OPINION 6

OF SRI LANKA AND

THE ANDAMANS

WORLD 8

'SUSPICIOUS' BLACKOUT STRIKES

IRAN'S NATANZ NUCLEAR SITE

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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 man-ufactured 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 pri-mary 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)

almost 20 vaccines in various clinical and pre-clinical stages, Sputnik V vaccine would receive approval first, within the next ten days.

For the manufacturing of vaccine doses, the Russian Direct Investment Fund has partnered with a number of Indian pharmaceutical com-panies, including Hyderabad-based Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Hetero Biopharma, Gland Pharma, Stelis Biopharma, and Vichrow Biotech. Sputnik V will provide a big boost in the war against Covid-19, with a production capacity of 850 million doses in the

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

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 Novavex (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

SPORT 12

PUNJAB VS ROYALS

IN IPL TODAY

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 rock 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 Madhva Pradesh.

authorities to cap the price of Remdesivir between ₹1,100 and ₹1,400 per vial and urged and V1,400 per vial and triged 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 manufactures 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 manu-facturers to ramp up the pro-

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

Government on Sunday made it mandatory for people coming from seven States which

Shimla: The Himachal Pradesh 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

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 main-

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

Keiriwal 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

 W^{eeks} 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 have also scheduled the Board lakh of children and parents | Maharashtra Chief Minister



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 examinations during the next

"In the light of the devastating corona second wave, conducting CBSE exams must be reconsidered. All stakeolders 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 rag-ing 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 stu-dents or others who might be severely affected by the disease in this manner," she

She said with over one lakh cases of Covid-19 being reported across the country, 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 he CBI on Sunday quesallegations 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

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 house

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



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

reconsidered in view of the ris-<u>Capsule</u>

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 or Monday, party leader Nawab 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 Momnt Groups in districts will take decisions as per conditions

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

hief Minister Shivrai 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 continuous supply Remdesivir injections in hospitals. Total 4000 injections have arrived and today 10,000 tied up with the company for injections. Chouhan said that lock-

down is not the solution to the problem. We also have to keep economic activities running. To prevent corona infection, the

COVID IN MADHYA PRADESH

public is being made aware that they themselves do not leave the house without work. The spontaneous corona curfew is the most effective solution.

Dists Total Cases Fresh Cases

21,946

more injections will come. Private hospitals are also being

effective in fighting Covid Mantralaya. In the V.C., Urges mohalla Khajuraho MP and state president of Bharatiya Janata Party committees, sarpanchs to implement it

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Novernor Anandiben Patel Ghas 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 time.

V.D. Sharma, P.C. Sharma of Indian National Congress, C.R. Gautam of Bahujan Samai 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.

Guv: Janata Curfew will be

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

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

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 vol-

against Corona and defeat it.

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.

untary corona curfew will be

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

2 kids die, 150 shanties gutted in fire in Noida

NOIDA/LUCKNOW

Amajor 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 pm in the JJ cluster near Behlolpur village under Phase 3 police station limits, according to officials.

"Around a dozen fire ten-ders 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 the situation of been recovered. The exact cause of the fire is being ascertained," he said.

350 people detained for violating lockdown

Friday 6pm for 60 hours in city

STAFF REPORTER BHOPAI

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

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 pre-

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

During the lockdown today action has been taken

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

liquor.
Continuous action has been taken against those vio-lating 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 preven-



A health worker administers Covid-19 vaccine to a beneficiary at a vaccination camp during nationwide 'Tika Utsav

Hailstorm, thunder activities likely in State: Met Dept

STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

Abrupt changes hailstorm, thundery activities, gusty winds would be witnessed in 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 Pioneer photo 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

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

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 organ-ised by youth group Ansh

Happiness Society. Anuradha Shankar beauti-

a shadow of Gandhi but an independent opinionated woman who never failed to be Gandhi's leading light in his needing 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 ide-

ology.

Megha Dalton, through

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 acci-

dent while he was moving towards Bhopal.

The deceased was identified as Manoj Vanshkaar who was returning in the evening when he met accident to save a cow which appeared on the road. After the preliminary investigation which appeared of 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

Meanwhile, a 35-year-old man died after his bike skid at Narela Damodar village; Berasia police have started investiga-tion. The deceased, identified as Manmohan Sahu had gone for

Online dance workshop to be held today by The Dance Arena

STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

The young dance aspirants I 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 con-temporary forms to people. Shrey Pandey has choreographed many shows till

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

The party dance can be

learned maximum in 20 days while the professional dance takes four years to be learned. The workshop currently will focusing 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



Odia dancer Aleena Acharaya shares her | Police book man for experiences on 'Baaton Baaton Mein'

dont like to be addressed as Guru as I feel Gurus have a different level of knowledge and experience," says renowned Odia dancer Aleena Acharava. Renowned Odissi dancer

Aleena Acharaya shared about her experiences with the art 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 Mishr, 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

The event was

conceptualised and

coordinated by Team

Invictus a core team

of five students of **Bhopal School of Social Sciences**

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 ehy they want to learb 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 alot,"

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

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 visi-bility 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.

selling house with forged documents Bhopal: The TT Nagar police have booked a man for fraudinvestigation police have plaint and on the completion of

ulently selling a house at `3.5 lakh, using forged document; police registered a case on

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-

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 arrest-ed. 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

Online cross cultural fest 'Abhisaran' concludes

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

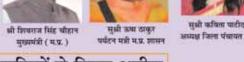
श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी

षधानमंत्री

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

Privank Iain, Sameeksha

Agrawal, Sufain Sami, Vanshika Nainani and Rohan Dayal along with the event management team to handle the event



नागरिकों से विनम्र अपील

45 वर्ष की आयु से अधिक सभी नागरिक कोरोना से बचने के लिए कोरोना की वैक्सीन अपने निकट सरकारी स्वास्थ्य केन्द्र में नि:श्लक लगवाएं



कोरोना से बचने के लिए मास्क पहने, हाथों को बार-बार धोते रहें दो गज की दूरी रखें, कोरोना के टीके को आवश्य लगाएं।

गणेश पाटीदार सरपंच ग्राम पंचायत गवर पलासिया सनिल शर्मा पचिव

ग्राम पंचायत ध्रावण सिलावर

नन्दनी सरपंच माम पंचापत कालाकंड केदार खेर

सचिव

मनोज काँशल सरपंच सरपंच ग्राम पंचायत स्रांतर प्रवीण विल्लोरे राग्रेप्रवर आंजना मचिव

in a thoroughly professional way.Over three days program

was spread over five different categories with more than 25 ing platform to show their cre-मधी कविता पाटीदार

ग्राम पंचायत

कोमल सिंह

मसिव

ative and intellectual talents. Student team of Abhisaran gave credit for the success of अध्यक्ष जिल्हा पंचायत हंतीर

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

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 P.J. Praising the efforts of the co-ordinators and organizers, the Principal deeply appreciated the stu-dents 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

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

Expressing her deep con-

cern over the second wave of the Covid pandemic that has gripped the nation, the Mutawalli has requested peo ple 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 and it is the social, moral and religious responsibility of people that they save them-selves from the deadly virus and if infected, should restrict

Saba Sultan has said that Ramzan is the month of selfdiscipline, 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 strict ly 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.

ings that the Almighty has granted us and continue to conduct ourselves with humility and wisdom. She wished the hopalities 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.



action with the citizens

She added that we should all be grateful for all the bless-

Special precaution at police stations amid Covid surge

STAFF REPORTER | BHOPAL

view of the increasing In view of the increasing infection of the corona, tions to take special precautions at police station level in the district and at every level of inter-

In view of the increasing infection of Corona and the spread of infection among the policemen, special care is being the Bhopal Police 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

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 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 Baghsewania police station while three policemen are critical

Constable 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

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Guv urges universities to help contain Covid spread

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 coor-

University teachers and students should extend support in ensuring necessary arrangements for public awareness and Janata Curfew. This will make affects to control Corrons make efforts to control Corona infection effective. She also called for the commitment of the staff and students of unithe 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. 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 vac-cination is important in this

cine 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 chan cellors 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 ■

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 pol-lution 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 He said that based on the

suggestions received from experts and organizations, the Delhi government will formu-late 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 quali-ty of Delhi and to solve the crisis the government has set a target to significantly reduce

the pollution level in the next

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 orga-nized by the Department of Environment, in which experts working in the field of environment, especially with regard to air pollution, have been

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 ■

 $H^{ ext{aving tricked the accused}}_{ ext{to confess with a NASA}}$ 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 of one Chandarbhan, 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

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.

Industrial area.

"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

"The accused alleged that the deceased used to abuse them after drinking. They had grudges against Chandarbhan 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 pro-fession. 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'e Greater Kailash area. The rescued persons have been identified as Shivani (27), Bharat (35), Naveet (31), C R 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 AC's 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.

Resume talks

with protesting

Negative Covid report mandatory to enter HP from 7 States

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

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 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 'lan-gars', '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 over-

crowding 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 mar riages 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

He directed that focus should be paid on Information Education Communication (IEC) regard-

ing taking fundamental pre-cautions such as use of face mask, social distancing and seeing a doctor in case of any

'Motivate people to get COVID-19 vaccination

Iai Ram Thakur urged BJP workers

Expressing concern over the rapid 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

said that the birth anniversary of Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar must be celebrated in a befitting manner by adopting all the SoPs of the State Government Steps must be taken to celebrate this occasion in a small number by adopting social distancing and ensuring that the gathering does not exceed two hundred, he said.

Member of Parliament and state BJP president, Suresh Kashyap said that the party worker must actively partici-pate in motivating the people of the state to come forward to vaccinate themselves against the COVID-19 virus. The 'Tikka Utsav' is being celebrated in the state from April

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

Maintaining that a surge in COVID-19 cases is being seen across the country and the situation is turning bad in Harvana 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.

Vii further said that a situation of uncertainty prevails as there have been no talks for a long time between the govern-ment 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 Bhonal on Sunday

Pioneer photo

105-yr-old Kaur mascot of Covid vaccination

s every person above the age As every person above the age of 45 years is being vaccinated in India, 105-year old Kartar Kaur has become the unlikely mascot of awareness on Corona vaccination in the coun-

While vaccination is being given full support by the educated and socially aware people, there are some under the influence of ignorance, who are creating superstitions and misconceptions about this. Kartar Kaur, the 105-year-old lady from Moga, carried the flag to create awareness among the people, where she and her family have



belongs to village Bhinder Khurd, she is now living with her son Harpinder Singh in Moga. She along with her family got vaccinated in a camp in Ward No. 3. The camp was organized under the leadership of her grandson and former councillor Manjit Singh Mann. More than 188 people were vaccinated in the camp. At present Manjit Singh Mann's wife, Amanpreet



Ward No.3. The family informed that Mata Kartar Kaur has been vaccinated on the sheer strength of her will and determination and was not pressured by any-one. The 105-year old thinks that

vaccination is mandatory to pre-vent this disease and said that even if it was not the turn of some people to get vaccinated, they should follow the instruc-

Over 1.13 administered

Pollowing 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

with an aim to ensure that the maximum number of people, the Department had set up more Vaccination Centres across the

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 posi-tive cases and deaths should be

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

given. All-party meetings should be organised

should

meeting.
Chouhan said that Tika (vaccination) Utsav is being celebrated in the state starting from 11April, 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

COVID VACCINE -Jab should have strict "Centre has chosen

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELH

Aam 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.

Terming vaccine univer-salisation 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

"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 Guvana? Odisha or Oman? Uttar Pradesh or United Kingdom? Kerala or Kenya?," he said in another tweet.

Chadha urged the government to prioritise vaccinating

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 vacci-nating 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

"Countries like the US have even gone to the extent of banning export of not just vac-cines 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

Government of India claims that Pakistan has only export ed 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 vacci

nation process controversial, 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 respective

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 infrastruc ture in the state's 'red' districts

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, in a letter to Punjab's Principal Secretary Hussan Lal, highlighted the gaps in the testing, contact trac-ing, 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 stricty to prevent further spread of the contagion.

In the letter, the Centre has listed out loopholes districtwise 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

structure, especially in Mohali, Jalandhar, and Ludhiana, as hospital bed occupancy rates continue to rise due to the rise in the number of Coronavirus Besides, it pointed out that the availability of isolation beds 'with oxygen" is also declining.

Administrations to prioritize

addressing the hospital infra-

District

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 Ialandhar 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 priori-

Guv: Janata vaccine doses Curfew will be effective in Haryana PNS CHANDIGARH

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, vaccine is administered to a

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.

India should cherish peace process on LAC, says China

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 posshould cherish the current pos-titive 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 dal-

lied 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 ten-sion at the LAC. The pro-posed pull back will ensure beace 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

Faced with the stalling tactics by China in Depsang val-ley 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,



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 "expeditious 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 pos-itive 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

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,

'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 Naravané 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 disease the minus 20 perature 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

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



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

onfederation 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 secors. 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 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 govern-ment 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

twitter 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 / #Malda No competition. #Langda is King. Yashwant deshmukh 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/Malda".

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 hella overrated". Another twitter user wrote One twitter user tweeted "Alphonso is overrated; Kesar is underrated". Dubbed the 'King of fruits'

in India, mangoes have an almost cult fanbase in India. With its puply, 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 Dusheri. West Bengal is popular for growing Himsagar mangoes while Andhra Pradesh is known for the lighter coloured Safeda mangoes. Other popu-Sateda mangoes. Other popular varieties of mangoes in India include Chausa, Lengra, Kesar, 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 a hit rate, but the odd one can be brilbut the odd one can be bril-

According to the agriculture ministry, mango produc-tion 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 west-ern 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**

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.

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

He has made this suggestion

2005, have been "inadequate".

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

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

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

Technology based systems in

Communication

achievements are inadequate.

Gandhi, who had set in

and recommendations".

backward caste in 1827 in Maharashtra, Phule fought against social discrimination and strove to promote educa-tion 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 sug-gested a "vaccination festival" from April 11 to April 14, birth anniversary of Dalit icon Bhim Rao Ambedkar, to push inocpowerment throughout his lation against the coronavirus among the people eligible for the shots.

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 pandem-

ic using virtual hearings," he said.

2005-19, just last one year has seen an addition of 75 lakh cases

to the pendency.

He said as against an increase of four lakh pending cases before courts between

Ex-CIC calls for making

virtual hearing permanent

feature of judicial system

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

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 misappropria-tion 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

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

Air purifiers in lifts, poorly ventilated

spaces helpful in Covid spread: Study

Air purifiers in lifts (elevators) and other poorly ventilated confined spaces could actually increase the spread of actuary increase the spread of airborne virus droplets, accord-ing 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

These droplets are now rec-

ognized 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

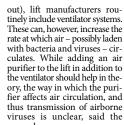
airing indoor spaces to reduce

the Cov-SARS-2 virus, responsible for the current Covid-19 Gandhi said the Committee mentions setting up of "some Virtual Courts", whereas all courts should be effective virtual pandemic, sneeze, talk or sim-ply breathe, they expel thousands of contaminated saliva

"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 spe-cific 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

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 courts. two-nour ramman.c. "If I presume an expenditure should be adequate. because of the increased CO2 levels produced as we breathe



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 manufac turers themselves, have not

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 transmis-

sion is lowest for low ventilation rates. This is due to reduced flow mixing inside the lift, says "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

Active Covid cases in India breach 11-L mark

The active Covid-19 cases in India crossed the 11 lakhmark for the first time after a record high of 1.52 lakh new infections on Saturday. The active caseload till now was at its lowest at 1,35,926 on February 12 and at its highest at 10,17,754 on September 18, 2020.

Amid an unprecedented burden on health infrastructure in 15 States and Delhi, which are witnessing an upward tra-jectory, authorities have started reserving more COVID hospitals and taking steps to address any shortage of med-ical supplies, besides enhancing curbs on the movement of

people.

The Centre announced a ban on export of Remdesivir, used in coronavirus treatment and its Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients, and asked all domestic manufacturers to dis-play on their website details of

their stockists and distributors. India's COVID-19 tally of cases climbed to 1,33,58,805, and the death toll increased to 1,69,275 with 839 daily new fatalities, the highest since October 18, 2020, the data updated by Health Ministry on Sunday morning showed.

While the cumulative number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in the after 85 days, the 'Tika Utsav' or a special 'vaccination festival' was started till April 14.

"Anyone eligible for the vaccine should get the jab, and for this the society and adminefforts," Prime Minister Modi



waste" and urging the people to follow COVID-appropriate

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

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

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 pre-vious 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-

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

PNS I 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 cou-

ple 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 pandem

Minister Shri @narendramodi ji 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,"

"Spoke to Hon'ble Prime

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

The Chief Minister also appealed to the people, those

igible, to get vaccinated.

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

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



Enhance peacekeeping budget: Army chief to UN

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 techno-logical support for the blue helmet mis-sions in view of the emerging chal-

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

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

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 inde-

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 straterists 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 of scale and scope for what beacekeeping missions today are more

than truce supervising operation".

The changing situation further expanded the missions" responsibility

sions of peace, such as establishing rule of law, protection of human rights, pro-

tection 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-ter-

rorism exercise, Shantir Ogroshena (Frontrunners of Peace) that com-

menced on April 4. An Indian Army

ipating 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 exer-

strengthen the procedures and enhance

interoperability amongst neighbour-

hood countries to ensure robust peace-

keeping 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.

The aim of the exercise is to

n 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.

EXPLOSIVE-LADEN SUV-HIRAN MURDER CASES _____

NIA arrests Vaze's associate Kazi,

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 ques-

Kazis artest came anter 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 marshv Reti-Bunder creek Mumbra in the neigh-

marshy Reti-Bunder creek Mumora in the neigh-bouring 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 secial 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 connec-

suspects he destroyed evidence inal 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 ze 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 arrest-ed 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 Lakhan 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 ATs 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

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

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

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

MA Yusuff 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 Yusuff Ali made a force landing in the marshy area along the Kochi-Thiruvananthapuram National Highway.

There were five persons in the chop-per 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 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. Yusuff 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.

Yusuff 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

Iammu: Sanieevani Sharda Kendra, Bohri, Jammu in association with more than one hundred 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 occa-

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-

According to a press statement issued by the Sanjeevni 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 Shriva Bhat, as early as the 15 th centu-

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 reli-

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, Laltaditya Muktapida for his valour and victory over Turks.

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

migrant labourers not to leave the

state.
"The chief minister would be

meeting top officials and on Wednesday, after which there

will be a weekly Cabinet meeting

where a decision regarding the

lockdown would be taken," Tope

Departmental probe against Param Bir

ess than a fortnight after it Lconstituted a judicial probe under retired High Court Judge Kailash U Chandiwal into allegations of corruption against former State Home Minister 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 Preliminary Inquiry (PE) launched by the CBI into Singh's allegations of corrup tion 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 govern ment 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 corrup-tion 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 SUV recovery case.

State Home department on April 3, Nagrale also stated that Vaze was posted as the in-

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

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 crimes," stated the report.

Vaze, who jumped on his own into the investigations involving the recovery of explo-sive 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.

Vaze handled sensational cases In a report submitted to the tee Home department on Anvay Naik suicide case and the death of her mother

injuries and were rushed to the Lakeshore Hospital for first-aid. All are safe and hearty,

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI With 6,618 new persons getting diagnosed with Covid-19 on Sunday, situation in Tamil Nadu has turned grave all over the State. The State saw 22 persons succumbing to the pandemic till 7 pm on Sunday.

TN logs 6,618 fresh cases

On Saturday, 5,989 persons tested positive through out the State while the death toll on the single day stood Chennai has to bear the brunt as the Metropolis registered 2,124 new cases on Sunday while the number

of new persons diagnosed with the pandemic on Saturday stood at 1,977. As on Sunday, Chengalpet, the neighboring district saw 631 new cases getting admitted to the hospital.

Dr C V Krishnaswamy, eminent physician, boldly stated that situation was critical and grave in both Tamil Nadu and Kerala. "The ever increasing number of

Covid-19 patients in these States are matters of concern. Both the State administrations should discuss with the medical fraternity and evolve a mechanism to prevent the spread of this pandemic," said Dr Krishnaswamy. He also cautioned the doctors and policy makers about the impact the disease could cause in youngsters.

"You forget all those who are above 60 years of age. Their good days are over. What is of concern is the complaints from youth who were afflicted with Covid-19. Those who came out of the ordeal have started complaining about weakness, loss of memory and stamina. Many persons who had the harrowing experience of Covid-19 are likely to face a series of medical issues," said the doctor. Dr Rajeev, ayurvedic physician, from "Many persons, especially youth, are complaining loss of memory and stamina after attack by the Covid virus. This is an issue which has to be studied in detail because it is becoming detrimental to the future of the coun-

Maha CM meets Covid task force, asks to prepare SOPs for lockdown

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

A mid clear indications that it might go in for a full-fledged lockdown to break the chain of the rapid infections across Maharashtra, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday met the members of the Covid 19 Task Force, his Cabinet colleagues and senior bureaucrats to make full-fledged preparations for the

proposed lockdown.

At the meeting, the chief minister discussed with those present about the need for increasing vaccination, setting up oxygen plants, increasing Covid-19 beds, increased availability of Remdesivir injections and ensuring early vaccination of health workers across the state

The chief minister said that he would make one more request to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to increase availability of vaccines to Maharashtra.

During the course of the meeting, the chief minister asked the Task Force members and senior bureaucrats to prepare Standard-Operating Procedures (SOPs) to be followed during the proposed lockdown. In the SOPs, the factors stemming from experiences the state government had

gained from handling the Covid-19 in the state during the past one

Among other things, the chief minister asked the state administration to explore ways to bring Oxygen cylinders in big way from the stats like Gujarat, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, where there is abundant availability of Oxygen.

At the meeting, the task force members stressed on the need for reducing the excessive use of Remdesivir injections by Covid-19 patients in the state. "Nine five per cent of Covid patients get well by being in home quarantine. Only serious patients should get themselves admitted to hospitals. In housing societies, the authorities can create isolation centres and make available Oxygen con-centrators and covid-19 beds so that patients can be looked after at the local levels," one of the task force members suggested at the

Earlier at the meeting, Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunde said that of the 1,200 metric tonnes of Oxygen available, 980 metric for medical purposes. "In consultation with the Centre, we are looking at ways to bring additional oxygen to the state," Kunte

Talking to media persons then the industries would have to after the meeting, State Health Minister Rajesh Tope hinted that take care of their workers. Meanwhile, he appealed the

the rapid spread of Covids-19 Tope said that the chief minister would take a final decision on the imposition of full-fledged lockdown in the state. He said that

the government might impose full-fledged lockdown to arrest

if the lockdown was announced,

MAHA BECOMES FIRST STATE TO ADMINISTER 1 CR VACCINE DOSES

Mumbai: Amid a fierce controversy between the MVA government and the Centre over the the discrimination in the distribution of vaccines to the State, Maharashtra on Sunday became the first State in the country to administer one crore doses to the Covid-19 patients.

"We have crossed one crore doses today. Till today noon, we have administered 1,00,38,42 doses," principal secretary (health) Dr Pradeep Vyas said doses, around 90 lakh people have been given the first dose, while the rest 10 lakh have received the two

a target of vaccinating 6 lakh people per month, 40 lakh a week – that comes to around 1.6 crore a month. However, it is facing a shortage of vaccines – and more than 30 per cent centres have run out of stock.

It may be recalled that State Health Minister Rajesh Tope had said on Thursday that given the gravity of the Covid-19 situation, Maharashtra would 7.5 lakh doses per week suffice for Maharashtra. "We need at least 40 lakh doses need at least 1.60 crore doses in a month. It is only then, we will be able to implement the vaccination programme properly," the

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



Jaipur: Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has said that with the in keeping it under control. Gehlot was presiding over 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

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

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 gov-ernment and all health rules and other guidelines are need-

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

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

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 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 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

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

IANS ■ ALIGARH (UP)

wo years after marriage, a I 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 mar-

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

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 sta-

tion, where the FIR was regis-tered, 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 sis-

No arrest has been made so

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 www.dailypioneer.com

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- PAPER WITH PASSION-

Shot shortage

Amid a plethora of issues, from safety to availability, the second wave of pandemic has hit India hard

India seems to be back to square one where fighting the pandemic is concerned, with more than 70 vaccination centres in Mumbai having shut down after running out of the COVID doses. Other parts of the country, too, like Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, are facing a shortage of the coveted shots. And this shortage is being faced despite there being major vaccine hesitancy in the country and the inoculation drive still not open to all. How massive the shortage would become if the Government decides to vaccinate all citizens is anybody's guess. When the pandemic began over a year ago, India was faced with the harsh reality of a poor healthcare infrastructure, shortage of hospital beds, ventilators, healthcare professionals, sani-



tisers, drugs and the know-how regarding the handling of the contagion. However, to the Government's and India Inc's credit, our "jugaadu" spirit kicked in and we overcame all these shortages by manufacturing everything in India and even reached a point where we began exporting PPEs, sanitisers and so on. Even where the vaccine was concerned, we surprised the world by coming out with two vaccines; in fact, India began gifting or selling vaccines to countries around the world. All this was done parallel to our own ambitious countrywide vaccination drive. As the first wave of the outbreak seemed to subside, it gave the Centre's vaccine diplomacy a shot

in the arm. It looked like we had it all under control, till the second wave hit.

Now, it seems that we have not learnt any lessons from the first wave and prepared ourselves better to handle the inevitable second wave, which empirical evidence suggests is always worse than the first one. So not only are we again facing a bed and oxygen shortage, we are beginning to fall short of the vaccines as well. A political slugfest has broken out over the issue with Maharashtra alleging that the Centre was "discriminating" against the non-BJP ruled States and the Government, for its part, accusing the States of having a lackadaisical attitude. A hectic debate is also on within the country whether charity should begin at home and the Government should have ensured that all of its citizens were covered first before exporting the shots. After all, even the US, the leader of the free world, has banned all exports until it vaccinates its own citizens. Be that as it may, the fact that we were not prepared to handle the inevitable second wave is a collective failure: Of the healthcare system, the policy planners, the bureaucracy, the Centre, States and the people as a whole. To make matters worse, some European regulators are talking about a possible link between the AstraZeneca vaccine (available in India under the brand name Covishield) and some rare occurrences of blood clots. Though the Indian panel on 'adverse event following immunisation' is studying the safety of Covishield, it will be some time before it gives its verdict. So, for now, it remains to be seen how our ingenuity gets us out of this jam.



A 3 000-year-old lost city in Luxor Envot, which was unearthed recently

Deliverance

Uttarakhand has decided to free 51 shrines from the Govt's control and hand these back to the priests

n a politically sensitive development ahead of the Uttarakhand Assembly elections in February 2022, Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat-led BJP Government has overturned his predecessor Trivendra Singh Rawat's decision enabling the Government to take over the management of 51 prominent temples and shrines. Trivendra's argument had



been that the new Act would help in the professional management of these shrines. The Act paved the way for setting up the Devasthanam Board, which was chaired by the Chief Minister. The Board was meant to control the management of renowned temples such as Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri; the annual pilgrimage to these temples is popularly called the Char Dham Yatra and is a money-spinner not only for the temples but also for allied businesses like the travel, hotel and tourism industries. In 2019, over three million people visited the four shrines, though 2020 was a damp squib owing to the COVID outbreak. Most worryingly for the seers, the Act had the provision to sack a priest found involved in any "wrongdoing". It

had been a long-pending demand of these teerth purohits (pilgrimage priests) that the Government roll back its decision as, they pointed out, they have been managing for generations the affairs of these temples, which were set up by their ancestors.

Now, though it can't be truthfully claimed that everything was hunky-dory at these religious establishments when their affairs were being managed by the respective teerth purohits, there's also no denying the fact that the State Government's move must not have spawned from any idea of piousness or welfare for the pilgrims, who descend on the hill State from across the length and breadth of the country. It is true that the infrastructure at the halting places leading to these places of worship is in a dilapidated condition and excessive commercialisation there has massively added to the nature's burden, the result of which we all saw in the tragic Kedarnath flash floods of 2013. However, the Government didn't stir all along to ameliorate the pathetic conditions. We would suggest that rather than taking extreme positions, let the temple management remain with the teerth purchits but, at the same time, the Government should keep an eye on them and the way they run the temple affairs and oversee the upkeep, facilities and amenities there.

Of Sri Lanka and the Andamans



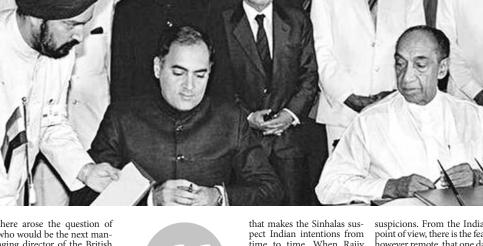
The issues between Sri Lankan Tamils and the Sinhalas may be resolved if India concurs to transfer the former to the Andamans

being able to coexist is a perennial problem in the Indian subcontinent.
An old saying goes, "Ek myaan mein do talwarein nahi reh sakti" meaning two swords cannot fit into one scabbard. The problem began by being underscored in our own India, which was divided into Pakistan for Muslims and Hindustan for the rest. MA Jinnah argued that Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations and could not coexist. The first leader to push this two nation thesis was Sir Syed Ahmad Khan of Aligarh fame. Some UP Muslims believed

their new country, Pakistan, was a new Medina. Muslims in the western wing despised easterner Bengalis as inferior, short and dark. Their economy was exploited from day one. Jinnah visited Dacca early in 1948 and peremptorily told university students that Urdu alone would be Pakistan's national language. Bengali, which they are proud of, was not in the reckoning. The two wings were daggers drawn from 1948; the clash came in 1971, in less than 24 years of the new Medina's birth. In December that year, they separated; Bangladesh was born. Thus, India was divided

into three. Now we hear that the people of Sindh wish to separate. This separatist movement is called "Jio Sindh". They are unable to exist under the yoke of the dominant Punjabis. Baluchistan is another unhappy province which was partly British India and partly the princely State of Kalat. It had an Embassy in Karachi until 1948 when Pakistan forcibly took it over. The Pathans of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) with their main city, Peshawar, have always wished to unite with all Pathans in Afghanistan, though this demand is dormant now.

With Sri Lanka, it is an old problem. I visited my in-laws-tobe in Colombo in 1964 as they wanted to introduce me to their society in the city where they had lived and worked for 32 years. In the course of my four-day stay,



there arose the question of who would be the next man-aging director of the British Ceylon Corporation, a British firm similar to the one we had in Kanpur, the British India Corporation, until the early 1960s. My father-in-law said that one Ramaswamy, a local Tamil, was the ablest choice but was unlikely to get the promotion. The prize was likely to go to DM Pereira as he was a Sinhala. The existing Board of directors was largely British, headed by a distinguished gentleman called Singleton-Salmon. There was no partiality in the company but the emerging milieu in Colombo was such. Ramaswamy was likely to emigrate to Australia.

My father-in-law explained that the Sinhalas were an overwhelming majority, an easy-going, fun-loving Buddhist people. They were jealous of the Tamils who were serious at work, and more efficient. There had developed a wedge between the two groups as far back as then. Their differences were bound to explode sooner or later. The fact that the people of Tamil Nadu have a soft corner in their hearts for their Sri



IF WE CAN OFFER A TRANSFER OF WILLING SRI LANKAN TAMILS TO THE ANDAMANS, INDIA'S ADVANTAGE WOULD BE POPULATING THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS. WHICH MAKES TAMILS' SURVIVAL SAFER, TAMIL NADU HAPPIER AND THE INDO-SRI LANKAN RELATIONS PERMANENTLY SUSPICION-FREE

time to time. When Rajiv Gandhi was India's Prime Minister and President JR Jayewardene headed Sri Lanka, we sent the IPKF military to help the Tamils. Instead of helping them, we only killed them and left the Sinhalas alone. This indicates that our Governments have mostly not understood Sri Lankan affairs.

Colombo's rulers smile at New Delhi and pretend to be friendly although they feel that the faraway yellow giant is less dangerous than the Indian giant, only 40 km to the north. They did appreciate the IPKF's help for some time; thereafter it became a distant memory. Lanka appears to have erred in owing China all the money for upgrading the Hambantota port as well as a highway from Colombo to Galle and further south. If Sri Lanka cannot repay the loan in time, these may be taken over as Chinese property. Yet Colombo would rather deal with Beijing than New Delhi. This mentality is likely to continue indefinitely until India takes a drastic stop to relieve the Sinhalas of their Tamil

suspicions. From the Indian point of view, there is the fear. nowever remote, that one day the Chinese may convert Sri Lanka into a yellow colony.

What should New Delhi do? Consider whether we can offer a transfer of willing Sri Lankan Tamils to the Andaman Islands. They are a community of four million people, mainly in the Jaffna area in the northeast of Sri Lanka and some scattered across the east of the island. The Andamans occupy about 9,000 sq km with only about four lakh people. Not all Sri Lankan Tamils are likely to accept the transfer. For those willing, Sri Lanka should pay a total ₹2 lakh per head towards resettlement, convenience costs and compensation. This means several billion rupees for Sri Lanka to borrow or somehow fork out, but a small cost for solving their greatest problem. India's advantage would be populat-ing the Andaman Islands, which makes Tamils' survival safer, Tamil Nadu happier and the Indo-Sri Lankan relations permanently suspicion-free.

(The writer is a well-known columnist and an author. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AMP UP VACCINE PRODUCTION

Sir - In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has rightly questioned the Centre's decision to export COVID-19 vaccines. It seems that the export was also an oversight, like many other decisions of the NDA Government. It also cannot be denied that it was an effort to garner publicity at the

The Government, before launching the world's largest vaccination drive should have calculated the domestic demand and supply. As several States are now alleging shortage of vaccines, it is time for the Centre to completely stop their export. India played the vaccine diplomacy card thinking that it was close to developing herd immunity. New Delhi wasn't granting or exporting vaccines to only the poor nations but also to the UK, Saudi Arabia and Canada. Despite India's stupendous efforts to vaccinate at a large scale, majority of the people are outside its purview. This is situation when there exists an age criteria to get vaccinated. It's not hard to imagine the situation if this age bar is removed and everybody is allowed to get vaccinated.

The current situation might lead to an increase in the prices of vaccines or, if the pharmaceutical companies ramp up production without increasing the prices, the quality will definitely get compromised. The Centre and State Governments must give up politics and find an amicable solution to this problem which will likely aggravate in the coming days if viable answers are not explored and worked upon.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

NEED TO TAKE IT SERIOUSLY

Sir — It should be a cause of worry for New Delhi that the US Navy recently carried out Freedom of Navigation Operation (FONOP) in India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) without its prior consent to challenge India's "excessive" maritime claims. According to the statement issued by the Commander of the US' Seventh

Nix the corruption in Maharashtra

came?



t refers to the editorial 'Tightening the screws' (April 10). I fully concur with the editorial view that the Central Bureau of



Investigation (CBI) and the National Investigation Agency (NIA) should work in tandem to unravel the Anil Deshmukh and Sachin Vaze maze. If tainted police officials and politicians can work hand-in-glove, then why not our sleuths? The revelations made by arrested police officer Vaze are disturbing. It shows

Fleet, the operation was conducted by guided-missile destroyer USS John Paul Jones on April 7 and is consistent with the international law. The Ministry of External Affairs responded that the Government's stated position on the UN convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is that the Convention does not authorise other States to carry out operations in the EEZ. What is shocking is that it came at a time when India and the US are trying to strengthen their ties and working in close cooperation in Quad for a free and open Indo-Pacific US President Ioe Biden's "tough talk" on China shows that Washington sees Beijing as its rival. However, the recent US misadventure can harm its good rapport with New Delhi.

TV Jayaprakash | Palakkad

NO REASON TO LOWER GUARD

Sir — We are responsible for the rise in

how rotten our whole system is and there is an open loot of public money. It seems that things like extortion, killings, transfer of honest officials, nepotism or using political influence to get Government contracts have become the order of the day in Maharashtra. Not only this, it can also not be denied that the links of corrupt police officials like Vaze and politicians like Deshmukh must be with Manists or terrorists else from where the gelatin sticks used in Antilia bomb scare case

Both the agencies must also focus their investigation on these lines. Corrupt politicians when in power at the State or the Centre give patronage to criminals and anti-social elements in a quid pro quo so that they may use them as and when required. Nothing could he more shameful for the Maharashtra Government than the recent happenings and the alleged involvement of Deshmukh in grave corruption. It must be investigated properly and the accused should not be spared

Abhishek Singh | Varanasi

the Coronavirus cases as we have lowered our guard and are not following the guidelines. People must understand that it is necessary to break the chain of transmissions to curb the spread of the Coronavirus.

The vaccines are no panacea. Not following the appropriate COVID-19 behaviour is not just laxity but is a criminal act as it is a major reason for the surge. After the vaccination programme kickstarted, people felt they should not wear masks. lany people hang their masks around their neck, some keep it in their pocket and some do not use it at all. It is only after such gross negligence and laxity on the part of people that Coronavirus cases have started increasing.

Jubel D'Cruz | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

COVID is surging and it is our responsibility Government to move away from PR tactics



Congress interim president



the logical path Comprehensive Plan of Action compliance. The

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif

return to full compliance first.

My parents organised a celebration on the eve of my birthday in advance as a surprise! I'm the



world to have such parents. Swara Bhasker



The Opposition gets nervous about AB de Villiers. We have depth in batting utilise. AB is probably

versatile. Cricketer — Virat Kohli

Lockdown is not an option. However, we will be putting some restrictions in place to

contain the spread of

the virus.



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal

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BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

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



ountries 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 fallouts 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

he nutshell identity of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) is still slotted on the left side of the conventional political divide. But over the decades and, especially after the end of the Cold War in 1991, the nature of this divide has continued to transform. According to Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond in the 2003 issue of the *Journal of Political Parties*, by the 1990s, the mainstream Right and Left of electoral politics had become the *status quo*, which began being challenged by new "anti-status quo" groups. Gunther and Diamond write that the roots of large electoral Right/Centre-Right parties can be found in the 19th century, when they emerged as a reaction to monarchism or parties entirely driven by the aristocratic elite.

Ironically, this means that what evolved to

become mainstream Right parties in the 20th century were originally on the Left in the 19th century because they represented the interests of the emerging middle classes that advocated capitalism, individualism and religious freedom and/or "classical liberalism."

Once such parties succeeded in becoming rt of the new status quo, they began to be challenged by parties stressing the need to regulate capitalism through various variations of socialism. Therefore, the latter came to be understood as electoral outfits that were on the left of the established classical liberal parties, which were now slotted on the right side of the divide.

In his book 'Sociologie Politique', French sociologist M Duverger writes that, because of the challenges posed by socialist parties, some classical liberal parties appropriated religion to expand their appeal but remained rooted in the post-19th century secular political paradigm. The Conservative Party in Britain, the Republican Party in the US and the Christian Democratic parties in Europe can be seen as examples of this. The mainstream Left parties were quick to adopt the same. Eventually, large parties on both sides of the divide became what are called the "big tent" or "catch-all" parties.

These parties retain an ideological core, which can be Left or Right, but they position themselves toward the Centre of the spectrum, appearing moderate in their policy preferences. "Big tent" parties become platforms for varied political players as long as they have even a semblance of recognition of the party's core ideological purpose. However, it is pragmatism that becomes the overriding nature of "catch-all" par-

The PPP was formed in 1967. It was initially conceived by the Marxist intellectual JA Rahim as a vehicle for the charismatic politician ZA Bhutto. The 39-year-old Bhutto had been part of the Ayub Khan dictatorship but was ousted from the Cabinet in 1966. Bhutto positioned himself as the man who had "stood up to a dictator." This gained him traction with universi-

ty and college students.

According to Rahim's analysis, the Ayub regime's economic policies had accelerated the radicalisation of Pakistan's bourgeoise, widened the gap between the rich and the poor, and an organised socialist party was not only the need of the hour, but would also be able to fill the vacuum created after Ayub's inevitable departure.



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

The writer is a senior ournalist and columnist.
The views expressed

are personal. Courtesy: Dawn

country's bourgeoise 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 con-centrated in just a few urban cen-

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" land-ed elite and in the Centre were what became to be known as "Islamic socialists", or those who appropriated Islam as a welfarist and socialist doctrine, as opposed to a theological expression of pol-

itics (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,

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

According to Gunther and Diamond, in an effort to expand their electoral appeal to a wide variety of groups, the policy orien-tations 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 ader 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

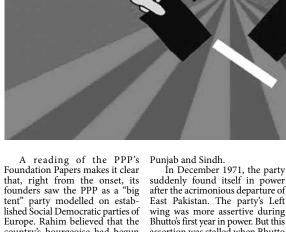
was under arrest. This was also when the party's leftist militant tendencies, which had been subdued by Bhutto, resurfaced. In 1986, however, fearing that the US would stall the party's return to power for being "too Left-wing",

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



TCOUNTERPOIN

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



but what about all the coun-



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?

irst, 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 vet. 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 sanc-

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

cancelled as of today. The has already been some 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 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

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" Mallov'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.

tries 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 So that's probably sorted, to...pursue nuclear disarma-

ment 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 actualmanaged 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 trilliondollar-plus "upgrade" of its nuclear forces, including a new generation of land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and new submarine-launched cruise mis-

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

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.

'Sarmat' that is able to carry

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 bouncing 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

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.

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

Myanmar forces kill 82 in single day

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 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 gov-ernment of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Their tallies are widely accepted as highly credible because cases are not added until they have been confirmed



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

RESCUERS FIND 4 DEAD FROM VESSEL IN ATLANTIC

to media reports.

oon Sunday that they had recovered the bodies of four migrants from a boat along with 19 survivors who had taken the 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

IRAN REPORTS HIGHEST

DAILY DEATH TOLL OF 2021 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 religious festival in Nepal's Bhaktapur. 'Bisket jatra', a chariot-pulling festival, started in east of Kathmandu, on Saturday morning. Soon after the festival and clashes erupted.

UK: Shops, pubs gear up for easing of

its next stage of Covid-19 lock-

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



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 bodties 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 involv-ing the massive use of force to try to crush the persistent opposition to the ruling junta.

Attacks were launched Wednesday on hardcore oppo-nents 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 But as the police and mil 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

including some bystanders — were reported killed.

The security forces were

elected government of

Aung San Suu Kyi

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 frag-

ments of mortar shells.

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

themselves part of a civil dis-

itary escalated the use of lethal force, a hardcore faction of protesters armed themselves with nomemade weapons such as firebombs in the name of selfdefense. In Kalay, activists dubbed themselves a "civil army" and some equipped themselves with rudimentary hunting rifles that are tradi-tional 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

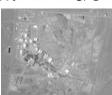
Dubai: Iran's underground Natanz nuclear facility lost power Sunday just hours after starting up new advanced centrifuges capable of enriching uranium faster, the latest incident to strike the site amid negotiations over the tattered atomic accord with world powers.

As Iranian officials inves-tigated the outage, many Israeli media outlets offered the sim-ilar 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



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

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," Kamalyandi said, "Fortunately, there was no casualty or damage and there is no particular contamination or problem." Asked by the state TV cor-

respondent 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

Iran calls blackout 'nuclear terrorism'

Iran on Sunday described a blackout at its underground Natanz atomic facility an act of "nuclear terrorism," raising regional tensions.

Ali Akbar Salehi, the head

of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, stopped short of directly blaming any-one for the incident. Details remained few about what hap-pened early Sunday morning at the facility, which initially was described as a blackout caused by the electrical grid feeding the site.

Many Israeli media outlets offered the same assessment that a cyberattack darkened Natanz and damaged a facili-ty 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 black-

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

"To thwart the goals of this terrorist movement, the Islamic Republic of Iran will nuclear technology on the one hand and to lift oppressive sanctions on the other hand," Salehi said, according state

He added: "While condemning this desperate move, the Islamic Republic of Iran emphasises the need for a confrontation by the interna-tional bodies and the (International Atomic Energy Agency) against this nuclear terrorism."

Sunday's developments also complicate efforts by the U.S., Israel's main security partner, to re-enter the atomaccord aimed at limiting Tehran's programme so it can't pursue a nuclear weapon. As news of the blackout emerged, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin landed Sunday in Israel for talks with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli Defense Minister Benny

Power at Natanz was cut across the facility, which is comprised of above-ground workshops and underground enrichment halls, civilian nuclear programme spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi earlier told Iranian state TV.

Trump: The key to Republican success is more Trumpism

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 pre-pared 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

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

 $B^{\mathrm{ritain's}}$ 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.

vice 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.

almost the grandfather of the nation," Prince Andrew, also the Duke of York, told

"I feel very sorry and sup-portive of my mother, who's

feeling it more than every-body 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

"It's a great loss. We've lost

As he left a memorial ser-

umphant 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

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

Jordanian prince makes first public appearance since arrest

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 pop-ular 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 pre-ceded 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

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 king-

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

Religious leaders

spiritual curiosity

Churches in Britain held ser-vices 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

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 con-

templated "a very long life,

remarkably led?

recall Philip's

AP ■ LONDON

Abdullah subsequently said authorities had thwarted an

authorities nad 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."

Chadians vote as

Deby seeks to extend 3-decade presidency

AP ■ N'DJAMENA

hadian President Idriss Chadian Fresiden Amber Deby Itno was widely expected to win re-election Sunday, extending his threedecade-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. for the husband of Queen Elizabeth II, who died Friday at

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

is 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 vesterday 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

candidates are also taking part, accused Deby's party — the Patriotic Salvation Movement, or MPS, of using state resources

US-Philippines officials discuss concerns over **China's ships**

AP ■ ABOARD A US MILITARY AIRCRAFT

Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin on Saturday dis-cussed 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 internation-

al trip.
Pentagon press secretary
John Kirby said Austin and Lorenzana discussed the situand the recent massing of Chinese vessels at Whitsun Reef, which has drawn criticism from Manila.

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 down restrictions being eased.

Chinese vaccines' effectiveness low, says official

Beijing: In a rare admission of the weakness of Chinese coronavirus vaccines, the country's top disease control official says their effectiveness is low and the government is considering mixing them to get a boost.

Chinese vaccines "don't have very high protection rates," said the director of the China Centers for Disease Control, Gao Fu, at a conference on Saturday. Beijing has distributed hundreds of millions of doses abroad while trying to promote doubt about the effectiveness of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine made using the previously experimental messenger RNA,

or mRNA, process. "It's now under formal consideration whether we should use different vaccines from different technical lines for the immunization process," Gao

family are rallying around to support her," he said, on being asked about his mother's emo **Pak scrambles** to speed up

Royal Lodge, Windsor, in England on Sunday

described it as having left a

Islamabad: Pakistani authorities have scrambled to speed up vaccination and firm up nonpharmaceutical interventions to contain the spread of the coronavirus, amid a surge in

The country on Sunday recorded 5.050 new Covid-19 cases, taking the national infec tion tally to 721,018. The death toll jumped to 15,443 in the last 24 hours.

The National Command Operation Centre (NCOC), the national apex body to combat the coronavirus, in a meeting on the existing non-pharmaceuti-cal int-erventions (NPIs) such as markets closure and restrictions on transport till Monday, Dawn newspaper reported.

OVER 2,000 YEARS ON Sanskrit remains popular in China: Chinese Professor vaccination PTI ■ BEIJING

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

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

anskrit studies are flourish-Sing in China, over 2,000 the number of cases.

Wang Bangwei, a well-

vears 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

About his late father, he

man. I loved him as a father. He

was always somebody you

could go to and he would

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 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 instru-

mental 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 spent about 23 years in China in the 4th century AD both as a prisoner and as a most ered 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 pro-ramme 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 lating 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 lan-guage 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,

"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 numer-ous 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.

The job prospects of the Sanskrit learning students are

also good as most of them puracademic career Buddhist studies, specially its history, he said.

'E-commerce growth in tier-2, 3

cities outpace

IANS MUMBAI

tier-1 Indian cities'

The growth of e-commerce volumes in tier 2 and 3 cities

in India is outpacing that in tier-

1 cities, according to a recent report. "Smaller Indian cities are

now accounting for a bigger volume of e-commerce sales. E-

time of e-commerce and the recommerce growth in tier 2 and tier 3 cities in India is outpacing that of tier 1 cities," said an ICICI Securities report. Volume share of these smaller cities in India's

e-commerce market increased to

46 per cent in O4CY20 from 32

per cent YoY. Also, online spend-

ing per customer in tier 2 and tier

3 cities has also improved as these

cities held a 43 per cent share of

SBI collects ₹300 cr from zero balance a/cs: Study

Several banks, including State Bank of India (SBI), have been imposing excessive charges on certain services provided to poor persons hav-ing zero-balance or Basic Savings Bank Deposit Accounts (BSBDA), a study by the IIT-Bombay has revealed.

The study observed that the SBI's decision to levy a charge of ₹17.70 for every debit transaction beyond four by the BSBDA account holders cannot be considered as "rea-

It highlighted that the imposition of service charges resulted in undue collections to the tune of over ₹300 crore from among nearly 12 crore Basic Savings Bank Deposit Account (BSBDA) holders of SBI during the period 2015-20. India's second-largest

public sector lender Punjab National Bank, which has 3.9 crore BSBD accounts, collected ₹9.9 crore during the same period.

"There had been system-atic breach in the RBI regulations on BSBDAs by few banks, most notably by the SBI that hosts the maximum number of BSBDAs, when it charged @ Rs 17.70 for every debit transac-

tion (even via digital means) beyond four a month.

"This imposition of ser-vice charges resulted in undue collections to the tune of over ₹300 crore from among nearly 12 crore BSBDA holders of SBI during the period 2015-20, of which the period 2018-19 alone saw a collection of ₹72 crore and the period 2019-20, Rs 158 crore," the study by IIT Bombay professor Ashish Das stated.

Levying of charges on BSBDA is guided by September 2013 RBI guidelines. As per the direction these accounts holders are 'allowed more than four withdrawals' in a month, at the bank's discretion provided the bank does not charge for the same.

"While defining the features of a BSBDA, the reg-ulatory requirements made it amply clear that in addition to mandatory free banking services (that included four withdrawals per month), as long as the savings deposit account is a BSBDA, banks cannot impose any charge even for value-added banking services that a bank may like to offer at their discretion," the study

The RBI considers a with-

We assess the dereliction

in SBI's duty towards the PMJDY when the BSBDA users were unduly (and against the extant regulations) forced to part with such high charges for their day-to-day (noncash) dig-ital debit transactions that the bank allowed in a BSBDA," it

SBI, in breach of RBI regulations set forth as early as 2013, had been charging the BSBDA holders for every debit transaction beyond four a month, it said, adding, the charges were as high as

Rs 17.70 even for digital transactions like NEFT, IMPS, UPI, BHIM-UPI and debit cards for merchant payments "On the one hand, the

country strongly promoted country strongly promoted digital means of payments, while on the other hand, SBI discouraged these very people, to transact digitally for their day-to-day expenditures, by charging an exploitative Rs 17.70 per digital transaction. This dwarfed the spirit of financial inclusion," it said.

The RBI's nonchalant attitude to supervise its own

attitude to supervise its own regulations encouraged other banks to become unreasonable towards charges beyond four

Some industrialists fear another exodus of migrant workers



PTI ■ COIMBATORE

rith the second wave of 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.

The industries recovered from the jolt of the first wave of coronavirus when over one lakh migrant workers from both Coimbatore and Tirupur industries rushed back to their home towns in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha by special

trains.
Even as the business started picking up, the 30 per cent increase in the raw materials has affected the industries, sources from different industrial associations said.

A few workers reportedly left for their natives early last week as they feared the availability of transport like trains to reach their towns.

However, there was no major exodus from the indus-tries as the workers working on weekly payment basis had taken their wages Saturday last, the sources said.

Coimbatore and Tirupur reported increased infection cases and a correct picture of workers returning would emerge only after another week, they said. No worker left the city till

Saturday from nearby Tirupur, a major hub of knitwear garments where 80 per cent of over three lakh workers hailed from the North, said sources in Tirupur Exporters

CAIT urges PM for staggered working time for different sectors to control Covid-19

Domestic traders' body 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 communication to the prime minister, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said it would be more appropriate if alternate measures may be adopted at district levels all over the coun-

"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," it said.

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 govern ment 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," it said.

CONFEDERATION of

ALL INDIA TRADERS

the e-commerce sales value last quarter, up from 26 per cent YoY. "This has raised hopes of a sustainable last mile delivery economics emerging for the industry - yet hyperlocal last mile small parcel deliveries remain economically as challenging as ever," it said.

"We continue to see emergence of end-to-end logistics contracts with Bajai Electricals and Flipkart with Mahindra Logistics," it said, adding that the trend, while accreting value to the service provider, also gains currency as emergence of multiple channels is increasing supply chain challenge and risks.

Rise in Covid cases to delay demand recovery in global oil market



IANS MUMBAI

 $F^{\text{resh surge in Covid-19}}_{\text{cases, eventual lockdowns is}}$ likely to delay the demand recovery in the global oil mar-ket, said an ICICI Securities

It however, noted that with 'OPEC+' capping supply to ensure supply deficit, impact on oil prices is likely to be muted.

'Fresh surge in Covid cases, consequent lockdowns and slow rollout of vaccines, especially in Europe, are likely to delay demand recovery to pre-Covid levels," the report said. However, delay in demand recovery may delay gross margin recovery for refineries.
The ICICI Securities report

also noted that vaccine-driven

recovery in global oil demand and permanent closure of refineries is estimated to boost global refinery utilisation to 77.8 per cent in CY21E from 37-year low of 72.5 per cent in

'We estimate global refinery utilisation to gradually rise from 79.1 per cent in CY22E to 80 per cent in CY26E. IEA estimates permanent closure of 3.6m b/d (barrels per day) of refining capacity, but believes 6m b/d is required to ensure global refinery utilisation is sustainably above 80 per cent." It noted that in CY07-

CY18, 16.5 million b/d of refining capacity was added globally, but 8 million b/d was shut implying net capacity addition of just 8.5 million b/d.

Nobel laureate trashes theory of limited Govt intervention to uplift poor

 $R_{
m Nobel\ laureate\ Abjijit}^{
m enowned\ economist\ and}$ Vinayak Banerjee has trashed the ideology that calls for lesser or limited government interpoor arguing that such freebies make the poor lazy, saying there is no evidence whatsoever proving so. He said his own research

on the subject across diverse economies in Asia, Africa and Latin America in the past decade and more does not support this ideology, rather it proves that those who have benefited from public and nongovernmental interventions wherein they were given free assets did in fact became more productive and creative.

Addressing the 20th foundation day of Bandhan Bank, the non-profit-turned-MFIturned-small finance bank, on Sunday, Banerjee said there is no data and no empirical evidence anywhere to establish the ideology that getting freebies or getting free assets make the

poor people lazy. This ideology has been pushing successive governments to give less to the poor so that they don't become lazy. But we have seen no evidence



to this effect anywhere, not even in India, instead we have seen everywhere improvements, he said.

The economist also partly blamed those people hawk-ing this ideology for the large number of the poor here and elsewhere as this had successive governments leaving poverty reduction and other socioeco nomic impactful measures to non-profits and private sector till about the middle of the first decade of the new millennium when Manmohan Singh-led government unveiled the rural

jobs guarantee scheme.
This and many other affirmative actions has lifted early tens of millions out of poverty in five years after the implementation.

He said an analysis of a decadal data from Bandhan when it was an NGO, clearly established the impact of its seen on average 25 per cent income growth helping them consume 18 per cent more.

This is a great data-driven lesson, gained from his rancontrol trials, in fighting

poverty over a long period, said, adding the first lesson

in this is that when the poor become better off, they become more creative in generating more wealth and leading better lives including by sending their kids to better schools far away from their villages.

Data from my randomised control trials clearly showed that they're those people who benefited from public/non-government help have seen income increasing by 25 per cent leading to an 18 per cent jump in consumption he said jump in consumption he said.
While calling for more
globalisation and free trade, he
however admitted that fight

against poverty has become more complicated in a globalised world as globalisation has created new forms of risks-- the now raging pandemic is one of the best examples of such new risks-- especially for the poor as they suffered the most from the lockdowns

Fuel prices unchanged for 12th straight day

IANS IN NEW DELHI

Oil marketing companies (OMC) kept petrol and diesel prices unchanged for the 12th straight day across the four metro cities on Sunday.

In the national capital,

petrol was sold for ₹90.56 per

litre.

Prices of the fuel in Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata were at ₹96.98, ₹92.58 and ₹90.77 per litre respectively, same as the previous levels.

Petrol and diesel prices fell by 22 paise and 23 paise per litre, respectively, on March 30 in wake the global softening of oil prices. The OMCs have decided to pause price revision as they want to watch the crude price movement that has now dropped below the \$63-per-barrel mark.

In tandem with petrol prices, diesel was sold at unchanged levels of ₹80.87, Rs 87.96, ₹85.88 and ₹83.75 per litre, in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, respec-

tively.

After petrol stayed at record levels for a considerable period and were steady for past 24 days, OMCs went on price cut for the first time this year on two consecutive days -March 24 and 25.



Thereafter, fuel prices have petrol and diesel prices increased 26 times in 2021.

It again reduced the price remained unchanged. Earlier,

Address Unit No. 103, First Floor C&B Square, Sangam

Complex, 127, Andheri-Kurla Road, Village Chakalla,
SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd. Randeri (East), Mumbai 400059 | Telephone: 491.22 78775300

(Erstwhile Small Business Fincredit India Pvt. Ltd.) Corporate Identity Number: U67190MH2008PTC178270

Extrahile Small Business Fincredit India Pt. Ltd.) Corporate Mentity Number: U57390MH2008PTC1782

EVELT CONTROL Small Business Fincredit India Pt. Ltd.) Corporate Mentity Number: U57390MH2008PTC1782

This is to indown the Public that Auction of pledged 60d foraments will be conducted by SBFC FI
Pvt. Ltd. on 20 April 7021 or thereafter at 10 AM at 0 - 7.1 at 1500r, above Look Sai on, Lajapat Na
New Delhi-110018-Aprachased branch 6-2, Risa Moore, Ltd., Plear 1-2 Chook, Farindabad, Rasyans-1, 122001, Charladad - 7-8 BCC Raj Nagar Charladaba New SBI branch, Hapur - First floor, above P C Leg
sarh pagrane pakka bagh, garth road hapur-245101

The Gold Ornaments to be auctioned belong to Loan Accounts of our various Customers who
failled to pay their dues. Our notices of auction have been duly issued to these borrowers.

He dold Ornaments to be auctioned belong to Overfale Lank Accounts of Contrains amendment and the many contrains the contrained on writer Contrains amendment and the many contrains the contrained on writer Contrains amendment and many lates and the contrained on writer Contrains amendment and many lates the more contrained to the authore belong to Overfale Lank Accounts of Contrains amendment Aller and the London Contrained Contrained Landon Contrained Landon Contrained Contrained Landon Contrained L

Amazon India launches mentor programme for startups

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

mazon India on Sunday Amazon India on Sunuay announced the launch of its 'Mentor Connect' programme, which is aimed at accelerating the growth of startups and emerging brand own-Launchpad initiative.

Through the programme, startups and emerging brands will gain access to guidance from venture capital firms, industry veterans and Amazon leaders through expert knowledge sharing sessions, networking events and 1:1 mentorship sessions, a statement

Mentors from educational institutions and VC firms like Fireside Ventures, DSG Consumer Partners, Elevation

Capital, Tomorrow Capital have already signed up for the programme to contribute to the Indian startup growth story, it

"Startups and emerging brands enrolled in the Amazon Launchpad programme can mentors through various ways. This includes one-to-one mentorship with chosen mentors over a three-month period, ongoing networking opportunities with a wider pool of industry experts, or knowledge sharing sessions between these experts and other Launchpad brands," the statement said.

This offers entrepreneurs a platform to engage, learn and showcase their startups to the industry's leading subject matter experts to help tackle strategic and functional challenges, it added.

"The Amazon Mentor Connect programme is not limited to startups and emerg-ing brand owners enrolled in the Amazon Launchpad proextended to the winners of the Amazon Smbhav Entrepreneurship challenge in the upcoming Amazon Smbhav summit," the state-

ment said. be the first cohort of startups to receive the benefits associated with the Amazon Mentor Connect programme, it added.Amazon Launchpad currently showcases over 2

lakh products offered by more than 800 emerging brands across 30 different

product categories. Popular sectors catered to by these brands include health and personal care, beauty and grooming, grocery and home prod-

'Amazon Smbhav' will be host-

"India has a large startup ecosystem that is key to disruptive innovation and accelerating India's progress towards an Aatmanirbhar Bharat. Most of these startups are led by first time entrepreneurs who have the passion to drive a change, but don't have the experience to deal with the breadth of challenges they face along the way," Amazon India Director (MSME and Selling Partner Experience) Pranav Bhasin

BRIEFS

INVESTORS OF FRANKLIN TEMPLETON'S SHUT SCHEMES

New Delhi: The investors of the six shut schemes of Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund are set to receive ₹2,962 crore in the coming week. This would be the second tranche of disbursement to the investors after the distribution of ₹9,122 crore across five schemes in February. "We are pleased to inform you that SBI MF would be distributing the next tranche of ₹2,962 crore to unitholders across all 6 $\,$ schemes. The payment to all investors whose accounts are KYC April 2021," said a company spokesperson. The distributable amount as a percentage of the asset under management (AUM) would be 28.42 per cent in Franklin Ultra Short Bond Fund, 14.18 per cent in Franklin India Low Duration Fund, 13.37% in Short Term Income Fund, 6.67% in Income Opportunities Fund, 11.22% in Credit Risk Fund and 11.23% in Dynamic Accrual Fund.

TATA COMMS, BIX EXTEND PARTNERSHIP FOR HIGH-SPEED INTERNET IN BAHRAIN

Mumbai: Tata Communications and Bahrain Internet Exchange (BIX) have extended their partnership to offer high speed internet connectivity with very low latency for a superior quality and seamless viewing gaming and download experience for customers in Bahrain Equipped with OTU-4, a next-generation optical technology, TGN-Gulf cable system will enable customers with a robust, consistent, and manageable data transport infrastructure with the capability to scale up beyond 100 Gbps, said a company statement. With this, Tata Communications and BIX bring the power of high-speed connectivity and digital transformation to the Middle East region, it said.

S KOREAN MOBILE CARRIERS TIPPED FOR ROBUST 01 EARNINGS

Seoul: South Korean wireless carriers are estimated to have logged robust earnings in the first quarter on the back of sharp growth in 5G users and their non-telecom businesses, a poll showed on Sunday. The combined operating profits of the country's three major mobile January-March period, up 6.8 per cent from the previous year according to the poll on six local brokerage houses by Yonhap Infomax, the financial arm of Yonhap News Agency. SK Telecom, the biggest of the three in terms of mobile users, is estimated to have posted an operating profit of 339.5 billion won for the first quarter, up 12.42 percent on-year, while its revenue probably rose 6.57 percent on-year to 4.74 trillion won. Telecom giant KT is expected to have logged 386.3 billion won in operating profit, up 0.84 percent on-year while the operating profit of LG Uplus is estimated to have risen 9.51 percent to 240.7 billion won.

DoT likely to issue guidelines for telecom PLI within week

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $T^{\text{he Department of Telecommunications}}_{\text{(DoT) is likely to issue guidelines on implementation of production-linked}}$ incentive (PLI) schemes for manufacturers in the sector and start inviting applications for the same in about a week according to government officials.

Telecom gear makers firms such as Ericsson and Nokia are keen to expand their operations in India, and global companies like Samsung, Cisco, Ciena and Foxconn have "shown interest" to set up manufacturing bases in the country for telecom and networking products for domestic and export markets.

"Telecom PLI has already been



Department of Telecommunications Ministry of Communications Government of India

approved by the government. The DoT is ready with guidelines to implement it, application format, incentive allocation, etc. It should be published on the DoT website within a week," the official, who did not wish to be named, told PTI.

The DoT notified the PLI scheme for

telecom and networking products on February 24, 2021, with a financial outlay of Rs 12,195 crore, over five years.

The scheme for telecom gear manufacturing in India which is expected to encourage production of equipment worth Rs 2.44 lakh crore and create direct and indirect employment for about 40,000 peo-

The investor can earn incentive for incremental sales up to 20 times the committed investment enabling them to reach global scales and utilise their unused capacity and

ramp up production. The scheme is ex The scheme is expected to bring an investment of over Rs 3,000 crore and generate tax revenue of about Rs 17,000 crore. carriers -- SK Telecom Co., KT Corp. and LG Uplus Corp. -- are expected to have reached 966.5 billion won (\$863.3 million) in the

For more details, please contact

SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd.

(Erstwhile Small Business Fineredit India Pvt. Ltd.

(Enstwhile Small Business Fineredit India Pvt. Ltd.

Contact Number(s): Laipet Nagar 1800-102-8012 / 011-40305228 / 207, Faridabad 01294314725/140450 and Gurgaon Branch 1024-4276037,

Ghaziabad branch - 8826084221, Hapur branch - 9555688622

(SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd. (Erstwhile Small Business Fineredit India Pvt. Ltd.) reserves the right to alter the number of accounts to be auctioned & postpone', clance the auction without any prior notice.)

A GLIMMER OF HOPE

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

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 gamechanger, 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 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

To ensure personal liberty of under-

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'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

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 informaTo 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 iden-tify 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

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 safe ly 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.)



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 Bhave, it releases on Netflix on April 30.



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 smalltown 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: Pankai Kuma

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 vul-nerable communities. Women and children have been disproportionately affect ed, 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

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 deliveries were down by 79 per cent. The demand for family planning services satisfied by modern methods fell by 67 per

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 preglater 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 gendersensitive 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.

impact women's ability to access maternal and antenatal health services. In India, regressive gender norms continue 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 Gender inequality, gender-based vio-lence and lack of agency continue to Gender inequality, gender-based vio-lence and lack of agency continue to 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 contempo

raries.
"There can't be competition between actors. Had it been products there would have been competition. I 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 dif-ferent 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 excite-

mere people are giving ferent 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 veah, 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) cess) 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

Before starring in the OTT show, 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.

TRENDBLAZER



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

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

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



'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

dailytalk RASHMIKA MANDANNA

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.'

'Since Lam just a beginner

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 pan-

demic 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.

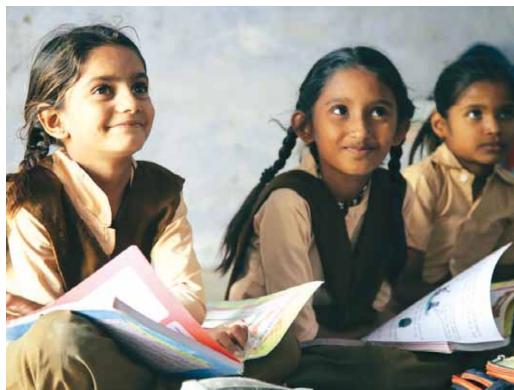
One such life that Chhavi has inspired is that of 25-yearold Radha Rajawat. A resident of Lalwari village in Niwai block of Tonk district in Rajasthan, Radha has not only educated herself but made a huge differ-ence in the lives of girls in and around her village by fighting for their rights to education. 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 sup-port, 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

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

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



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 sec-ondary 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

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

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 pur-sue their dream of higher edu-

cation.
"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 panchavat elections," said the panchayat elections," said Maina Rana, a colleague of Radha's. She obliged their

request and contested the elec-tion but couldn't win. She, however, continued to support the winner, Devalal Gurjar, who is also her colleague, to serve the

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 opportuni-ty to meet the former Vice President of India, Hamid Ansari. Taking note of her con-fidence 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 educa-tion, 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 treat ment. I was completely against her education but now I realise my mistake and understood the importance of girls' educa-tion," said Radha's father.

Her struggle and passion for social awareness is an outstanding example of women's empow-erment. 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.

Keep your body, mind active

signs. "It is important to achieve a healthy work-life balance in order to live a ful-Working long hours filled life. But there are moments in life can damage your 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 vitality even without tell-tale signs India Champion. The fitness expert has these sugges-

to be considered are - shape of the tions for those busy hours that will not only nourish your body and mind, but chair, its height, height of the table, lumbar support in the chair, among also increase overall productivity:

Between emails, meetings and calls, try to take a stroll even for a few others. Ensure that your chair has some kind of lumbar support. Lumbar support will protect your lumbar spine from pressures of excessive flexion durminutes to reset your body and brain. A little bit of movement during those ing long sitting hours. It is also important to choose a chair where you can adjust the height of the chair so that 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 interyou can adjust its height vis-a-vis your table. It will be good for your midvals. Take a few long breaths engaging your abdominals to ensure that your upper back and shoulders. Often peo-ple who ignore this advice can devel-op health conditions like scoliosis and

body is getting enough oxygen. Learn some *Pranayama* techniques to recreate yourself quickly so that you can rounded shoulders. Keep drinking water during a long shift. It's quite common that people under pressure keep suppressing their maintain a constant energy level throughout the long span of desk sit-Remember to do a few neck and thirst subconsciously that makes them dehydrated. Remember to keep sipping shoulder stretches while on your desk the water every hour or so to keep your circulation and will keep your blood pressure in check, apart from many other benefits of drinking water. It will also help in keeping your posture upright. Add useful stretches

Choose the appropriate ergonomic chair and table in order to maintain Decorate your space nicely and keep it clean, organised and minimal. a good posture while sitting for long hours. Some of the important factors Avoid too much clutter around in your space. Too much physical clutter affects



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

the states of your mind, too. Practice the 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.

community with sincerity.

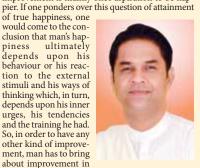
Babulal Sharma, a local

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 ecompic status. Some want to improve or explain the composition of the source being status. nomic 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 hap-

clusion that man's hap-piness 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 improve-ment, 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 upon things. ing wrong things.

Another major hurdle in man's path to progress

Another major hurdle in mans 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 fag-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 her possible the progression of the prog 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 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

Knowing all this, one should get rid of body con-sciousness. The first step for this is to withdraw one's attachment from 'religions' of the body, which rob 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-

Invest in your dreams. Grind now. Shine later. –Unknown

TREATING SLEEP APNEA MAY REDUCE DEMENTIA

from your yoga class to these intervals.

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



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 adults with bigger brains and lower levels of anxiety, a new study suggests. The mouse-model



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

OBESITY LINKED TO HEAVY PERIODS

Lobesity 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 or

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

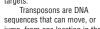


In the mouse study, the team found that after shedding their womb lining, the mice on a high-fat diet showed delayed repair of the remaining womb lining in comparison to mice on

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

 U^{S} scientists have found that transposons, also known as jumping genes, can protect against certain blood cancers and help develop new therapeutic



jump, from one location in the genome to another when activated. These "iumping" 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



 $U_{\text{effective}}^{\text{S}}$ 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 umour 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

cell looking for danger molecules or pathogens. "When

NLRP3 recognises these signals, it

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 resulting in tumour growth," Marchetti said.

Rana, Tripathi power KKR to 187





Picture credits: IPLT20.com

pener Nitish Rana (80) and Rahul Tripathi (53) hit fluent half-centuries to propel Kolkata Knight Riders to a challenging 187 for six against Sunrisers Hyderabad in their Indian Premier League match, here on Sunday.

SRH's Rashid Khan (2/24) was yet again at his best, asking tough questions to the batsmen but most of his bowling colleagues proved ineffective on a batting-friendly wicket.
Dinesh Karthik (22 not out off

9 balls) provided a late flourish to KKR innings but they could gather only 42 runs in the last five

Left-handed opener Rana struck the ball hard and clean to provide his side a confident start after they were asked to take first

His strokes on the off-side —

NITISH RANA LAST SIX INNINGS IN IPL

Runs	Balls	Opposition team
0	1	RR
81	53	DC
0	1	KXIP
87	61	CSK
0	1	RCB
80	56	SRH

the drives and cuts - were of highest quality and a treat to the eye.

Neither Bhuvneshwar Kumar nor T Natarajan could stop Rana from hitting boundaries even as Subhman Gill was quiet initially. Sandeep Sharma was hit for three boundaries in a row by him.

Gill opened up his arms to hit massive straight six off Natarajan to make it even better for KKR.

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

provided the breakthrough when he deceived Gill with a wrong'un

to find the stumps.

Rana though kept going strong, completing his half-century with a six off Vijay Shankar after surviving an LBW appeal off Rashid. He got the decision overturned, taking the DRS call. Rana's six-hitting continued after getting his fifty as he punished Natarajan and Sandeep again. His colleague at the other end

Rahul Tripathi also stroked confidently and fluently. He smashed a massive six off Bhuyneshwar and then followed it up with a cheeky four in the third-man region.

He completed his fifty with other boundary off Bhuvneshwar but was dismissed by Natarajan soon after when he top-edged a ball. Rashid too sent back dangerous Andre Russell (5)

Mohammed Nabi (2/32) got rid of Rana and Eoin Morgan (2)

1. Shikhar Dhawan (DC 85 2. Nitish Rana (KKR) 80 3. Prithvi Shaw (DC) 72 WKTS 1. Harshal Patel (RCB) 5 2. Avesh Khan (DC) 3. Chris Woakes (DC) 2 **MOST SIXES** Nitish Rana (KKR)

PLAYER

4

2. Suresh Raina (CSK)

3. Chris Lynn (MI)



Chennai Super Kings' Suresh Raina spends time in kitchen



David Warner's daughters Indi Rae, Isla Rose and Ivy Mae get ready to cheer for Sunrisers Hyderabad **@davidwarner3**

DHONI FINED FOR SLOW OVER RATE

Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni has been fined ₹12 lakh for maintaining a slow over rate during his side's IPL opener against DC here. "Chennai Super Kings captain MS Dhoni has been fined after his team maintained a slow over-rate during their IPL 2021 match against Delhi Capitals at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai on April 10," the IPL said in a media statement." As it was his team's first offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over-rate offences. Mr Dhoni was fined ₹ 12 lakh," the statement added.

LOSING HAZELEWOOD A BLOW

Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming said losing Josh Hazelwood 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 Hazelwood 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

Big-hitters galore

RR, Punjab Kings aim for winning start to IPL campaign

KEY PLAYERS



BEN STOKES English all-rounder will have an extra responsibility with the ball this time in absence of Archer



CHRIS GAYLE

He will be the X-factor in Kings line-up. Gayle's power hitting can take PBKS to big total

PTI MUMBAI

nother battle of big-hitters is on the cards Awhen KL Rahul's Punjab Kings take on the Sanju Samson-led Rajasthan Royals, two lineups dotted with expansive stroke-makers and in rsuit of a winning start to their IPL campaigns here on Monday.

Rajasthan will be banking heavily on their swashbuckling all-rounder Ben Stokes, Stokes will runs under his belt and so will be the likes of Englishman Jos Buttler and newly appointed skipper Samson, who is a mine-field of tal-The Royals

could opt to open with the highlyrated Yashasvi Iaiswal Buttler. While Samson, who would be itching to prove a point, and Stokes would then form strong middle-order.

If the four fire on all cylinders, they can pum-mel any attack into submission and Punjab on the Wankhede track. which is usually bat-

ting-friendly.

Royals also have an several other options at their disposal, including all-rounders Shivam Dube, Shreyas Gopal, Rahul Tewatia, Riyan Parag and Liam Livingstone.

Gopal, Tewatia and Parag, all bowl leg-spin, so it would be inter-esting to see whether the Royals opt to go in with two leg-spinners.

Tewatia and Dube have the abil-

VENUE: WANKHEDE STADIUM, MUMBAI TO HEAD

Rajasthan Royals Punjab Kings

LAST YEAR'S MATCHES



Rajasthan Royals beat Punjab Kings by 7 wicketa at Abu

1922

Punjab Kings Skipper Lokesh Rahul who scored 1922 runs at an average of 54.91 in 42 innings of as many matches ,needs 78 runs to become only second batsman after Shaun Marsh (2477 runs) to score over 2000 runs for Punjab Kings in IPL.

ity to whack the ball outside the park and look to be certainties in the playing XI.

With star pacer Jofra Archer missing due injury, the pace attack will have to be led by Rajasthan's newest recruit — South African all-rounder Chris Morris, who will be eager to justify his huge price tag of Rs 16.25 crore. RR will have to get their combination

right as only four foreigners can make the playing XI. So, it will be interesting to see whether Royals opt for left-arm pacer Mustafizur

Rahman or go in with either Jaydev Unadkat, Kartik Tyagi or Chetan Sakariya. Unadkat, with his experience, might

On the other hand, Puniab boast of 2020 season), Mayank Agarwal (424 runs) and

Rahul and Agarwal formed a lethal opening combination in 2020 and would continue to

They also have the likes of Englishman Dawid Malan, one of the finest T20 batsmen currently, hard-hitting Tamil Nadu batsman M Shahrukh Khan, and West Indian Nicholos

For them too, it would be all about getting

the combination right.
Shahrukh could get the nod ahead of others like Deepak Hooda and Sarfaraz Khan, and could play the role of a finisher.

Dhawan impressed by Pant's calmness on captaincy debut

Delhi Capitals experienced opener Shikhar Dhawan was mighty impressed with Rishabh Pant's leadership qualities, saying the youngster led the team in a calm and composed manner in his first match as captain and will only get better with time.

Pant was thrust into captaincy after regular skipper Shreyas Iyer sustained a shoulder injury during the recent ODI series against England and was ruled out of the

tournament.
The 23-year-old wicketkeeperbatsman made a memorable start to his captaincy stint as he led DC to a convincing seven-wicket win over three-time champions Chennai Super Kings in their opening match of the IPL 2021 here on Saturday.

"He (Rishabh Pant) did quite well. First of all, glad that he won the toss. It was a bit of a sticky wicket, so it was good for us to bat sec-



ond. He kept his calm and kept on motivating the boys," Dhawan said during the post-match press con-

"He made good changes as well. It was his first match (as captain), so I am sure it is only going to get refined from here. He has just

started and with experience, I am sure, he is only going to get better. "The best thing about Rishabh Pant is that he stays calm. His pres ence of mind is quite there, which is very very good."

Asked if he gives his advice to Pant as a senior player, Dhawan said: "...Of course, I give my advice to him. The youngsters, whenever they come to me to ask for batting tips or mindset things, I always

share my knowledge with them."

Dhawan smashed a 54-ball 85 studded with 10 fours and two maximums and alongwith Prithvi Shaw (72) shared a 138-run opening stand as Delhi chased down 189 with eight balls to spare.

Asked about his sweep shots against the pacers, Dhawan said: against the pacers, Dhawan said:
"I started practising it at the nets
and then introduced it in the
game. We have to play according
to the field set. I knew Chennai
keeps square leg and fine leg
inside the 30-yard circle and keep
covers behind for me.

from South Africa's ODI series against Pakistan. Missing Jofra is big blow: Sangakkara

PTI MUMBAI

Star pacer Jofra Archer's absence because of injury is a "big blow" to Rajasthan Royals but their new Director of Cricket Kumar Sangakkara is confident that the team's young Indian fast bowlers will rise to the challenge in this year's Indian Premier League.

Archer, who played with a hand injury during the India series, is currently recuperating from a surgery and the duration of his availability during the later part is still not clear

Sanju and I will both agree that it's a big blow for us. Jofra is a very vital part of our makeup and not to have him is unfortunately the reality of it. We have to work around it and plan contingencies," Sangakkara told PTI during a virtual press conference on Sunday ahead of the clash against Punjab Kings here on Monday.

The former Sri Lankan captain is, however, hopeful that Archer will be available at some point and "play his part in the IPL."

stage on fire.

have his left-arm back-up



Indian pace attack where the most experienced name Jaydev Unadkat hasn't exactly set the Apart from Unadkat, they

The weak link for Royals. Chetan Sakariya and the over the years, has been their immensely talented Kartik

> work for you and it could mean that opposition hasn't seen you either. Fast bowling in IPL is not an easy task and we saw that yes-

terday (Delhi Capitals vs Chennai Super Kings) as well," said Sangakkara, who has played a number of seasons in the IPL.
"Most of the wickets are

good for batting. So, you have to be quite skilful. We have Kartik Tyagi, who did pretty well last season in patches and this year we have new additions (pacer) Kuldeep Yadav (Jr) and Chetan Sakariya," he stated.

For Sangakkara, it is imper-ative that these youngsters are prepared to understand match situations and bowl according-

"It's about keeping them focussed on what their job is and get them trained and prepared to execute different deliveries, scenarios and match plans for the opposition but at the same time, giving them confidence about their own strengths."

The Royals skipper Sanju Samson has gone slightly off the radar as far as the national team is concerned after having failed to grab even a single opportuni-However, Sangakkara believes that both the captain and Rahul Tewatia, who recently was in India squad for the T20 series against England, could be national team regulars if they can trust their abilities a bit more.

"Pressure is always there. Whether it is Sanju or Rahul, reality is they will tell you that expectations and pressures will always be there. Everyone has various coping mechanisms to deal with it, focus is to stay in the moment," he said.

'It is very important to have those grand ambitions of play-ing regular international cricket and both Saniu and Rabul are very capable of not just being regulars but great, outstanding performers at the international

The eloquent former glovesman wants each of his 11 players to be "problem solvers", who can think on their feet and help

the skipper.
"... That really helps the skipper Saniu a lot on the field when people are thinking themselves as to what's going on (match situation), and it also builds a lot of trust within the unit," he