastructure

is to be upgraded to facilitate running of trains upto 160 kmph. GM emphasised on the need of periodic overhauling of the rolling stock i.e. locomotives, coaches and wagons to increase their working abilities. Doubling and electrification of high density routes are to be taken up, for this Detailed Project Reports (DPR) should be prepared and submitted on priority.

Taking note of the working of the Business Development Units of the five divisions, GM lauded their efforts. He stated that freight transportation, both inter and intra state, should be targeted upon.

As a part of the observance of the 'Atma Nirbhar Week', three facilities of Ordnance Factory Board were dedicated to the nation by the Minister of Defence. They are:

- Manufacturing facility for sighting devices for T-90 Tanks at the Opto Electronics Factory, Dehra Dun.

The facility comprises ISO-6: Class 1,000 and ISO-7: Class 10,000 level clean environment rooms for the production of various

## OFB ENHANCES EFFICIENCY

high end Opto Electronics and Electronics assemblies/sub-assemblies of T-90 systems and Stabilised Remote Controlled Gun (SRCG) project.

The automated assembly line for the production of Pinaka Rockets at the Ordnance Factory, Chandrapur.

The system has been conceptualised and developed

indigenously by OF Chanda with M/s Godrej and Boyce, Mumbai. The automated assembly will not only enhance the production capacity but would also be more efficient as it seeks to do away with most of the manual operations. The assembly line has automated safety features and facilities for monitoring the quality of production.

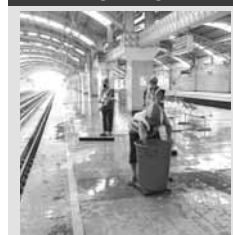
□ The assembly and test-

ing facility of SRGC at the Ordnance Factory, Tiruchirappalli.

The SRGC is a 12.7 mm M2 NATO standard Machine Gun for marine applications. The modern facility with specialised buildings and equipment is for the assembly and for conducting factory acceptance tests of this gun.

These modern, indigenously conceptualised facilities will go a long way in enhancing productivity, quality and efficiency.

## IN SHORT



Kolkata Metro has been observing cleanliness week from August 10 to 16. Special focus has been given to cleanliness of track, station offices, platform and adjoining areas, toilets, railway colonies, drains, water vending points, work sites and hospital. Emphasis is being given to the collection and disposal of plastic wastes in these areas.



As per the directive of the Railway Board, under Swachh Rail Swachh Bharat, special cleanliness drive is being organised in the Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW). It will be carried out in all the offices and workshop premises. It will also be carried out in the Dankuni Unit of CLW.

GAIL (India) Limited has been included in the FTSE4Good Index Series for the fourth time in a row, affirming the company's commitment towards Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) practices in the oil and gas sector. The index series measures the performance of companies demonstrating strong ESG practices. The



FTSE4Good Index Series are used by a wide variety of market participants to create and assess responsible investment funds and other products. GAIL Chairman & Managing Director Manoj Jain said, "I am pleased that the company has been included in the series for the fourth year. This is a proof of our commitment towards sustainable development while also doing business responsibly and focusing on our stakeholders."



Government-owned Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC), a NBFC, signed a MoA with District Administration, Siddharthnagar, Uttar Pradesh for construction of two modular operation theatre rooms in the district hospital. Under the MoA, PFC will provide financial assistance of close to ₹94 lakh to the District Administration under its CSR initiative. M Prabhakar Das, CGM (CSR&SD), PFC and Dr. Dinesh Kumar Chaudhary, Dy. CMO, Siddharthnagar, signed the agreement on behalf of respective organisations. The pact is intended to provide support to the Siddharthnagar District Administration to develop the necessary infrastructure to reduce Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR).

## Max Bupa introduces ReAssure insurance plan

Max Bupa — one of the standalone health insurers, has introduced 'ReAssure' — a comprehensive health insurance plan that provides unlimited sum insured for any type of hospitalisation including the ones related to COVID-19. This allows consumers to make as many claims as required for themselves or for family members covered in the same policy, for same or different illness in a year, at no additional cost. A single claim under ReAssure benefit will be payable up to the base sum insured amount. In a nutshell, the customers will never fall short of coverage which is critical to protect against unforeseen medical expenditure towards all kinds of diseases, including COVID. Even in case of critical illnesses like kidney dialysis or cancer, when patients often need hospitalisation multiple times in the same year, unlimited coverage in the product will prove to be extremely useful.

For instance, a family of four are insured with Max Bupa ReAssure policy with ₹10 lakh floater sum insured. In the event of them getting diagnosed with COVID or any other disease covered in the policy and needs hospitalisation, then s/he can



claim coverage up to ₹10 lakh along with the ReAssure benefit getting triggered. Next claim onwards an additional amount of ₹10 lakh per claim for as many number of claims as needed will be available for any insured or any illness in the same year. The benefit will be triggered from the first claim, even if two family members get hospitalised at the same time.

The product comes with a 'Booster Benefit' that doubles the sum insured in just two claim free years. If no claim was made during the year, then for the next year the sum insured will increase by 50 percent. If in the second year also there is no claim, then there will be another 50 percent increase in sum insured which amounts to a total 100 per cent increase in sum insured in just two years. Moreover, in case a claim is

made only for COVID in a year, there will be no impact on Booster Benefit which means sum insured will not be impacted and will still increase by 50 percent; up to a maximum of 100 percent.

Commenting on the launch of ReAssure Health Insurance Plan, Krishnan Ramachandran, MD & CEO, Max Bupa Health Insurance said, "ReAssure Health Insurance promises our customers three things which are relevant in times of COVID — Assurance in the form of multiple customer benefits; Accessibility through our quality network across the country and Affordability through the various financial benefits available under the product. The Max Bupa Covid-19 survey showed that 71 percent people now realise the benefits

health insurance and 57 percent have a strong preference for comprehensive health insurance plans for protection against any unforeseen medical emergencies."

Dr Bhabatosh Mishra, Director - Products, Underwriting & Claims, Max Bupa Health Insurance said, "India is one of the most underpenetrated health insurance markets globally, with people either having no health insurance cover being inadequately covered. Considering this, we have launched ReAssure which has the potential to revolutionise how people perceive insurance in the country. Each product benefit has been conceptualised with the intent that every customer is adequately covered at any given point in time. At Max Bupa, we acknowledge that people want to be financially secured in these difficult times, hence we have designed a truly cashless product that will ensure there is no financial burden on them once they opt for this policy."

The ReAssure plan is available on individual and family floater basis, with sum insured ranging from ₹3 lakh up to ₹1 crore.

## LOVE FOR WRITING

deal with IRS Officer, Neha Chakravarty.

A science graduate, Chakravarty has an insatiable passion for writing and considers it as a medium to connect with inner soul. Her passion has increased manifold since

she started to scribble. She is now ready to make a mark with her two poetry collections, *Impressions* and *Reflections*.

In the words of Nitish Raj, Co-Founder, Litteria, "We are delighted to sign Chakravarty who

brings a huge amount of talent and unparalleled creativity in her writings. She is surely going to be one of the doyens of the literary fraternity in future and we are more than happy to pitch her masterpieces with Big Foot Publications."

## HARYANA CM INAUGURATES PLASMA BANK

Manohar Lal Khattar, Chief Minister of Haryana, Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Labour & Employment, Govt of India inaugurated plasma bank at ESIC Medical College and Hospital, Faridabad.

During his address, Gangwar informed that the ESIC has been working to provide social security to its insured persons. In the last 67 years of journey, that day, the services of ESIC have expanded to about 566 districts out of 722 and about 12 crore beneficiaries are receiving ESIC facilities. In this crisis situation, 21 ESIC hospitals have been converted into dedicated COVID hospitals. More than 2,400 isolation beds, 550 ICU/HDU beds with 200 ventilators have been made available. Quarantine facility (1300 Beds) has been made



functional in four ESIC hospitals at Alwar (Rajasthan), Bhiha, Patna (Bihar), Gulbarga (Karnataka) and Korba (Chhattisgarh). Besides, Covid-19 testing facility has been made available at ESIC hospital, Faridabad (Haryana), Basaidapur (New Delhi) and Sanaathnagar (Hyderabad). Plasma therapy is also being provided at ESIC Hospitals, Faridabad and Sanathnagar for the treatment of serious COVID patients. Gangwar commended the efforts being made by ESIC, an organisation under his Ministry, to combat COVID-19.



## No action for Blue Tigers this year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian football team will not see any action this year with the Asian qualifying matches for the 2022 FIFA World Cup on Wednesday getting postponed to 2021 owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Asian Football Confederation postponed all men's qualifiers scheduled in October and November for the 2022 World Cup and the 2023 Asian Cup. India's last international match was the joint qualifying round match against Oman in Muscat in November last year, which they had lost 0-1.

Though out of contention for a place in the next round of World Cup qualifiers, India are still in the reckoning for a spot in the 2023 Asian Cup. They were scheduled to play Qatar at home on October

8 followed by matches against Afghanistan (home) and Bangladesh (away) in November.

A third-place finish in the group will help India get a direct berth in the third round of the qualifiers for the 2023 Asian Cup.

Both FIFA and AFC stated that the decision was taken keeping in mind the safety of all participants during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The games will be rescheduled in 2021.

India are currently fourth in Group E with three points from five games. Qatar top the group with 13 points with Oman a point behind them in second.

Eight group winners and four best runners-up will progress to the continent's 12-team final qualifying stage for the World Cup.

## LATE WINNER

Ocampos' 88th minute header break Wolves hearts; Shakhtar thump Basel to reach semis

AFP ■ DUISBURG

Sevilla qualified for the semi-finals of the Europa League on Tuesday after Lucas Ocampos' late header broke Wolverhampton Wanderers' hearts, while Shakhtar Donetsk thumped Basel 4-1 to join the Spaniards in the last four.

Five-time competition winners Sevilla face Manchester United in Cologne on Sunday thanks to a brilliant header from Argentine Ocampos with less than two minutes left on the clock which gave them a deserved 1-0 win, while Shakhtar take on Inter Milan on Monday in another intriguing tie.

Sevilla dominated their English opponents over the course of the match, as a tired-looking Wolves



Sevilla players celebrate after Lucas Ocampos scores Spanish club's first goal against Wolves Europa League/Twitter

dreams of European glory ended with a whimper.

"I am very proud of my players. We needed to have lots of patience against a very good team," said Sevilla coach Julen Lopetegui, whose team are now unbeaten in 19 matches in all competitions, to BT Sport.

"We have ambition we work very hard, but we are going to play against Manchester United," the biggest team in world football.

Premier League outfit Wolves thought they were set to make the perfect start in the 11th minute when

Adam Traore set off on a sensational surge towards goal from his own half and was chopped down in the area by Diego Carlos.

However, Raul Jimenez, who had scored all of his previous eight penalties for Wolves, sent a weak spot-kick towards the goal.

There were claims that Bounoun had left his line while Sevilla players seemed to enter the area before the

penalty was taken, but in any case, that was to be Wolves' last shot on target of the match as chances became hard to come by.

In Gelsenkirchen, Shakhtar booked their spot in the last four with a commanding win over Basel that will give Inter Milan something to think about ahead of their semi-final clash on Monday.

"I'm feeling amazing because we have worked hard and we trust we can reach the final," said goalscorer Junior Moraes.

## Serena sets Venus clash in Top Seed Open

AFP ■ LEXINGTON

Serena Williams had to fight for a winning return from her six-month coronavirus lay-off on Tuesday, defeating lowly ranked Bernarda Pera in three sets at the WTA Top Seed Open tournament in Kentucky.

Serena, who before Tuesday had not played a competitive game since a Fed Cup appearance in February, came from behind to defeat American world number 60 Pera 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 in two hours and 15 minutes at the Top Seed Tennis Club in Lexington.

Venus Williams started her campaign with a straight sets win over Victoria Azarenka in a battle of former World No 1 players. The 40-year-old American won 6-3, 6-2 and set up an exciting encounter between the Williams sisters in the second round.

Rising American star Coco Gauff had to work hard for her straight-set win over qualifier Caroline Dolehide, winning 7-5, 7-5 while Canadian qualifier Leylah Fernandez knocked out seventh seed

Sloane Stephens in their opener.

This week's tournament — the first WTA event in the US since the Covid-19 pandemic — is taking place without spectators.

Williams, 38, later revealed that the sedate surroundings had suited her game.

"It was a really calm atmosphere. It was really chill," Williams said. "I can't say I disliked it. I didn't mind it at all. I've been through so many things in my career and this was totally different. I think I won today because I was calm for once in my career. Kind of reminds me of junior days. Something nostalgic about that. I kind of enjoyed it."

The 23-time Grand Slam singles champion looked to be flirting with an early exit in the second set, but recovered from 0-40 down at 4-4 before holding and eventually winning the set.

"I just knew I could do better," Williams said. "It was an interesting game. I just had to get used to her game a little bit. She played really well."



## CSK expect Dhoni to play until 2022

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chennai Super Kings CEO K. Sridharan said that CSK expect Dhoni to play until 2022.

"I am getting updates through the media only, saying he has been training in Jharkhand in indoor nets. But we don't have to worry about the skipper, boss. We don't worry about him at all. He knows his responsibilities and he will take care of himself and his team."

N. Srivastava, the vice-chairman and managing director of India Cements, owners of the CSK franchise, in January said that Dhoni would be retained by the team for



— 2022," Viswanathan was quoted as saying by *indiatoday.in*.

"I am getting updates through the media only, saying he has been training in Jharkhand in indoor nets. But we don't have to worry about the skipper, boss. We don't worry about him at all. He knows his responsibilities and he will take care of himself and his team."

N. Srivastava, the vice-chairman and managing director of India Cements, owners of the CSK franchise, in January said that Dhoni would be retained by the team for

## RR fielding coach tests virus +ve

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rajasthan Royals' fielding coach Dishaan Yagnik has tested positive for Covid-19, the IPL team announced on Wednesday, making it the first such case among the league franchises ahead of their departure next week to this year's tournament venue, the UAE.

Yagnik is currently in his hometown Udaipur and has been advised to get admitted to hospital for his 14-day quarantine.

"Post 14 days, Dishaan will be undergoing two tests as per the protocols of BCCI. On Wednesday, making it the first such case among the league franchises ahead of their departure next week to this year's tournament venue, the UAE."

Yagnik is currently in his hometown Udaipur and has been advised to get admitted to hospital for his 14-day quarantine.

## Unacademy to fight for IPL title sponsorship rights

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Education technology company Unacademy, which is already one of IPL's sponsors, is eyeing the league's title sponsorship rights and is set to submit its bid to replace Chinese mobile phone company Vivo this season.

A BCCI official confirmed that Unacademy has picked up bid papers but refrained from making any comments beyond that.

"I can confirm that Unacademy has shown interest and picked the bid papers. The all-rounders' fitness will be a key factor in the bidding process. It is a pretty serious. So Patanjali if they

## Eng will sweep Pak series: Vaughan

PTI ■ KARACHI

Southampton's former England captain Michael Vaughan predicted the hosts will sweep the three-test series against Pakistan despite the absence of batsman Ben Stokes for the last two matches.

Stokes was part of the England team which pulled off a thrilling three-wicket victory in the first Test at Old Trafford.

"(Stokes) plays a big role in that dressing room. Vaughan wrote in a blog, although he had no doubts about the depth in the England squad.

"Even though Ben Stokes is out, I think England will be no strong. England will win the series 3-0, that's my prediction."

He also felt England might rest veteran quick James Anderson in the second Test beginning on Thursday.

"I was surprised if he plays back-to-back games, so I think he will be rested. Maybe Sam Curran will come in for him or Mark Wood," he added. "Zak Crawley will probably come in for Ben Stokes."

bid, will have competition," the senior official told PTI.

Vivo, which annually paid ₹440 crore, dropped out as title sponsor this year due to the Sino-India border stand-off.

The BCCI is now looking at a lesser value — between ₹300 to 350 crore — for a period of four months and 13 days.

The official said Unacademy is a part of IPL's central sponsorship pool with other companies like Dream11 and Paytm.

Yes, Unacademy is already an IPL's central sponsor's pool 2020 to 2023," the BCCI official said.

## National hockey camps to resume on Aug 19

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The training camps for India's national hockey teams will go ahead as scheduled from August 19 in Bengaluru despite half a dozen men's team players, including skipper Manpreet Singh, being hospitalised after testing positive for Covid-19.

Both the men's and women's teams will resume training at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) South Centre in Bengaluru.

"The Indian men's and Indian women's hockey teams are scheduled to resume sports activities from, Wednesday 19th August 2020, following the completion of their 14-day quarantine period," the SAI said in a statement on Wednesday.

The decision was taken after a discussion with the game's stakeholders, including Hockey India officials and chief coaches of both the teams.

"After giving the utmost priority to the safety and well-being of all the athletes, it has been decided that the sporting activities will be resumed at SAI's National Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, as scheduled earlier."

The camp for male hockey players was uncertain after six of them tested positive for Covid-19. The women's camp, however, was never in doubt



after all of them tested negative for the dreaded virus.

Currently, 33 male and 24 female players are in Bengaluru for the camp.

The light intensity national camp is expected to continue till September 30.

Men's hockey team chief coach Graham Reid said the health and wellbeing of the players and support staff will be the top priority during the camp.

The six Covid positive players will be integrated into the

## All 6 players shifted to hospital

PTI ■ BANGALURU

Five Covid-19 positive hockey players have been shifted to a hospital in Bengaluru as a precautionary measure after striker Mandeep Singh was transferred to the facility following a dip in his blood oxygen level, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said on Wednesday.

"The Sports Authority of India decided to shift the other five players, to SS Spars Multi-specialty hospital in Bengaluru on Tuesday afternoon, as a precautionary measure," the SAI said.

"The decision to hospitalise them was taken so as to ensure that the players were attended to at all times and could be given the best possible treatment. All six athletes are in good health and recovering well."

PTI

group once they recover from the virus.

"They are in good spirits, and are looking forward to a quick recovery. Once recovered and after following protocol of quarantine, we look forward to have them back with us," Reid said.

## Robinson replaces Stokes for 2nd Test

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Fast bowler Ollie Robinson replaced Ben Stokes as England on Wednesday named a 14-member squad for the second Test against Pakistan, starting Thursday at The Ageas Bowl.

The 26-year-old trained with the squad during the West Indies series and took

## Hafeez breaks bio-bubble

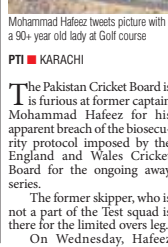
PTI ■ KARACHI

Mohammad Hafeez tweets picture with a 90+ year old lady at Golf course

The Pakistan Cricket Board is furious at former captain Mohammad Hafeez for his apparent breach of the biosecurity protocol imposed by the England and Wales Cricket Board for the ongoing away series.

The former skipper, who is not a part of the Test squad is there for the limited overs leg.

On Wednesday, Hafeez



tweeted a picture of himself with an elderly lady from the golf course adjacent to the team hotel despite strict instructions that they shouldn't interact with anyone outside the bubble.

A source close to the Pakistan team said Hafeez's breach of protocol had upset everyone as all players had been told specifically to avoid interaction with anyone outside the bio secure bubble, since the country has been open to the public in Southampton. Hafeez put himself in trouble when he posted a tweet of himself and the lady, whom he called his grandmother, as inspirational.

The ECB medical team is aware of the breach of protocol and Hafeez will most likely have to isolate himself for five days and then undergo two negative Covid-19 tests before he rejoins the team again.

The ECB is taking any breach of the biosecurity protocol very seriously and fast bowler Jofra Archer was reprimanded and was dropped for the second Test against West Indies after he also breached the biosecurity bubble by going to his apartment in Brighton.

## Eng will sweep Pak series: Vaughan

PTI ■ KARACHI

Southampton's former England captain Michael Vaughan predicted the hosts will sweep the three-test series against Pakistan despite the absence of batsman Ben Stokes for the last two matches.

Stokes was part of the England team which pulled off a thrilling three-wicket victory in the first Test at Old Trafford.

"(Stokes) plays a big role in that dressing room. Vaughan wrote in a blog, although he had no doubts about the depth in the England squad.

"Even though Ben Stokes is out, I think England will be no strong. England will win the series 3-0, that's my prediction."

He also felt England might rest veteran quick James Anderson in the second Test beginning on Thursday.

"I was surprised if he plays back-to-back games, so I think he will be rested. Maybe Sam Curran will come in for him or Mark Wood," he added. "Zak Crawley will probably come in for Ben Stokes."

tweeted a picture of himself with an elderly lady from the golf course adjacent to the team hotel despite strict instructions that they shouldn't interact with anyone outside the bubble.

A source close to the Pakistan team said Hafeez's breach of protocol had upset everyone as all players had been told specifically to avoid interaction with anyone outside the bio secure bubble, since the country has been open to the public in Southampton. Hafeez put himself in trouble when he posted a tweet of himself and the lady, whom he called his grandmother, as inspirational.

The ECB medical team is aware of the breach of protocol and Hafeez will most likely have to isolate himself for five days and then undergo two negative Covid-19 tests before he rejoins the team again.

The ECB is taking any breach of the biosecurity protocol very seriously and fast bowler Jofra Archer was reprimanded and was dropped for the second Test against West Indies after he also breached the biosecurity bubble by going to his apartment in Brighton.

## Shakib could return from ban during SL tour

PTI ■ DHAKA

Serving a ban for not reporting corrupt approaches, Bangladesh's premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is likely to return to the national fold for a tour of Sri Lanka later this year, with his suspension ending on October 29.

The southpaw was banned for two years, one year of it was suspended for failing to report corrupt approaches by an alleged bookie during the IPL.

Bangladesh's tour of Sri Lanka is more or less confirmed and given the schedule, Shakib could feature in the proposed three-match T20 series.

"I think Shakib being out for a year is not that much different to the rest of our squad who have been out for six or seven months as well," Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo was quoted as



having to organise a bit of game time for Shakib, as well as for all the players.

The all-rounders' fitness will be taken into consideration before picking him. "It is very difficult to get into international cricket without any sort of cricket. I think we need to try to find some opportunities for him to play some games. He is a world-class player so I am sure he will get back into the team soon, but fitness is an important thing," the coach said.

According to the report, Sri Lanka Cricket chief executive Mohan de Silva said the two boards have reached an agreement on Bangladesh's departure date, which has been set as September 24.

But there are still discussions over whether it will be a two or three-match Test series after the BCB requested a three-match T20I series in addition to the

official schedule.

Shakib is set to start training at the BCB facility ahead of his return to competitive cricket.

Domingo, however, added that Shakib would have to play unofficial cricket matches as a suspended cricketer before he is drafted into the national team.

It is something that we have to discuss with the selectors. I don't think he can play any official game before October 29, so all games that he plays have to be unofficial games. It might be inter-squad games but we need to have clarity if he is allowed to play that."

He has to make sure he is fit and that he starts hitting balls and bowling some balls. Once we assemble before heading off to Sri Lanka — when that tour is confirmed — we will get closer to making a decision," he said.

have to organise a bit of game time for Shakib, as well as for all the players.

The all-rounders' fitness will be taken into consideration before picking him. "It is very difficult to get into international cricket without any sort of cricket. I think we need to try to find some opportunities for him to play some games. He is a world-class player so I am sure he will get back into the team soon, but fitness is an important thing," the coach said.

According to the report, Sri Lanka Cricket chief executive Mohan de Silva said the two boards have reached an agreement on Bangladesh's departure date, which has been set as September 24.

But there are still discussions over whether it will be a two or three-match Test series after the BCB requested a three-match T20I series in addition to the

official schedule.

Shakib is set to start training at the BCB facility ahead of his return to competitive cricket.

Domingo, however, added that Shakib would have to play unofficial cricket matches as a suspended cricketer before he is drafted into the national team.

It is something that we have to discuss with the selectors. I don't think he can play any official game before October 29, so all games that he plays have to be unofficial games. It might be inter-squad games but we need to have clarity if he is allowed to play that."

He has to make sure he is fit and that he starts hitting balls and bowling some balls. Once we assemble before heading off to Sri Lanka — when that tour is confirmed — we will get closer to making a decision," he said.