

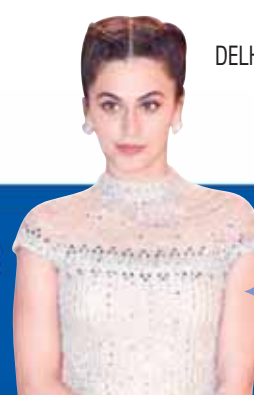
OPINION 6
OF SRI LANKA AND
THE ANDAMANS**WORLD 8**
'SUSPICIOUS' BLACKOUT STRIKES
IRAN'S NATANZ NUCLEAR SITE**SPORT 12**
PUNJAB VS ROYALS
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SUIT UP, SMILE
UP, SHOW UP:
TAAPSEE
10 VIVACITY

5 new vaccines by year end: Govt

Record over 1.57 lakh cases in a day as Covid 2nd wave grips India



A policeman tries to ensure people wear face masks as a precaution against the coronavirus at a Sunday market in Jammu on Sunday

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India celebrated the beginning of three-day Tika utsav (vaccination festival) on Sunday amid reports of a massive shortage of vaccine in several States and indication that by the end of the third quarter of this year India will receive Covid-19 vaccines from five additional manufacturers.

Meanwhile, India recorded a new all-time high daily Covid-19 count at 1,57,028 cases with Maharashtra contributing maximum at 63,294. "India currently has 2 Covid-19 vaccines being manufactured locally: Covishield

and Covaxin, and we can expect five more vaccines by Q3 2021. These vaccines are Sputnik V vaccine (in collaboration with Dr Reddy's), Johnson & Johnson vaccine (in collaboration with Biological E), Novavax vaccine (in collaboration with Serum India), Zydus Cadila's vaccine, and Bharat Biotech's Intranasal Vaccine. Safety and efficacy are the Union Government's primary concerns while granting emergency use authorisation (EUA) to any Covid-19 vaccine in the country," news agency ANI reported, citing top Government sources.

The report said out of the

Covid-19 IN INDIA	
TOTAL CASES:	1,35,12,493 (+1,57,028)
DEATHS:	1,70,066 (+761)
RECOVERED:	1,21,47,081 (+68,748)
ACTIVE:	11,89,856
MAHARASHTRA:	34,07,245
KERALA:	11,67,191
KARNATAKA:	10,65,290
TAMIL NADU:	9,33,434
DELHI:	7,25,197 (+10,774)

UP schools shut, social gathering restricted to 50 in closed space

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh Government on Sunday ordered the closure of all schools till April 30 and directed the imposition of a night curfew in the districts, which report 100 new infections in a day or have 500 active cases.

The Government ordered that not more than 100 people be allowed to assemble at an open space, and 50 in closed spaces.

Detailed report on P5

"Sputnik is expected to be available latest by June if all goes well Johnson and Johnson (Bio E) will be available by August, Cadilla Zydus will also be available by August, Novavax (Serum) by September, and Nasal Vaccine (Bharat) by October," the source said, on when the vaccines would be available for use.

The country is facing a huge shortage of vaccines and several vaccination centres have closed down in Maharashtra due to this. Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Telangana and Punjab have complained of a shortage of vaccines.

India bans virus drug Remdesivir's export

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Anticipating increase in the demand for Remdesivir injection in the coming days in the wake of a spike in Covid-19 cases, the Centre on Sunday took a string of measures from prohibition of the export of the anti-viral drug as well as that of Remdesivir Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) with an aim to ensure sufficient availability in the domestic market.

The Centre's decision to ban the export of Remdesivir comes in the wake of reports of its shortage and hoarding resulting in inflated prices of the drug in black market. There have been reports of Remdesivir shortage in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.

The Government has asked authorities to cap the price of Remdesivir between ₹1,100 and ₹1,400 per vial and urged about a dozen pharmaceutical companies, including Mylan, Hetero Healthcare, Jubilant Life Sciences, Cipla, Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Zydus Cadila and Sun Pharmaceuticals — to scale up to their maximum capacity of 31.6 lakh vials per month and lower its MRP (maximum retail price).

The Government has also advised all domestic manufacturers of Remdesivir to display details of their stockists/distributors on their website.

In order to facilitate access to the drug while the Department of Pharmaceuticals has been in contact with domestic manufacturers to ramp up the production.

Negative report must for travelling to Himachal from seven worst-hit States

Shimla: The Himachal Pradesh Government on Sunday made it mandatory for people coming from seven States which

have witnessed a spike in coronavirus cases to show a Covid-19 negative test report on entering the State.

Stay indoors to obviate Delhi lockdown: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the national Capital recording whopping 10,774 fresh cases of Covid-19 on Sunday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal termed the situation very worrisome and urged people not to step out of homes unless it is urgent.

The Chief Minister said the ongoing peak has surpassed the intensity of November 2020. He asked people to use face masks and sanitisers and maintain social distancing.

Kejriwal said, "Corona is rising rapidly in the entire country. In Delhi too, it has increased significantly in the past 10-15 days. It is the fourth wave in Delhi and it is very dangerous. It is spreading very fast so much so that it is beyond the understanding of many people."

The Centre should remove the age bar for vaccination as 65 per cent of Covid patients are below 45-years. "If 65 per cent patients are less than 45 years of age, we can break its cycle with vaccination of these group. I request the Central Government to lift restriction on age and vaccinate people on mass level," he said.

Kejriwal added the Government does not want to impose lockdown in Delhi but

Kejriwal terms situation serious



such a situation may arise if there is a rush to the hospitals and beds are unavailable for serious patients. "We need your cooperation. If your cooperation is received and situation of hospitals is under control, there will be no need to impose lockdown in Delhi. But, if beds in hospitals fall short, then lockdown may have to be imposed," he said.

"Lockdown should be imposed by any Government only when its hospital system has collapsed. I am not in favour of lockdown. I believe lockdown is not a solution to deal with Covid-19. It should be imposed if hospital system collapses," he said.

He, however, asked people to remain in home isolation if infected with the virus instead of rushing to hospitals, saying the most important thing is that hospital beds are kept vacant for serious patients.

Opp seeks cancellation of CBSE, ICSE Board exams X, XII exams scheduled from May 4

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Weeks ahead of the CBSE and ICSE Board examinations, political parties have expressed serious concern over the Centre's go-ahead to conduct the examinations amid the corona pandemic.

While the Congress has sought cancellation of the Board exams, saying it will be impossible to ensure safety of students at crowded exam centres, Shiv Sena appealed to the Centre to take a uniform decision on the board exams of Classes 10 and 12 across the country in the wake of different States and Boards having different opinions on the issues.

While former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said the decision to conduct the CBSE exams from May 4 should be reconsidered in view of the ris-



ing number of Covid-19 cases across the country, party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi wrote to Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank seeking cancellation of the Board exams. She also pointed out that it is our responsibility as political leaders to protect and guide the young.

According to the revised date sheet for CBSE Board exams 2021, the Class 10 exams would be held between May 4 and June 7 and those for Class 12 would be held between May 4 and June 15. CBSE officials have said exam centres across the country have been increased by 40-50 per cent to ensure social distancing among examinees. ICSE Board examinations as well as several States have also scheduled the Board examinations during the next two months.

"In the light of the devastating corona second wave, conducting CBSE exams must be reconsidered. All stakeholders must be consulted before making sweeping decisions. On how many counts does GOI intend to play with the future of India's youth?" Rahul asked through social media platform.

In her letter to the Education Minister, Priyanka said by forcing children to sit for these exams during a raging pandemic, the Government and the CBSE board will be held responsible if any exam centre becomes a hotspot with a large numbers of children becoming infected. "The Government and the CBSE board might want to consider whether they are prepared to own the legal liability for students or others who might be severely affected by the disease in this manner," she said.

She said with over one lakh cases of Covid-19 being reported across the country, lakh of children and parents have expressed fear of getting infected with coronavirus.

CBI grills Deshmukh's 2 aides over ₹100 cr extortion order to Vaze

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Sunday questioned two personal assistants of former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh in connection with allegations of corruption levelled against him by former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh.

Following the High Court directive for a CBI probe into the issue, Deshmukh had to resign from his post within hours of the order.

The agency had asked Deshmukh's personal assistants Sanjeev Palande and Kundan to appear before the CBI team in Mumbai for questioning in connection with the Preliminary Enquiry registered by it following an order of the Bombay High Court.

Sources said the duo appeared around 10.30 am at its office in Mumbai and were questioned for several hours.

In a letter addressed to Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Singh had alleged that Palande was pre-



sent when Deshmukh allegedly asked suspended Mumbai Police Assistant Inspector Sachin Vaze to extort over ₹100 crore a month from bars and restaurants of Mumbai numbering about 1,700, the sources said.

Vaze is facing an NIA probe in the case relating to the parking of an explosive-laden SUV near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's house in Mumbai.

In his statement before the CBI team, Vaze is said to have told the investigators that Kundan was present during one such conversation with the former Maharashtra Home Minister.



A medical shopkeeper pastes a notice of non-availability of Remdesivir injections outside his closed shop during weekend lockdown amid coronavirus pandemic, at wholesale medicine market in Bhopal on Sunday

CAPSULE

FIRMS FEAR ANOTHER EXODUS OF MIGRANTS
Coimbatore: With the second wave of Covid-19 sweeping across various parts of Tamil Nadu, some of the industrialists in the State are apprehensive of migrant workers leaving for their hometowns considering the health conditions.

PAWAR'S GALL BLADDER SURGERY TODAY: NCP
Mumbai: NCP chief Sharad Pawar was on Sunday admitted to a hospital here for the gall bladder surgery scheduled on Monday, party leader Nawab Malik said.

SANSKRIT REMAINS POPULAR IN CHINA
Beijing: Sanskrit studies are flourishing in China, over 2,000 years after the ancient Indian language was brought to this country along with Buddhism, making a profound impact on Chinese monarchs and scholars over the centuries, according to a distinguished professor here.

No state-wide lockdown, only corona curfew in cities: CM

Local Crisis Mgmt Groups in districts will take decisions as per conditions

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that in order to effectively prevent corona infection in the state, a spontaneous corona curfew will be implemented in cities. State-wide lockdown will not be imposed. Local Crisis Management Groups in the districts will take decisions after discussion with the public according to local conditions. Chouhan was talking to the media today after planting trees in Smart City Park.



Chouhan said that there are adequate beds and oxygen for the treatment of corona in all districts. Today 250 beds are being increased in Hamidia Hospital Bhopal, while RKDF Hospital is also being contracted. Discussions are on with other hospitals as well.

Chouhan said that there is a continuous supply of Remdesivir injections in hospitals. Total 4000 injections have arrived and today 10,000

more injections will come. Private hospitals are also being tied up with the company for injections.

Chouhan said that lockdown is not the solution to the problem. We also have to keep economic activities running. To prevent corona infection, the public is being made aware that they themselves do not leave the house without work. The spontaneous corona curfew is the most effective solution.

COVID IN MADHYA PRADESH		
Dist	Total Cases	Fresh Cases
Bhopal	58,127	793
Indore	78,511	919
Jabalpur	21,946	402

Guv: Janata Curfew will be effective in fighting Covid

Urges mohalla committees, sarpanchs to implement it

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Governor Anandiben Patel has said that Janata Curfew will prove to be very effective in preventing Corona infection. She urged the residential and mohalla committees in urban areas and sarpanchs in rural areas to effectively implement measures like Janata Curfew to curb corona infection.

Patel was taking an all party meeting from Raj Bhavan Lucknow on Sunday through video conferencing. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan participated in video conferencing from the

Mantralaya. In the V.C., Khajuraho MP and state president of Bharatiya Janata Party V.D. Sharma, P.C. Sharma of Indian National Congress, C.R. Gautam of Bahujan Samaj Party, Shailendra Shaily of Communist Party of India, Sachin Singh of Trinamool Congress, K. Jaswinder of Communist Party Marxist and Brijmohan Shrivastava of NCP were present besides Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang, Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Additional Chief Secretary Health Mohammad Suleman and others.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that the Corona crisis is big. Compared to the first peak of Corona in the state, more than twice the cases are being received this time.

In such a situation, everyone should team up in the fight

against Corona and defeat it. Chouhan said that we will have to fight this battle at three levels. Effectively preventing the infection of Corona with the cooperation of all, the best system of treatment of Corona in all the districts and vaccination of every person above 45 years of age. Also, in order to ensure that the economy of the state does not deteriorate, a voluntary corona curfew will be imposed in place of lockdown.

Anandiben said that all other precautions including wearing masks, sanitization and social distancing should be taken to check Covid infection. In this, the common people should come forward and cooperate.

Patel said that the media should be informed every day about the situation of Corona.

Continued on Page 3

2 kids die, 150 shanties gutted in fire in Noida

PTI ■ NOIDA/LUCKNOW

A major fire broke out in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Noida on Sunday, leaving two children dead and around 150 shanties destroyed, police said.

The fire broke out around 1 pm in the JJ cluster near Behlolpur village under Phase 3 police station limits, according to officials.

"Around a dozen fire tenders were deployed at the sight to control the blaze. The fire has been controlled now but due to wind there is still smoke left," Deputy Commissioner of Police, Central Noida, Harish Chander said.

"Around 150 shanties got destroyed in the fire and the bodies of two children have been recovered. The exact cause of the fire is being ascertained," he said.

350 people detained for violating lockdown

Imposed from Friday 6pm for 60 hours in city

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

In the complete lockdown action under section 188 IPC on 350 people who violated section 144 was taken during lockdown which was imposed from Friday 6 pm for 60 hours.

Special checking and patrolling by blockade and barricading at more than 200 places by more than 3000 officers and employees in the district in view of peace and security arrangements in the state capital was done.

From March 20 till date action against 1000 people under section 188 IPC has been taken and around 6000 people have been penalised who are found not wearing face masks in public places.

Using PA system announcements are being made by more than 100 mobile patrolling parties in different areas to follow the guide line of the government for the prevention of corona.

People were made aware regarding wearing masks compulsorily in public places. Follow Corona guideline.

During the lockdown today action has been taken against 150 persons for roam-

ing outside without necessary work, without mask, and during the complete lockdown. In the above cases, police have found that the people were moving in public places without masks, roaming in vehicles unnecessarily, illegal selling liquor.

Continuous action has been taken against those violating lockdown and Corona guidelines and these actions would be continued.

Bhopal police had appealed to citizens to wear the mask compulsorily in public places, to maintain social distancing. Participate in public participation by helping police and administration in prevention of corona infection.



A health worker administers Covid-19 vaccine to a beneficiary at a vaccination camp during nationwide 'Tika Utsav' programme at Sheela Mata temple in Bhopal on Sunday
Pioneer photo

Hailstorm, thunder activities likely in State: Met Dept

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Abrupt changes hailstorm, thundery activities, gusty winds would be witnessed in the state which has been warned by Met department; changed weather conditions would be witnessed in the next 24 hours in different parts of the state.

The Jabalpur, Sagar, Bhopal and Hoshangabad divisions have reported rainfall in the past 24 hours.

Weather in state capital remained normal with partial cloudy conditions and day temperature at 38.3 degree Celsius. According to forecast day temperature would further

dip around 37 degree Celsius as thundery activities, lightening and speedy winds are likely to occur in the next 24 hours. The weather conditions would remain partially cloudy.

The Met department has issued warning of thundery activities, lightening and speedy winds would be witnessed in Bhopal, Hoshangabad, Shahdol and Rewa divisions and Khandwa, Khargone, Burhanpur, Guna and Ashok Nagar in the next 24 hours.

Harsher weather conditions witnessing thundery activities, lightening, speedy winds and hail storms for brief periods would be reported in Sagar and Jabalpur.

Online discussion held on birth anniversary of Kasturba Gandhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

On the occasion of 152nd Birth Anniversary of Kasturba Gandhi, an Online Discussion was held on Facebook. The online discussion was held here on Sunday.

In the discussion Anuradha Shankar Singh, ADGP, Madhya Pradesh Police, R.K. Paliwal IRS (Retired) and renowned Singer Megha Dalton were present. The online discussion was organised by youth group Ansh Happiness Society.

Anuradha Shankar beauti-

fully spoke how Baa wasn't just a shadow of Gandhi but an independent opinionated woman who never failed to be Gandhi's leading light in his needling moments.

RK Paliwal emphasised on Baa's eminent personality and the way she broke Patriarchal norms around her though small actions because of which people followed her. He also reiterated that Baa wasn't just an ideal human but much more than that, she is an ideology.

Megha Dalton, through her magnificent voice remind-

ed us of the power of Baa's ideals through which she identified herself on grassroot level and because of which she is still considered an idol in many Adivasi communities of Jharkhand. The discussion was moderated by Yashasvi Kumud.

Kasturba Bai was an Indian political activist. She married Mohandas Gandhi in 1883. In association with her husband and son, she was involved in the Indian independence movement in British-ruled India. She was very influenced by her husband Mahatma Gandhi.

30-yr-old man dies in accident

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A 30-year-old man died in a road accident after his motorbike met accident at Runhana village under Berasia police station area on Saturday. Police said that the injured was taken to hospital he was declared dead. Police said that the man met accident while he was moving towards Bhopal.

The deceased was identified as Manoj Vanshkaer who was returning in the evening when he met accident to save a cow which appeared on the road. After the preliminary investigation the body was sent for the post mortem. The police have registered a case under section 174 of the CrPC and started further investigation. The locals informed the police and on the receipt of the information police team rushed to the spot and started investigation.

Meanwhile, a 35-year-old man died after his bike skid at Narela Damodar village; Berasia police have started investigation. The deceased, identified as Manmohan Sahu had gone for some work and met accident near his village.

Online dance workshop to be held today by The Dance Arena

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The young dance aspirants will learn the grooves and moves of dance at an online dance workshop. To be held on Monday, the workshop is being organised by The Dance Arena, Bhopal. The workshop will much fun for the aspirants.

The workshop is organised to let the Bhopalites learn about the international dance forms. The workshop is being conducted in collaboration with The Dance Arena, a dance company Bhopal where the main instructor along with his

team will teach basic moves of Jazz, dance drama and contemporary forms to people. Shrey Pandey has choreographed many shows till now.

On the first day of the workshop, the aspirants will learn the very basics steps of different dance forms. There will be the Jazz and contemporary forms. It is to be noted that all these are professional dancing style. Though anyone can learn it but it takes a lot of practice to get professional in these forms.

The party dance can be

learned maximum in 20 days while the professional dance takes four years to be learned. The workshop currently will focus on the basic dance steps so that the upper level steps could be easily learned.

Notably, in these dance forms body language is major criteria. Shrey said that it is important to keep body flexible and free at the same time to bring out the essence of the dance form. Then he stated that it is also important to feel the music and feel the dance together.



A city road wears a deserted look during weekend lockdown imposed due to a spike in the Covid-19 cases in Bhopal on Sunday
Pioneer photo

Odia dancer Aleena Acharaya shares her experiences on 'Baaton Baaton Mein'

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

I don't like to be addressed as Guru as I feel Gurus have a different level of knowledge and experience," says renowned Odia dancer Aleena Acharaya. Renowned Odissi dancer Aleena Acharaya shared about her experiences with the art lovers.

Aleena was featured in the latest episode of Baaton Baaton Mein, the Instagram talk show on Sunday. A talk series 'Baaton Baaton Mein' is being held every day on Instagram. Hosted by renowned art critic Sunil Mishra, the series is being held for the art lovers.

During the show, Aleena shared her life struggles and stories of the musical journey during the talk. Aleena Acharya is a student of Guru

Kelucharan Mohapatra. She has studied at Kala Vikash Kendra, Cuttack.

It requires a different level of dedication and hardwork to be called a Guru, shared Aleena. "But, I try to teach the same way to my student, the way I have been taught by my Guru. It is nothing but a sheer love for the art and you will achieve success," added Aleena.

"My first question to aspirants is that why they want to learn Odissi dance, as influence of Bollywood is more in Mumbai. But, they show their love and passion for the traditional dance and I like it a lot," she said.

Aleena has dedicated her dance skills to the cause of young dancers whom she trains to keep alive the testimony of dance over the years. She

strongly feels that this art has to be passed on to aspiring youngsters, so that it is enriched with experience and lives eternally.

Aleena talked about Odissi dance and its origin. Odissi is a dance form from the state of Odisha in eastern India. It is recognised as one of the eight classical dance forms of India, and celebrated around the world for its lyricism, sensuality and emphasis on bhakti bhava (attitude of devotion and surrender). Odissi gained visibility in India and internationally from the 1950s onwards when it began to be presented on theatre stages. Since then, Odissi dancers and writers have claimed that it is the oldest of India's classical dance forms, which was earlier performed in the temples of Odisha.

Police book man for selling house with forged documents

Bhopal: The TT Nagar police have booked a man for fraudulently selling a house at ₹3.5 lakh, using forged document; police registered a case on Saturday.

Police said that the victim Uttamchandra Shahwani lodged a complaint against his brother Sacchanand Shahwani.

In his complaint the victim stated that his allowed his brother to stay in his house in Shashtri Nagar in the year 2005 and after few years he found that accused brother produced forged documents and using them sold the house at ₹3.6 lakh to another person. After the victim found that house was sold he asked him to vacate house but he refused and continued to stay at the house. The victim lodged com-

plaint and on the completion of investigation police have registered case against the accused.

The police have registered a case under sections 420, 467 and 468 of the IPC and have started further investigation. The accused sold the house by producing fake power of attorney, said police. Accused was not arrested yet and in the further investigation, he would be arrested. The details of aides who have helped accused in producing forged documents is yet to be revealed and would be investigated. The person who had bought the house would be questioned as the person had bought the house knowingly or he was not aware of the actual owner of house is not clear, said police. **SR**

Online cross cultural fest 'Abhisaran' concludes

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Bhopal School Of Social Sciences concluded it's three days youth oriented international online cross cultural

fest Abhisaran - The Cultural Convergence. The event was conceptualised and coordinated by Team Invictus a core team of five students.

Priyank Jain, Sameeksha

Agrawal, Sufain Sami, Vanshika Nainani and Rohan Dayal along with the event management team to handle the event in a thoroughly professional way. Over three days program

The event was conceptualised and coordinated by Team Invictus a core team of five students of Bhopal School of Social Sciences

was spread over five different categories with more than 25 different competitions providing platform to show their creative and intellectual talents.

Student team of Abhisaran gave credit for the success of this event to their visionary Principal Fr Dr John PJ who supported the students and placed faith in their abilities to organise the event of this kind. Abhisaran has received an overwhelming response from participants from India and abroad.

On the third and the final day of Abhisaran, the Award and Valedictory ceremony was held. The very well organized ceremony came to an end with the encouraging and motivating words of the Principal of the college, Fr. John PJ. Praising the efforts of the co-ordinators and organizers, the Principal deeply appreciated the students as this was an event, exceptionally, by the students.

Congratulating the winners, the Principal hoped for many such wonderful events in the future.

Saba Sultan urges Bhopalites to follow Covid norms during holy Ramzan

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Saba Sultan, daughter of Nawab Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi and the Mutawalli of Auqaf-e-Shahi, has urged the citizens of Bhopal to take special care during the upcoming holy month of Ramzan under the prevailing worrisome circumstances.

Expressing her deep concern over the second wave of the Covid pandemic that has gripped the nation, the Mutawalli has requested people to follow all protocols laid down by the government including wearing a mask when going out, washing hands frequently and maintaining the mandatory social distance. She said that Islam teaches us to importance of preservation of life and it is the social, moral and religious responsibility of people that they save themselves from the deadly virus and if infected, should restrict its spread to others.

Saba Sultan has said that Ramzan is the month of self-discipline, self-evaluation and empathy. Along with the obligatory, sunnah and non-obligatory prayers, it is important that people take out the time for



reflection and contemplation in light of the holy month. Apart from these, they need to strictly follow the standard protocols that must be observed to break the chain of spread of the Corona virus and help in bringing a halt to its spread. Community gatherings should be restricted and social distancing must be observed no matter what.

She added that we should all be grateful for all the blessings that the Almighty has granted us and continue to conduct ourselves with humility and wisdom. She wished the Bhopalites a safe, healthy and spiritually enlightening Ramzan and urged people to pray for the well-being of everyone irrespective of faith and religion and specially for an end to this tragedy called Covid-19.

Special precaution at police stations amid Covid surge

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

In view of the increasing infection of the corona, senior officials gave instructions to take special precautions at police station level in the district and at every level of interaction with the citizens.

In view of the increasing infection of Corona and the spread of infection among the policemen, special care is being taken by the Bhopal Police during the duty and duty in the area in compliance with the guidelines by senior officers.

Glass cabins are being installed in all the police stations of Bhopal so that the complaint of the complainant who comes to the police station can be heard well and the station staff can also be safe from corona.

Handwash, washbasin and sanitizer have been served notices in all the police stations so that the station staff and visitors enter the police station after washing their hands. Apart from this, face shields are being mandated by police staff and checking, patrolling staff, special precautions are being

Glass cabins are being installed in all the police stations of Bhopal so that the complaint of the complainant who comes to the police station can be heard well and the station staff can also be safe from corona

taken during field visits and checking.

The condition of policemen in the rapidly increasing of Corona is getting worse.

Among the policemen an SI Kunjilal Sen died of Corona on Sunday, he was undergoing treatment at Hamidia hospital for the past few days. He was posted at Baghewani police station while three policemen are critical.

Constable Suresh Vishwakarma posted with Bilkharia police is also undergoing treatment and his condition is critical. He was deployed in Damoh during visit of President of India around 22 days ago.

Guv urges universities to help contain Covid spread

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Governor Anandiben Patel has said that the universities should cooperate in the control of Corona infection, office bearers and members of residential, mohalla and ward committees should be motivated for public curfew in areas where the impact of the infection is more. Efforts must be made by universities to coordinate.

University teachers and students should extend support in ensuring necessary arrangements for public awareness and Janata Curfew. This will make efforts to control Corona infection effective. She also called for the commitment of the staff and students of universities to follow Corona guidelines responsibly. Patel was holding a video conference from Lucknow Raj Bhavan today with the Vice Chancellors of 21 government universities of the state.

Patel said that there should be no need for residents to go

out during Janata Curfew. Support of youth may be sought in this task. The Universities should form teams of youth, who can stay in touch with residents on telephone and purchase necessary items and other materials for them and deliver it to them. This will ensure that residents stay indoors. There will be less congestion in shops. System of social distancing will also be strengthened. She said that students who have done outstanding work in the field of public awakening and public assistance through social service and for vaccinations, can be rewarded and honoured by the universities. Universities should make efforts in this direction with innovative thinking.

Patel said that universities and their students can also cooperate in speeding up the work of vaccination according to the guide line issued by the Central Government. She said that every single dose of vaccination is important in this

hour of crisis because one vaccine has dose for 10 people. Therefore, it is important that motivators for vaccination keep in mind that only eligible persons are taken to the centre in multiples of 10. In this regard, public awareness efforts should be intensified through University IT Cell. The universities must ensure cent percent vaccination in the villages adopted by them.

At the same time, everyone including university vice chancellors to the students should strictly wear mask and follow social distancing. They should inspire others also to follow. Patel said that the symptoms of Corona are changing. A person may be affected by Covid infection even if not showing direct symptoms. It is therefore necessary for everyone to wear a mask and follow social distancing. Following Corona guide line with responsibility is the basis of success in the battle against Corona. She said that yoga has an effective role in boosting immunity.

Delhi Govt all set to reduce air pollution by one third in 5 yrs: Rai

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government will organize an online round table conference with an aim to reduce the level of air pollution in Delhi. The government has set a target of reducing the pollution level by one-third in the next five years and will formulate a long-term action plan based on the suggestions received from experts and organizations.

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the government has set a target of reducing Delhi's pollution level by one-third in the next five years.

He said that based on the suggestions received from experts and organizations, the Delhi government will formulate a long-term action plan to tackle pollution.

Rai also said, "The Delhi government is continuously

working to reduce air pollution. The work that our government has done in the last 6 years to fix the environment and improve the environmental situation has made a positive beginning in reducing Delhi's pollution, but it is not enough. Therefore, to fix the air quality of Delhi and to solve the crisis the government has set a target to significantly reduce the pollution level in the next five years."

The Environment Minister said that the government has set a target to significantly reduce the pollution levels in the next five years. "This round table conference is being organized by the Department of Environment, in which experts working in the field of environment, especially with regard to air pollution, have been called.

Along with this, social organizations and NGOs doing different work in the field of environment are also participating in it," he said.

Police trick 2 with NASA satellite story to confess crime

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Having tricked the accused to confess with a NASA story, the Delhi Police arrested two men for allegedly killing a 35-year-old man who used to abuse the accused in northwest Delhi's Mangolpuri area.

The accused have been identified as Pradeep and Raju, both residents of Mangolpuri. Police said that body of one Chandrabhan, a resident of Mangolpuri, with injury marks was found on Monday at 9.35 AM and he used to work as a cardboard box painter in Rampura Industrial area.

According to Parminder Singh, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Outer district, during investigation, it was revealed that the deceased was last seen with two men on a bike.

"Later, they were identified as Pradeep and Raju. Police did not have any evidence and released them. The inputs were

again cross checked and the duo were apprehended," said the DCP.

"To know about the truth, police told the accused that since the area was under surveillance through satellite cameras of NASA and in those footages, they were seen with the deceased, following which the accused confessed their crime," said the DCP.

The accused disclosed that they had attacked him on his face and throat with stones lying in the park, the DCP said.

"The accused alleged that the deceased used to abuse them after drinking. They had grudges against Chandrabhan and had planned to kill him. On April 4, they had drinks and brought the deceased to the isolated park in Mangolpuri Industrial area and killed him," said the DCP.

Pradeep is a sales agent working in a private company and Raju is a painter by profession. They have been arrested in the case, police said.

5 rescued from blaze in National Capital

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Fire Services (DFS) on early Sunday rescued five persons from a blaze in south Delhi's Greater Kailash area. The rescued persons have been identified as Shivani (27), Bharat (35), Naveet (31), CR Ram (60) and Romil (57).

According to a senior DFS official, they received information regarding a fire at 4.18 am. "The fire was in a house at GK-2. Four fire tenders were rushed to the spot.

The fire was in domestic articles and five ACs at the first floor of a building. The DFS rescued five persons safely from the second floor," said the senior DFS official.

Another major fire occurred in Shastri Park area. The DFS received information at 12.45 am.

The fire was in furniture market at Vijay Court near Shastri Park metro station. Total 27 fire tenders were rushed to the spot, the official said, adding that around 200 furniture shops gutted in the fire.

Negative Covid report mandatory to enter HP from 7 States

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Amid the spike in COVID-19 cases in the state, Himachal Government on Sunday made it mandatory for people coming from seven high load states to produce a RT-PCR negative report obtained within 72 hours of entry, from April 16 onwards.

The high load states are Punjab, Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

The decision was taken during a review meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur here.

The Chief Minister said that people coming from Punjab, Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh need to carry a negative RT-PCR report not earlier than 72 hours while visiting Himachal from April

16 onwards. As of now, the State Government has decided to allow tourists to visit the state, but at the same time hotel owners and tourists should strictly adhere to the SoPs issued, he said.

Thakur said that the State Government has allowed the devotees to visit various temples in the state during the Navratri festival, but at the same time, organizing of 'langars', 'bhandaras' and 'jagran' has been completely banned.

He said that devotees are allowed to visit the temple to perform 'puja' and 'darshans' by maintaining social distancing and using face masks. The temple managements must also ensure strict implementation of the SoPs laid down by the State Government, he said.

While laying stress on strategy for testing, tracing and treatment with effective surveillance of micro contain-

ment zones, the Chief Minister said that greater emphasis must also be laid on RT-PCR tests to achieve the target of 70 percent RT-PCR tests.

He said that the state Health Department must also take steps to increase bed capacity in order to meet out any eventuality. The Health Department must also ensure minimum wastage in vaccine.

The virus is spreading at a fast pace which is the biggest concern. During the last 45 days, the state has reported 10,690 new COVID cases. In addition to this, the number of deaths has also increased rapidly which is also a matter of concern, as 120 deaths were reported in the state during the last 45 days, he said.

Thakur said that no overcrowding would be allowed in buses and other public transport and private vehicles. Wearing of face masks even in

the vehicles must be enforced strictly.

SoPs regarding organizing social functions such as marriages etc. must also be adhered strictly, he added.

The Chief Minister further said that strict action must also be taken against those involved in gross violation of SoPs.

Special focus must be laid on regular monitoring of people in home isolation. People should also be motivated to immediately go for testing as soon as they get any symptoms so that they could be provided treatment without delay, he said.

He directed that focus should be paid on Information Education and Communication (IEC) regarding taking fundamental precautions such as use of face mask, social distancing and seeing a doctor in case of any ILI symptoms.

'Motivate people to get COVID-19 vaccination'

Himachal CM Jai Ram Thakur urged BJP workers

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Expressing concern over the Erapid surge in the COVID-19 cases in the state, Himachal Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Sunday urged the BJP workers to motivate people to get vaccinated against the virus.

The Chief Minister was addressing a virtual meeting of BJP workers here.

He said that in the first wave of COVID last year, the party worker worked tirelessly to provide the people of the state face masks, food packs

and hand sanitizers etc.

Sharp surge has been witnessed by the state, as there were only 218 cases left in the state on February 23 this year, but today, there are 5005 active cases. As many as 10,690 fresh cases were reported during the last 45 days, he said.

Thakur said that all this required strict vigil and precautions to check further spread of the virus.

He said that people must be motivated to get vaccinated and also adopt SoPs issued by the State Government. People must also be motivated to strictly adhere to the limit of guests in social functions such as marriages etc fixed by the State Government. This would help in containing the spread of the virus in a big way, he

Resume talks with protesting farmers: Anil Vij to Tomar

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In view of surge in COVID-19 cases across the country, Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij has written to Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, urging him to resume talks with farmers protesting against the Centre's farm laws.

Maintaining that a surge in COVID-19 cases is being seen across the country and the situation is turning bad in Haryana too, Vij said he is worried about the farmers protesting on the state borders with Delhi.

Vij, who is also Health Minister of the state, said that all possible efforts are being made to bring the situation under control in Haryana but my worry pertains to thousands of agitating farmers who are sitting on the borders of Haryana. I have to save them from COVID-19, he said.

In his letter, the Minister also said that there is also a worry that because of them the disease may not spread in the rest of the state.

He also mentioned that being in agitation mode, the farmers are not able to follow all COVID-related guidelines.

Vij further said that a situation of uncertainty prevails as there have been no talks for a long time between the government and the agitating farmers. I am of the belief that a problem can be solved through dialogue. Therefore, I request you that the talks should be resumed so that the issue is resolved and the protest ends, he said.



Security personnel stop commuters during weekend lockdown in Bhopal on Sunday

Pioneer photo

COVID VACCINE Jab should have strict India-first rule: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Am Aadmi Party (AAP) national spokesperson Raghav Chadha has written to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying there must be a strict India-first rule as citizens' needs must be given priority over exports to other countries.

Termining vaccine universalisation and vaccine nationalism need of the hour, the AAP MLA in a letter said the Centre has chosen to export over 64 million doses to 84 countries while Indian citizens are desperately looking for a vaccination centre that is still open.

"Central Govt has exported 64million doses to 84countries. I wish to ask the Govt as to what its priority is - people of Delhi or Dominican Republic? Maharashtra or Mauritius? Bengal or Bangladesh? Gujarat or Guyana? Odisha or Oman? Uttar Pradesh or United Kingdom? Kerala or Kenya?" he said in another tweet.

Chadha urged the government to prioritise vaccinating

"Centre has chosen to export over 64 million doses to 84 countries while Indian citizens are desperately looking for a vaccination centre that is still open"

the entire 135 crore in India before "earning trivial international laurels".

"I urge Government of India to adopt 'vaccine nationalism', and prioritise vaccinating the entire 135 crore in India before earning trivial international laurels. Do not let vaccination centres shut while doses are being flown out of the country.

"Countries like the US have even gone to the extent of banning export of not just vaccines but also raw materials used to manufacture vaccines. And here we, despite being a manufacturer of world class vaccines, are gleefully exporting it. We need vaccines now more than ever," he said in

another tweet. The APP spokesperson further said that it is further alarming to read reports that the Government of India will be exporting nearly 45 million doses to Pakistan in the coming days.

"On one hand, Government of India claims that Pakistan has only exported terrorism to India, on the other hand, we are exporting life-saving vaccines to Pakistan," he said.

Responding to Chadha, Delhi BJP Spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said that the AAP leader Chadha's letter is neither motivated by nationalism nor any serious concern for the youth.

"The letter written by the AAP leader is just a part of his party's political game to create confusion and make the vaccination process controversial," he said.

Kapoor said that the centre is committed to speedy vaccination for all and taking steps like prohibiting covid medicine export same as it has banned export of Remdesivir injections on Sunday.

Centre points loopholes in Punjab's battle against COVID

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

The central team, visiting Punjab following an explosion in the COVID-19 cases, has found the health system ailing and has recommended, among other things, injecting resources into urgent development of healthcare infrastructure in the state's 'red' districts.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, in a letter to Punjab's Principal Secretary (Health and Family Welfare) Hussan Lal, highlighted the gaps in the testing, contact tracing, and even state's healthcare infrastructure coupled with non-adherence of COVID-19 appropriate behaviour which is hampering the state's battle against COVID-19.

The letter, highlighting the areas of concern, including sub-optimal containment operations, and contact tracing, skewed testing and shortage of health workers, came after the central teams, deputed to visit worst affected states, submitted its report to the Union Health Ministry.

Of the 50 districts most affected by COVID-19 across India, nine are in Punjab.

The Union Health

Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, in a letter to the states, shared a brief summary of key performance indicators related to testing, hospital infrastructure and vaccination, as reported by the central teams, for suitable corrective actions by State or District Administrations.

Bhushan, taking strong note of the non adherence COVID appropriate behaviour, has advised Punjab to enforce the norms more strictly to prevent further spread of the contagion.

In the letter, the Centre has listed out loopholes district-wise besides immediate steps required.

The team has pointed out "fast exhausting ICU bed capacity" in most of the nine "red" districts of the state. As per the report of the central team, the ICU bed occupancy rates in the State was reported to be 89 percent in Ludhiana, followed by 80 percent in SAS Nagar (Mohali), 70.6 percent in SBS Nagar (Nawanshahr), 63.2 percent in Jalandhar, and 44.4 percent in Patiala, 40 percent in Amritsar, 20 percent in Hoshiarpur, while Ropar's data was not available.

The Centre has asked the

respective District Administrations to prioritize addressing the hospital infrastructure, especially in Mohali, Jalandhar, and Ludhiana, as hospital bed occupancy rates continue to rise due to the rise in the number of Coronavirus cases.

Besides, it pointed out that the availability of isolation beds "with oxygen" is also declining. As per the available figures, the occupancy rate of isolation beds with oxygen in the state is as high as 98 percent in Hoshiarpur, followed by 69 percent in Mohali, 46 percent in Ludhiana, 38 percent in Amritsar, 35.6 percent in Jalandhar, 35.2 in Nawanshahr, 34.4 percent in Patiala, 25 in Rupnagar (Ropar). In fact, more than 75 percent COVID-positive patients, in the listed 'eight red' districts, are under home isolation mandating strict monitoring by the health authorities.

The letter, giving district wise details, pointed that Patiala and Ludhiana districts are vaccinating people against COVID-19 at a slower pace. The Union Health Secretary has asked the Punjab Government to address the issue on priority.

Over 1.13 vaccine doses administered in Haryana

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Following the appeal of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to further augment the vaccination drive by observing 'Teeka Utsav' from April 11 to April 14, the Haryana Health Department had set up 1627 COVID-19 Vaccination Centres which administered 1,13,917 vaccine doses to the beneficiaries on Sunday in the state.

Additional Chief Secretary, Health, Rajeev Arora said that the Health Department has administered 1,13,917 Covid-19 vaccine doses on Sunday thereby enhancing the consolidated number of vaccine doses administered till date to 24,69,233 doses. On the COVID-19 vaccine roll out plan, Arora said that, with an aim to ensure that the vaccine is administered to a maximum number of people, the Department had set up more Vaccination Centres across the state.

He elaborated that these Centres have been strategically placed in highly populated areas across the state and even in the rural areas to ensure maximum penetration of the vaccine so as to curtail the spread of highly contagious COVID-19 virus.

Guv: Janata Curfew will be effective in fighting...

From Page 1

Details of vaccination status, information about how many beds are filled in hospitals, how many are vacant, availability status of ventilators, oxygen, number of new positive cases and deaths should be given. All-party meetings should be organised regularly.

The Governor expressed happiness that at the time of worldwide crisis of Covid infection, all political parties are ready to cooperate and work shoulder to shoulder, it is a matter of great pleasure. She directed the officials to implement the new suggestions which have come up in the meeting.

Chouhan said that Tika (vaccination) Utsav is being celebrated in the state starting from 11 April, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule ji till April 14, the birth anniversary of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar ji, under which it is being ensured that the Corona vaccine is given to every person above 45 years of age.

India should cherish peace process on LAC, says China

PNSPTI ■ NEW DELHI/BEIJING

With both sides unable to firm up a plan to withdraw from the flash-points during the latest round of talks, China on Sunday said India should cherish the current positive trend of de-escalation and peace on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh.

This statement came two days after the 11th round of Corps Commander-level talks on Friday at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point at the LAC in Ladakh failed to show any tangible movement forward. Both the sides, however, agreed to continue holding regular dialogue at the military and diplomatic levels to restore peace.

In the talks lasting more than 12 hours, China dilly dallied on pulling back troops from the friction points at Patrolling Points 15, 17 and 17A at the Hot Springs and Gogra, sources said.

The Indian delegation led by Leh-based 14 Corps chief Lt General P G K Menon reiterated the country's stand that disengagement from Hot Springs and Gogra will go a long way in bringing down tension at the LAC. The proposed pull back will ensure peace and stability in the region besides ensuring tranquility, the Indian team insisted.

China, however, did not give any commitment on a plan to disengage and continues to maintain large number of troops at the face-off sites. This led to concern in the Indian security establishment, sources said. The Chinese team was led by Major General Liu Lin.

Faced with the stalling tactics by China in Dipsang valley where it advanced into Indian territory in 2013 and continued to remain there, the two Corps Commanders will meet again shortly to continue the momentum of dialogue,



they said.

In this backdrop, the Chinese military said on Sunday India should cherish the "current positive trend" of de-escalation and cooling down of tensions in the border area. A day after the 11th round of Corps Commander-level talks, the Indian army is a statement said on Saturday both sides held a detailed deliberation on the disengagement of troops in the remaining friction points of Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang in eastern Ladakh.

Both the sides agreed to jointly maintain stability on the ground, avoid any new incidents and resolve the outstanding issues in an "expedient manner".

There was no visible forward movement at the latest round of military talks between the two countries as the Chinese delegation came to the talks with a "premeditated mindset" and did not show any flexibility in moving forward on the disengagement process at the remaining friction points.

In its press release on the latest round of talks between two militaries

held on April 9, China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) said India should cherish the de-escalation and cooling in the border area, in an apparent reference to the disengagement of troops from the most contentious area of the Pangong Lake in February.

Both sides should also adhere to the consensus reached in the previous talks, the state-run China Global Television Network (CGTN) on Sunday quoted the press release by a PLA spokesperson on the talks held at the Chushul border point on the Indian side of the LAC.

"We hope the Indian side could cherish the current positive trend of de-escalation and cooling in the border area, adhere to the relevant agreements between the two armies and the consensus of the previous talks and move towards the same direction as the Chinese side to jointly maintain peace and tranquility in the border area," a spokesperson for the Western Theater Command of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) said in a statement.

The Indian Army statement said it was highlighted at the talks that completion of disengagement in other areas would pave the way for considering "de-escalation of forces" and ensure full restoration of peace and tranquility in the region.

The two sides agreed on the need to resolve the outstanding issues in an expeditious manner in accordance with the existing agreement and protocols, the statement said.

The two sides agreed that it was important to take guidance from the consensus of

Both the sides agreed to jointly maintain stability on the ground, avoid any new incidents

their leaders, continue their communication and dialogue and work towards a mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest, it said.

"They also agreed to jointly maintain stability on the ground, avoid any new incidents and jointly maintain peace in the border areas," the statement said.

Army Chief General M M Naravane had said last month the threat to India has only "abated" following the disengagement in the Pangong lake area, but it has not gone away altogether. He said China still maintained considerable number of troops in the "rear areas." It means the Chinese troops though pulled back from the eyeball to eyeball confrontation but continued to have heavy armour and troops close by thereby posing threat to Indian interests. Naravane also observed peace will be restored once these additional troops return to their barracks from the forward areas.

Not willing to take any chances, the Army in the last few months substantially bolstered its troop strength besides weaponry. Moreover, the troops remained deployed on the LAC throughout the harsh winter months when the temperature dipped to minus 30 degrees.

The standoff between the two armies started on May 5 last year when the troops from both the sides exchanged blows at the Pangong Tso. Soon, the face-offs commenced at some other places on the LAC.

The border saw massive troop build up by India and China after a bloody brawl on June 15 in the Galwan valley. Twenty Indian soldiers including the Commanding Officer were killed. At least 40 Chinese were also killed by China was yet to officially announce the number of casualties.

Traders' body asks Modi not to impose night curfew, lockdown



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) on Sunday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to impose night curfew or lockdown amid rising Covid-19 in the country and instead adopt staggered working time for different sectors. In a letter to the Prime Minister, the traders' association said it would be more appropriate if alternate measures may be adopted at district levels all over the country.

"Instead of night curfew or lockdown which have not proved a worthy step so far to combat escalation of COVID-19, it would be more appropriate if alternate easy measures may be adopted at district levels and staggered working time for different sectors," said CAIT.

CAIT Secretary General Praveen Khandelwal said that a closer analysis of the COVID-19 statistics over the last one week have made it ample clear that night curfew and lockdown in different states have not brought the desired results of bringing down the cases. It suggested that working hours of different verticals of trade and commerce should be revised.

"We suggest that government offices, private offices and other all kinds of offices may work from 8 am to 2 pm whereas the markets and shops may be allowed to work from 11 am to 5 pm," said CAIT.

Best mango? Jury is out on social media

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Social media on Sunday debated which variety of mango-Alphonso, Dushehri, Langda, Maldah or Totapari is the best. The hashtag #Alphonso has gone viral on Twitter and it was trending at 13 numbers with many tweeting which variety of the king of fruit is the best in the country.

It all started when a Twitter user claimed that 'Alphonso' mangoes are the best, while responding to this tweet, a twitter user wrote no mango can aspire to come even within sniffing distance of the Langda/Maldah, no competition, Langda is King. One twitter user wrote 'Alphonso is the most overrated stuff' ever and that only "brand conscious babalog" have a taste for it. Several people tweeted for Alphonso mangoes. Twitterati from Bihar, Eastern UP and West Bengal tweeted Maldah is the best.

A twitter user Joey@Drjoyeeta claimed that Alphonso mangoes are the best! Specially packed by my dear brother for calling me a loser. PS: Let's start the mango war. Repeating in capitals: ALPHONSO MANGOES ARE THE BEST!

Responding to the tweet, Sankarshan Thakur tweeted: "No mango can aspire to come even within sniffing distance of the #Langda / #Maldah No competition. #Langda is King. Yashwant deshमुख responded to Thakur saying 'Alphonso



is the most overrated stuff you will ever come across. The brand-conscious Alphonso Babalog has no idea what real mango is. Try Dashahari, Chausa, Safeda and ultimate Langda/Maldah".

Another twitter user tweeted "Dashehri, Malgova and Sappattai for me. A little known variety called Panjavarnam from my home town is also very good, but sadly not available freely outside of that region. And yes, Alphonso is hell overrated". Another twitter user wrote 'One twitter user tweeted "Alphonso is overrated; Kesari is underrated".

Dubbed the 'King of fruits' in India, mangoes have an almost cult fanbase in India. With its pulpy, juicy flesh wrapped around a delightfully hardcore, the fruit comes in many shapes, sizes, flavours and varieties across the states of India. A large variety of mangoes are grown across India. Maharashtra is famous for Alphonso mangoes, Uttar

Pradesh is known for Dushehri. West Bengal is popular for growing Himsagar mangoes while Andhra Pradesh is known for the lighter coloured Safeda mangoes. Other popular varieties of mangoes in India include Chausa, Lengra, Kesari, Totapuri, Neelam and much more. Another netizen wrote: "Agree, Langra is just awesome..... although I have developed a taste for Banganapalli in recent years. Alphonso has a bad hit rate, but the odd one can be brilliant".

According to the agriculture ministry, mango production is estimated to increase 4.24 per cent to 21.12 million tonnes in the crop year 2020-21 ending June. The output of mango, the 'king of fruits', stood at 20.26 million tonne during the 2019-20 crop year (July-June). The arrival of mangoes from southern and western India has started, while the season in the northern states like Uttar Pradesh will begin from mid-June onwards.

Modi pays tribute to social reformer Jyotirao Phule

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday paid tributes to noted social reformer Jyotirao Phule on his birth anniversary, and said his commitment to reforming the society will continue to inspire future generations.

In a tweet, Modi also hailed him as a great thinker, philosopher and writer and noted that he was committed to women's education and empowerment throughout his life.

Born in an extremely

backward caste in 1827 in Maharashtra, Phule fought against social discrimination and strove to promote education among the most deprived communities.

He and his wife, Savitribai Phule, are considered pioneers for their efforts to promote education among women.

Modi had recently suggested a "vaccination festival" from April 11 to April 14, birth anniversary of Dalit icon Bhim Rao Ambedkar, to push inoculation against the coronavirus among the people eligible for the shots.

Ex-CIC calls for making virtual hearing permanent feature of judicial system

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Central Information Commissioner Shailesh Gandhi has called for making virtual hearing a permanent feature of the judicial system, stating that the achievements of a Supreme Court e-committee, which has been around since 2005, have been "inadequate".

He has made this suggestion in his submission to Justice DY Chandrachud, the Chairperson of the SC e-committee, saying the draft report placed by the committee in public domain lacks "any real evaluation of the effectiveness of the earlier efforts and recommendations".

Gandhi, who had set in motion paperless working in the Central Information Commission a decade back said, "The Supreme Court E-Committee has been around since 2005 and it appears its real achievements are inadequate".

Citing the findings of the Committee, Gandhi said the report mentions that a total of Rs. 639.411 crore plus Rs 1670 crore have been spent implementing Information and Communication Technology based systems in courts.

"If I presume an expenditure

of 309.411 crore for software and consultancy, it would mean Rs 2,000 crore for hardware. Assuming about 20,000 courts, this would mean an average expenditure of about Rs.10 lacs per court for hardware. This should be more than adequate. Yet, most courts did not function effectively during the pandemic using virtual hearings," he said.

He said as against an increase of four lakh pending cases before courts between 2005-19, just last one year has seen an addition of 75 lakh cases to the pendency.

Gandhi said the Committee mentions setting up of "some Virtual Courts", whereas all courts should be effective virtual courts.

"In fact, I would submit that all courts should be prepared and mandated to allow lawyers and litigants to appear virtually or physically without any specific need to inform anyone or take permissions," he said.

The former Information Commissioner said to achieve this there is no requirement for any serious training, but just ability to use a keyboard, which is a common skill available to any literate person and at best a two-hour familiarisation video should be adequate.

CBI to probe cheating, misappropriation of funds case against ex-MP KD Singh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has taken over a case of cheating and misappropriation of funds against former Rajya Sabha MP KD Singh from Uttar Pradesh Police following a reference from the State Government and further notification from the Centre for probe into the case by the Central agency.

The case was originally registered at Kotwali Kanpur Nagar police station in Kanpur as Crime No. 234/2019 on a complaint from one Pawan Mishra alleging cheating and misappropriation of funds invested by the complainant and other investors in Alchemist Infra Realty Ltd and Alchemist Township Ltd promoted by the former MP.

The investors were promised plots/villas/apart-



ments against their investments. However, they were neither given the promised plots, flats, or villas. They were not even refunded the funds despite the plots or flats not being allotted to them.

Besides Singh, six directors of the two firms have also been

booked in a case of cheating and criminal breach of trust.

The UP Government had requested a CBI probe through an order dated August 16, 2020. The Centre notified the probe by the CBI on April 1 this year following which the CBI re-registered the case on Friday.

Air purifiers in lifts, poorly ventilated spaces helpful in Covid spread: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Air purifiers in lifts (elevators) and other poorly ventilated confined spaces could actually increase the spread of airborne virus droplets, according to researchers who have called upon the health authorities to look for such places which might be turning out to be super spreader for Coronavirus which is spreading like a raging fire.

When people infected with the Cov-SARS-2 virus, responsible for the current Covid-19 pandemic, sneeze, talk or simply breathe, they expel thousands of contaminated saliva droplets.

These droplets are now recognized as being the main way in which the virus spreads to other individuals and people are being advised to wear masks to curb contamination. Regularly airing indoor spaces to reduce the concentration of viral particles is also important.

Since the quality of air in a small space can quickly deteriorate even when there is just one person in that space (mainly because of the increased CO2 levels produced as we breathe



out), lift manufacturers routinely include ventilator systems. These can, however, increase the rate at which air - possibly laden with bacteria and viruses - circulates.

While adding an air purifier to the lift in addition to the ventilator should help in theory, the way in which the purifier affects air circulation, and thus transmission of airborne viruses is unclear, said the researchers.

Air purifiers work by sucking in stale air and exhausting cleansed air, but this adds to the overall circulation of air - an aspect that previous studies, or indeed air purifier manufacturers themselves, have not considered.

To investigate this issue, Dimitris Drikakis and Talib Dbouk of the University of Nicosia analysed air circulation

and found that the air purifier actually increases the spread of saliva droplets in the cabin.

"This is because the air intake integrated inside the purifier equipment induces flow circulation that can add to the transport of these droplets," explains Drikakis.

They also found that the risk of airborne virus transmission is lowest for low ventilation rates. This is due to reduced flow mixing inside the lift, says Dbouk.

"The broader implications of the present findings are that health and safety authorities must revise guidelines accordingly by considering the flow circulation and droplet dispersion effects arising from air purifiers and sanitisers in confined spaces," say Drikakis and Dbouk.

Focus on micro containment zones to curb Covid march: Modi to K'taka CM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday suggested to Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on focusing on "micro containment zones" to contain the spread of Covid-19 infection in the State.

Karnataka has seen a surge in COVID19 cases since the beginning of this month and is reporting nearly 7,000 fresh cases per day for the last couple of days.

The Chief Minister who spoke to the Prime Minister said that the latter also appreciated the state government's efforts to counter the second wave of Coronavirus pandemic.

"Spoke to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodiji and apprised him about the measures being taken in the state to mitigate second wave of pandemic. PM appreciated the Government's efforts and suggested to focus on micro containment zones to contain the spread of infection," Yediyurappa tweeted.

After the video conference with Modi, Yediyurappa on Thursday had announced a corona curfew between 10 PM to 5 AM in seven district centres of the state along with Manipal, from April 10 to 20, targetted to controlling the fast spread of COVID-19.

Untill Saturday the total number of active cases in the

state stood at 61,653.

The Chief Minister also appealed to the people, those eligible, to get vaccinated.

"Vaccine is the biggest weapon available to us in this battle against Covid-19. I urge all eligible citizens to get vaccinated and also encourage people around you to get vaccinated. Let us continue to stay protected by wearing masks and following social distancing," he said in another tweet.

As suggested by the Prime Minister at Thursday's video-conferencing with various Chief Ministers, the State Government is organising vaccination drives from April 11-Jyotiba Phule's birthday till April 14- Ambedkar's birthday.



said pitching for "zero vaccine waste" and urging the people to follow COVID-appropriate behaviour.

"This festival is, in a way, the beginning of another major war against corona. We have to lay special emphasis on personal hygiene as well as social hygiene," he said.

Five states — Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Kerala -- cumulatively account for 70.82 per cent of India's active COVID-19 cases, while Maharashtra alone accounts for 48.57 per cent, the Union Health Ministry said.

Besides these states, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal are displaying an upward graph in daily new cases.

Most of these states have reimposed restrictions, including the closure of schools, night curfew, weekend and local shutdowns, while ruling out a total lockdown, but as the latest wave of patients

continues to flood hospitals, there are some signs of a rethink.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and his Delhi counterpart Arvind Kejriwal have said that a lockdown will be the only option if the infections don't abate and the health system shows signs of collapsing. Kejriwal on Sunday said the COVID-19 situation in the national capital is "very serious".

The city recorded 10,774 fresh COVID-19 cases on Sunday, the highest single-day spike so far, with 48 more fatalities. "The fourth wave is more dangerous than the previous wave," he told a press conference, and urged the people not to step out unless there is urgent work.

Speaking at an all-party meeting held virtually to discuss the COVID-19 situation in the State on Saturday, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had indicated the imposition of a strict lockdown in the State given the alarming rise in COVID-19 cases.

Enhance peacekeeping budget: Army chief to UN

PTI ■ DHAKA

Indian Army chief Gen MM Naravane on Sunday urged the United Nations to enhance the budget for its peacekeeping missions and emphasised the need to provide appropriate logistics and improved technological support for the blue helmet missions in view of the emerging challenges.

Gen Naravane, who is here on a five-day official tour, delivered a keynote address on "Changing Nature of Global Conflicts: Role of UN Peacekeepers" during the "Army Chiefs Conclave" hosted by his Bangladeshi counterpart General Aziz Ahmed, the Indian Army's Additional Directorate General of Public Information (ADG PI) tweeted.

Gen Naravane laid emphasis on enhanced budget for UN peacekeeping activities, Bangladesh defence ministry's Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR) directorate quoted him as saying at the conclave. Bangladesh Foreign Minister A K Abdul Momen was the chief guest at the event.

The Indian Army chief also called for providing appropriate logistics and improved technological support for the UN blue helmet missions, pointing out their emerging challenges. He said the

UN peacekeeping missions should run on a participatory basis.

The Bangladesh Army hosted the conclave coinciding with the celebrations of the birth centenary of the country's 'Father of the Nation' Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the golden jubilee of its 1971 independence.

Force commander of UN multidimensional integrated stabilisation mission in Mali Lieutenant General Dennis Gyllensporree, force commander of UN multidimensional integrated stabilisation mission in the Central African region Lieutenant General Sidki Daniel Traore and Bhutan army's deputy chief of operation Brigadier General Darji Rinchen, among others attended the conclave.

Senior diplomats, security strategists and police officers also attended the seminar.

During the event, the Indian Army chief interacted with the senior officers of the participating nations and military observers from the other nations.

Momen told the conclave that the nature of peacekeeping operations in recent periods transformed both in terms of scale and scope for what "peacekeeping missions today are more than truce supervising operation".

The changing situation further expanded the missions' responsibility

taking into account "other dimensions of peace, such as establishing rule of law, protection of human rights, protection of women and children, support to political process, managing elections, reintegration and socio-economic development," he said.

The conclave was held as part of a multilateral UN-mandated counter-terrorism exercise, Shantir Ogroshena (Frontrunners of Peace) that commenced on April 4. An Indian Army contingent of 30 personnel are participating along with the Royal Bhutan Army, Sri Lankan Army and Bangladesh Army in the exercise that will conclude on Monday.

Military observers from the US, UK, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Singapore are also attending the exercise. The aim of the exercise is to strengthen the procedures and enhance interoperability amongst neighbourhood countries to ensure robust peacekeeping operations in the region. The armies of all the participating nations shared their valuable experiences and refined their drills and procedures in peacekeeping operations.

The visit of Gen Naravane, who is here at the invitation of his Bangladeshi counterpart Gen Aziz Ahmed, comes less than two weeks after Prime Minister Narendra Modi travelled to the neighbouring country.

EXPLOSIVE-LADEN SUV-HIRAN MURDER CASES

NIA arrests Vaze's associate Kazi, suspects he destroyed evidence

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In the fourth arrest in the twin explosive laden SUV planting and alleged Mansukh Hiran murder cases, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Sunday took Assistant Police Inspector (API) Riyazuddin Kazi, a close associate and colleague of incarcerated police officer Sachin Vaze, into custody.

Shortly after he was arrested on Sunday, Kazi was produced before a special NIA court, which remanded him to the custody of the agency till April 16.

Kazi's arrest came after several rounds of questioning by the NIA over the past three weeks.

Kazi was directly working under Vaze, an API heading the Crime Intelligence Unit (CIU) of the Crime Branch-CID of Mumbai Police.

The NIA is looking into Kazi's role in the planning of a Gelatin sticks' laden Scorpio and a threatening letter inside the vehicle, in the vicinity of Mukesh Ambani's 27-storey residence "Antilia" on Carmichael Road in south Mumbai on February 25 and the subsequent alleged murder of Thane businessman Mansukh Huran. Hiran's body was recovered from the marshy Reti-Bunder creek Mumbai in the neighbouring Thane district on March 5.

The NIA suspects that acting allegedly at the behest of Vaze, Kazi might have destroyed evidence in the case and procured fake vehicle number plates number plates

Vaze was the first accused to have been arrested by the NIA which registered an FIR in the explosive-laden SUV recovery case on March 8.

Vaze had earlier this week created a sensation by making a written submission before the social NIA Court accusing Deshmukh and another Maharashtra Minister Anil Parab of asking him to Indulge in extortion for them.

Vaze, who was arrested on March 13 in connection with the gelatine sticks laden Scorpion recovery

case, was earlier booked under sections 120 (B) (criminal conspiracy) 286 (negligent conduct with respect to explosive substance), 465 (forgery) 473 (making or possessing counterfeit seal) and 506 -2 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and 4 (a)(b)(i) of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908.

Vaze was subsequently booked under sections 16 (Punishment for Terror act) and 18 (Punishment for conspiracy etc) of the stringent Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).

On its part, Maharashtra's Anti Terrorism – which initially investigated the circumstances leading to the alleged murder of Hiran -- had on March 21 arrested convicted Mumbai Police constable Vinayak B. Shinde (51) and a cricket bookie Naresh R. Gaur (31) in connection with Hiran's alleged murder. The arrest of Shinde and Gaur came a day after the Union Home Ministry asking the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to take over the investigations into the murder of Hiran.

Shinde and Gaur are said to be accomplices of Vaze. Shinde is a dismissed policeman, who has been convicted in the case involving the fake encounter of Ramnarayan Gupta alias Lakhna Bhaiya. Bhaiya was killed in a fake encounter on November 11, 2006. In 2013, a Mumbai sessions court had awarded life sentences to 21 people, including Shinde and 12 other Mumbai Police personnel, convicted in the case.

Shinde has been on parole. The investigations by the ATIs have revealed that Shinde was in regular touch with Vaze and helped the latter in his activities.

During the investigations that followed, the NIA seized from Shinde and Gaur two mobile, one iPhone, 7 SIM cards, a blank cover of SIM card, a note with 14 mobile numbers mentioned including 5 in the name of arrested-suspected cop and prime accused Sachin Vaze with 'OK' written (for activation) beside them.

UP man held for announcing reward on priest's head

IANs ■ MEERUT

The Meerut police have arrested a youth for allegedly announcing a reward for killing a controversial priest of a temple in Ghaziabad's Dasna area.

The man, Danish Ali, a resident of Meerut, had uploaded a video on a social media platform saying that anyone who beheads the controversial priest, will get a reward of Rs 51 lakh.

The priest, Yati Narsinghanand Saraswati, recently made a controversial statement against the Prophet, for which the Delhi Police booked him for hurting religious sentiments.

The statements were made at a press conference at Delhi Press Club.

Danish is heard in the video purportedly saying, "I will sell my property, jewellery, everything I have and will arrange Rs 51 lakh."

Though Danish did not name Saraswati, he referred to him as the priest of the Dasna temple in Ghaziabad.

Meerut's Superintendent of Police (SP) Vineet Bhatnagar said, "We have arrested Danish Ali. We have also seized the mobile phone through which he had made the controversial announcement."

World's richest Malayali, wife escape unhurt as their chopper crash-lands

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

M A Yusuf Ali, the richest Malayali in the world, (net worth \$4.8 billion) and his wife had a miraculous escape from an air crash on Sunday morning at Kochi. The helicopter ferrying them to a hospital owned by Yusuf Ali made a force landing in the marshy area along the Kochi-Thiruvananthapuram National Highway.

There were five persons in the chopper including the Alis and all were brought out of the sleeky flying machine once the rotors came to a standstill.

The pilot and Ali suffered some minor injuries and were rushed to the Lakeshore Hospital for first-aid. All are safe and hearty, according to sources in the hospital. According to eye witnesses who watched the low flying chopper force landing in the

marshy stretch, there was heavy wind and rains when the incident happened.

An enquiry has been ordered into the incident.

Yusuf Ali who owns the Lulu Group business empire is a close friend of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and other top CPI(M) leaders in the country. The business tycoon enjoys cordial ties with leaders of all political parties, though the Marxists in the State visit the oil kingdoms in West Asia as the guests of Ali who have built up a vast business empire across the Arab nations in Asia, Africa and Europe.

Yusuf Ali, who owns a fleet of executive jets and helicopters, had been awarded Abu Dhabi Prize, the country's highest civilian honours, on Friday by crown prince Sheikh Mohammed Bin Sayed Al Nahyan.

Navreh celebration in J&K from today

Jammu: Sanjeevani Sharda Kendra, Bohri, Jammu in association with more than one hundred and twenty five Kashmiri Hindu organisations globally has formulated a three-day programme from 12 th to 14 th April, 2021 with the intention to celebrate Tyaag, Sankalp and Shaurya Divas and urge the Kashmiri Hindus to take a pledge for returning to their homeland on the auspicious occasion of Navreh.

The Celebrations were expected to culminate with a virtual address by Sarsanghchalak Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Dr Mohan Bhagwat.

Now it is not clear whether Dr Bhagwat would be able to address the august gathering as he has been

admitted in the hospital in Nagpur after he tested positive for Covid-19.

According to a press statement issued by the Sanjeevani Sharda Kendra, "the Navreh celebrations will commence on 12 th April-the Tyaag (Sacrifice) Divas in the memory of the Shriya Bhat. The Indian history records the great contribution in saving Hindu culture by a Kashmiri Pandit Shriya Bhat, as early as the 15 th century.

Shriya Bhat was able to cure a dreadful disease of Sultan Zainulab-ud-Din and was offered enormous wealth and property. But Shriya Bhat instead negotiated for the safety and security of Kashmiri Hindus and their religious places.

gious places.

On April 13, Navreh (first day of New Year) is being celebrated as Navreh Sankalp Divas. Globally all Kashmiri Hindus shall take a solemn pledge.

On 14th April, 2021 the Shaurya Divas will be celebrated in the honour of the great 8th century King of Kashmir, Lalitaditya Muktapada for his valour and victory over Turks.

Sanjeevani Sharda Kendra has already released an audio and video of a song on Navreh Celebrations composed by Dr. Kuldeep Raina Sudeshi, written by Sunita Raina Pandit, sung by Lovely Chandra and Vishal Pandita and video edited by Pardeep Pandita.

Departmental probe against Param Bir

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Less than a fortnight after it constituted a judicial probe under retired High Court Judge Kailash U Chandavil into allegations of corruption against former State Home Minister Anil Deshmuh, the Maharashtra Government has initiated a departmental probe against Mumbai's former police commissioner Param Bir Singh under senior IPS officer Sanjay Pandey for alleged breach of service rules and dereliction of duty.

In a development that has come in the midst of a Preliminary Inquiry (PE) launched by the CBI into Singh's allegations of corruption made against Deshmukh, Pandey—who has been entrusted with additional charge as the State General Police – has begun the probe against the former city police commissioner.

The Maharashtra government has ordered the probe against Singh on the basis of a report submitted by Mumbai's new Police Commissioner Hemant Nagrale to it on matters relating to suspended and incarcerated police officer Sachin Vaze.

Among other things, Pandey will look into the charge about Singh's alleged dereliction of duty arising out of his failure to keep the state government about his personal investigations into the alleged malpractices by Deshmukh, whether his charge of corruption made against the former state Home Minister had any substance, why had not only given so much importance to Vaze but also asked him report to him directly to him and whether he assigned Vaze to investigate the explosive laden SUV recovery case.

In a report submitted to the State Home department on April 3, Nagrale also stated that Vaze was posted as the in-

charge of the Crime Intelligence Unit (CIU) of the Mumbai police as per the orders of former Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh.

"API Sachin Vaze never reported to any officer of the Crime Branch during his tenure of nine months from 10/06/2020 to 12/03/2020. No officers of the Crime branch gaver any review/opinion/direction in the investigation handled by Sachin Vaze because he directly reported to the then Commissioner of Police," the report stated.

"As per oral orders of the then commissioner of police, the then joint commissioner of police (crime) transferred police inspector Vinay Gorphade and Sudhakar Deshmukh to Unit 10 and Unit 1, respectively and Vaze was posted in-charge of CIU," the report stated.

"Vaze has not followed the rules and he directly and independently reported to the then CoP (Singh) and he investigated under his guidance... was following the guidelines of (Singh) about raid on illegal activities, whom to arrest or not, to call whom as witness and accused of sensitive crimes," stated the report.

Vaze, who jumped on his own into the investigations involving the recovery of explosive laden SUV near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's skyscraper mansion in south Mumbai on February 25, also took up points of the CIU in remands, bail, anticipatory bail pleas and other critical decisions, and if he required manpower for various investigations, it was given as per Singh's directions.

As the in-charge of CIU, Vaze handled sensational cases like TRP rigging scam, the Anvay Naik suicide case and the death of her mother Kumud Naik.

People should follow Covid protocol to keep infections under check, says Raj CM



Jaipur: Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has said that with the ever increasing corona infection in Rajasthan, the State government will be forced to take strict action if people will not follow the health protocol of wearing masks, keeping proper distance and keeping away from the crowd.

He said that during the second wave, the infection is spreading very fast and all the people should follow the health rules and help the government

in keeping it under control.

Gehlot was presiding over the review meeting on infection and vaccination status at the Chief Minister's residence on Saturday night.

He said that during the spread of corona infection last year, the same spirit and support of the people of all classes and communities has given full support of the state government and all health rules and other guidelines are needed again.

UP schools shut till Apr 30, Govt orders night curfew in districts logging 100 new cases/day

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh Government on Sunday ordered the closure of all schools till April 30 and directed the imposition of a night curfew in the districts, which report 100 new infections in a day or have 500 active cases.

According to a government statement, the government also ordered that not more than 100 people be allowed to assemble at an open space for an event while the number has been put at 50 for closed spaces.

The fresh government directives have come on a day the state reported its highest single-day spike of 15,353 cases since the outbreak of the pandemic.

So far, 9,152 people have died from the infection in the state, which has reported 6,92,015 cases since the outbreak of the pandemic.

Earlier, a night curfew was imposed in Kanpur, Gorakhpur, Gautam Buddh Nagar, Allahabad, Meerut, Ghaziabad, Bareilly, Muzaffarnagar districts and the Lucknow civic body area.

On April 2, the UP government had extended till April 11 the closure of all schools for stu-

dents of Classes 1 to 8.

According to the statement issued on Sunday, all government and private schools will remain closed till April 30 while pre-scheduled examinations can be held.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said a night curfew be imposed from 9 pm to 6 am in the districts that report 100 fresh cases in a day or have 500 active COVID-19 cases.

Stressing the need to focus on the "test, trace and treat" approach, the government said the daily count of RT-PCR tests should be taken to one lakh.

Tracing of at least 30-35 persons who have come in contact with a COVID-19 patient should be done, the directives said.

The UP chief minister said an effective COVID-19 vaccination drive should be carried out as a four-day "Tika Utsav" began in the state on Sunday. The four-day vaccination programme, which began on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Jyotibha Phule, will continue till April 14, the birth anniversary of B R Ambedkar.

UP man, sister booked for 'forcing conversion' 2 years after marriage

IANs ■ ALIGARH (UP)

Two years after marriage, a woman has accused her husband and his two sisters of "forcibly converting" her.

The woman said, she never realized that her husband was a Muslim and had never met her in-laws. She had retained her maiden name after marriage.

The Muslim man, 25, and his sisters have now been booked under the anti-conversion law.

According to reports, the woman, Puja Soni, 23, is from Chhattisgarh. She said she had married a man named Ashok Rajput in March 2019 in Delhi, where she works at a hospital.

She got to know the man,

who worked as a plumber, when they started talking over the phone.

They met and fell in love. "We got married in a temple," she said. The couple started living in Noida.

In her complaint to police, she said, "On February 7 this year, we had a daughter. On March 22, he took me to his home at the Rait village in Aligarh. There, I found out his name was Afzal Khan. I was forced to read the 'namaz' and stopped from offering my prayers."

She further said, "On April 8, they took my daughter away from me. Then, they converted me forcefully and renamed me 'Alna'."

She alleged her in-laws drove her out of the house and

dropped her off at Mathura.

SHO Abhay Kumar Sharma of the Lodha police station, where the FIR was registered, said, "Ashok Rajput a.k.a Afzal Khan has been booked under the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance and Section 323 of the IPC (voluntarily causing hurt) along with his sisters."

No arrest has been made so far.

The woman's statement will be registered in court under Section 164 of the CrPC on Monday.

So far, 32 FIRs have been registered under the state's anti-conversion law since it came into effect in November last year.



FIRST COLUMN

BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

This can give the impetus to meet climate commitments while making contributions to post-COVID recovery



RIYA RAHIMAN

Countries have been grappling with the impact of climate change and extreme events as they pose various risks to people, infrastructure, economies and future development. A significant proportion of the economic losses due to extreme events is attributed to the loss and damage to infrastructure systems, thereby stressing the need for integrating disaster and climate resilience for infrastructure development. In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have witnessed an unprecedented impact on infrastructure sectors worldwide. Even though it has not led to direct damages to physical infrastructure, it led to interruptions in infrastructure services, with significant implications on economies. The outbreak is the latest reminder of the need to invest in resilient infrastructure. It exposed systemic risks across various sectors and underlying drivers such as poverty, poor health systems and limited social welfare schemes that perpetuated them. The risks cut across different sectors and strongly brought out the imperative to understand and address systemic and cascading dangers and fragilities.



As part of global recovery, infrastructure investments are being looked at as an indispensable part of stimulus packages aimed at restarting economic activities. Countries are expected to invest heavily in infrastructure sectors as an attempt to mitigate the impacts of the economic fallout as well as create employment and improve competitiveness simultaneously. While the health and economic implications take centre stage when planning for COVID-19 recovery, the urgency of the climate emergency cannot be ignored. The pandemic has clearly brought out the need to focus on managing systems risks for strengthening resilience, a lesson one must heed, to make headway against climate change as well. With countries submitting their national climate action plans as part of the Paris Agreement, this is a crucial year for climate action as well. It is vital that the post-COVID recovery and climate action plans complement each other.

Studies show that infrastructure construction and operations account for 70 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions and the provision of quality infrastructure underpins the achievement of 92 per cent of targets across all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) also highlights the role of resilient infrastructure as a cornerstone for sustainable development. The four specific targets relate to loss reduction in SFDRR, focus on cutting global disaster mortality, the number of affected people, economic loss and damage to infrastructure. However, the SFDRR target on reducing damage to critical infrastructure is an important prerequisite for achieving the three other targets on loss reduction. In view of this, infrastructure investments and policies to bolster economies should be leveraged as an opportunity to deliver on global commitments such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, SDGs and the SFDRR targets. Though some progress has been made on the SDGs and the SFDRR target, the overall action to meet them has not advanced at the required pace. The pandemic has further pushed back their progress. The COVID-19 recovery can be utilised as an opportunity to progress on these global goals and build a healthy, inclusive and climate-friendly future. Investing in disaster and climate-resilient infrastructure can provide the much-needed impetus in meeting global commitments while also making contributions to post-COVID recovery.

(The writer is Senior Specialist for Infrastructure Resilience, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. The views expressed are personal.)

The big tent of the PPP decoded

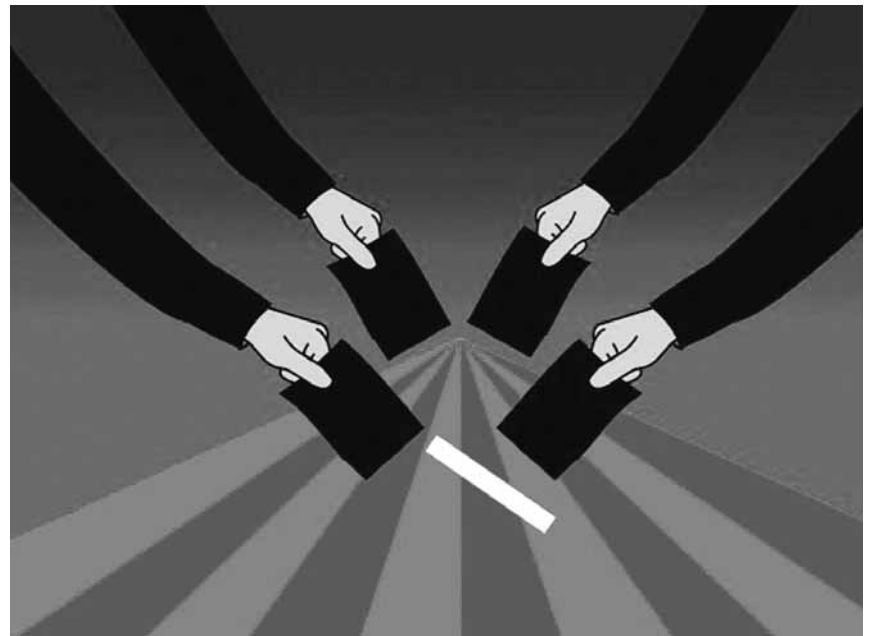
Pragmatic centrism and the need to remain a bridge between Sindh's electorate and the political fruits of federalism may help explain why the PPP made a grab for the Senate



NADEEM PARACHA



IN PAKISTAN, BECAUSE OF CERTAIN OVERARCHING ECONOMIC SHIFTS, THE MOOD WAS CLEARLY SHIFTING TO THE RIGHT. IN THE SECOND HALF OF BHUTTO'S TENURE, THE REGIME TRIED TO APPROPRIATE THIS MOOD AND, BY THE TIME THE GOVERNMENT FELL IN 1977, THE PARTY BELIEVED IT HAD UPSTAGED THE FAR-RIGHT ISLAMIST GROUPS THAT WERE OPPOSING IT



A reading of the PPP's Foundation Papers makes it clear that, right from the onset, its founders saw the PPP as a "big tent" party modelled on established Social Democratic parties of Europe. Rahim believed that the country's bourgeoisie had begun their march towards a revolutionary phase, just as the European middle classes had done in the 19th century. Yet, at the time, a majority of Pakistanis lived in rural areas and the process of industrialisation, though rapid during the Ayub era, was still concentrated in just a few urban centres.

When the party was launched, it exhibited three main groupings: On the Left were Marxist student leaders, socialist intellectuals, trade unionists and peasant leaders. On the Right were "progressive" landed elite and in the Centre were what became to be known as "Islamic socialists", or those who appropriated Islam as a welfareist and socialist doctrine, as opposed to a theological expression of politics (à la Jamaat-i-Islami).

During the 1970 elections, the party's "big tent" tactics were a success, aiding it to attract the majority of middle and lower-middle class votes, and the votes of small farmers and peasants in (West) Pakistan's two largest provinces,

Punjab and Sindh.

In December 1971, the party suddenly found itself in power after the acrimonious departure of East Pakistan. The party's Left wing was more assertive during Bhutto's first year in power. But this assertion was stalled when Bhutto began perceiving the party's radical Left as agents of anarchy with a juvenile understanding of Marxism.

According to Gunther and Diamond, in an effort to expand their electoral appeal to a wide variety of groups, the policy orientations of "big tent" parties were eclectic and shifted with the public mood. In Pakistan, because of certain overarching international economic shifts, the mood was clearly shifting to the Right. In the second half of Bhutto's tenure, the regime tried to appropriate this mood and, by the time the Government fell in 1977, the party believed it had upstaged the far-Right Islamist groups that were opposing it.

But it seems that the party did not go far enough and was toppled by an Islamist General. With its leader hanged in 1979, and its other major players either in exile or in prison, the reins of the party fell in the hands of its lower-tier leadership. Bhutto's daughter Benazir was at the helm, but she

was under arrest. This was also when the party's leftist militant tendencies, which had been subdued by Bhutto, resurfaced. In 1986, however, fearing that the US would stall the party's return to power for being "too Left-wing", Benazir began to gradually push the party back towards the Centre.

This push continued through the 1990s, especially with the appearance of the Pakistani Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) as the "big tent" party of the Right. Under Asif Ali Zardari, the PPP has dug its heels deep in pragmatist centrism. Its electoral appeal in Punjab was neutralised by the PML-N and then the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). This has blocked its path to Islamabad as a ruling party.

The PPP continues to enjoy power and electoral traction in Sindh. But this traction is largely based on the fact that the Sindhi speakers perceive the PPP as a bridge between them and the economic and political fruits of federalism. For this, the PPP needs to continue having a strong presence in federal institutions.

This is why it was important for Zardari to recently bag a majority in the Senate, even if he ended up upsetting his allies in the anti-Government Pakistan Democratic Movement.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

THE CRPF HAS SHOT FOUR PEOPLE IN COOCH BEHAR. THERE'S A CONSPIRACY UNDER THE HOME MINISTER'S ORDER AND THIS INCIDENT IS PROOF. —WEST BENGAL CM
MAMATA BANERJEE



DIDI AND HER GOONS ARE PERTURBED, SEEING THE PEOPLE'S SUPPORT FOR THE BJP. SHE HAS STOOPED TO THIS LEVEL AS SHE CAN SEE HERSELF LOSING. —PRIME MINISTER
NARENDRA MODI

Quaking over Iran's phantom nuclear weapons

There are many countries that already had nukes when they signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. They have obligations, too. How are they doing?

First, the good news. The US and Iran had talks in Vienna on Tuesday, and the nuclear deal they and all the other great powers signed in 2015, is coming back.

It's not exactly back yet. After then US President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled out of the treaty in 2018 and re-imposed harsh sanctions on Iran, the Iranians retaliated by slowly deviating from their own commitments under the deal one baby step at a time. So now there has to be an agreement on a timetable for unwinding those steps as well as cancelling the US sanctions.

On a better run planet, the US special envoy for Iran, Rob Malloy, would just declare that all the US sanctions on Iran wrongly put in place by the discredited Trump Administration are



GWYNNE DYER

Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy (and Work)'. The views expressed are personal.

cancelled as of today. The Iranian delegation, led by Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, a veteran of the 2015 talks, would reply that Iran will immediately return to compliance with all the terms of the treaty and invite UN inspectors to verify that all its temporary deviations from treaty obligations over the past three years have been reversed. And we would all live happily ever after.

However, in the real world it is not so. The negotiators in Vienna are not even in the same hotel. All the countries that are still observing the treaty (China, France, Germany, Iran, Russia and the UK) are in one hotel, and the American mission is in another, with messages going back and forth between the two parties. Porcupines mate with less difficulty, but there

has already been some progress.

"The United States knows that, in order to get back into compliance, it's going to have to lift those sanctions that are inconsistent with the deal that was reached with Iran," said Rob Malloy. The Iranian Government's spokesman Ali Rabiei replied that he "saluted" Malloy's remarks. "We find this position realistic and promising," he added.

Two working groups have been set up that include American representatives, with the task of choreographing reciprocal moves by the US and Iran to return to the treaty and a target of full compliance by both sides within two months. Just in time for Iranian moderates to claim credit for ending the US sanctions a week or so before the June election.

So that's probably sorted,



but what about all the countries that actually do have nuclear weapons? Iran originally got into trouble because it signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1970 and later tried to get nuclear weapons anyway, but the countries that already had nukes when they signed the NPT have obligations, too. How are they doing?

The NPT states that "nuclear-weapons States agree to...pursue nuclear disarmament

aimed at the ultimate elimination of their nuclear arsenals." But it has been a long pursuit and 50 years later not one of them has actually managed to catch the damn thing.

The US has got turned around somehow and is pursuing in the wrong direction. It's in the midst of a trillion-dollar-plus "upgrade" of its nuclear forces, including a new generation of land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and new submarine-launched cruise missiles.

According to President Vladimir Putin, Russia has developed nuclear-powered cruise missiles and torpedos with unlimited range, a hypersonic vehicle called Avangard to deliver nuclear weapons at a low level and ultra-high speed, and a new ultra-heavy ICBM called

'Sarmat' that is able to carry even more and bigger warheads (10-15) over a longer range (18,000 km.) There have also been reports of a new nuclear-powered drone torpedo that is capable of delivering a 100-megaton warhead (biggest ever tested was 50 megatons) over a range of 10,000 km. Then it would explode off an enemy's coast to create a tsunami wave 500 metres tall to inundate the coastal regions with highly radioactive water. But maybe this one is fiction.

Then there's Little Britain with its four submarines that carry nuclear-tipped missiles. Prime Minister Boris Johnson recently announced that he was increasing the number of warheads they carry from 180 to 240, but it doesn't really make much of a difference.

Traditionally the UK's strategy is "no first use", which

means Britain's retaliation would be on cities, not on empty silos. So you're just talking the rubble after the first few dozen warheads explode. That's probably why Johnson broke with tradition and said that Britain might use nuclear weapons in response to non-nuclear attacks, including even cyber attacks. One way to compensate for not really being very dangerous is to sound very reckless.

Then there's France (mostly harmless, despite some 280 nuclear weapons) and China (320 but still talking about expansion). Plus India (150), Israel (90), North Korea (30-40) and Pakistan (160), all countries that "unsigned" or never signed the NPT. But at least we're safe from Iran's nuclear weapons, which never existed and still don't.

Myanmar forces kill 82 in single day

AP ■ YANGON

At least 82 people were killed in one day in a crackdown by Myanmar security forces on pro-democracy protesters, according to reports on Saturday from independent local media and an organisation that keeps track of casualties since the February coup. Friday's death toll in Bago was the biggest one-day total for a single city since March 14, when just over 100 people were killed in Yangon, the country's biggest city. Bago is about 100 kilometers (60 miles) northeast of Yangon. The Associated Press is unable to independently verify the number of deaths.

The death toll of 82 was a preliminary one compiled by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, which issues daily counts of casualties and arrests from the crackdown in the aftermath of the Feb. 1 coup that ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. Their tallies are widely accepted as highly credible because cases are not added until they have been confirmed,



with the details published on their website.

In its Saturday report, the group said that it expected the number of dead in Bago to rise as more cases were verified.

The online news site Myanmar Now also reported that 82 people had been killed, citing an unnamed source involved with charity rescue work. Myanmar Now and other local media said the bodies had been collected by the military and dumped on the grounds of a Buddhist pagoda. At least 701 protesters and

bystanders have been killed by security forces since the army's takeover, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

The attack on Bago was the third in the past week involving the massive use of force to try to crush the persistent opposition to the ruling junta.

Attacks were launched Wednesday on hardcore opponents of military rule who had set up strongholds in the towns of Kalay and Taze in the country's north. In both places, at least 11 people — possibly

The death toll of 82 was a preliminary one compiled by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, which issues daily counts of casualties and arrests from the crackdown in the aftermath of the Feb. 1 coup that ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi

including some bystanders — were reported killed.

The security forces were accused of using heavy weapons in their attacks, including rocket-propelled grenades and mortars, though such allegations could not be independently confirmed by The Associated Press. Photos posted on social media from Bago appeared to show fragments of mortar shells.

Most protests in cities and town around the country are carried out by nonviolent

demonstrators who consider themselves part of a civil disobedience movement.

But as the police and military escalated the use of lethal force, a hardcore faction of protesters armed themselves with homemade weapons such as firebombs in the name of self-defense. In Kalay, activists dubbed themselves a "civil army" and some equipped themselves with rudimentary hunting rifles that are traditional in the remote area.

A report by Myanmar Now said residents of Tamu, a town in the same region as Kalay, used hunting rifles Saturday to ambush a military convoy, and claimed to kill three soldiers.

The junta has taken other measures as well to discourage resistance. It recently published a wanted list of 140 people active in the arts and journalism charged with spreading information that undermines the stability of the country and the rule of law. The penalty for the offense is up to three years' imprisonment. Arrests of those on the list have been highly publicised in state media.

'Suspicious' blackout strikes Iran's Natanz nuclear site



This satellite photo from Planet Labs Inc. shows Iran's Natanz nuclear facility

Dubai: Iran's underground Natanz nuclear facility lost power Sunday just hours after starting up new advanced centrifuges capable of enriching uranium faster, the latest incident to strike the site amid negotiations over the tattered atomic accord with world powers.

As Iranian officials investigated the outage, many Israeli media outlets offered the similar assessment that a cyberattack darkened Natanz and damaged a facility that is home to sensitive centrifuges. While the reports offered no sourcing for the evaluation, Israeli media maintains a close relationship with the country's military and intelligence agencies.

If Israel caused the blackout, it further heightens the tensions between the two nations already engaged in a shadow conflict across the wider Middle East.

It also complicates efforts by the US, Israel's main security partner, to re-enter the atomic accord aimed at limiting Tehran's programme so it couldn't pursue a nuclear

weapon if it chose. As news of the 'blackout' emerged, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin landed in Israel on Sunday for talks with Netanyahu and Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz. Power at Natanz had been cut across the facility comprised of above-ground workshops and underground enrichment halls, civilian

nuclear program spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi told Iranian state television.

"We still do not know the reason for this electricity outage and have to look into it further," Kamalvandi said. "Fortunately, there was no casualty or damage and there is no particular contamination or problem."

Asked by the state TV correspondent if it was a "technical defect or sabotage," Kamalvandi declined to comment. Malek Shariati Niasar, a Tehran-based lawmaker who serves as spokesman for the Iranian parliament's energy committee, wrote on Twitter that the incident was "very suspicious," raising concerns about possible "sabotage and infiltration." He said lawmakers were pursuing details of the incident as well. **AP**

GLOBE TROTTER

EX-B'DESH PM KHALEDA TESTS COVID POSITIVE
Dhaka: Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia tested positive for Covid-19 on Sunday, a year after she was released from jail temporarily amidst the pandemic, according to media reports.

RESCUERS FIND 4 DEAD FROM VESSEL IN ATLANTIC
Madrid: Spanish authorities said on Sunday that they had recovered the bodies of four migrants from a boat along with 19 survivors who had taken the treacherous route from West Africa to the Canary Islands. Spain's maritime rescue service said that its crews had responded to an alarm call by a fishing boat that had located the migrants in a flimsy craft unfit for the high seas.

ECUADOR, PERU HEAD TO POLLS UNDER COVID NORMS
Lima, Peru: Ecuador and Peru choose new presidents Sunday under strict public health measures prompted by the coronavirus pandemic, which has recently strengthened in the neighboring South American nations. Ecuadoreans face a runoff between a conservative businessman and a protégé of former leftist President Rafael Correa, while Peruvians have 18 options to pick from in the first round.

IRAN REPORTS HIGHEST DAILY DEATH TOLL OF 2021
Tehran: Iran on Sunday reported its highest single-day death toll from Covid-19 this year, bringing the country's total deaths in the pandemic to nearly 64,500, state TV reported. The report said 258 new deaths were recorded in 24 hours. Iran's deadliest day of the pandemic was in mid-Nov, when over 480 deaths were tallied.

20 HURT AS CHARIOT FALLS IN NEPAL
Kathmandu: Twenty people have sustained injuries after a chariot fell and clashes erupted during a religious festival in Nepal's Bhaktapur. "Bisket jatra", a chariot-pulling festival, started in Bhaktapur municipality, 16 km east of Kathmandu, on Saturday morning. Soon after the festival was declared open a chariot fell and clashes erupted.

UK: Shops, pubs gear up for easing of lockdown

London: Non-essential retail shops, including shopping malls, pubs and restaurants and hairdressers are among the businesses gearing up to reopen their doors to customers from Monday, when England enters its next stage of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions being eased.

Indoor gyms, swimming pools, libraries, zoos and nail salons are also among the establishments now allowed to reopen, with pubs and restaurants required to strictly follow outdoor dining rules.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson had declared that he would be among the first people to order a pint of beer in a beer garden when the rules are relaxed. **AP**

Trump: The key to Republican success is more Trumpism

AP ■ PALM BEACH

Staking his claim to the Republican Party, former President Donald Trump is casting his populist policies and attack-dog politics as the key to future GOP success.

In a closed-door speech Saturday night to donors at his Mar-a-Lago resort, Trump also reinforced his commitment to the party, according to prepared remarks obtained by The Associated Press.

His appearance came as Republican officials are trying to play down an internal feud over Trump's role in the party, his commitment to GOP fundraising and his plans for 2024.

While Trump's advisers report he will emphasize party unity, he rarely sticks to script.

"The key to this triumphant future will be to build on the gains our amazing movement has made over the past four years," Trump told hundreds of leading Republican donors, according to the prepared remarks.

"Under our leadership, we welcomed millions upon millions of new voters into the Republican coalition. We transformed the Republican Party into a party that truly fights for all Americans."

It was the final address of the Republican National Committee's weekend donor summit in Palm Beach. Most of the RNC's invitation-only gathering was held at a luxury hotel a few miles away; attendees were bused to Trump's club for his remarks.

Jordanian prince makes first public appearance since arrest

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Jordan's Prince Hamzah on Sunday made his first public appearance since he was placed under house arrest last week, attending a ceremony with King Abdullah II in what appeared to be an attempted show of unity on a major Jordanian holiday.

But it remained unclear whether the king and his popular half brother had put aside the differences that escalated last week into the most serious public rift in the ruling family in decades. Hamzah joined members of the Jordanian royal family marking the centenary of the establishment of the Emirate of Transjordan, a British protectorate that preceded the kingdom.

The royal palace released a photo and video with Abdullah, Hamzah, Crown Prince Hussein and other dignitaries at the grave of King Talal in Amman, Jordan's cap-



This photo from the Royal Court twitter account, shows Jordan's King Abdullah II, centre, Prince Hamzah bin Al Hussein, second left, and others during a visit to the tomb of the late King Hussein, in Amman Jordan on Sunday **AP**

ital. It was the first time that Hamzah was seen in public since he was placed under a form of house arrest on April 3 following accusations that he was involved in a "malicious plot" to destabilise the kingdom.

In statements leaked to the media, Hamzah denied the accusations and accused the country's government of cor-

ruption and incompetence.

Abdullah subsequently said authorities had thwarted an attempt at sedition involving his half brother and some 18 suspects, while saying he was angry and in shock. Abdullah also suggested there was continued control over Hamzah's movements, saying the prince was "with his family at his palace, under my care."

Prince's death a 'huge void' for Queen: Andrew

PTI ■ LONDON

Britain's Queen Elizabeth II has described the death of her husband of 73 years, Prince Philip, as having left a "huge void in her life", their son Prince Andrew said on Sunday.

As he left a memorial service for his late father, the Duke of Edinburgh, who passed away aged 99 on Friday, Prince Andrew said his passing was a "terrible loss" and the family was grateful for all the messages of support and condolence.

"It's a great loss. We've lost almost the grandfather of the nation," Prince Andrew, also the Duke of York, told reporters.

"I feel very sorry and supportive of my mother, who's feeling it more than everybody else. The Queen, as you would expect, is an incredibly stoic person and she described his passing as a miracle, and she's contemplating. She



Britain's Prince Edward, Sophie Countess of Wessex and their daughter Lady Louise Windsor, attend the Sunday service at the Royal Chapel of All Saints at Royal Lodge, Windsor, in England on Sunday **AP**

described it as having left a huge void in her life. We as a family are rallying around to support her," he said, on being asked about his mother's emotions.

About his late father, he added: "He was a remarkable man. I loved him as a father. He was always somebody you could go to and he would always listen."

Religious leaders recall Philip's spiritual curiosity

AP ■ LONDON

Churches in Britain held services Sunday to remember Prince Philip as people of many religions reflected on a man whose gruff exterior hid a strong personal faith and deep curiosity about others' beliefs.

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby led a service of remembrance at Canterbury Cathedral in southeast England for the husband of Queen Elizabeth II, who died Friday at the age of 99.

Welby, who is set to preside at Philip's funeral on Saturday at Windsor Castle, led prayers for Philip, also known as the Duke of Edinburgh, and contemplated "a very long life, remarkably led."

Chadians vote as Deby seeks to extend 3-decade presidency

AP ■ N'DJAMENA

Chadian President Idriss Deby Itno was widely expected to win re-election Sunday, extending his three-decade-long rule in this central African nation after three top opposition politicians chose not to take part in the vote.

Some polling stations opened later than expected in the capital of N'Djamena, where streets are lined with giant portraits of Deby.

A constitutional referendum approved several years ago means he can now serve two more terms, potentially stay in power until 2033.

"I invite all Chadians to go to the polls to choose the candidate of their choice," the longtime president said after casting his ballot Sunday along-

side his wife. "I have seen since yesterday that the boycott order has not been respected, so people must go out to perform their civic duties."

While running for a sixth time in this oil-producing country, Deby has campaigned on promises of building schools, paving roads and improving living conditions in this country that remains one of the least developed in the world. The top opposition candidate remaining in the race is Albert Pahimi Padacke, a one-time Deby ally who served as prime minister from 2016 to 2018.

Five other lesser known candidates are also taking part, including one that has publicly accused Deby's party — the Patriotic Salvation Movement, or MPS, of using state resources to campaign.

US-Philippines officials discuss concerns over China's ships

AP ■ ABOARD A US MILITARY AIRCRAFT

Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin on Saturday discussed with his Philippine counterpart China's recent positioning of "militia vessels" near the Philippines in the South China Sea.

Austin spoke by phone with Philippine Secretary of National Defence Delfin Lorenzana while Austin was flying from Washington to Israel to begin an international trip.

Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said Austin and Lorenzana discussed the situation in the South China Sea and the recent massing of Chinese vessels at Whitsun Reef, which has drawn criticism from Manila.

OVER 2,000 YEARS ON Sanskrit remains popular in China: Chinese Professor

PTI ■ BEIJING

Sanskrit studies are flourishing in China, over 2,000 years after the ancient Indian language was brought to this country along with Buddhism, making a profound impact on Chinese monarchs and scholars over the centuries, according to a distinguished professor here.

Wang Bangwei, a well-known Chinese scholar in Sanskrit and Director of Sino-Indian Buddhist Studies, Institute of Oriental and Indian Studies at the Peking University, said Sanskrit which is the root of Indian culture continues to remain popular in China, contrary to its modest progress in modern India.

Wang said the Peking University is one of the oldest in China and this year marks

the completion of 100 years of teaching Sanskrit at the leading varsity. Wang credited 4th Century AD Indian scholar Kumarajiva for spreading Sanskrit in China.

Kumarajiva was instrumental in translating Buddhist sutras into Chinese language during his stay in China over 2,000 years ago, earning the royal title of "National Teacher of China". He was the first among numerous scholars who laid a firm foundation for civilisational links between the two countries.

Kumarajiva, hailing from a Kashmiri Brahmin family from the then Kucha Kingdom, spent about 23 years in China in the 4th century AD both as a prisoner and as a most revered scholar.

Sanskrit, its associated culture and its development was

kept alive by numerous Chinese scholars, like Fa Xian and Xuan Zang and others, who visited India, Wang said, while launching the Sanskrit learning application "Little Guru" of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations, (ICCR) at the Indian Embassy here on Friday, along with Indian Ambassador, Vikram Misri.

Sanskrit teaching programme started at the Peking University a century ago but Sanskrit research and teaching in China has a history of over 2,000 years, Wang said.

When Buddhism came to China from India, Chinese Buddhist monks started translating Indian texts into Chinese.

"From that moment, Sanskrit study and research started. China has a long history of Sanskrit tradition, till that time outside of India,

China has the longest and strongest scholarship in the world," he said. Over 100 Chinese scholars studied in Nalanda University until it began to decline in 11th Century, Wang said.

"Sanskrit is a major language of Indian culture. More and more people in China are interested in Indian culture and Sanskrit is a good way to learn more about Indian culture," he said.

He said Sanskrit was the most important language through which Chinese learned about Hinduism, Buddhism, ancient Indian medicine, astronomy and mathematics.

"While Buddhism declined in India, it became very strong in China and has become part of Chinese culture," he told **PTI**. Once the language became strong in China, the need to go to India

to learn it declined, he said. "China gradually became centre of Buddhism in Asia. In India, Buddhism has declined and in China it grew," he said, adding that thanks to numerous scholars who visited India over the centuries, China has some rare Sanskrit scriptures brought by them, which may not be available in India.

Y.E. Shaoyong, Associate Prof of Sanskrit in Peking University, said the Sanskrit studies in China are booming. His department now has 10 scholars specialising in the language while 200 others studied as part of the subject for their graduate programme.

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Bollywood
'Nomination in BAFTA was way more than a big deal for me, so I have zero expectations.'
—Adarsh Gourav

A GLIMMER OF HOPE

Advanced AI-driven surveillance systems, when used efficiently, have the potential to bring safety back into society, says ABHISHEK KUMAR

A secure city is arguably the sign of an attractive and prosperous place, where all residents and visitors live, work and travel in peace, knowing that they are safe. Though this concept seems dream-like, it is steadily evolving, thanks to the futuristic vision of some state-of-the-art surveillance players. These players are working towards creating real-time, dynamic and proactive AI-based video surveillance systems. It brings us closer to the dream of walking down the street feeling secure while being productive. There are a lot of ways that these systems can make a difference in our lives but the following are some major areas where surveillance systems can truly be a game-changer, especially in India.

Safety of residents

Until recent times, whenever we thought of security, our mind would go to a person standing guard at a police post or the entrance of a building. In this regard, it's not impossible for human errors, omissions and negligence to seep in sometimes. This scenario leaves a chink in the armour, doesn't it? We have faith in our compatriots, but being solely dependent on them can be unwise. We need technological interventions for their support. Hence, an automated surveillance system comes into play. The right surveillance system can monitor visitors in a residential area so that there is a clear record of anyone entering and leaving. It can keep a sharp eye on people to ensure they're safe, and it can also detect other major incidents like break-ins, thefts and violence. Such systems raise an alert with the security personnel in real-time, thereby leading to quick response.

To ensure personal liberty of under-trials

We are aware that a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty. So, in order to set a good precedent, we must begin with digitising our



police stations and courthouses to the extent possible. The highly-publicised double murder of a father and son by police personnel at a Tuticorin police station highlights the need for these surveillance systems. NCRB data states that there were over 1,700 custodial deaths between 2001 and 2018. There were 452 custodial deaths between 2014 and 2018, in which no police officers were held responsible. Surveillance systems are everywhere across India and deploying them across our courthouses and police stations will bring greater confidence of people in our institutions. Also, ideally, the video footage should not be stored locally and will be streamed directly to the police headquarters so that tampering is averted.

Women security

Women's security should be more than just a priority. Going back to a

gut-wrenching incident back in 2017, where a 25-year-old woman at the Pune Infosys campus was raped and strangled to death in her office by a security guard — demonstrates the horrendous threat that women face daily. In this case, the culprit was caught but what about the others that get away with their crimes? Should we not prevent such dreadful incidences from repeating over and over again? Bengaluru City has announced that it will be setting up 16,000 CCTV cameras for women's safety but workplaces also need to follow suit. They need to step up security measures for women in the workplace so that they can follow their dreams without the constant fear looming over them.

Traffic management

Traffic monitoring and management have grown to a whole new level

due to the latest surveillance technology. Commuters can now monitor the news to get the latest traffic reports before heading out to work. CCTV cameras have been installed on busy roads, atop traffic signals and at busy intersections. Cameras are used for monitoring traffic, recording the pattern data, overall observing traffic and to issue *challans*. However, this infrastructure is largely restricted to the metropolitan cities.

India has the highest accident mortality and theft rate. Deploying traffic cameras across smaller cities would urge drivers to exercise caution and discourage violations. Transport authorities can also use them to monitor vehicle flow in case of road closures or accidents. They do so by issuing automated tickets for moving violations by simply picking up the offender's number plate information.

To stop terrorism

Sadly, India is no stranger to terrorism. There have been numerous attacks in our country in the past and we've recently honored the 12th anniversary of the infamous Mumbai attacks in 2008, where 171 people lost their lives and 239 were injured. These horrific instances have demonstrated to us the need for high-tech surveillance. With the latest technology, modern surveillance systems are equipped with features such as facial recognition. It can be linked to government and police records to identify known criminals and suspicious individuals. When installed at various junctures around cities, it could identify and inform authorities of a wanted individual or threat well in advance without stirring up mass panic.

After going through the aforementioned points, it becomes plain to see that surveillance is no longer a choice but a need in today's world. So that our children could play safely outside, women could walk freely or sit in their office alone, and the only people approaching them are the ones who want to offer help. Advanced AI-driven surveillance systems give us a glimmer of hope. And when used efficiently, they have the potential to bring safety back into society.

(The writer is the regional director of Oncam.)

WEBBED



THE DISCIPLE

Self-doubt, sacrifice and struggle converge into an existential crisis for a devoted classical vocalist as the mastery he strives for remains elusive. Starring Aditya Modak, Arun Dravid and Sumitra Bhavne, it releases on Netflix on April 30.



SEXIFY

To build an innovative sex app and win a tech competition, a sexually inexperienced student and her friends must explore the daunting world of intimacy. Starring Aleksandra Skraba, Maria Sobocinska and Sandra Drzymalska, it releases on Netflix on April 28.



THINGS HEARD AND SEEN

A young woman discovers that both her husband and their new home harbour sinister secrets after they leave Manhattan for small-town life. Starring Amanda Seyfried, James Norton and Natalia Dyer, it releases on Netflix on April 29.



Actor Gauhar Khan launches The Park Holidays International Mobile App in Delhi. Photo: Pankaj Kumar

We have witnessed a steep rise in maternal deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis has shown us that we must strengthen health systems to cope with emergencies without impacting essential services," says Executive Director, Population Foundation of India, Poonam Muttreja.

Besides the overwhelming burden of COVID-19 cases in India, the indirect effects of the pandemic are cause for concern, especially in the case of already vulnerable communities. Women and children have been disproportionately affected, with studies registering a significant increase in the numbers of stillbirths and maternal deaths compared to pre-COVID periods. A recent review in The Lancet, of studies on maternal and child health outcomes, has confirmed that the impact of the COVID-19-associated lockdowns has been devastating for mothers and newborns. Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) have been worst affected.

Clinics and public health facilities being inaccessible to many during pandemic-induced lockdowns cut off thousands from essential health services. The United Nations has estimated that this may have caused an additional 2,20,000 child deaths and 11,000 maternal deaths in South Asia alone. These numbers are likely to increase with India potentially accounting for the largest proportions. In India, the number of women who received all four antenatal check-ups during the pandemic also dropped by 51 per cent and the number of institutional deliveries were down by 79 per cent. The demand for family planning services satisfied by modern methods fell by 67 per cent.

National Safe Motherhood Day is celebrated on April 11 every year, on Kasturba Gandhi's birth anniversary. This year, the focus must be on ensuring access to quality family planning services and reproductive health services for all.

A robust family planning programme is an important way of curbing preventable deaths. "More accessible and equitable family planning services that offers a wider choice of contraceptive

A cause for concern

Prior to National Safe Motherhood Day, public health expert Poonam Muttreja says that the focus needs to be widened to include morbidity as an important aspect of maternal health



methods to couples are a simple, low-cost intervention that can reduce maternal and child mortality by preventing early pregnancies and unwanted pregnancies at a later age," says Poonam.

"At Population Foundation of India, we have engaged with policymakers, donors, NGOs and communities to consistently raise the discourse on the need for informed decision making on women's health. We promote effective and gender-sensitive health and development strategies and policies. We have constantly emphasised the importance of planned families, birth spacing and delayed marriage as strategies to improve maternal health," she adds.

Gender inequality, gender-based violence and lack of agency continue to

impact women's ability to access maternal and antenatal health services. In India, regressive gender norms continue to result in a preference for sons, leading to frequent pregnancies. Further social norms around child and early marriages also impact maternal and child health.

While the full impact of the pandemic on the public health system will not be clear for some time, COVID-19 has underscored that stronger maternal and child care systems are a critical requirement of health system strengthening going forward.

The foundation has been working at the national, state and community level to change perceptions around gender family planning, adolescent sexuality and reproductive health.

No competition between actors: Pratik Gandhi

He became a pan-India sensation almost overnight, with his portrayal of Harshad Mehta in last year's popular series *Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story*, and has now planted his feet in Bollywood. With the spotlight firmly on him, actor Pratik Gandhi says he does not believe in competition among contemporaries.

"There can't be competition between actors. Had it been products, there would have been competition. If I was a biscuit or a soap, there would be competition," Pratik said.

He added, "I am a human being. How can two people, looking so different and having distinct types of acting, be compared? I don't take the pressure that your next thing has to be bigger than the previous one."

Gujarati actor Pratik first made his mark on stage and his name was included in *Limca Book Of Records* for a monologue he performed in three languages, in the play *Mohan No Masalo*. He would tell you the *Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story* success has been a progression of his steady rise as an actor, and it has opened up opportunities.

"I would convert this as excitement where people are giving me different opportunities now. They are open to work with me in different subjects — which is very exciting for me as an actor, and I am just looking forward to playing another character. So yeah, I don't think that much. My theatre background is helping me here," Pratik said.

He insists fame and success are peripheral products. "I don't think about all these things (fame and success) because they are peripheral byproducts. I am getting much love from the audience all across, and across all age groups. I don't think



about it much. It is the character that worked for them," he said, about his *Scam 1992* success.

Before starring in the OTT show, Pratik was also seen in the Hindi film *Loveyatri*, but he admits Hansal Mehta's web series was a game changer for him.

"It is an absolute gamechanger. It changed a lot of things for me personally and professionally. More so, it has changed the way people look at me now," he said.

He finds all the love coming his way satisfying and describes it as "a very overwhelming feeling."

"It has something that I have been waiting for, over the last 16 years," he concluded.

—IANS

TRENDBLAZER



TAAPSEE'S MANTRA: SUIT UP, SMILE UP, SHOW UP

Actor **TAAPSEE PANNU** shared a mantra in life that she follows.

"Suit up... smile up.... show up," she wrote as caption on Instagram, with a picture where she is dressed in burnt orange pants paired with a white shirt and a blazer.

The actor is currently busy shooting for *Shabaash Mithu*, based on the life of Indian women's ODI cricket team captain Mithali Dorai Raj.

She also has *Looop Lapeta*, *Haseen Dilruba* and *Rashmi Rocket* coming up.

fairtalk

AAHANA KUMRA



'I know as an actress, I have the power to influence people, and I want to do it in the right direction. Films can have an enormous impact on society, especially young minds. So, I never want to be associated with a project that will showcase women in a poor light. It's important and a high time to have conversations around women's rights and safety.'

dailytalk

RASHMIKA MANDANNA



'Since I am just a beginner in the field of acting, as a person I am curious how it is going to pan out when I do different things. For me, every film I choose, I do a different character because, for me, I wouldn't want to watch myself do the same content twice. I like to keep surprising myself — 'am I really doing this?' I am craving to do better work in any language.'

SCARY TO HAVE A BABY IN PANDEMIC: JONES

Actor **FELICITY JONES** said that it was an intense experience giving birth to a baby during the pandemic.

"I made banana bread three times and burnt it each time. I had a baby in the first one. It seems ages ago now in the really scary lockdown when we were all advised to wash our groceries and we didn't know what was going to happen. It was pretty intense, but having kids is intense anyway. The pandemic just added a little extra," she said.

She added: "To have a baby in an apocalyptic moment is pretty scary."



EDUCATION: A POWERFUL WEAPON

While there are schemes like *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* that aim to educate girls but continuous awareness and persistent effort are needed to enable them to benefit at the ground level, says RAMA SHARMA

There are several powerful women, who have shattered the patriarchal norms and have shown the rest of the world what women can do if they have equal rights. Chhavi Rajawat is one such name that has done exactly that and more. India's first woman sarpanch with an MBA degree, Chhavi was the sarpanch of her village Soda in Malpura block, Tonk district in Rajasthan. She had left her lucrative corporate job to serve as a sarpanch. Her ardour to work for the community has not just touched lives but has led the way for several girls and women who have set their hearts on serving the community.

One such life that Chhavi has inspired is that of 25-year-old Radha Rajawat. A resident of Lalwari village in Niwai block of Tonk district in Rajasthan, Radha has not only educated herself but made a huge difference in the lives of girls in and around her village by fighting for their rights to education. Her journey, however, has been a tough one. She had to put up a fight against her parents first and then, against the entire Rajput community of her village to reach where she is today.

"Initially, we were against her idea of pursuing education after Class 8th as that would have meant sending her outside the village," shared her parents who had to eventually give up in front of their daughter's perseverance. Their support was faced by the opposition not just from their extended families but from the Rajput community as well. The pressure forced Radha's parents to withdraw their support, but Radha was adamant. She put up a brave fight against everyone, worked as a laborer, and managed to complete Class 12 with a good score of 70 per cent.

Radha's journey had started while she was still in Class 8th. Under the Sakshar Bharat Mission — a centrally sponsored nationwide literacy scheme of



the Indian Department for School Education and Literacy (DSEL), Radha was selected as a child reporter. This provided her a platform to raise issues concerning her village and panchayat through newspapers. Slowly, she started mobilising the villagers.

In 2013, she led the girls and women from the panchayat to address the issue of corruption. "Led by Radha, the group submitted a memorandum not only to the District Collector but also to the Chief Minister requesting solution the challenge of negligence and corruption at the panchayat level," informed

Poonam Rajawat, a member of Kishori Manch — an adolescent group run by a local non-profit organisation in the region.

One of the most important transformations that Radha brought to this panchayat was setting up a school till Class 12. Her persistent efforts to address the concerns of thousands of girls who had to give up education due to lack of a higher secondary school in their village led to this impact. The girls of the village, now, do not have to compromise on their dreams of completing school education.

Not just for girls, she soon started working towards the

education of the entire village. "In 2014, as a panchayat motivator, she took the initiative to educate 1,800 illiterate people of the village and encouraged them to sit for the examinations," said Panchayat Assistant, Hemraj Singh.

Shashi Kanwar, who was tutored by Radha, shared that there wasn't a single educated woman in the village. "It is a result of her hard work and efforts of the other adolescent girls associated with her that today, nearly 70 per cent of women in the village are literate." As far as the education of adolescent girls is concerned,

prior to 2013, only 30 per cent of girls in Lalwari panchayat were educated, while today, more than 80 per cent are linked with mainstream education. Not only this, 30 to 40 per cent of the girls are stepping out of the village boundary to pursue their dream of higher education.

"Overwhelmed by Radha's zeal to work for the better future of her community, she was requested by the girls, women and other responsible people of the village to contest the panchayat elections," said Maina Rana, a colleague of Radha's. She obliged their

request and contested the election but couldn't win. She, however, continued to support the winner, Devalal Gurjar, who is also her colleague, to serve the community with sincerity.

Babulal Sharma, a local teacher, said, "Radha has tried to raise social issues, problems and challenges not only at the panchayat level but also at the district and state level from time to time. It is the result of her dedication towards the society that she had the opportunity to meet the former Vice President of India, Hamid Ansari. Taking note of her confidence and her ability to lead the youth, local political groups had also offered her to join them. Radha, a true social worker, showed her will to rise above politics and work for all the sections of society."

Her life, however, is not only occupied with social responsibilities but is equally dedicated to her family. "I am a cancer patient. Radha, as responsible as she is, has taken the entire charge into her hands. Along with pursuing further education, she is working in a private firm. Currently, I am receiving free treatment with the help of Dr Prahlad Dhakad, a Senior Doctor working in Jaipuria Hospital. It is because of her that I am able to get this free treatment. I was completely against her education but now I realise my mistake and understood the importance of girls' education," said Radha's father.

Her struggle and passion for social awareness is an outstanding example of women's empowerment. While there are schemes like *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* that aim to educate girls but continuous awareness and persistent effort are needed to enable them to benefit at the ground level. For women to become self-reliant and courageous, they should have equal right and opportunities to educate themselves.

—Charkha Features



LEARN AND UNLEARN

One should give up self-conceit and accept changes if one wants to do better in life, says

RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

There is hardly any human being in the world who is not inclined to improve himself/herself. Of course, some aspire for improvement in their relationship with whom they have to live and work, whereas others work for improvement in their economic status. Some want to improve or enhance their personality, whereas others are more concerned about their spiritual progress. In any case, the will to make some progress is basic to all normal beings and the efforts to improve are a sign of life. And, the volition, under-lying all efforts of man to bring about improvement is mainly one's aspiration to be happier. If one ponders over this question of attainment

of true happiness, one would come to the conclusion that man's happiness ultimately depends upon his behaviour or his reaction to the external stimuli and his ways of thinking which, in turn, depends upon his inner urges, his tendencies and the training he had. So, in order to have any other kind of improvement, man has to bring about improvement in his outlook, habits, mannerism and ways. For this, he has to pick up and learn certain things and unlearn others. If man's process of learning (or unlearning wrong things) stops and his effort to put into practice what he has learned already ceases or his capacity and will to make efforts are exhausted, his improvement and progress also come to a halt.

Not many are aware of the fact that the path to progress is paved with some obstacles which are mostly of man's own making. One of these is man's pride and arrogance about his own knowledge. It is easy to teach him who has no pride in his own intelligence. But he who regards himself as perfectly wise would say to others, "There is nothing that I do not know." It is difficult to offer correction to such a man, for he assumes air in such a manner that people would stutter in his presence; he loses temper no sooner than anyone would start informing him on any subject. So, if one wants to improve and, for that purpose, is inclined to accept some changes, one should give up self-conceit because it precludes the possibility of learning good things of life and unlearning wrong things.

Another major hurdle in man's path to progress is his attachment to worldly objects, his lust for sensual pleasures, his sense of deep involvement, and his attachment to his body. Little does man realise that, at this far-end of iron age, when a man has lost his morals, the worldly things are devoid of their original essence. One who wants spiritual improvement should know that the present unrighteous world has no substance. Is the bark of a sugar cane worth anything when the juice has been squeezed out of it? So has the world lost all its sap and truth because it has become debased. This body of ours is assailed by several different diseases and is made of debased matter. So one who aspires for self-improvement should push out attachment to objects of senses or thirst for these, with only one determined effort, as, otherwise, it would mean that one has lost or is losing one's precious life over a mere trifle.

Knowing all this, one should get rid of body consciousness. The first step for this is to withdraw one's attachment from 'religions' of the body, which rob one's life of its essence, and to devote one's mind and body and possessions towards the welfare of the world. This will bring in man qualities such as service, dedication, sacrifice, meekness, fellow-feeling, tolerance, and hundred-and-one other noble traits of high character. It will quicken his efforts for self-improvement.

Whether working from home or office, toiling away for long hours without breaks and physical activity can begin to damage your body, vitality and even without tell-tale signs.

"It is important to achieve a healthy work-life balance in order to live a fulfilled life. But there are moments in life when you have to finish certain deadlines and cannot avoid spending a lot of time on your desk," says Beenu Rajpoot, noted filmmaker and a Fit India Champion.

The fitness expert has these suggestions for those busy hours that will not only nourish your body and mind, but also increase overall productivity:

Between emails, meetings and calls, try to take a stroll even for a few minutes to reset your body and brain. A little bit of movement during those long sitting hours will go a long way to ensure that your body and joints do not become too stiff by sitting.

Check your breath during intervals. Take a few long breaths engaging your abdominals to ensure that your body is getting enough oxygen. Learn some *Pranayama* techniques to recreate yourself quickly so that you can maintain a constant energy level throughout the long span of desk sitting.

Remember to do a few neck and shoulder stretches while on your desk to avoid neck pain or back pain later. It will also help in keeping your posture upright. Add useful stretches from your yoga class to these intervals.

Choose the appropriate ergonomic chair and table in order to maintain a good posture while sitting for long hours. Some of the important factors

Keep your body, mind active

Working long hours can damage your vitality even without tell-tale signs

to be considered are — shape of the chair, its height, height of the table, lumbar support in the chair, among others. Ensure that your chair has some kind of lumbar support. Lumbar support will protect your lumbar spine from pressures of excessive flexion during long sitting hours. It is also important to choose a chair where you can adjust the height of the chair so that you can adjust its height vis-a-vis your table. It will be good for your mid-upper back and shoulders. Often people who ignore this advice can develop health conditions like scoliosis and rounded shoulders.

Keep drinking water during a long shift. It's quite common that people under pressure keep suppressing their thirst subconsciously that makes them dehydrated. Remember to keep sipping the water every hour or so to keep your body rich in fluids that will improve the circulation and will keep your blood pressure in check, apart from many other benefits of drinking water.

Decorate your space nicely and keep it clean, organised and minimal. Avoid too much clutter around in your space. Too much physical clutter affects



the states of your mind, too. Practice the yogic principle of *Aparigraha* or minimalism to keep your space, physical as well as mental, free.

Ensure that you are getting some sun during the day. It will not only enrich your Vitamin D levels but also give a big

boost to your immune system. It is very common among the big cities in India that people don't get enough Vitamin D as they are not exposed to the sunlight often. Lack of exposure to the sunlight leads to Vitamin D deficiency that is often linked to other health issues.

Gives your eyes some rest in between after every half an hour or so by doing a simple yoga technique of palming. Rub your palms together and just cover your eyes with your warm palms. Your eyes will feel energised immediately.

—IANS

“Invest in your dreams. Grind now. Shine later.”
 —Unknown

TREATING SLEEP APNEA MAY REDUCE DEMENTIA

Older adults who received positive airway pressure therapy prescribed for obstructive sleep apnea may be less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease and other kinds of dementia, new research suggests.

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is a condition in which the upper airway collapses repeatedly throughout the night, preventing normal breathing during sleep.

OSA is associated with a variety of other neurological and cardiovascular conditions, and many older adults are at high risk for OSA.

"We found a significant association between positive airway pressure use and lower risk of Alzheimer's and other types of dementia over three years, suggesting that positive airway pressure may be protective against dementia risk in people with OSA," said lead author Galit Levi Dunietz, Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan.



CHILDHOOD DIET LINKED TO LESS ANXIETY LATER

Exercise and a healthy diet in childhood leads to adults with bigger brains and lower levels of anxiety, a new study suggests.

The mouse-model study determined that early-life exercise generally reduced anxious behaviors in adults. It also led to an increase in adult muscle and brain mass.

"During the COVID-19 lockdowns, particularly in the early months, kids got very little exercise. For many without access to a park or a backyard, school was their only source of physical activity," said researcher Marcell Cadney from the University of California - Riverside. "It is important we find solutions for these kids, possibly including extra attention as they grow into adults," Cadney added.

The researchers determined that early-life exercise generally reduced anxious behaviours in adults. It also led to an increase in adult muscle and brain mass. When fed "Western" style diets high in fat and sugar, the mice not only became fatter, but also grew into adults that preferred unhealthy foods.



OBESITY LINKED TO HEAVY PERIODS

Ladies, here is one more reason to reduce your body weight. Obesity is linked to greater menstrual blood loss, which may result from increased inflammation in the womb lining, delaying its repair, according to a study conducted both on women and mice.

The study, led by researchers from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, UK, found a weak but statistically significant association between increasing body mass index (BMI) and more heavy periods in women.

In the mouse study, the team found that after shedding their womb lining, the mice on a high-fat diet showed delayed repair of the remaining womb lining in comparison to mice on a normal diet.

Further examination of womb tissue from the mice indicated that inflammatory factors were also higher in mice with greater body weight. The findings are detailed in the Journal of Endocrinology.



'JUMPING' GENES CAN PREVENT BLOOD CANCER

US scientists have found that transposons, also known as jumping genes, can protect against certain blood cancers and help develop new therapeutic targets.

Transposons are DNA sequences that can move, or jump, from one location in the genome to another when activated. These "jumping" genes are a source of genetic mutations responsible for a number of human diseases.

The findings, published in the journal Nature Genetics, can help predict how patients will respond to cancer therapies and find new therapeutic targets for acute myeloid leukemia (AML) — the deadliest type of blood cancer in adults and children.

"Our initial finding was a surprise because it's been long thought that activated transposons promote cancer development by generating genetic mutations. We found it was the opposite for blood cancers, and that decreased L1 activity was associated with worse clinical outcomes and therapy resistance in patients," said Jian Xu, Associate Professor in the CRI.



NEW DRUG CAN STOP TUMOURS FROM GROWING

US researchers have found that an oral drug can be effective in stopping tumours from growing. The team from the University of Colorado Cancer Center found that slowing down NLRP3 can reduce inflammation and curb tumour growth and progression.

"NLRP3 is a member of a larger family that is involved in sensing danger signals," said Carlo Marchetti, from the varsity's School of Medicine.

It is a receptor that surveils the intercellular compartment of a cell, looking for danger molecules or pathogens.

"When NLRP3 recognises these signals, it leads to the activation of caspase-1, a protein involved in the processing and maturation of interleukin-1-beta into its biological active form, causing an intense inflammatory response. We found that in melanoma, this process is dysregulated, resulting in tumour growth," Marchetti said.





His strokes on the off-side —

However, the run-flow was affected when ever-reliable Rashid got the ball in his hands. He also

Mohammed Nabi (2/32) got rid of Rana and Eoin Morgan (2) off successive balls in the 18th

LOSING HAZELEWOOD A BLOW

Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming said losing Josiah Hazlewood was a big blow ahead of the new season's start as it left the team without the overseas pace bowling options with his replacement Jason Behrendorff and South African Lungi Ngidi still not available for team's next game said. Australia pacer Hazlewood had withdrawn at the last moment to keep himself fit for upcoming international assignments. Behrendorff was named his replacement last Friday and is yet to arrive, while Ngidi is serving his quarantine after returning midway from South Africa's ODI series against Pakistan.

ow: Sangakkara