**OPINION 6** 

OF SRI LANKA AND

THE ANDAMANS

\*Late City Vol. 17 Issue 98 \*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

# BHUBANESWAR, MONDAY APRIL 12, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹4 the pioneer

SUIT UP, SMILE UP, SHOW UP: TAAPSEE

10 VIVACITY

Stay indoors to

lockdown: CM

**Kejriwal terms** 

situation serious

such a situation may arise if

there is a rush to the hospitals

and beds are unavailable for serious patients. "We need

your cooperation. If your coop-

eration 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

"Lockdown should be imposed by any Government

only when its hospital system

down. I believe lockdown is not

a solution to deal with Covid-

19. It should be imposed if hos-

pital system collapses," he said.

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.

He, however, asked people

I am not in favour of lock-

imposed," he said.

has collapsed.

obviate Delhi

STAFF REPORTER MEW DELHI

With the national Capital recording whopping 10,774 fresh cases of Covid-19 on Sunday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal termed the sit-

uation very worrisome and urged people not to step out of homes unless it is urgent. The Chief Minister said the

ongoing peak has surpassed the

intensity of November 2020. He asked people to use face masks

and sanitisers and maintain

social distancing.

Kejriwal said, "Corona is rising rapidly in the entire country. In Delhi too, it has

increased significantly in the past 10-15 days.

It is the fourth wave in Delhi and it is very dangerous.

It is spreading very fast so much so that it is beyond the

understanding of many peo-

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

Government does not want to impose lockdown in Delhi but

Kejriwal added the

mass level," he said.

The Centre should remove

# 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

Opp seeks cancellation of

CBSE, ICSE Board exams

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 new all-time high daily Covid-19 count at 1,57,028 cases with Maharashtra con-

tributing maximum at 63,294. "India currently has 2 Covid-19 vaccines being manufactured locally: Covishield

X, XII exams

scheduled

from May 4

Weeks ahead of the CBSE and ICSE Board exami-

nations, political parties have

expressed serious concern over

the Centre's go-ahead to con-

duct the examinations amid the

sought cancellation of the

Board exams, saying it will be

impossible to ensure safety of

students at crowded exam cen-

tres, Shiv Sena appealed to the

Centre to take a uniform deci-

sion on the board exams of

Classes 10 and 12 across the

country in the wake of differ-

ent States and Boards having

different opinions on the issues.

chief Rahul Gandhi said the

decision to conduct the CBSE

exams from May 4 should be

reconsidered in view of the ris-

ing number of Covid-19 cases

across the country, party gen-

While former Congress

While the Congress has

corona pandemic.

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), Zvdus Cadila's vaccine, and Bharat Biotech's Intranasal

Safety and efficacy are the Union Government's primary concerns while granting emergency use authorisation (EUA) to any Covid-19 vaccine in the country," news agency ANI reported, citing Government sources. citing

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 exam-

inations as well as several States

have also scheduled the Board

examinations during the next

tating corona second wave, conducting CBSE exams must

"In the light of the devas-

two months.

# 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)

The report said out of the 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 companies, including Hyderabadbased 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 country.

'Haider not referred

by VIMSAR to SCB'

Following Haider's escape from the SCB Hospital in

Cuttack, it was reported that the VIMSAR doctors at Burla had referred him to the SCB.

But the VIMSAR authorities have strongly refuted the

matter. "Haider was not

of our hospital," said VIMSAR

Superintendent Dr Lal Mohan

Nayak on Sunday. Haider came

for treatment to Burla on

December 12, 2020 and went

back to jail on the same day.

"He required plastic surgery for a bullet injury and the doctors

here only told him that this

facility is available at Cuttack

only. But none of us referred him to Cuttack," Dr Nayak

on strict condition of anonymi-

v, revealed Haider's lifestyle in

he jail. "He was provided all

Though it is claimed that

only six police personnel were

guarding the gangster at the

SCB Hospital, other policemen

of Cuttack and the hospital

outpost were also reportedly

engaged for his security,

him before her alive

**RAJESH BEHERA** 

Haider's wife

suspects fishy in

gangster's escape

facilities by senior officials for

fear only," they said.

Now, Sambalpur jail staffs,

claimed.

His name is not there in

referred by us to Cuttack.

PNS SAMBALPUR

## 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 be available by August, (Serum) by Novavex September, and Nasal Vaccine (Bharat) by October," the source said, on when the vac-

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.

 $T^{\text{he CBI on Sunday questioned two personal assist}}$ 

tants of former Maharashtra

Deshmukh in connection with

allegations of corruption lev-

elled against him by former

Mumbai Police Commissioner

Following the High Court directive for a CBI probe into

the issue. Deshmukh had to

resign from his post within

Deshmukh's personal assis-

tants Sanjeev Palande and

Kundan to appear before the

CBI team in Mumbai for ques-

tioning in connection with the

Preliminary Enquiry registered

by it following an order of the

appeared around 10.30 am at its

office in Mumbai and were

questioned for several hours.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Singh had alleged that Palande was pre-

Sources said the duo

In a letter addressed to

Bombay High Court.

The agency had asked

Param Bir Singh.

hours of the order.

**CBI** grills **Deshmukh's** 

extortion order to Vaze

2 aides over ₹100 cr

cines would be available for use.

# **India bans virus drug** Remdesivir's export

Anticipating increase in the demand for Remdesivir injection in the coming days in the wake of a spike in Covid-19 cases, the Centre on Sunday took a string of measures from prohibition of the export of the anti-viral drug as well as that Remdesivir Active

Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) with an aim to ensure sufficient availability in the domestic market. The Centre's decision to

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

The Government has

asked authorities to cap the price of Remdesivir between ₹1,100 and ₹1,400 per vial and urged about a dozen pharmaceutical companies, including Mylan, Hetero Healthcare, Jubilant Life Sciences, Cipla, Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Zydus Ćadila 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 Pharmaceuticals has been in

contact with domestic manufacturers to ramp up the production.

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

Shimla: The Himachal Pradesh have witnessed a spike in coro-

sent when Deshmukh alleged-

ly 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

Vaze is facing an NIA probe in the case relating to the

parking of an explosive-laden

SUV near industrialist Mukesh

CBI team, Vaze is said to have

told the investigators that

Kundan was present during

one such conversation with

the former Maharashtra Home

In his statement before the

Ambani's house in Mumbai.

sources said.

Government on Sunday made navirus cases to show a Covidit mandatory for people coming from seven States which 19 negative test report on entering the State.

## State reports 1,379 more Covid cases MAX 317 CASES IN SUNDARGARH

The State continued to register 1,000-plus Covid-19 posutive day with 1,379 new ones being reported from 30 districts and the State pool on Sunday. With this, the total tally rose to

Out of the new cases, 808 were from quarantine and 571 were local contact cases Sundargarh district reported the day's maximum 317 cases followed by Khordha with 158, Sambalpur 86, Nuapada 90, Nabarangpur 71, Bargarh 68, Cuttack 56, Balangir 54, Mayurbhanj 49, Puri 43 and

Besides, 35 cases were reported from

TOTAL SURGES TO 34,9,56;459 MORE RECOVER

PNS BHUBANESWAR

34,9,561 in the State.

Jharsuguda 42.

State pool.Currently, the active cases in State stood at 7,979 and the cumulative samples tested were 93,70,359, including 31,651 on Saturday. The positivity rate stood at 3.73 per cent. However, 459 patients recovered on day, increasing total recoveries to

# 148 new Covid cases found in Bhubaneswar

## Surveillance stepped up at rly station

PNS BHUBANESWAR

capital Shubaneswar on Sunday registered 148 new Covid-19 positive cases, with which its total tally rose to 33,512.Out of the new cases 11 were local contacts and 32 were quarantine cases linked to earlier positive cases.

Out of the local contacts, 15 cases were from Khandagiri, 10 from Pokhariput, six each from IRC Village, Niladri Vihar and Old Town, five each from Baramunda and Kalpana Chhak and four each from Mancheswar and Rasulgarh.

Currently, the active cases in the city stood at 977. Till now, 32,264 patients have

recovered and 250 have succumbed to the disease. Municipal Corporation (BMC) has stepped up surveillance at the railway station with the

help of the railway authorities. The passengers arriving from other States would now be required to produce Covid negative report (RT-PCR test report) or final vaccination certificate at the BMC kiosk set

up at the station. In case any passenger does not have either of the reports, they would have to complete a registration process so that necessary tracking and followup action would be taken by

the health authorities. Besides, the entry and exit routes of the railway station have been changed. As per the BMC authorities, the passen gers coming to the station would now enter from the Master Canteen bus-stand side and exit would be from the

Reliance Fresh side.

## 6 policemen on Haider escort duty suspended

DGP REVIEWS OPERATIONS TO NAB GANGSTE

TEAMS FORMED; NIEGHBOURING STATES ALERTED RAJESH BEHERA ■ KENDRAPADA

Hasina Bibi, spouse of gang-ster Sk Haider, on Sunday suspected something fishy about

the escaping of Haider from the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack on Saturday. 'My husband is reeling under kidney related ailment; his hands and legs were not fit. Besides, he has heart problem

too. With such sickness, how could my husband flee from the hospital with police security, questioned Bibi. "I do not know whether my

husband escaped from the SCB or some warring gang members kidnapped him or police took away my husband with an ulterior motive. I and my family are in dark. We have faith on police department and we request the



before us," added Bibi. In 2015, the Court of Additional District Judge-2 in Bhubaneswar had convicted Haider and awarded him and two others, life imprisonment in connection with the kidnap and murder of mine Mohapatra

Hyder had taken ransom of Rs 1.72 crore from the family members of the kidnapped businessman, a Keonjhar based mines and crusher owner, who was kidnapped on May 27, 2007 from Bhubaneswar along with his driver and was later killed. *Continued on page 2* | or some warring gang members

Hasina Bibi, spouse of gang-ster Sk Haider, on Sunday suspected something fishy about the escaping of Haider from the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack on Saturday. "My husband is reeling under kidney related ailment; Rashmi Ranjan

his hands and legs were not fit. Besides, he has heart problem too. With such sickness, how could my husband flee from hospital with police security," questioned Bibi "I do not know whether  $my\ husband\ escaped\ from\ SCB$ 

Wants police to present kidnapped him or police took away my husband with an ulterior motive. I and my family are in dark.

We have faith on police department and we request the top brass to produce my husband before us," added Bibi. In 2015, the Court of

Additional District Judge-2 in Bhubaneswar had convicted Haider and awarded him and two others, life imprisonment in connection with the kidnap and murder of mine owner Rashmi Ranjan Mohapatra. Hyder had taken ransom of

Rs 1.72 crore from the family members of the kidnapped businessman, a Keonjhar based mines and crusher owner, who was kidnapped on May 27. 2007 from Bhubaneswar along with his driver and was later

killed. *Continued on page 2* 

## Twins with 2 heads, 3 hands born in K'pada

To be referred to Cuttack Sishu Bhawan PNS KENDRAPARA

onjoined twins have been Conjoined twins in the born in Kendrapada with

two heads, three hands and two legs. The twins are girl children and were born at a private nursing home in Kendrapada town. After their condition deteriorated, they were shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) Paediatric DHH

Consultant Debasish Sahu said the conjoined twins are rare congenital anomaly and are joined at chest and abdomen. Their condition is stable at present. After ultrasound of twins, details of the abnormality would be known. "We are referring the conjoined twins to Sishu Bhawan in Cuttack. Like

Jaga-Kalia conjoined twins, the

present case is one of the vari-



eties of the congenital anomaly," Dr Sahu said. Notably, in 2015, Jaga and Kalia of Kandhamal district were fused at the head since their birth. After the State Government intervened and announced to fund for a separation surgery of twins, a team of doctors of AIIMS, New Delhi conducted the country's first Craniopagus The team of doctors per-

formed surgery for 45 hours in phases from August to October in 2017 to separate Jaga and Kalia.Kalia died at SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack during his treatment in November last year.

# Vaccine shortage hits 900 centres in State

PNS BHUBANESWAR

Even as the 'Tika Utsav', a four-day-long mega vaccination drive against Covid-19 began in the country on Sunday, as many as 900 centres ran out of vaccine doses in Odisha.

The ongoing Covid-19 vaccination in the State would be hampered and might be stopped if fresh stocks of vaccines are not supplied by Monday, said Health Department Director Bijay Panigrahi

The massive vaccination drive has almost come to a halt in the State due to the shortage of vaccines. The vaccination process is currently being carried out in 579 centres in various districts which have vaccine stocks. Most of the districts have no vaccine stocks. If



supplied by tomorrow, the process will be hampered in almost all the districts," said Panigrahi. Priority is being given to the districts which have report-

ed the most positive cases. Currently, the State has stocks of 2,33,000 doses of

Covishield vaccines and 77,960 doses of Covaxin. The vaccination drive would continue in the districts which have vaccine stock, said Panigrahi.

# **WORLD 8**

'SUSPICIOUS' BLACKOUT STRIKES IRAN'S NATANZ NUCLEAR SITE

SPORT 12 PUNJAB VS ROYALS IN IPL TODAY

www.dailypioneer.com

# **State's revenue rises** by 18% in 2020-21 FY pandemic

Despite a setback due to Covid-19 pandemic, the Odisha Government has been able to generate more resources during Financial Year 2020-21 in comparison to a normal Fiscal of 2019-20.

Latest report on collection of State's revenue reveals that the Odisha Government has achieved more than 18 per cent growth in March 2021 as compared to March 2020.

Collection of both Tax and Non Tax Revenue during 2020-21 clocked Rs 55,511.63, which is all time high though the Fiscal was dented by Covid-19 pandemic.While Own Tax Revenue was Rs 34,421.09 crore, Non Tax Revenue was Rs 21,090.54 crore during 2020-21.Of the Own Tax Revenue,

include VAT, Entry Tax, SGST and IGST share. Excise Collection was less as compared to 2019-20.

While Tax collected from Excise was Rs 3962.37 crrore during 2020-21, it was Rs 4,495.42 crore during 2019-20. Stamp and registration collection also registered better growth during last Fiscal. While Odisha collected Rs

2,887.89 crore during 2020-21, it registered more than 100 per cent growth as against 2019-20.

The Department of Revenue and Disaster Management geared up for revenue collection, which resulted in achieving 101.26 per cent growth, officials say. However taxes on vehicles were also less during 2020-21 in 1,836.32 crore during 2019-20.

Taxes and duties on electricity clocked big rise, which was more than Rs 1,000 crore than 2019-20. Overdrive by the Department of Energy has resulted in big rise as Odisha collected Rs 3,938.13 crore during 2020-21, while it was Rs 2,819.67 crore during 2019-20. The collection from power sector has boosted the Own Tax Revenue in a big way, offi-

cials admit. On Non Tax Revenue front, the Mining and Metallurgical Sector performed much well though the sector was badly hit by Covid-19 pandemic. Collection from non ferrous mining and metallurgical industries went up to Rs 13,591.58 crore during

# Despite

a growth of 23.34 per cent as compared to 2019-20, when the collection was Rs 11,020.02 crore. Interestingly, the State set the target of the sector at Rs 12,500 crore during 2020-21. however, the collection crossed the target and came as a big help to the State, admit officials.

Non Tax Revenue collection from interest, dividend and education clocked much better growth as compared to

However, the Central Share Tax and Grants from the Center came down as compared to 2019-20. The Share Tax from the Centre received a jolt with a negative growth of 9.56 per cent, while Grants from Centre experienced similar fate with a negative growth of 5.79 per cent.

# Two gunrunners Class-IX exam held in Cuttack

## Six guns, 32 rounds ammo seized

PNS CUTTACK

Even as the flow of illegal arms continues unabated to the twin cities of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar, Commissionerate police on Sunday arrested two gunrunners in Cuttack, who were

allegedly members of an illegal

firearms racket. Four pistols, two revolvers and 32 rounds of ammunitions were seized from the two accused. The Chauliaganj police also seized an Indica car and four mobile phones from their possession. The two accused were identified as Ajit Ray alias Dipuna of Biridi in

Jagatsinghpur district and Ajay Moharana alias Papu from Ganjam. While 11 cases are pending against Dipu, 10 criminal cases are registered against Papu at various police stations in Cuttack and Jajpur district.

As per reports, the illegal arms were procured from Munger in Bihar and were meant to be supplied to local criminal gangs . Police arrested the duo after getting credible intelligence input regarding their movement.

Earlier on April 9, the Special Task Force of Crime Branch arrested two arms peddlers following a raid near Sikharghat bridge under the Niali police station in Cuttack district and recovered eight pistols, including two sophisticated 9 mm and 20 live ammunition from their pos-

# decision after **April**

PNS BHUBANESWAR

A mid doubts over the possibility of conduct of school examinations in the State due to the Covid-19 situation, School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash on Sunday said a decision regarding the Class-IX examinations would be taken after April 30.

"The final decision will be taken after reviewing the Covid-19 situation in the State after April 30.

The department wants to conduct the examinations as per the syllabus covered by the teachers so far," the Minister said.Notably, the State Government has suspended



physical classes of Class-IX students in schools till April 30 in view of the rising Covid-19

The class-IX students residing in hostels and residential schools have been allowed to go back home.

# CST Act amended; Odisha to reap benefits

## Earlier State was losing Value added Tax of ₹ 500 crore per annum due to misuse of Form-C

PNS BHUBANESWAR

With the Union Government taking steps to bring necessary amendment in the CST Act, 1956, Odisha is all set to reap huge benefits in terms of revenue generation.

Due to presence of a clause in the Central Act, Odisha was losing Value Added Tax (VAT) more than Rs 500 crore every year due to the misuse of Form-C by the mineral raising contractors and works contractors of the State, said a senior official.For last four long years, Odisha was facing

and the State repeatedly had requested the Union Government to bring in amendments in the Central

Recently once again, the Odisha Government had requested the Union Ministry of Finance for bringing amendment of Sub Section(3) of Section 8 of Central Sales Tax (CST) Act, 1956.

Attention of Union Minister Finance Niramla Sitharaman was drawn by Odisha Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari to bring exquisite amendment in the

huge loss of VAT in this regard CST Act.Sitharaman has taken steps to bring in the amendment in the CST Act, 1956 in the Finance Bill for which Odisha is going to reap big benefits in terms of revenue generation.

Way back in 2016, the Union Government in order to bring in force the GST Act, had made certain amendments in the CST Act, 1956 vide the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Act, 2017 dated May 5, 2017.

In the amendment definition of "Goods" was amended as petroleum crude, high speed diesel, motor spiritcommonly known as petrol, natural gas, aviation turbine fuel and alcoholic liquor for human consumption with a view to restrict the applicability of the CST Act to these six

As a result, the interpretation of the Section 8 (3) b of CST Act would be such that purchase of these six commodities can be allowed at a concessional rate on the strength of Form-C for resale or manufacture of these six commodities only and use of these six commodities in telecommunication network, mining and generation of electricity or any other power. Bu to protect the State rev-

enue-VAT, it was clarified not to use Form-C to manufacturers, contractors and mining lease holders by interpreting the implication of the amendments made to the CST Act and migration of registration granted under the OVAT Act and CST Act to GST Act.

Later on, with the issue of an order by the High Court of Orissa and similar orders of High Courts of other States, the window for issue of Form-C covered manufacturers, mining contractors and works contractors, who started pur-

chasing High Speed Diesel (HSD) by paying CST at 2 per cent. This resulted in loss of VAT revenue of HSD to the extent purchased from other States, for which Odisha was losing over Rs 500 crore per annum due to misuse of Form-C.

Now that necessary amendment has been brought and Sub Section (3) of Section 8 has been omitted, the mineral raising contractors and works contractors will not be able to take advantage of Form-C as they were unduly enriching themselves at the

## **MBA** student held for duping jewellers

## Used fake money debit messages

PNS BHUBANESWAR

Red ant chutney medicine for Covid?

A Special Squad of the Twin Commissionerate police on Sunday arrested an MBA student of Bengaluru from a five-star hotel in Bhubaneswar for allegedly duping jewellers of lakhs of rupees with 'fake money debit messages' on his mobile phone. The accused was iden-

tified as Vishal Lilenga. As per reports, he had introduced himself as an Income Tax officer and bought gold orna-ments from various jewellery shops in the State.

For payment, he used to opt for the UPI mode but displayed a fake money debit

message on his mobile phone to deceive the seller. The accused was wanted

in Sambalpur, Jharsuguda and Puri districts, sources said. Following his arrest, he was handed over to the Sambalpur police. Further investigation into offences was underway.

# Guv releases book on Dongarias by scribe Patnaik

PNS BHUBANESWAR

Abook written by senior journalist and researcher Jitendra Patnaik on the life, struggle, livelihoods and culture of aboriginal tribe Dongria Kondhs was released by Governor Prof Ganeshi Lal here on Thursday. Prof Lal lauded Patnaik's

work as rare and useful. Patnaik has set an example for others by visiting the Niyamgiri Hills and articulating on the tribal The book titled 'Dongran

est) contains 242 pages with six main chapters and 16 sub-sec-The contents deal with myths on Dongaria lifestyle and culture, livelihoods, strug-

Kuan' (meaning people of for-

gle for survival and a chapter on the Niyamgiri Hills. While the forward of the book has been written by for-



Kumar Patnaik, eminent writer and translator Asit Kumar Mohanty has written the introduction. It's the second book to the credit of Patnaik. Earlier, his

writings on Gond tribe and book "Dangara Uhade Jahna' (Moon hides on shades of barren hills) are appreciated by many and available in leading bookstores and libraries.

## **Utkal Varsity** student tests positive

PG 1st semester exam deferred

PNS BHUBANESWAR

Covid-19 has spread its Wings to the Utkal University in the second wave of the pandemic as a post-graduate student in the Sociology Department has tested positive for the virus.
Following the detection of

the Covid case, the university authorities deferred the ination of PG programme till further orders.

"In view of a Covid-19 positive case found in the department and as per discussion with PG Council Chairman, mid-term examination for 1st semester students stands postponed until further order," a notice issued by PG Department of Sociology Utkal Ûniversity, stated.

# We're not equipped to comment,

PNS CUTTACK

says HC

Disposing of a plea which ant) chutney can prevent the Covid-19 virus infection, the Orissa High Court has said the use of red ant chutney or soup by the tribal communities for medicinal and therapeutic purposes is based on their traditional knowledge systems which the court is hardly equipped to comment upon.

Dismissing the WP (C) No. 8317 of 2021, a Bench of

Chief Justice S Muralidhar and Justice BP Routray made this observation.Petitioner Nayadhar Padhial, Assistant Engineer (Civil), Takatpur of Mayurbhanj who belongs to the Bathudi Tribal Adibasi community, had claimed in his plea that 'Kaai or Kukuti chutney which is prepared using red ants, mixed with green chili, is a potent medicine that can boost the immunity system and thus, could prevent Covid 19 infection.

Earlier, the petitioner's representations were considered both by the Ministry of Ayush, Government of India as well as

In its communication, the CSIR said that it currently does not have the required expertise in the domain of entomophagy and therefore, would not be able to pursue any action in the matter.

As regards the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences, it noted that it could not find any reference from the classical books



Cosmetics Act, 1940 on the internal use of red ant chutney as claimed by the petitioner so

Therefore, the use of red ant chutney for the beneficial use of the Covid19 patient is out of the purview of Ayurveda drugs as per regulatory provisions of Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules, 1945."Red ant chutney is traditionally used as a medicine by tribal belts of Odisha Jharkhand, Andhra and Chhattisgarh for flu, cough, common cold, breathing difficulties, fatigue, and other ail-

According to a research for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET) "red ants have medicinal properties which can cure cough, fever and cold."

However, the claim saying red ant chutney is a cure for coronavirus so far has no scientific evidence. Unless it is scientifically proved, no medicine can be considered as an effective treatment for any disease.

# Road connectivity to Buddhanath Temple poor

## Repeated pleas to authorities fall on deaf ears

PNS BHUBANESWAR

Even as the Odisha Government is making efforts to boost temple tourism in the State by allocating more than Rs 500 crore to the Tourism Department to create top-class infrastructures, the utter neglect of basic infra-

structure of the Buddhanath

Temple at Garedipatana village

in Balipatna on the outskirts of

Bhubaneswar has raised many

an eyebrow. Though the State

Archaeology Department has

declared the Buddhanath

Temple as a protected monument and conservation of the temple has been taken up with 14th Finance Commission funds, connectivity to the shrine still remains a major problem. The 1,500-metre stretch of the road from the Balipatna bazaar to the historical Buddhanath Temple is in a pitiable condition.

Hundreds of devotees, students and locals of Garedipatna and adjacent villages, who are dependent on this access road for commuting to schools and college, markets and other destinations daily, are facing hardship for years. In the rainy season, the situation turns still worse and negotiating this stretch is a nightmare.It is a matter of regret that locals'



repeated pleadings for the last

15 years for repair or relaying

of a motorable road to Ministers, the local MLA and other political leaders and the Khordha district Collector have fallen on deaf ears

Local Sarpanch Soumya Ranjan Mohanty had recently raised the issue in the Balipatna Panchayat Samiti meeting. Locals also complained at the Collector's Grievance Cell at the block office, but the net result is again zero.

This has triggered deep resentment in the area and locals are bracing up to embark on a stir for fulfillment of their longstanding demand. They question that with this kind of reticent attitude, how the face of tourism in the State can be transformed as envisioned by the Government.

# reaches Jagasara school Varsha inspires

'Ama Pathagaara'

disadvantaged kids towards education

PNS BHUBANESWAR

The 3rd edition of "Ama **▲** Pathagaara", an initiative by Ollywood actor and activist Varsha Priyadarshini, was held in the Government Primary School, Jagasara Adivasi Sahi, on Sunday. As part of the initiative, Varsha donated a variety of books, ranging from edu-

cational to children's fables, to the students of the school.Varsha through Ama Pathagaara is trying to reignite the library movement pioneered by Dasia Aja. Through the initiative, she

plans to collect books and magazines from enthusiastic donors across Odisha and beyond, and donate them to the disadvantaged people, particularly children, all over the

By doing so, she aims to encourage setting up of libraries in each district of Odisha, just as Dasia Aja had envisioned. She has already collected and distributed hundreds of books through the initiative. During the event, Varsha stressed on the importance of education in a child's life and counselled all the students present to aim to complete their formal education at

any cost. She also inquired about and empathised with the students' predicament due to situation brought about by pandemic. The students in turn shared their dreams with the actress and also delighted her with a couple of cultural performances. All Covid19 related precautions mandated by State Government were strictly followed during the event.

## Haider's wife suspects fishy in gangster's escape

## From Page 1 Prior to that in 2011,

Hyder and seven others were sentenced to life imprisonment for killing Sheikh Chuna alias Malik Hanan, elder brother of history sheeter Suleman Mallik on May 31, 2005 near Stuart

School at CRP square of Bhubaneswar due to security Bhubaneswar for tender paper fixing and also for giving information to police about the criminal antecedents of

Hyder gang. On May 2, 2017, Hyder was transferred to Sambalpur jail from Jharpada jail in police and hospital staff.

reasons following reports of gang war with Dhalasamanta brothers.

Intellectual masses opined that Hyder escaped from SCB medical college and hospital following his nexus with jail,

### 6 policemen on Haider...

From Page 1 All the necessary measures are being taken and hopefully the gangster will be nabbed soon," said Crime Branch ADG Yashwant Jethwa. Meanwhile, Twin City Commissionerate

police have launched a massive

operation to trace the where-

Commissioner Saumendra Priyadarshi, who held a closeddoor meeting with senior officials including Cuttack DCP Prateek Singh, said a core team has been constituted to trace

Haider. "We have constituted a core team comprising senior abouts of the gangster.Police officials who were part of inves-

tigation of old cases related to Haider and Tito," said Priyadarshi.

He further said a recent photograph of Haider has been circulated among the SPs of border districts including Baleswar and Mayurbhani apart from the senior officials of neighbouring Kendrapada

and Jagatsinghpur districts. A staff nurse on duty at the ward of the SCB Medical College Hospital where Haider was admitted said, "I had last seen him (Haider) when I went to the ward to administer medicine and there were four to five people and a policeman near-

by, but when I visited again at

5.30 pm, the guard was sleeping and the patient was missing." Haider escaped from Ward-5 of the surgery ward of the SCB Hospital. Lodged in the Sambalpur Circle Jail, he had been referred by doctors to the SCB after undergoing treatment for some illness at the VIMSAR in Burla.

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements

## **Release addl coal levy of ₹560 cr: State** to Centre

TATHYA 
BHUBANESWAR

¬he Odisha Government has I requested the Ministry of Coal to release the amount of additional levy realised from various companies on account of cancellation of coal blocks.

The Government of India has realised additional levy with respect to coal extracted from the prior allottees of 31 cancelled Schedule-II coal mines in various States.

The additional levy of Rs 295 per metric tonne has been imposed in terms of provisions of the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Ordinance 2014/Act 2015. About Rs 560 was paid by HINDALCO on account of Talabira-I, a Schedule-II Coal

Other State Governments like Chhattisgarh and West Bengal have also put forth similar claims. Till date the amount due has not been transferred to the State although the matter was taken up by the Odisha Government with the Union Government

However, there has been no arrangement to transfer the funds worth Rs 560 crore to the State Government, admit officials. Accordingly, the Odisha Government has once again raised the issue with the Ministry of Coal and has requested to

release the amount, which is a legitimate claim of the State.Raising another issue, the State Government has urged the Centre to rename the Cess collected from coal as And "Environment Rehabilitation Cess" and ear-

mark at least 60 per cent of the Cess for the coal bearing States. Odisha, being a coal rich State, is facing the brunt of coal

mining and its adverse impact. However, the Union Government is collecting cess and recently the Union Government has raised Clean Environment Cess on coal from Rs 200 to Rs 400 per metric ton.

The Odisha Government had requested the Centre to share at least 60 per cent to the coal bearing States as they have to bear the cost of environmental degradation and rehabilitation. This point was raised in several forums in general and in ST Council in particular.

However, the GST Council

has decided that the entire amount of the cess collected would be used for GST Compensation Fund. In fact, Odisha is heavily suffering due to climatic hazards and has turned out to be a "Calamity Zone." So looking at the plight of the State, the Union Government is needed to consider the case, pointed out a senior official.

# 5T Secy reviews S'garh 'High School Transformation'

5 T Secretary VK Pandian on Saturday reviewed the progress of 'High School Transformation' programme in Sundargarh district over videoconferencing from the Lok Seva Bhawan and inter-acted with the stakeholders of all 17 blocks.

All Government High Schools of Sundargarh district would be transformed under the Government's 5T initiative. The review included 40 schools to be covered under first phase of the programme.A 'Vision Document prepared by the district administration con-

taining the roadmap, role of stakeholders and new initiatives to achieve the vision was released in the review meeting. Sundargarh Collector Nikhil Pavan Kalyan solicited wholehearted support from all con-cerned to make the programme successful.

While elaborating on the programme, Pandian said CM Naveen Patnaik has envisioned for transforming the Government schools in the State. This would enhance the learning environment, standard of teaching and usher in holistic development of the schools through collaboration of parents, alumni and local

**Covid spreads to jails** 

On Sunday, as many as nine inmates of two jails in

Gajapati district tested positive

for the virus, the district

administration said. While

prisoners



community. "By achieving this mandate, we can ensure a better future for our students," said the 5T Secretary. Collector Kalyan informed the media that under the initiative, all

9 inmates of 2 prisons

Government, Aided and TRW schools of the district have been

Sets target to

achieve 1st

### included. A target of completing the first-phase transformation before October 2 has

## **INBRIEF**

**ADVOCATE SABAT QUALIFIES FOR (PHD) IN LAW** 

Brahmapur: Advocate Panchanan Sabat of Ganjam district has qualified for degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Law under the Berhampur University. He had been pursuing his doctoral research under the guidance of Prof Bhagirathi Panigrahi of the university since last about five years on the topic "Women Empowerment and the Law in India: A Socio Legal Study". His thesis was adjudicated by eminent law teacher Prof Jatindra Kumar Das, Professor of Law of Calcutta University, who highly appreciated the research acumen of the scholar

B'PUR ARTIST MAKES SMALLEST THAKUANAI IDOL

Brahmapur: Artist Dillip Moharana, a resident of Sana Redika Sahi here, has made the smallest idol of Maa Budhi Thakurani on the occasion of the Budhi Thakurani Jatra. The idol of goddess made with pure wood has a height of half inch only with three eyes, earrings, nose pins. The rare creation has been appreciated by many. Dilip had made similar idols of Maa Durga on the occasion of Dusshera. His smallest crafted idol of one inch had got India and Asia Books of records. He said he was inspired by his father Bhagabar Moharana, brother Manoj and mother Jhunu to perform his art.



**WOMEN'S BODY HOLDS BLOOD DONATION CAMP** 



Cuttack: Leading women's organisation Mahila Bikash Parisad in association with the Bhuhaneswar-Cuttack Police Commissionerate organised a blood donation camp at Goninath Pur near Jagatour. The objective was to meet the blood shortage during the Covid pandemic. The Red Cross blood bank of Cuttack joined the camp and collected 31 units of blood. ACP-cum-joint secretary IRCS Regional Branch Lalitendu Mohanty was chief guest.

### 16 fever clinics opened in Gajapati

PNS ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI

**T**n view of spike in Covid-19 cases, Gajapati administration has opened 16 fever clinics in district. "The district administration has taken steps for containing Covid-19 through massive testing, tracking and surveillance.

To bring initiative in action, 16 fever clinics have been opened," Collector said, This apart, 4Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) have been formed in Paralakhemundi. "People are urged to visit fever clinics in case of need and cooperate with RRTs," Collector added.



Paralakhemundi Sub Jail were found infected, six inmates of the R Udayagiri Sub Jail were found also found have contracted the virus. All the

Government has already issued an SOP to prevent spread of Covid-19 in jails. As per the SOP, if anybody

infectees have been reported-

ly kept in isolation cells in

respective jails. The State

(both inmates and employees) are found positive for Covid-19, should be sent to the 'dedicated Covid Care Centre or hospital by the concerned remanding agencies.

## 3 weekly market yards to come up in JSpur

**PNS** ■ JAGATSINGHPUR

Three weekly market yards ■ will be established in the Kujang and Tirtol areas, for which a sum of Rs 10 lakh has been sanctioned for each yard.

The market yards are Kanjiakan Haat'in Balia Panchayat and Khosalpur Haat in Hansura Panchayat under Kujang block and Jogania Haat in Porgadei village under Tirtol

block.
The farmers from Tirtol,
Kujang and Paradip areas have been complaining perennially in facing hardship to fetch their produces far away for sale.

Usually, farmers had been sending vegetables to local for selling. They had been demanding the setting up of local Haat several times and apprised about their concerns to the local administration and

During elections cam-paigning, BJD candidate Sambit Routray had promised to fulfil the demand for local Haats. Meanwhile Tirtol MLA Routray thanked Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and his pro farmers policy for the three market yards in Tirtol

and Kujanga blocks.
District Collector Sangram Keshari Mohapatra told how the market yards would come to the benefits of the farmers as well as locals and assured that more yards would be opened in near future. "In view of the massive production and distress sale of vegetables leading to sufferings of farmers, we demand for establishment of at least two cold storages in Tirtol and Kujang block headquarters," said farmer Sarata Chandra Patnaik from Kujang.

# **Covid guidelines** flouted during elections

NHRC seeks ATRs from CEC, Home Secy

**PNS** ■ BHUBANESWAR

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought Action-Taken Reports (ATRs) from Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the Union Home Secretary over violation of Covid-19 guidelines in several States where elections are being held.

The commission sought the report within five weeks, taking cognisance of a report filed by human rights activist and lawyer Radhakanta

Tripathy pointed out that unregulated election rallies, mass protests and get-togethers defeat the slogan of "Do

Gaj Duri, Mask hei Zaruri' and is responsible for surge of coronavirus cases in India. Due to negligence, inaction and failure of Election Commission of India, Central and State Governments to check, regulate political and electoral process, infections have been increasing and people are suffering immensely, he stated.

Seeking intervention of the NHRC, Tripathy pointed out that that more than fortyone countries in the world have delayed and postponed their elections.



## Army recruitment rally 2 kingpins held for forging age-proof

**PNS** ■ BRAHMAPUR

Police here have arrested two kingpins in an age-proof certificate forging case found in an Indian Army recruitment rally held at the Bhanja Vihar Airstrip. The arrested persons were

documents

Raghabendra Academy, Gandhingar, Brahmapur chief S Shankar Rao and one M Labanya Kumar.
They were held basing on

the information of seven can-didates for allegedly forging documents relating to their matriculation certificates to prove their age. The fraud was detected by

of Gopalpur, who during scrutiny of documents found that the youths possessed two separate Class-X certificates

issued by two different boards of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. Police during probe found that the accused had earlier applied for jobs with the Indian Army by showing certificates issued by the Board of Secondary Éducation, Cuttack.

But they could not qualify as the date of birth on the certificate proved they had exceeded the age limit for the recruitment examination.
They then took admission

in the National Institute of Open Schooling and got another certificate for Class-X with a different date of birth which qualified them for the examination.

dates are stored in Army database, it was easy to verify the documents during scrutiny and detect frauds if any

## In Kendrapada

# Four burglars nabbed; bronze idols, ammo seized

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

The Town police have nabbed four members of a burglars' gang at Ekanakhandi bridge on the Gandakhia-Santasahi road and seized bronze idols, sharp weapons

and a car from them. While night patrolling was intensified on Saturday across the district with bike and vehicular checking at all the entry points to nab mobster Hyder, who sneaked from the SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack recent-

were conducting bike and vehicular checking with the help of a bike patrolling team when they came across an alto car coming from Kansar direction at around 2.30 am. They stopped the car and started checking the vehicle.

ly, the constables deployed at

Ékanakhandi post nabbed the

Jena and Chandrabhanu Rout

Constables Sumant Kumar

Six persons were on board the car. While checking the dickey, they stumbled upon bronze idols of different goddesses. A Salagram was hidden in the dickey, besides half a dozen of sharp edged weapons and an iron rod.

Police seized them all. While the miscreants were trying flee the spot, the police whereas two others escaped. SP Madkar Sandeep Sampat praised the constables for their

### In Jajpur

# Couple killed, daughter injured in road mishap

Deceased belonged to Mayurbhani

**PNS** ■ JAJPUR

A couple was crushed to death under the wheels of a truck in a head-on collision with their motorcycle at Neulipur Chhak on National Highway-16 under the Dharmasala police station of Jajpur district on Sunday. Their seven-year-old daugh-

ter Gayatri sustained serious injuries. Police seized the bodies of Laxmikanta Matia (30) and Manjulata (28) of Badadeuli village under Karajia block of Mayurbhanj district and sent the bodies to the Government hospital at Dharamsala for autopsy.

The couple and their

minor daughter were going to Bhubaneswar by the bike when the tragedy took place.

Police seized the truck, but its driver managed to flee, said Dharmasala police station IIC Saroj Kumar Sahoo. Large numbers of locals blocked NH-16 at Neulipur for two hours and demanded immediate arrest of the truck driver and compensation for the kin of the deceased.

Police rushed to the spot and pacified the agitators. The accident took place as the driver was taking the truck on the wrong side due to the closure of one side of the highway as road repair work is

## Probe begins in Kendrapada

RAJESH BEHERA ■

Yet another serious allega-tion on rape and child sale case came against Patalipanka based –Lutheran Mahila Samiti following the brother of a physically disabled victim woman knocked the doors of the district Collector ,SP of Kendrapada and Child Welfare Committee by lodging an FIR at the Marshaghai police station. According to the complainant, his brother-in-law

was arrested in a murder case in 2014. As a result, he had left his mentally sick sister, who was six months' pregnant, to stay at Patalipanka based –Lútheran Mahila Samiti, after the intervention of staff of the Samiti. In December 2014, his sister had given birth to a baby

A staff later informed to the complainant that the new born child would stay with his mother at the Samiti ,but the staff did not show the child, while at the same time,

she directed him not to come to see the child any more as per the guidelines of the said NGO. Since his sister was staying at the NGO establishment,

she had never gone to meet his brother or to her father's house. But to his utter surprise, his sister on April 27 2016 and April 17 2020 gave birth to two sons at the SCB Medical College and Hospital and also at the District Headquarters Hospital, Kendrapada, alleged the complainant in the FIR.

When he inquired the mat-

Sexual abuse, child sale slur against Lutheran Samiti

ter, he came to know that only one son out of three was with his sister whereas whereabouts of the other two children of

her sister were not informed. The staff of Lutherana Mahila Samiti allegedly sold his two nephews as he came to know from local sources, the

complainant said in his FIR.He

the Samiti. Acting on the allegations, SP Madkar Sandeep Sharma, directed the IIC of Marshaghai police station to registered a

raped several times and forced

to deliver child by the staff of

alleged that his sister

ASP B Gagarin Mohanty, SDPO Rajib Lochan Panda, Inspector Sasmita Behera, IIC of Marshaghai police station

Kalandi Behera, besides the Additional Tehsildar and the CDPO of Mahakalapada on Friday conducted a spot inquiry in the case. Meanwhile, the statement of the complainant was also recorded under Section 161 of CrPC.

# **JSPL Foundation chief Shallu visits Barbil**

## Interacts with tribal Wushu players

PNS ■ CHAMPUA

During her visit to Barbil in Konjhar district, JSPL Foundation (the social arm of Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (ISPL) chairperson Shallu Jindal interacted with Wushu players belonging to the tribal

groups.
"Whether you win or not but always strive to give your best in every challenge and let the rest go its way. Because you are worth your best effort," she said. She visited the Martial Art Sports Complex developed by



the JSPL Foundation and spoke to international Wushu medalist Bablu Munda and national medalist Manju Munda

At the Sports Complex, players and Wushu aspirants demonstrated their talents.

Jindal School and stressed on enhancing infrastructural support for quality education. She also interacted with the ladies' club members and lauded their efforts in public services.

# Advanced ambulance launched at Khariar

n Advanced Life Support  $A^{\text{II}}$  Advanced Line surprise (ALS) ambulance service was launched at the Khariar Sub-Divisional Hospital in Nuapada district on Sunday. It was inaugurated by Khariar MLA Adhiraj Mohan Panigrahi in the presence of Dinabandhu MO Dr Mahananda and Dr Aditya Joshi.

"I had allotted Rs 40 lakh from my MLA LAD share a year ago, but ambulance could not be obtained due to Covid situation at that time. I am thankful to administration for completing all formalities for procurement of the vehicle,' said Panigrahi. "The ALS aims

at facilitating high-end ambulance transportation from a patient's doorstep to hospital. The ambulance will have ALS system equipped with equip-ments like cardiac life support, cardiac monitors as well as glucose-testing device and a paramedic on board along with an emergency medical technician," informed doctors.



## **Ganjam dance institute** founder gets nat'l trophy

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

rhe Rastriya Sikshya Seekhar ■ Sammilani-2021 was held on March 20 at Jeypore in Rajasthan. This was organised by Hypage Media and Icon Foundation in which State Transport Minister Pratap Singh Khachari Abas and national chairperson of the foundation Gourav Goutam along with hundreds of eminent educationists, academicians, art lovers and intellectuals joined.

The workshop discussed on the theme "the changing structure and method of imparting education during Covid-19 pandemic and its implications on future". As per "Kalanjali" Rameswari Nanda survey conducted by the of Brahmapur was given the

Icon Foundation in the country last year, the Kalanjali Art Institution, Brahmapur was considered as the best dance and music training institute in the country, sources said.

Accordingly, the founder and manager of the art institute

trophy along with "National Educational Brilliance Award" for her contribution in the field of art and culture and education in the region, sources said. The

denizens Brahmapur congratulated Nanda who acclaimed recognition at the national level.

# **India should cherish peace** process on LAC, says China

he pioneer

PNS\PTI ■ NEW DELHI\BEIJING

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

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

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

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

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

Faced with the stalling tactics by China in Depsang valley where it advanced into 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 Commanderlevel 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

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

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

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

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

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

**Both the sides** Traders' body agreed to jointly asks Modi not maintain stability on the ground, to impose night avoid any new curfew, lockdown their leaders, continue their

incidents

Naravane had said last month

the threat to India has only

"abated" following the disen-

gagement in the Pangong lake

area, but it has not gone away

altogether. He said China still

maintained considerable num-

ber 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

Not willing to take any chances, the Army in the last

few months substantially bol-

stered its troop strength besides weaponry. Moreover, the

troops remained deployed on

the LAC throughout the harsh winter months when the tem-

perature dipped to minus 30

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

troop build up by India and

China after a bloody brawl on

June 15 in the Galwan valley.

Twenty Indian soldiers includ-

ing the Commanding Officer

were killed. At least 40 Chinese

were also killed by China was

yet to officially announce the

The border saw massive

other places on the LAC.

The standoff between the

the forward areas.

it said.

statement said.



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 sectors. In a letter to the Prime Minister, the traders' association said it would be more appropriate if alternate measures may be adopted at district levels all over the country.

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

CAIT 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

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

# Best mango? Jury is out on social media

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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 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 bril-

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

## **Modi pays tribute** to social reformer **Jyotirao Phule**

 $P^{\text{rime Minister Narendra}}_{\text{Modi on Sunday paid trib-}}$ utes to noted social reformer tion among the most deprived 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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

 $F_{\text{Commissioner Shailesh}}^{\text{ormer Central Information}}$ 

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

Gandhi, who had set in

Information

and recommendations".

Central

Born in an extremely

backward caste in 1827 in Maharashtra, Phule fought against social discrimination and strove to promote educa-

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

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

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.

increase of four lakh pending

cases before courts between

2005-19, just last one year has

seen an addition of 75 lakh cases

mentions setting up of "some Virtual Courts", whereas all

courts should be effective virtual

all courts should be prepared

and mandated to allow lawyers

and litigants to appear virtually

or physically without any specific need to inform anyone or

The former Information

Commissioner said to achieve

this there is no requirement for

any serious training, but just

ability to use a keyboard, which

is a common skill available to

any literate person and at best a

two-hour familiarisation video

should be adequate.

take permissions," he said.

Gandhi said the Committee

"In fact, I would submit that

to the pendency.

He said as against an

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

 $T^{
m he}$  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 and further notification from the Centre for probe into the case by the Central agency. The case was originally

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

The investors were promised plots/villas/apart-



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

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

## **Active Covid cases in** India breach 11-L mark PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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,

Amid an unprecedented burden on health infrastructure in 15 States and Delhi, which are witnessing an upward trajectory, authorities have started reserving more COVID address any shortage of medical supplies, besides enhancing curbs on the movement of

The Centre announced a ban on export of Remdesivir, used in coronavirus treatment and its Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients, and asked all domestic manufacturers to display 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 country has crossed 10 crore 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 administration have to make full efforts," Prime Minister Modi



'This festival is, in a way, the beginning of another major war against corona. We 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 percent of India's active COVID-19 cases, while Maharashtra alone accounts for 48.57 percent, the Union Health Ministry said. Besides these states, Delhi,

Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan, Puniab. 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

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

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

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

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

out), lift manufacturers rou-

tinely include ventilator systems.

These can, however, increase the

rate at which air - possibly laden

with bacteria and viruses - cir-

culates. While adding an air

purifier to the lift in addition to

the ventilator should help in the-

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

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

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 concentration of viral particles is also important.

Since the quality of air in a

small space can quickly deteri-

orate even when there is just one

person in that space (mainly

because of the increased CO2

levels produced as we breathe

ory, the way in which the purifier affects air circulation, and These droplets are now recthus transmission of airborne viruses is unclear, said the researchers. Air purifiers work by sucking in stale air and exhausting cleansed air, but this adds to the overall circulation of air - an

aspect that previous studies, or indeed air purifier manufacturers themselves, have not considered. To investigate this issue, Dimitris Drikakis and Talib Dbouk of the University of

Nicosia analysed air circulation

and found that the air purifier actually increases the spread of saliva droplets in the cabin. "This is because the air

intake integrated inside the purifier equipment induces flow circulation that can add to the transport of these droplets, explains Drikakis. They also found that the

risk of airborne virus transmission is lowest for low ventilation rates. This is due to reduced flow mixing inside the lift, says "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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

'Spoke to Hon'ble Prime

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

Untill Saturday the total number of active cases in the state stood at 61,653. The Chief Minister also opealed to the people, those eligible, to get vaccinated.

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

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

Commission a decade back said, "The Supreme Court E-Committee has been around since 2005 and it appears its real achievements are inadequate." Citing the findings of the Committee, Gandhi said the

report mentions that a total of Rs. 639.411 crore plus Rs 1670 crore have been spent implementing Information Communication Technology based systems in

"If I presume an expenditure

# 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 technological support for the blue helmet missions 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 Ârmy's Additional Directorate General of Public Information (ADG PI) tweeted.

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

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

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

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

Senior diplomats, security strategists and police officers also attended

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

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

The changing situation further expanded the missions" responsibility

taking into account "other dimen sions of peace, such as establishing rule of law, protection of human rights, protection of women and children, support to political process, managing elections,

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

will conclude on Monday.

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

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

### EXPLOSIVE-LADEN SUV-HIRAN MURDER CASES \_\_\_\_\_

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

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

Vaze was the first accused to have been arrested by the NIA which registered an FIR in the explosiveladen 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 connection with the gelatine sticks laden Scorpion recovery

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

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

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

Shinde and Gaur are said to be accomplices of Vaze. Shinde is a dismissed policeman, who has been convicted in the case involving the fake encounter of Ramnarayan Gupta alias 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.

at a press conference at Delhi Danish is heard in the

The statements were made

video purportedly saying, "I will sell my property, jewellery, everything I have and will arrange Rs 51 lakh." Though Danish did not

name Saraswati, he referred to him as the 'priest of the Dasna temple in Ghaziabad'.

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

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

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

 $M^{\rm A}$  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 chopper including the Alis and all were brought out of the sleeky flying machine once the rotors came to a standstill.

The pilot and Ali suffered some minor injuries and were rushed to the Lakeshore Hospital for first-aid. All are safe and hearty, according to sources in the hospital. According to eye witnesses who watched the low flying chopper force landing in the marshy stretch, there was heavy wind and rains when the incident happened.

An enquiry has been ordered into the

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

# Navreh celebration in J&K from today

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

ed 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 Shriya 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 religious 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 Sunita Raina Pandit, sung by Lovely Chandra and Vishal Pandita and video edited by Pardeep Pandita.

take care of their workers.

Meanwhile, he appealed the

## Departmental probe against Param Bir Intelligence Unit (CIU) of the

ess than a fortnight after it **∟**constituted a judicial probe under retired High Court Judge Kailash U Chandiwal into allegations of corruption against former State Home Minister Deshmuh, 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

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

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

Among other things, Pandey will look into the charge about Singh's alleged dereliction of duty arising out of his failure to keep the state government about his personal investigations into the alleged malpractices by Deshmukh, whether his charge of corruption made against the former state Home Minister had any substance, why had not only given so much importance to Vaze but also asked him report to him directly to him and whether he assigned Vaze to investigate the explosi8ve laden SUV recovery case.

In a report submitted to the State Home department on April 3, Nagrale also stated that Vaze was posted as the inMumbai police as per the orders of former Police Commissioner Param Bir "API Sachin Vaze never

Crime Branch during his tenure of nine months from 10/06/2020 to 12/03/2020. No officers of the Crime branch review/opinion/direction in the investigation handled by

reported to any officer of the

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

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

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

## TN logs 6,618 fresh cases **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 per-

sons succumbing to the pandemic till 7 pm on Sunday. On Saturday, 5,989 persons tested positive throughout the State while the death toll on the single day stood Chennai has to bear the brunt as the Metropolis reg-

istered 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 admit-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 Kerala, too echoed the concerns of Dr Krishnaswamy. "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 country," said Dr Rajeev.

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

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

Amid clear indications that it might go in for a full-fledged lockdown to break the chain of the rapid infections across Maharashtra, Chief Minister met the members of the Covid 19 Task Force, his Cabinet colleagues and senior bureaucrats to make full-fledged preparations for the proposeď 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 what he called "all inclusive" 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 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 concentrators 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 tonnes of Oxygen was being used 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 the government might impose full-fledged lockdown to arrest the rapid spread of Covids-19 infections.

ister would take a final decision on the imposition of full-fledged lockdown in the state. He said that if the lockdown was announced,

migrant labourers not to leave the "The chief minister would be meeting top officials and on will be a weekly Cabinet meeting

where a decision regarding the lockdown would be taken," Tope

### 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

Of one crore-odd vaccine doses, around 90 lakh people have been given the first dose, while the rest 10 lakh have received the two

Maharashtra has worked out

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 per week. In other words, we 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 state health minister had said.

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



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

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

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

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

Two years after marriage, a

■ woman has accused her husband and his two sisters of 'forcibly converting" her. The woman said, she never

realized that her husband was a Muslim and had never met her in-laws. She had retained her maiden name after 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 vear, 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 She further said, "On April

8, they took my daughter away from me. Then, they converted me forcefully and renamed me 'Alna'.' She alleged her in-laws

drove her out of the house and

dropped her off at Mathura. SHO Abhay Kumar Sharma of the Lodha police station, where the FIR was registered, said, "Ashok Rajput a.k.a Afzal Khan has been booked under the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful

Conversion of Religion

Ordinance and Section 323 of

causing hurt) along with his sis-

IPC (voluntarily

No arrest has been made so The woman's statement will be registered in court under Section 164 of the CrPC on Monday.

the

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

www.dailypioneer.com

face book.com/daily pioneer + @The Daily Pioneer + instagram.com/daily pioneer/

- PAPER WITH PASSION-

# **Shot shortage**

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

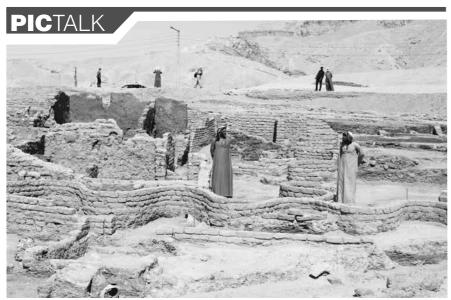
■ ndia seems to be back to square one where fighting the pandemic is concerned, with more than 70 vaccination centres in Mumbai having shut down after running out of the COVID doses. Other parts of the country, too, like Puniab, Raiasthan, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, are facing a shortage of the coveted 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, Egypt, 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 purchits (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 twonation 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 managing 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.

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 Lankan brethren is natural but



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

that makes the Sinhalas suspect Indian intentions from 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. I his 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, however 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 populating 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.)

## TERS 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 cost of our own citizens.

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 a 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**



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 Joe 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 Maoists 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 be 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

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. Many 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: letterstopioneér@gmail.com

COVID is surging and it is our responsibility to push the Government to move away from PR tactics and act in the interest of the people.



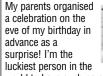


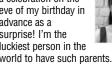
the logical path to full Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action compliance. The

Iran proposes

US, which caused this crisis, should return to full compliance first.

> Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif





Swara Bhasker



The Opposition gets nervous about AB de Villiers. We have depth in batting which we want to utilise. AB is probably the only one in the team who is so

Cricketer

Virat Kohli

versatile.

Lockdown is not an option. However, we will be putting some

restrictions in place to contain the spread of

Delhi CM — Arvind Kejriwal

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

# **FIRST COLUMN**

www.dailypioneer.com

## **BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE**

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



RIYA RAHIMAN

nountries 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

# 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 part 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-

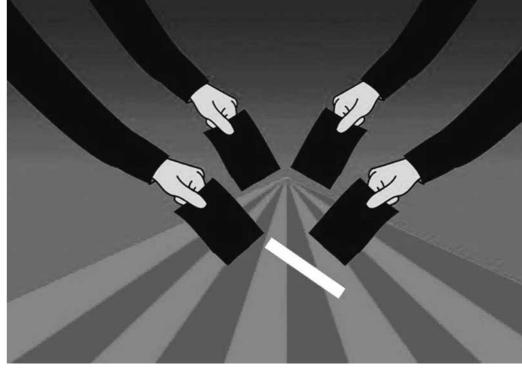
The PPP was formed in 1967. It was initially conceived by the Marxist intellectual JA Rahim as a vehicle for the charismatic politician ZA Bhutto. The 39-year-old Bhutto had been part of the Ayub Khan dictatorship but was ousted from the Cabinet in 1966. Bhutto positioned himself as the man who had "stood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



A reading of the PPP's Foundation Papers makes it clear that, right from the onset, its founders saw the PPP as a "big tent" party modelled on established Social Democratic parties of Europe. Rahim believed that the country's 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" landed 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, Punjab and Sindh.

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

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

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

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

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** 

The writer is a senior iournalist and columnist.

The views expressed

Courtesy: Dawn





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

—PRIME MINISTER

NARENDRA MODI

# Quaking over Iran's phantom nuclear weapons

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

First, the good news. The US and Iran had talks in Vienna on Tree 1 Vienna on Tuesday, and the nuclear deal they and all the other great powers signed in 2015, is coming back.

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



cancelled as of today. The Iranian delegation, led by Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, a veteran of the 2015 talks, would reply that Iran will immediately return to compliance with all the terms of the treaty and invite UN inspectors to verify that all its temporary deviations from treaty obliga-tions 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

has already been some

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

and promising," he added.

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

the June election. So that's probably sorted, to...pursue nuclear disarma-



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

The NPT states that "nuclear-weapons States agree ultra-heavy ICBM called strategy is "no first use", which

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 actually managed to catch the damn

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

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

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

ly make much of a difference. Traditionally the UK's

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 reckless. Then there's France

(mostly harmless, despite some 280 nuclear weapons) and China (320 but still talking about expansion). Plus India (150), Israel (90), North Korea (30-40) and Pakistan (160), all countries that 'unsigned" or never signed the NPT. But at least we're safe from Iran's nuclear weapons, which never existed and still

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

# Myanmar forces kill 82 in single day

t least 82 people were killed Ain one day in a crackdown by Myanmar security forces on pro-democracy protesters, according to reports on Saturday from independent local media and an organisation that keeps track of casualties since the February coup.

Friday's death toll in Bago was the biggest one-day total for a single city since March 14, when just over 100 people were killed in Yangon, the country's biggest city. Bago is about 100 kilometers (60 miles) northeast of Yangon. The Associated Press is unable to independently verify the number of deaths.

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

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

GLOBE TROTTING Q

EX-B'DESH PM KHALEDA TESTS COVID POSITIVE

Dhaka: Former Bangladesh

Prime Minister Khaleda 7ia

tested positive for Covid-19 on

Sunday, a year after she was

released from jail temporarily

to media reports.

amidst the pandemic, according

RESCUERS FIND 4 DEAD FROM VESSEL IN ATLANTIC

**Madrid:** Spanish authorities said

migrants from a boat along with

19 survivors who had taken the

Spain's maritime rescue service

responded to an alarm call by a

fishing boat that had located the

migrants in a flimsy craft unfit

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

nations. Ecuadoreans face a

runoff between a conservative businessman and a protégé of

former leftist President Rafael

Correa, while Peruvians have 18

ontions to nick from in the first

IRAN REPORTS HIGHEST Daily Death Toll of 2021

Tehran: Iran on Sunday reported

its highest single-day death toll

from Covid-19 this year, bringing

the country's total deaths in the

pandemic to nearly 64,500, state

TV reported. The report said 258

new deaths were recorded in 24

hours. Iran's deadliest day of the

pandemic was in mid-Nov, when

Kathmandu: Twenty people have

sustained injuries after a chariot

fell and clashes erupted during a

chariot-pulling festival, started in

Bhaktapur municipality, 16 km

east of Kathmandu, on Saturday

morning. Soon after the festival

over 480 deaths were tallied.

20 HURT AS CHARIOT FALLS IN NEPAL

religious festival in Nepal's

Bhaktapur. 'Bisket jatra', a

has recently strengthened in the neighboring South American

treacherous route from West

Africa to the Canary Islands.

said that its crews had

for the high seas.

oon Sunday that they had

recovered the bodies of four



with the details published on their website.

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

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

At least 701 protesters and

**AP** ■ PALM BEACH

future GOP success.

The Associated Press.

Staking his claim to the Republican Party, former

President Donald Trump is

casting his populist policies and

attack-dog politics as the key to

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

unity, he rarely sticks to script.

His appearance came as

In a closed-door speech

aftermath of the Feb. 1 elected government of bystanders have been killed by security forces since the army's including some bystanders —

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

takeover, according to the

Assistance Association for

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

undreds

Republican

all Americans."

according to the prepared

"Under our leadership, we

velcomed millions upon mil-

lions of new voters into the

Republican coalition. We trans-

formed the Republican Party

into a party that truly fights for

dees were bused to Trump's

club for his remarks.

The death toll of 82 was themselves part of a civil disobedience movement.

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

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

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

# 'Suspicious' blackout strikes Iran's Natanz nuclear site

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

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

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

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

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

Behrouz Kamalvandi told Iranian state television.

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

contamination or problem."

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

# Iran calls blackout 'nuclear terrorism'

Tran on Sunday described a Tran 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 anyone for the incident. Details remained few about what happened 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 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 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 international 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 atomic accord 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 Gantz.

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.

## Jordanian prince makes first Trump: The key to public appearance since arrest Republican success is more Trumpism

a preliminary one

compiled by the

**Assistance Association** 

for Political Prisoners.

which issues daily

counts of casualties and

arrests from the

crackdown in the

coup that ousted the

**Aung San Suu Kyi** 

The security forces were

accused of using heavy

weapons in their attacks,

including rocket-propelled

grenades and mortars, though

such allegations could not be

independently confirmed by

The Associated Press. Photos

posted on social media from

Bago appeared to show frag-

town around the country are

carried out by nonviolent

Most protests in cities and

ments of mortar shells.

were reported killed.

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 umphant future will be to build on the gains our amazing appeared to be an attempted show of unity on a major movement has made over the past four years," Trump told leading Jordanian holiday.

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

Prince Hussein and other dignitaries at the grave of King Talal in Amman, Jordan's cap-



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 corruption and incompetence. Abdullah subsequently said

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

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

AP ■ ABOARD A US MILITARY

Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin on Saturday discussed with his Philippine counterpart China's recent positioning of "militia vessels"

near the Philippines in the South China Sea. Austin spoke by phone with Philippine Secretary of National Defence Delfin Lorenzana while Austin was

flying from Washington to Israel to begin an international trip.

### Republican officials are trying It was the final address of to play down an internal feud the Republican National British protectorate that preover Trump's role in the party, Committee's weekend donor ceded the kingdom. his commitment to GOP fundraising and his plans for summit in Palm Beach. Most of The royal palace released a photo and video with the RNC's invitation-only gathering was held at a luxury Abdullah, Hamzah, Crown While Trump's advisers report he will emphasize party hotel a few miles away; atten-

Prince's death a 'huge void' for Queen: Andrew PTI ■ LONDON

 $B^{
m ritain's}$  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.

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

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

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



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

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

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

## **Religious leaders** recall Philip's spiritual curiosity

AP ■ LONDON

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

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

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

**OVER 2,000 YEARS ON** 

## Chadians vote as Deby seeks to extend 3-decade presidency

**AP** ■ N'DJAMENA

Chadian President Idriss Deby Itno was widely expected to win re-election Sunday, extending his 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 Debv. A constitutional referen-

dum approved several years ago means he can now serve two more terms, potentially stay in power until 2033

"I invite all Chadians to go to the polls to choose the candidate of their choice," the longtime president said after casting his ballot Sunday alongside his wife. "I have seen since yesterday that the boycott order has not been respected so people must go out to perform their civic duties."

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

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

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

# cism from Manila.

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

Y.E. Shaoyong, Associate Prof of Sanskrit in Peking

not be available in India.

## 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.

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

## **Pak scrambles** to speed up vaccination

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 number of cases.

The country on Sunday recorded 5,050 new Covid-19 cases, taking the national infection 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 Saturday decided to extend the existing non-pharmaceutical int-erventions (NPIs) such as markets closure and restrictions on transport till Monday, Dawn newspaper reported.

# $S_{ing}$ 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

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

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

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

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

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

Sanskrit, its associated culture and its development was

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

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

When Buddhism came to China from India, Chinese Buddhist monks started trans-

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, astronomy and mathematics.

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

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 pursue academic career in Buddhist studies, specially its history, he said.

## was declared open a chariot fell and clashes erupted. **UK: Shops,** pubs gear up for easing of lockdown London: Non-essential retail

shops, including shopping malls, pubs and restaurants and hairdressers are among the businesses gearing up to reopen their doors to customers from Monday, when England enters its next stage of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions being eased. Indoor gyms, swimming pools, libraries, zoos and nail salons are also among the

establishments now allowed to

reopen, with pubs and restau-

rants required to strictly follow

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

'E-commerce

cities outpace

IANS MUMBAI

growth in tier-2, 3

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 vol-

ume of e-commerce sales. E-

commerce 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 Q4CY20 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 having zero-balance or Basic 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 "reasonable.'

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 systematic 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 transacbeyond four a month.

"This imposition of service 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

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

features of a BSBDA, the regulatory 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 withdrawal, beyond four a month,

'We assess the dereliction

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) digital 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 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 regulations encouraged other banks to become unreasonable towards charges beyond four debits a month, it said.

# Some industrialists fear another exodus of migrant workers



**PTI** ■ 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.

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

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 industries 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 Tirúpur, 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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

**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 Bajaj 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



 $F^{\text{resh surge in Covid-19}}_{\text{cases, eventual lockdowns is}}$ 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.

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 CY20E. "We estimate global refin-

ery utilisation to gradually rise from 79.1 per cent in CY22E to 80 per cent in CY26E. IEA estimates permanent closure 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

**PTI** ■ MUMBAI

 $R^{
m enowned}$  economist and Nobel laureate Abjijit Vinayak Banerjee has trashed the ideology that calls for lesser or limited government interventions towards uplifting the poor 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 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 socioeconomic impactful measures to non-profits and private sector till about the middle of the first decade of the new millennium when Manmohan Singh-led obs guarantee scheme.

This and many other affirmative actions has lifted early tens of millions out of poverty in five years after the imple-

He said an analysis of a decadal data from Bandhan when it was an NGO, clearly established the impact of its

work on the poor who have 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 ran-

control 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/nongovernment help have seen income increasing by 25 per cent leading to an 18 per cent jump in consumption he said. While calling for more

globalisation and free trade, he 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 across the world.

# **Fuel prices unchanged** for 12th straight day

IANS ■ 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, oetrol was sold for ₹90.56 per

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 litre, in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, respec-

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.



It again reduced the price

Thereafter, fuel prices have

remained unchanged. Earlier, petrol and diesel prices increased 26 times in 2021.

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

SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd. Fax: +912 26 787534 | Numba 400059 | Telephone: +912 26 787530 |

Kerstwhile Small Business Fineredit India Pvt. Ltd.) | Corporate Identity Number: U67190MH2008PTC178270 PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the Public that Auction of pledged Gold Ornaments will be conducted by SBFC Finance.

Pvt. Ltd. on 20 April' 2021 or thereafter at 10 AM at 0 – 7, 1 st Floor, 'above Look Sal on , Lalpat Nagar 2
New Delhi-110024, Faridabad branch D-2, First Floor,N.I.T., Near 1-2 Chowk, Faridabad, Haryana- 121001
and Gurugram branch First Floor, Property No. 342/9, Subhash Nagar, 1 st Floor, New Railway Road, Gurugram
122001, Ghaziabad - 28 RDC Raj Nagar Ghaziabad Near SBI branch, Hapur - First Floor, above P C Jeweller
garh pargana pakka bagh, garh road hapur-245101

The Gold Ornaments to the auctioned Helpon to Long Accounts of Acc

am branch First Floor, Property No. 342/9, Subhash Nagar, 1st Floor, New Railway Road, Gurugarnapatibad - 28 ROR (Rail Nagar Ghastland Near Sib Inardh, Flaurr – First Floor, Jacove P. Cleweller, a pakka bagh agarh road hapur-245101 road and control of the property of the control of the cont

TATA COMMS, BIX EXTEND PARTNERSHIP FOR HIGH-SPEED

manageable data transport infrastructure with the capability to scale up and digital transformation to the Middle East region, it said.

Q1 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 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.

# Amazon India launches mentor programme for startups

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

mazon India on Sunday Announced the launch of its 'Mentor Connect' programme, which is aimed at accelerating the growth of startups and emerging brand owners enrolled under its Amazon 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

The Department of Telecommunications

 $\mathbf{I}$  (DoT) is likely to issue guidelines on

implementation of production-linked

incentive (PLI) schemes for manufacturers in the sector and start inviting appli-

cations for the same in about a week,

Ericsson and Nokia are keen to expand

their operations in India, and global com-

panies like Samsung, Cisco, Ciena and

Foxconn have "shown interest" to set up

manufacturing bases in the country for

telecom and networking products for

"Telecom PLI has already been

domestic and export markets.

Telecom gear makers firms such as

according to government officials.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

"Startups and emerging brands enrolled in the Amazon Launchpad programme can access guidance from these 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 state-

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 emerging brand owners enrolled in the Amazon Launchpad programme, but will also be extended to the winners of the Amazon Smbhav Entrepreneurship challenge in the upcoming Amazon Smbhav summit," the statement 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 emerg-

ing 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-

The second edition of 'Amazon Smbhav' will be hosted from April 15-18, 2021.

"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

# DoT likely to issue guidelines for telecom PLI within week

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 manu-

facturing 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

enabling them to reach global scales and utilise their unused capacity and ramp up production.

The scheme is expected to bring an

## **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 compliant with all details available will be made during the week of 12 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.

## 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 beyond 100 Gbps, said a company statement. With this, Tata Communications and BIX bring the power of high-speed connectivity

S KOREAN MOBILE CARRIERS TIPPED FOR ROBUST

users and their non-telecom businesses, a poll showed on Sunday. The combined operating profits of the country's three major mobile carriers -- SK Telecom Co., KT Corp. and LG Uplus Corp. -- are expected to have reached 966.5 billion won (\$863.3 million) in the 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

For more details, please contact SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd.

(Erstwhile Small Business Fincredit India Pvt. Ltd.

Contact Number(s): Lajpat Nagar 1800-102-8012 / 011- 40305228 / 207, Faridabad: 01294314725/4104450 and Gurgaon Branch 0124-4276037,

Ghaziabad branch - 8826084221, Hapur branch - 9555688622

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

KARVY || FINANCE Retail is now SBFC

# times the committed investment

investment of over Rs 3,000 crore and generate tax revenue of about Rs 17,000 crore. https://www.dailypioneer.com/vivacity/

# A GLIMMER OF HOPE

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

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

Women's security should be more than just a priority. Going back to a gut-wrenching incident back in 2017, where a 25-year-old woman at the Pune Infosys campus was raped and strangled to death in her office by a security guard — demonstrates the horrendous threat that women face daily. In this case, the culprit was caught but what about the others that get away with their crimes? Should we not prevent such dreadful incidences from repeating over and over again?

Bengaluru City has announced that it will be setting up 16,000 CCTV cameras for women's safety but workplaces also need to follow suit. They need to step up security measures for women in the workplace so that they can follow their dreams without the constant fear looming

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 ne 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 informa-

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 démonstrated to us the need for high-tech surveillance. With the latest technology, modern surveillance systems are equipped with features such as facial recognition. It can be linked to government and police records to identify known criminals and suspicious individuals. When installed at various junctures around cities, it could identify and inform authorities of a wanted individual or threat well in advance without stirring up mass

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

(The writer is the regional direc-

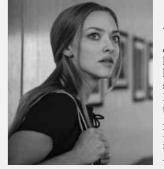


THE DISCIPLE

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 Módak, 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



Actor Gauhar Khan launches The Park Holidays International Mobile App in Delhi.

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

Besides the overwhelming burden of COVID-19 cases in India, the indirect effects of the pandemic are cause for concern, especially in the case of already vulnerable communities. Women and children have been disproportionately affectincrease 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 per cent and the number of institutional deliveries were down by 79 per cent. The demand for family planning services satisfied by modern methods fell by 67 per

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

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

# A cause for concern

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



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

"At Population Foundation of India, we have engaged with policymakers, donors, NGOs and communities to consistently raise the discourse on the need for informed decision making on women's health. We promote effective and 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. Gender inequality, gender-based vio-

lence and lack of agency continue to

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

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

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

## No competition between actors: Pratik Gandhi

He became a pan-India sensation lalmost 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 competition among contempo

raries.

"There can't be competition

"The theen products, between actors. Had it been products, there would have been competition. If I was a biscuit or a soap, there would be competition," Pratik said.

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

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

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

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



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

Before starring in the OTT show, Pratik was also seen in the Hindi film Lovevatri, but he admits Hansal Mehta's web series was a game chang-

er 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

## TRENDBL

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

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

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

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.



fairtalk

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

## dailytalk RASHMIKA MANDANNA



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

### SCARY TO HAVE A BABY IN PANDEMIC: JONES

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

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

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







# EDUCATION: A POWERFUL WEAPON

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

here are several powerful women, who have shat-tered 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 difference in the lives of girls in and around her village by fighting for their rights to education. Her journey, however, has been a tough one. She had to put up a fight against her parents first and then, against the entire Rajput community of her village to reach where she is today.

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

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

India Champion.

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 fitness expert has these sugges-

Between emails, meetings and

tions for those busy hours that will not only nourish your body and mind, but

calls, try to take a stroll even for a few

minutes to reset your body and brain.

A little bit of movement during those

long sitting hours will go a long way to

ensure that your body and joints do not

vals. Take a few long breaths engaging

your abdominals to ensure that your

body is getting enough oxygen. Learn

some Pranayama techniques to recre-

ate yourself quickly so that you can

maintain a constant energy level

throughout the long span of desk sit-

Remember to do a few neck and shoulder stretches while on your desk

to avoid neck pain or back pain later.

It will also help in keeping your pos-

ture upright. Add useful stretches

from your yoga class to these intervals.

ic chair and table in order to maintain

a good posture while sitting for long

hours. Some of the important factors

Choose the appropriate ergonom-

Check your breath during inter-

become too stiff by sitting.

also increase overall productivity:



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

the villagers. In 2013, she led the girls and women from the panchayat to address the issue of corruption. Led by Radha, the group submitted a memorandum not only to the District Collector but also to the Chief Minister requesting solution the challenge of negligence and corruption at the panchayat level," informed Poonam Rajawat, a member of Kishori Manch — an adolescent group run by a local non-profit organisation in the region.

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

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 liter-

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

"Overwhelmed by Radha's zeal to work for the better future of her community, she was requested by the girls, women and other responsible people of the village to contest the panchayat elections," said Not just for girls, she soon started working towards the adolescent girls is concerned, Radha's. She obliged their

request and contested the election but couldn't win. She, however, continued to support the

ever, continued to support the winner, Devalal Gurjar, who is also her colleague, to serve the community with sincerity.

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

Her life, however, is not only occupied with social responsibilities but is equally dedicated to her family. "I am a cancer patient. Radha, as responsible as she is, has taken the entire charge into her hands. Along with pursuing further 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 treatment. I was completely against her education but now I realise my mistake and understood the importance of girls' education," said Radha's father.

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

—Charkha Features

# 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 India Champion

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

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

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



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

Ensure that you are getting some sun during the day. It will not only enrich your Vitamin D levels but also give a big boost to your immune system. It is very common among the big cities in India that people don't get enough Vitamin D as they are not exposed to the sunlight often. Lack of exposure to the sunlight leads to Vitamin D deficiency that is often linked to other health issues

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

## 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

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

would come to the con-clusion that man's happiness ultimately depends upon his behaviour or his reaction to the external stimuli and his ways of thinking which, in turn, depends upon his inner urges, his tendencies and the training he had. So, in order to have any other kind of improvement, man has to bring about improvement in



his outlook, habits, mannerism and ways. For this, he has to pick up and learn certain things and unlearn others. If man's process of learning (or unlearning wrong things) stops and his effort to put into practice what he has learned already ceases or his capacity and will to make efforts are exhausted, his improvement and progress also come to a halt.

Not many are aware of the fact that the path to

progress is paved with some obstacles which are mostly of man's own making. One of these is man's pride and arrogance about his own knowledge. It is easy to teach him who has no pride in his own intelligence. But he who regards himself as perfectly wise would say to others, "There is nothing that I do not know" It is difficult to effer correction to such a man 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 learning good things of life and unlearn ing wrong things.

Another major hurdle in man's path to progress is his attachment to worldly objects, his lust for sensual pleasures, his sense of deep involvement, and his attachment to his body. Little does man realise that, at this 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 has no substance. Is the bark of a sugar cane worth anything when the juice has been squeezed out of it? So has the world lost all its sap and truth because it has become debased. This body of ours is assailed by several different diseases and is made of debased matter. So one who aspires for selfimprovement 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 consciousness. The first step for this is to withdraw one's attachment from 'religions' of the body, which rob one's life of its essence, and to devote one's mind and body and possessions towards the welfare of the world. This will bring in man qualities such as service, dedication, sacrifice, meekness, fellow-feeling, tolerance, and hundred-and-one other noble traits of high character. It will quicken his efforts for self-

Invest in your dreams. Grind now. Shine later. **—Unknown** 



### TREATING SLEEP APNEA MAY REDUCE DEMENTIA

 $O^{ ext{lder}}_{ ext{prescribed}}$  does not received positive airway pressure therapy prescribed for obstructive sleep apnea may be less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease and other kinds of dementia, new research suggests.

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

breathing during sleep. OSA is associated with a variety of other

neurological and cardiovascular conditions, and many older adults

are at high risk for OSA.

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

### CHILDHOOD DIET LINKED TO LESS ANXIETY LATER

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

study determined that early-life exercise generally reduced anxious behaviors in adults. It also led to an

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

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

### **OBESITY LINKED TO HEAVY PERIODS**

adies, here is one more reason to reduce your body weight. 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 on women and mice.

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

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

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

### 'JUMPING' GENES CAN PREVENT BLOOD CANCER **NEW DRUG CAN STOP TUMOURS FROM GROWING**

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

Transposons are DNA sequences that can move, or

jump, from one location in the genome to another when activated. These "jumping" genes are a source of genetic

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

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



 $U_{\text{effective}}^{\text{S}}$  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 tumour growth and progression. "NLRP3 is a member of a larger family that is

involved in sensing danger signals," said Carlo Marchetti, from the varsity's School of Medicine. It is a receptor that surveils the intercellula

compartment of a cell. looking for danger molecules

or pathogens "When NLRP3 recognises these signals, it

leads to the

activation of



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

**CAPTAIN'S CALL** 

# Rana, Tripathi power KKR to 187



**Big-hitters galore** 

Matches

Rajasthan Royals

Punjab Kings

Sharjah

RR, Punjab Kings aim for

BEN STOKES

**CHRIS GAYLE** 

**PTI** MUMBAI

here on Monday.

be keen to get some

runs under his belt

and so will be the likes of Englishman Jos

Buttler and newlyappointed skipper

Samson, who is a

mine-field of tal-

could opt to open

with the highly-

rated Yashasvi

Samson, who would

Jaiswal

Buttler.

middle-order.

ting-friendly.

The Royals

and While

be itching to prove a point, and

Stokes would then form strong

If the four fire on all

cylinders, they can pummel any attack into sub-

mission and Punjab

would be no exception

on the Wankhede track,

which is usually bat-

Royals also have an

several other options at

their disposal, including

all-rounders Shivam Dube,

Shreyas Gopal, Rahul Tewatia,

Riyan Parag and Liam

to go in with two leg-spinners.

Livingstone. Gopal, Tewatia and Parag, all

bowl leg-spin, so it would be inter-

Tewatia and Dube have the abil-

esting to see whether the Royals opt

winning start to IPL campaign

**KEY PLAYERS** 

English all-rounder will have an

extra responsibility with the ball

this time in absence of Archer.

He will be the X-factor in Kings

line-up. Gayle's power hitting

can take PBKS to big total

nother battle of big-hitters is on the cards

Awhen KL Rahul's Punjab Kings take on the

Sanju Samson-led Rajasthan Royals, two line-

ups dotted with expansive stroke-makers and in

pursuit of a winning start to their IPL campaigns

Raiasthan will be banking heavily

on their swashbuckling all-rounder Ben Stokes. Stokes will

VENUE: WANKHEDE STADIUM, MUMBAI

**LAST YEAR'S MATCHES** 

Rajasthan Royals defeated

Punjab Kings by 4 wickets at

Rajasthan Royals beat Punjab

Kings by 7 wicketa at Abu

1922

Punjab Kings Skipper Lokesh

Rahul who scored 1922 runs at

of as many matches ,needs 78

(2477 runs) to score over 2000

runs to become only second

batsman after Shaun Marsh

runs for Punjab Kings in IPL.

an average of 54.91 in 42 innings



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

Run	is Balls	Opposit 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 a 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 Bhuvneshwar and then followed it up with a cheeky four in the third-man region.

He completed his fifty with boundary 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) off successive balls in the 18th

1. Shikhar Dhawan (DC) 2. Nitish Rana (KKR)

3. Prithvi Shaw (DC)

85

80

72

**WKTS** 



## **PLAYER**

1. Harshal Patel (RCB) 2. Avesh Khan (DC)

# 3. Chris Woakes (DC)

### 1. Nitish Rana (KKR) 4 2. Suresh Raina (CSK) 4 3. Chris Lynn (MI)

**MOST SIXES** 

MOTION PICTURE



Chennai Super Kings' Suresh Raina spends time in kitchen @chennailPL



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

## **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 from South Africa's ODI series against Pakistan.

# Dhawan impressed by Pant's calmness on captaincy debut

Delhi Capitals experienced opener Shikhar Dhawan was mighty impressed with Rishabh 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

The 23-year-old wicketkeeperbatsman måde 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-



Picture credits: IPLT20.com

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

sure, he is only going to get better. 'The best thing about Rishabh Pant is that he stays calm. His pres-

started and with experience, I am

ence of mind is quite there, which 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: "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.

# 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 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 make-up and not to have him is unfortunately the reality of it. We ing combination in 2020 and would continue to 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



Picture credits: @rajasthanroyals

The weak link for Royals, Chetan Sakariya and the

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

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.

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 opportunity. However, Sangakkara believes that both the captain and Rahul Tewatia, who recently was in

national team regulars if they can trust their abilities a bit "Pressure is always there. Whether it is Sanju or Rahul, reality is they will tell you that expectations and pressures will

against England, could be

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 playing regular international cricket, and both Sanju and Rahul are very capable of not just being regulars but great, outstanding

performers at the international

always be there. Everyone has

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 Sanju 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

# terday (Delhi Capitals vs India squad for the T20 series

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

With star pacer Jofra Archer missing due to 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 get the nod. On the other hand, Punjab boast of

some hard-hitters like Rahul (670 runs in 2020 season), Mayank Agarwal (424 runs) and Chris Gavle. Rahul and Agarwal formed a lethal open-

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.

over the years, has been their Indian pace attack where the most experienced name Jaydev Unadkat hasn't exactly set the

Apart from Unadkat, they have his left-arm back-up immensely talented Kartik Inexperience can probably

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 yesgood for batting. So, you have to

For Sangakkara, it is imper-