

OPINION 6
WHAT MODI REALLY
MEANS TO PEOPLE

WORLD 8
BIDEN PRESSED ON EMISSIONS GOAL
AS CLIMATE SUMMIT NEARS

SPORT 12
SPURS SACK
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18 + TO GET COVID JABS FROM MAY 1

States can buy
Covid doses
from makers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major decision, the Union Government on Monday announced that everyone above the age of 18 will be eligible to get a vaccine against Covid-19 from May 1, allowing States, private hospitals and industrial establishments to procure the doses directly from manufacturers.

In other words, the new liberalised vaccine policy will not be the part of the Centre's nationwide vaccination programme that was launched from January 26 wherein healthcare workers, frontline workers and then those above 45 years of age are being given the jab. The decision to

scale up the vaccination where-in State Governments, along with private sector will play a major role in providing the jabs, was taken in a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi who said the Government has been working hard for over a year to ensure that maximum numbers of Indians are able to get the vaccine in the shortest possible time. "India is vaccinating people at world record pace and we will continue this with even greater momentum," he said.

Under the third phase of the vaccination drive commencing next month, the vaccine manufacturers would supply 50 per cent of their monthly Central Drugs Laboratory (CDL) released doses to the Central Government and would be free to supply the remaining 50 per cent doses to State Governments and in the open market. Manufacturers would

have to make an advance declaration of the price for 50 per cent supply that would be available to the State Governments and in open market before May 1, 2021, an official statement said.

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES:	1,52,71,432 (+2,13,546)
DEATHS:	1,80,082 (+1,289)
RECOVERED:	1,30,66,927 (+1,17,941)
ACTIVE:	20,18,108
MAHARASHTRA:	38,98,262
KERALA:	12,53,069
KARNATAKA:	11,76,850
TAMIL NADU:	10,02,392
DELHI:	8,53,460 (+25,462)

Ex-PM Singh tests +ve, admitted to AIIMS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, 88, tested positive for Covid-19 and was admitted to All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) trauma centre in Delhi with a mild fever on Monday

afternoon. Trauma centre is a dedicated Covid facility, sources said, adding Singh's condition is stable. They said Singh had a mild fever in the morning and later tested positive for Covid-19. The doctors are monitoring his condition. Singh had taken both doses of Covid-19 vaccine.

Britain adds India to Covid-19 travel 'red list'

London: Britain on Monday added India to its Covid-19 travel "red list", which effectively bans all travel from the country and makes a 10-day hotel quarantine for returnees.

Delhi locks down for 6 days

Will ramp up beds, oxygen during this period, says CM; migrants jostle to leave city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Hours after Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday announced a week-long lockdown in Delhi, starting from 10 pm on Monday till 5 am next Monday (April 26) in the wake of a sharp rise in coronavirus cases in the city, a large number of migrants arrived at Anand Vihar Railway Terminal to leave for their hometowns.

As Delhi reported the highest 240 Covid-19 deaths and 23,686 new cases in 24 hours on Monday with posi-

tivity rate of 26.12 pc, Kejriwal said the health system "has not collapsed but is under great stress." "If strict measures are not taken now, the health system in Delhi can collapse."

The Delhi Government would arrange for a large number of beds and utilise this lockdown to arrange for oxygen and medicines in this period of six days of lockdown," he said.

Also, the CM requested the labourers not to panic and stay in Delhi. He said in this duration, all essential services concerning food, medicine, etc, will continue, a total of 50 peo-

ple would be allowed to attend weddings for which separate passes will be issued.

UP to move SC against HC lockdown direction

Lucknow: Despite a clear directive from the Allahabad High Court to impose lockdown in five cities, the UP Government clarified that in view to protect the livelihood of the poor, the Government will not go for complete lockdown. The State Government is likely to move the Supreme Court on Tuesday.



A large number of migrants arrive at Anand Vihar Railway Terminal after Delhi Government announced lockdown for 6 days, in New Delhi on Monday PTI

Boris Johnson cancels India visit due to rise in cases

New Delhi/London: In view of the alarming Covid-19 situation in India, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has cancelled his visit next week. He was scheduled to arrive on April 25. He will now hold a "virtual" dialogue with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the coming days. This is the second time the British Prime Minister's visit was cancelled. He was invited as the Chief Guest for this year's Republic Day parade. However, he postponed his visit due to the outbreak of coronavirus in the UK then.

PNS/PTI
Detailed report on P4

4 more Covid deaths

Also highest-ever spike of 4,445 +ve

BHUBANESWAR: Four more persons died Covid-19 in the State on Monday, with which total toll rose to 1,948. The deceased were a 53-year-old man of Jharsuguda district, a 40-year-old man of Keonjhar, a 43-year-old man and a 50-year-old woman of Sundargarh.

Meanwhile, positive cases in State registered a big jump of 4,445 persons on day in 30 districts and State pool. With this, total tally surged to 3,72,703. This was highest-single day spike in State ever since outbreak of pandemic in March

2020. Odisha had last registered highest cases around seven months ago on September 25, 2020 when 4,356 people tested positive. Out of new cases, a total of 2,574 cases were reported from quarantine while 1,871 were local contact cases.

Sundargarh registered days maximum 722 cases followed by Khordha 587, Nuapada 437, Kalahandi 273, Cuttack 251, Sambalpur 241, Jharsuguda 231, Puri 219, Bargarh 178, Balangir 168, Nabarangpur 127, Baleswar 123, Mayurbhanj 100, Angul 87, Keonjhar 75, Ganjam 62, Jajpur 58, Rayagada 53 and Nayagarh 50. However, 1503 patients recovered on the day.

Weekend shutdown in State's all urban areas

Anganwadis to remain closed
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In view of rapid spread of coronavirus, State Government on Monday announced weekend (Saturday and Sunday) shutdown in all urban areas beginning on April 24. The Government also revised its guidelines, under which Jattras, opera and open air theatres are banned. The restriction would take effect from April 21 and remain till May 15. Special relief Commissioner Pradeep Jena also said all Anganwadi Centres would be closed. Marriage and funeral organisers would have to

mandatorily submit list of participants to local authorities for necessary permission 24 hours before events. The present cap of 50 attendees at weddings would continue. However, all essential services including hospitals, medicine stores would continue functioning.

"District offices, municipality offices, police stations, fire services centres, all other offices of State & Centre providing emergency services would remain open. Petrol pumps, telecom, water supply, electric supply, grocery shops, milk booths and newspaper stalls will also remain open," said Jena.

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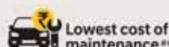
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INNOVATION-007/21

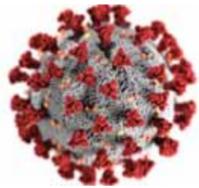
Covid treatment Adequate beds, ventilators available in State

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Even as Covid-19 cases are witnessing a huge surge in Odisha, the State Government on Monday assured that the healthcare facilities are in full preparedness to tackle any eventuality.

A total of 1,576 patients are currently undergoing treatment at various hospitals as the State is witnessing a surge in the number of daily positive cases for the past several days.

As per official sources, while 82 patients are getting treatment in various Government hospitals, 753 are admitted to different private



hospitals. As many as 9,008 beds are available for treatment of Covid patients at various hospitals across the State including 4,640 beds in private hospitals and 4,368 beds in Government hospitals.

The State has a total of 2,018 ICU beds; and currently, 424 patients are availing the

facilities at various public and private hospitals. As far as occupancy in the Government hospital is concerned, 104 patients are being treated in ICUs. The State-run hospitals have 524 ICU beds. Besides, the private hospitals have 1,494 beds and 320 patients are currently admitted in ICUs.

Meanwhile, a total of 782 ventilators are available in the State with the Government hospitals having 179 and the private hospitals 603.

Currently, a total of 41 patients, including 18 in the Government hospitals and 59 in the private hospitals, are on ventilator support.

Pipili by-poll BJD not to hold rallies, meetings

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In view of the raging pandemic, BJD president Naveen Patnaik on Monday said the party would not hold any rallies or campaign meetings in the run-up to the Pipili Assembly by-election.

"Every life is precious and I always consider people of Odisha as my family members. In this extremely serious Covid-19 situation amidst surge in cases in the country, the BJD has decided not to hold any public rallies or campaign meetings in Pipili by-poll, Patnaik said taking to twitter. "We contest elections to serve



people. If the campaign has potential to endanger lives, I would earnestly appeal to political parties and the Election Commission to reconsider both the duration and method of campaigning," Patnaik said.

interview of the week I've always remained a bureaucrat, haven't joined politics



After 37 years of an eventful career as a civil servant, Bijay Kumar Patnaik had his superannuation in 2013 as Chief Secretary of Odisha. A 1976-batch IAS officer of Odisha Cadre, he worked in many key positions of the Government. He was Collector of Sundargarh district from 1986 to 1990.

A large-hearted gentleman gifted with suave manners, always maintaining a low profile, soft-spoken, Patnaik was endeared to the masses of Sundargarh including tribals. Thereafter, he worked as Secretary in several departments before being appointed as Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister from 2004 to 2010.

After having climbed the hierarchical ladder, he was elevated to the post of Chief Secretary, which he held from 2010 to 2013. During 2013-14, he became the Chairman, State Staff Selection Commission. He joined the Anil Agarwal Foundation in April 2015 as President of the Vedanta University Project.

He played a pivotal role in catapulting an overdraft State of the 2000 era to an invigorating state of economy with 8% growth of GDP and even with a surplus budget by the end of his tenure.

His no-nonsense style of functioning has earned him the jesting sobriquet of a 'Super CS' among the bureaucratic circles. In an interview to The Pioneer, Patnaik spoke to Sugyan Choudhury on many relevant issues concerning the State.

Could you please tell about the most memorable experiences in your long administrative career?

I remember my most memorable days as Collector, Sundargarh. Times were much simpler than they are today. So much of love and affection I got from the people of Sundargarh that it inspired me to do my best for the district. What I did was part of my duty and what I got from them was not part of their duty. Wherever I have worked, I got the full cooperation of my bosses.

We remember you were instrumental in spearheading an overdraft Government of 2000 to a surplus State towards the end of your tenure. Are we not going to face a similar situation owing to Covid; and in that case what would be your advice to the Government?

Yes, by the year 2000, the financial condition of the State was precarious. The Government treasury used to open only once in a month and that was even to distribute pension to the retired persons.

That was really, really difficult times. But thanks to the effort of Naveen Patnaik as the CM, many unpleasant measures were undertaken; unnecessary expenditures were not allowed. Besides, expenditure compression, fortunes also favoured us as the entire country went through an economic boom by 2006 and that helped us greatly to generate our revenue which consequently resulted in a surplus State for us.

Regarding the other question, I must say that Covid is a huge challenge to both the State and the Central Governments. The State Governments are in more tight situations unlike the Centre relating to the fund management. At this point of time, my advice to our State Government would be that they most exercise



caution in expenditure. It should be made only to generate revenue and for growth of our economy. Expenditure can be made on infrastructure development or in such other things which will fetch revenue and Government should be harsh in expenditures till we tide over the pandemic.

What's your considered opinion regarding online classes?

The pandemic has been most cruel to the poor children of this country who have no access to mobile connectivity. Of course, India has been the largest number of telephones in the world, but the distribution has not been uniform and the poor children have no access to this gadget. I also personally believe that the online system of education is no substitute for the physical classroom teaching.

How far are the Centre's farm laws beneficial to the farmers?

Farm laws are not anti-farmer. There are certain provisions that are highly beneficial to the farmers as claimed by experts. The fact that farmers shall bring all their stuffs to a mandi or a particular yard has not worked well all over the country except Punjab and Haryana, where road connectivity is good and farmers have enough stuffs.

But farmers can sell their stuffs with the Minimum Support Price, which is a forward-looking measure. There seems to be exaggerated apprehension in the minds of farmers that probably procurement shall stop if they are not coming to the mandi; it is untrue. The State and the Central Governments shall carry on procurement with the mandi system or without it. The exaggerated fear that the rights of farmers are taken away if they are not coming to the mandi is a misnomer.

What's your opinion for

toning up of Odisha's agrarian economy?

You see, this is a very big question for too small a space. But then, you should remember that agriculture is the biggest employer and the GDP generated from agriculture is as much that of the other sectors like industry and manufacturing, etc.

I firmly believe that Odisha should not copy the model of Punjab and Haryana and Western countries for a robust agrarian economy like having big farms, larger inputs like pesticides, fertilizer, etc. Odisha farmers with small holdings should concentrate on organic farming.

That will fetch large dividends for them. We have a long tradition of using manures, composts; and bringing technology to improve the nutrient of the manure contains would tone up farmers' fortunes in Odisha.

We can earn name not only at home but also abroad as growers of organic farm products. Besides we should have our desi chickens, eggs, our own fruits and vegetables. The Government should ensure ideal connectivity to the farmers so that whatever they produce can find their way to the nearby markets. Secondly, the Government should facilitate good storage facilities for value addition to farm produce which can, of course, be managed by farmers through their cooperatives.

How do you view Odisha's border disputes with Andhra, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal?

The entire State Government including the local administration should provide good road connectivity, ideal markets, educational and health facilities so that the people should not have the desire to cross the fence to the other side.

The political grapevine was agog that after Pyaribabu, you would be filling the void. Of course, you are coming to the aid and advice of the CM as learnt from confirmed sources; but then, why are you not batting at the front?

(Laughter). Pyaribabu was in active politics, had taken a position in BJD and was a RS member, but I have always remained a bureaucrat; and even after my retirement, I have not joined any political bandwagon. That is the difference between Pyaribabu and me.

With your repository wisdom and long innings in administration, Rajya Sabha would undoubtedly be an ideal place for you to put properly the problems of Odisha before the Centre. Are you going to act in such a direction and when?

You see, whenever a RS seat falls vacant, the aspirants are many. Some are academicians; some are from the celluloid worlds, some are from administrative cadre like me. Pressure is built over the decision makers in such a way that it becomes too difficult on their part to decide to one's satisfaction.

Shops to be sealed if Covid norms flouted in BBSR

Markets, Haats to be decentralised

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Even though Covid-19 cases continued to soar in the capital city, the guidelines to prevent the virus spread like masking and physical distancing are blatantly flouted in the overcrowded markets and Haats.

In a bid to stringently enforce the norms, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Monday decided that commercial establishments and other shops would be sealed if social distancing norms are flouted. The use of masks

would also be mandatory and violations would attract closure of the concerned institution. Covid-appropriate behaviour would be strictly enforced at Dumduma, Patia, Damana, Unit-4, Unit-1, Unit-2 and other markets across the city.

All the Zonal Deputy Commissioners have been asked to ensure strict compliance of the Covid norms and other guidelines issued by the State Government.

The BMC Zonal Deputy Commissioners would identify suitable places in consultation with the respective market associations and local ACP or IIC for conducting the markets, Haats at decentralised places for convenience of the people as well as for their safety.

Jagannath land issue: Routray issues ultimatum

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Jatni Congress MLA Suresh Kumar Routray on Monday issued an ultimatum to the State Government to restore the lands of people of his constituency settled in the name of Lord Jagannath by May 19; otherwise, they would gherao the Lokaseba Bhavan.

Routray told a Press conference here that people of 13 villages under Jatni block and municipality area have decided to resort to agitation if the Government does not return their private lands.

Routray mentioned that around 1.72 lakh families are not able to purchase and sell their lands and avail any ben-



efits of both the State and Central Governments since last nine years because of the land issues.

Earlier, these lands were recorded as "sthitiban" in patta in the names of villagers since their ancestral periods. During the last settlement, the

Government suddenly changed the ownerships and wrongly corrected the record of rights in the name of Lord Jagannath. For this reason, thousands of acres of land have been transferred to the Lord's name without consent of the people of the localities, said Routray.

Black marketing of Covid drugs 22 flying squads formed; 7 for twin city

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Amidst the second wave of the pandemic, lifesaving drugs to treat Covid-19 patients are reportedly in short supply and being sold at excessive prices in a thriving black market in some parts of the country. In a bid to prevent such a situation in Odisha, the State Government on Monday formed flying squads to check hoarding and black-market-

ing of drugs and medical supplies for treatment of Covid.

Total 22 flying squads have been formed, of which seven teams would be deployed in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack and 15 would prevent hoarding and black-marketing of the medicines in rest of the State, said Crime Branch ADG Yashwant Jethwa on Monday. Notably, the Government has constituted a State-level committee headed

by Jethwa to prevent and curb such activities. The district authorities have been directed to monitor the stocks of essential medical supplies and take corrective action as deemed fit.

The committee would supervise the district-wise positions of availability of essential medical supplies and ensure that the officers conducting the raids, search and seizure get full cooperation from various agencies, including police.

Edu institutions shut in State

MARRIAGE, FUNERAL GATHERINGS LIMITED

INTER-STATE BUS SERVICES SUSPENDED

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Government on Monday imposed several new restrictions in view of the second wave of Covid-19. All educational institutions and

hostels were closed until further orders. However, online classes would continue wherever feasible. Marriages and funeral rites-related gatherings would be allowed with a ceiling of 50 and 20 persons, respectively. No marriage procession shall be allowed. All inter-State bus services were suspended while buses plying within the State shall run with the seating capacity only.

Fresh notification issued for Pipili poll

Speculations on about Congress candidate

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Election Commission of India on Monday issued a fresh notification for the by-election to the Pipili Assembly constituency, which had been countermanded after the demise of Congress candidate Ajit Mangaraj.

As per the notification, poll will be held on May 13 between 7 am and 6 pm. April 26 is last date for filing of nominations while nominations will be scrutinised on April 27. The last date for withdrawal of candidature is April 29. The counting of votes will occur on May 16 and entire process will be completed before May 18. Meanwhile, speculations continued as to who would be new Congress candidate.

468 new Covid cases in BBSR

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Covid-19 positive cases soared to 468 in Bhubaneswar on Monday, with which the city's total tally increased to 36,147. Of the new cases, 386 were local contacts and 82 quarantine cases.

Out of the local contacts, 27 cases were reported from Nayapalli, 18 from Old Town, 17 from Sundarpada, 14 from Pokhaript, 14 from Khandagiri, 13 each from Shaalashree Vihar,

Chandrasekharpur and Rasulgah, 11 from Laxmisagar, 10 each from Unit-3 and BJB Nagar and eight from Unit-9. Currently, the active cases in the city stood at 2827. Till now, 33,004 have recovered and 250 persons have succumbed to the disease.

Treatment delay for liver patients during Covid-19 can be fatal

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Even as the World Liver Day was observed on April 19, experts from the CARE Hospitals led by gastroenterologist Dr Debasis Misra said that patients suffering from liver diseases should not delay treatment and that the disruption in treatment due to the restrictions imposed by Covid-19 paired with fear of contracting infection can prove to be fatal for liver patients.

Reports from all over the globe state that patients with preexisting diseases are at a greater risk of developing serious Covid-19 infection.

However, data also suggest that hospitals around the world, including India, have noted

approximately a 50% decrease in the patients visiting hospitals since the outbreak of the pandemic. Explaining the situation, Dr Misra said, "According to a report by NCBI, patients with advanced liver disease and those living with liver transplants represent vulnerable patient cohorts with an increased risk of infection and/or a severe course of Covid-19.

In addition, the current pandemic requires unusual allocation of healthcare resources which may negatively impact the care of patients with chronic liver disease that continue to require medical attention."

"People with suppressed immune systems due to

immunosuppressive medication, people over the age of 60, people with other co-morbidities such as diabetes or as a component of other illnesses are at elevated risk of contracting the infection along with having a more severe disease. Some liver disease patients have several of the above mentioned concurrent conditions like diabetes, thus increasing susceptibility," he said.

Avoiding treatment or delaying it further may increase the risk of being infected by Covid-19 or will deteriorate the liver condition further. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that people suffering from liver diseases should not delay treatment any further.

50 more linked to Jagannath Temple test positive

Kumbh Mela returnees yet to pose threat in Puri

PNS ■ PURI

As many as 50 persons associated with the Jagannath Temple in Puri have tested positive for Covid-19, informed the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) on Monday. Of the new infected, 22 are servants and their family members, 19 are workers of the shoe-stand and nine are staffs of the temple adminis-

tration, said SJTA (Development) Administrator Ajay Kumar Jena. Though the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar is thought to be one of the factors in the significant spike in Covid cases across the country, the returnees from the mega religious event are yet to pose a threat in the pilgrim town Puri.

So far, 17 people have returned to Puri from the Kumbh Mela, of whom two have tested negative for Covid-19. The Covid test reports of 13 returnees are awaited and two persons are yet to undergo the test, Jena said. Meanwhile, a

new standard operating procedure (SOP) for devotees visiting the Jagannath Temple was enforced from Monday. As per the revised SOP, Covid negative report is mandatory for the devotees from outside Odisha.

The devotees need to show Covid-19 negative certificate (RT PCR) of testing done within 96 hours prior to their visit or produce a report on the second dose of Covid vaccination.

Besides, the temple will remain closed on weekends for sanitisation as part of precautionary measures to prevent transmission of the virus.

Caterers struggling for survival during pandemic

Urge Govt to increase crowd size to 300 at marriages

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Covid-19 pandemic has virtually ruined the catering industry in the State and the caterers are facing severe financial hardships due to their clients cancelling marriages, birthday parties and funeral gatherings.

Like their colleagues in the restaurant industry, they have been left at the mercy of municipal authorities and public health agencies, whose new

or revised guidelines randomly for crowd sizes, have affected the livelihood of more than 10 lakh persons, who are directly or indirectly employed in the sector.

In the second phase of the pandemic, the State Government has issued guidelines that maximum 50 people are allowed in a marriage ceremony. The All Odisha Caterers and Tent House association at a Press meet here on Monday said that from March



2020 onwards, the industry has been devastated and they are not in a position to sustain their families and staffs.

They appealed the Government to increase the crowd size to 300 from 50 at the marriage ceremonies which are usually of four to five hours

duration. The association said if 300 people come to a marriage ceremony, hardly 50 to 60 people would be present in a marriage mandaps or hall every hour.

The Government has issued guidelines that auditors and cinema halls can

operate at 50 per cent capacity. They demanded that the Government to apply the same norms for marriage halls and mandaps.

Association president Binay Bhusan Patnaik said they had adhered to Covid-19 protocols issued by the Government strictly in the past and now they would continue doing so.

He requested the concerned authorities to consider their demands sympathetically. Among others, Anup Kumar Bagai, Prabodh Kumar Das, Dwarinath Panda, Purna Chandra Das and Bibhuti Bhusan Swain were present.

As Covid cases rise Scant health infra stares at face in J'guda

RAJ KUMAR SHARMA ■ JHARSUGUDA

As the second wave of Corona rocks Jharsuguda district, many raise questions on the administration's Covid preparedness in the district. Despite many big industrial houses like Vedanta, OPGC and MCL extending helping hands, the district is still far behind others when it comes to health infrastructure. On Sunday, the number of Corona patients breached the three-digit mark. With the rising trend of Corona patients day after day, the district cannot cope with

patients' requirements due to the shortage of ICUs and beds with ventilators in hospitals. The members of civil society blamed the administration's negligence and lack of political will for the situation. A year ago, the old hospital at Mangal bazaar was renovated to function as a Covid hospital. The hospital was said to have contained about 100 beds for isolation ward, ten beds for ICU, and seven beds for backup. The administration had assured to enhance ICU beds in future. The administration had also said that ten ventilators, sufficient oxygen cylinders,

and compressors were also available in the hospital. The management of the hospital, set up by the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) and Vedanta's assistance, was given to Hitech Medical College. A memorandum of understanding was signed to provide required doctors and support staff by Hitech Medical College to the Jharsuguda Covid hospital. While more than Rs 10 crore was sanctioned from the DMF funds, more than Rs 2 crore was given to the hospital by Vedanta Company's CSR fund to procure the required machinery. As the Covid cases

are spiking, the expenditure towards the hospital management and treatment of patients has increased substantially. Demands are being made from different civil society groups to provide 200 hospital beds and 50 beds with ventilators in the hospital. Otherwise, many patients in critical conditions will lose their lives. On the other hand, the quality of treatment available in the hospital is also not up to the mark. Former Municipality Chairman Tapas Ray Choudhury said that the hospital's infrastructure could only be improved with the support of big industrial houses in

Jharsuguda. The district administration should immediately take steps to provide 50 ICU beds with ventilator support in the hospital. Senior BJD leaders like Manoranjan Mohapatra admitted that the present scenario of the hospital is very precarious. Patients in critical conditions cannot be treated in the hospital due to a shortage of ICU beds with ventilators. Likewise, the Jharsuguda District Bar Association president Trinath Gual proposed to increase ICU beds and ventilators, given the seriousness of the Covid infections in the second wave.

No Ganjam staff can leave HQS

PNS ■ BRAHMAMAPUR

Amidst the resurge in coronavirus cases, Ganjam district Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange on Stoday directed employees of Government offices not to leave their headquarters. He stated that if any employee wants to leave the headquarters for an urgent work, he or she must take prior permission. In case, anyone violates the directive, action would be taken against him or her, he cautioned. In last 24 hours, Ganjam district reported 66 more Covid cases. So far, a total of 22,540 positive cases have been detected in the district.

INBRIEF

SUNITA CHAIRPERSON OF FICCI FLO BBSR CHAPTER

Bhubaneswar: Sunita Mohanty, a fellow member of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI), has been appointed as the new chairperson of FICCI FLO Bhubaneswar Chapter for the year 2021-2022. FICCI FLO is the women's wing of Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) with the headquarters at Delhi. Sunita took the baton from outgoing chairperson Dharitri Patnaik.



LOVEBIRDS END LIFE IN NABARANGPUR

Nabarangpur: A young couple committed suicide by hanging from a tree at Murtuma village under Umarkote block Nabarangpur district on Sunday night. The girl was identified as Susmita Majhi (20). The boy's identity was yet to be ascertained. As per locals, duo was in love for past few months which was being objected by their families. The girl's marriage was fixed with another person and scheduled on April 29.

BIJU DEATH ANNIV HELD AT PARADIP

Paradip: The death anniversary of legendary leader Biju Patnaik, who was also creator of Paradip Port, was celebrated by Paradip BJD unit on Saturday. BJD Paradip president Basant Kumar Bishwal, BJD State secretary Santosh Kumar Patnaik and many other party leaders paid tributes to Bijuababu. A Tila Tarpan ritual was held near sea and a prayer at a temple. In afternoon, a memorial meeting was held at Biju Patnaik Memorial Trust Assembly Hall in Nuabazaar. Prominent people attended meeting and recalled Biju Patnaik's sacrifices, courage and contribution to country's freedom fight.



B'pur police hold 10-day anti-Covid campaign

PEOPLE ASKED TO FOLLOW PROTOCOLS
FINES COLLECTED FROM VIOLATORS

PNS ■ BRAHMAMAPUR

In order to keep a tab on the habitual violators of law and effectively contain the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic in the city and its adjoining areas, the police, as a part of its preventive measures, conducted a special drive from April 7 to 16 to sensitise the public about the

disastrous impact of the deadly virus and urged them to follow several measures to remain safe. In the process, the police, among other measures, mainly stressed on wearing face masks and social distancing and made the two core measures mandatory for every citizen in the greater interest of the public. During its awareness campaign, the police conducted surprise visits, kept strict vigil on those who flouted the Covid-19 protocols. During these 10 days special drive, the

Brahmapur police have reportedly collected fine worth Rs 10.25 lakh from the violators. Most of the people in the city though currently wear mask, but majority of them are not strictly following social distancing posing a threat to their lives. Before night curfew, the markets in the city witnessed an unprecedented rush and few shop owners do not follow the five standard principles. The BeMC enforcement team also conducted surprise visits and kept a strict vigil on the violators of Covid protocols.

Columnist Day held: Scribes honoured in B'pur

PNS ■ BRAHMAMAPUR

The fortnight tabloid 'Lekhanira Agnishikha' celebrated the Columnist Day and felicitated renowned columnists of city in a State-level celebration here in both offline and online modes. Chief speaker Deputy Director of CHSE, Odisha Dr Kulamani Ojha described day as a unique and special one. Columns have special spaces in a newspaper. A columnist always composes story with news and views with opinions to create an understanding in society and among people as well. So they should be honored, Dr Ojha said. As another guest, Dr Harish Chandra Behera, Principal of JMC, SMIT, highlighted role of columnists and how they make media impartial. Columnists Dr PC Mohanty (Haritas), Bighneswar Sahu, RM Pattnaik, Dr Laxmi Narayan Das and Dr Kulamani Ojha were honoured for their contributions to media. Journalist



Saroj Mohanty conducted the meeting, which was coordinated by Santosh Behera, Roshani Sahu Jitu Gouda and Prasant Kar.

Two killed, three injured in Ganjam blast

PNS ■ BRAHMAMAPUR

At least two people were killed and three others sustained serious injuries in an explosion in a house at Kukudakhandi village under the Berhampur Sadar police station in Ganjam district on Monday.

The injured were admitted to the MKCG Medical College Hospital here. However, the cause of the blast was yet to be ascertained. According to reports, the explosion took place in the morning. Its intensity was so powerful that while one person died on the spot, four others sustained serious injuries. They were immediately shifted to the hospital, where doctors declared one of them as brought dead. According to locals, the accident might have occurred due to stone blasting in a crusher unit in the vicinity of the house or due to an explosion of an LPG cylinder in the house. Fellow villagers demanded that the family of the injured and dead be compensated by the district administration. Later, the Sadar police reached the spot and started an investigation.

In Jagatsinghpur Man commits suicide after killing aunt Had 'one-sided love'

PNS ■ JAGATSINGHPUR

A man, who allegedly had an A one-sided love affair with his aunt (wife of father's younger brother) committed suicide after killing the woman at Ekasudha village under the Jagatsinghpur Sadar police limits on Monday. According to reports, Debiprasad Jena attacked his aunt Lipsa Jena with an axe in the morning while she was dumping garbage outside house. The woman sustained critical injuries and died on the spot. Debiprasad later hanged himself from a tree on the outskirts of the village. Being informed, police reached the spot, recovered the bodies and initiated an investigation. Parents of Debiprasad were detained by police for questioning. However, the attack by Debiprasad was fallout of a land dispute between him and Lipsa, some sources said.

Foundation after late Cong leader Sriballav launched

To focus on good governance, educating needy children

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Sriballav and Sunanda Panigrahi Foundation was founded after former Congress leader, former Minister and former trade unionist late Sriballav Panigrahi and his wife Sunanda Panigrahi recently here. Trustees of the foundation are State Congress president Niranjana Patnaik, Priyadarshini Panigrahi (prominent NRI,

management professional and elder son of Sriballav) and Rajarshi Panigrahi (senior finance professional and younger son) besides former MLA Dr Raseswari Panigrahi (also Sriballav's younger sister). While the former three were present on the occasion, Dr Raseswari joined the launch from Sambalpur through videoconferencing. The foundation will promote values and ideals that were close to the



hearts of Sriballavbabu and Sunanda Devi. Among other things, it will aim to promote probity in public life, good

governance and try to empower the marginalized and deprived sections of the society particularly through education, said the tustees. "I was associated with Sriballavbabu since 1960 as a classmate and close friend. He had tremendous interest in social service. Known for his honesty and integrity, he was a leading leader of our times. I am happy at the launch of the foundation by his sons, family members and friends which will keep preserve their memories and help the spread of the values that they stood for all their lives. Sunanda devi was a highly qualified educationist who devoted her life to education, and I do miss both of them very dearly," said PCC president Patnaik. Priyadarshini Panigrahi said, "Some of the objectives of the foundation, like providing training to elected representatives on their responsibilities, providing good governance etc. are unique and shall make an impact in improving the lives of the people. "The foundation also seeks to recognize and reward unsung heroes who are making an impact on the society, he added.

Stray dogs menace: B'pur locals submit memo

Want tax collection be stopped till dogs not shifted

PNS ■ BRAHMAMAPUR

The residents of Gandhinagar are reeling under stray dog menace as at least half a dozen street dogs have made their life miserable. The people are not only facing a threat of dog bite and accidents on road, but the canines

are creating the surrounding filthy by defecating in the open space. They are also creating constant noise pollution by barking. Meanwhile, a group of residents of Gandhinagar, mostly senior citizens, have submitted a memorandum to the BeMC Commissioner, Ganjam District Collector-cum-Chief Administrator of BeMC and 5-T Secretary on Tuesday. They demanded dog catching squad in Gandhinagar 3rd Lane/and 3rd lane extension; sweeping and removal of wastes from the road twice



every day; no feeding of stray dogs in public places or roads and stop collecting holding tax from the residents of Gandhinagar till the stray dogs are lifted from the streets.

Covid rule violation ₹2.98 cr collected in 10 days

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

On last day of the special Covid enforcement drive on Saturday, police acted against 9,032 violators of mask usage and social distancing rules across the State and collected fines totaling Rs 27.41 lakh. Cumulatively, in ten days, action was taken against 1,01,057 violators of Covid protocols in State and a total fine amounting to about Rs 2.98 crore was collected, said a police release.

Healthcare service for elderly in city

TriBeCa Care launches drive

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A sizable number of Bhubaneswar's elderly population suffers from different health challenges and need special care. For them, quality healthcare remains unreachable due to high costs. Realising this, TriBeCa Care, a social organisation, has launched its services in the city. "We want to

support the elderly people to lead an independent life. We have partnered with top clinicians to provide high-quality patient care at their homes," said TriBeCa Care Co-CEO Tamojit Dutta, adding, "Today's increasingly globalised workforce and nuclear family structures often deprive them of support from their adult children." All that the elderly people have to do to avail the healthcare services is that they have to enroll their names with the organisation with a minimum registration fee. Then,

TriBeCa Care members would regularly monitor their health conditions through trained experts. "Senior citizens, who formed only 8% of India's population in 2015, will be 19% by 2050 and 34% by 2100," said a TriBeCa Care official. "The TriBeCa Care team has helped over 25,000 families in the last six years; and we hope to bring the same levels of care to the elderly and their families in Bhubaneswar," said TriBeCa Care Co-CEO Prateep Sen.

Sexual abuse case Kendrapada Mahila Samiti ex-house father held

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

The Kendrapada police arrested a sexagenarian, Kunja Behari Das for allegedly raping a 32-year-old mentally-weak and destitute woman of Patalipanka-based Lutheran Mahila Samiti. Das, who was the former house father of the Lutheran Mahila Samiti, allegedly raped woman and made her pregnant. The victim delivered a male child in April 2016. But

the NGO president later adopted the child unlawfully by showing that the baby was rescued from outside. Das later left NGO and was staying in Mahakalapada. Women and Child Desk Inspector of district SP office Sasmita Behera on Saturday arrested him following the victim woman brought the matter to the notice of the police. During interrogation whereas victim and her mother too took name of Das accusing him of sexual exploitation,

their statement was recorded under Section 164 of CrPC, informed police sources. Notably, victim's brother earlier alleged before Chairperson of Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSPCR). Sandhyabati Pradhan that his sister was harassed sexually at Lutheran Mahila Samiti. Das was produced before a local court where he was remanded in jail custody, informed police sources.

In Rayagada Covid-infected rly employee ends life

PNS ■ RAYAGADA

A Covid-infected railways employee reportedly committed suicide at Railway Colony in Rayagada town on Sunday. It was presumed that he took the extreme step after losing his mental balance. The Government Railway Police (GRP) recovered the body as per the Covid protocol while further investigation was underway. According to

reports, the man complained of fever a week ago and was diagnosed with malaria after a blood test. As his condition didn't improve, he underwent Covid-19 test at the Rayagada District Headquarters Hospital and tested positive for the virus on April 17. As advised by doctors, he was under home isolation at his Government quarters. However, his body was found hanging in the house on Sunday morning.

Ganjam NGOs to chip in Covid fight Hold meet

PNS ■ BRAHMAMAPUR

Representatives of over 22 NGOs of Ganjam district discussed the future strategy to fight against the second wave of Covid-19. The meeting was held with support from Dr Mihir Kumar Bal of ECOS. The NGOs discussed on the measures to fight against Covid19 last year and showed their commitment to help the Odisha Government and Ganjam district administration in their fight against Corona this year. They laid



stress on creating community awareness and inducing Covid19 appropriate behavior among the people, including mask wearing, social distancing, avoiding gathering and following personal hygiene. Among civil society leaders Lokanatha Mishra, Mangaraj Panda, K Anand, Brundaban Panda, Rabindra Patra and Mochiram Nahak were present.

Cong States' doubt on jobs stoked 2nd wave: Vardhan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Monday hit back at former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for his "offer of constructive cooperation" on Government's Covid-19 management, saying "history shall be kinder" to the senior Congress leader if his valuable advice was followed by his own party leaders. In fact, Vardhan alleged that the second wave of the pandemic was fuelled by Congress-ruled States as they were busy raising doubts about vaccines rather than vaccinating people.



Vardhan.

Vardhan said while Singh understands the importance of vaccination as an important method of fighting the Covid-19 battle, "irresponsible" public pronouncements made by some Congress leaders have resulted in a below national average vaccination coverage of senior citizens and even front-line workers in some of the Congress-ruled States. Vardhan also tweeted his letter to Singh.

Singh on Sunday wrote to Prime Minister Modi suggesting five measures to battle the Covid-19 crisis, including ramping up vaccination and boosting supply of medicines.

Vardhan said, "People in responsible positions in your party as well as in the State Governments formed by your party do not seem to share your view."

He expressed shock that senior members of the Congress are yet to utter a single word of gratitude towards scientists and vaccine manufacturers for innovating under trying circumstances and empowering the world with

members of "your party" too must follow your advice.

With due respect, and "irrespective of the negativity that your party spreads", Vardhan said he takes Singh's suggestions at face value and with the belief that they are made keeping national interest in mind.

"However, it does seem that those who drafted your letter or advised you, have done a great disservice to your standing by misleading you regarding material that is already in public domain," he said.

Highlighting the point in the letter on allowing import of vaccines that have already been approved by credible foreign authorities, Vardhan said a decision on this had already been taken a week ahead of "your suggestion", on April 11, 2021.

The same is the case with your suggestion regarding providing funds and other concessions to augment vaccine manufacturing. This decision had also been taken many days before receipt of your letter and multiple vaccine manufacturing entities have been funded by the government to immediately enhance production.

"Anyways, despite such factual inaccuracies, we understand your deep concern for the country and also assure you that we share the same," the minister said.

"We request your continued cooperation in the battle against the pandemic and welcome more such illuminating suggestions. However, as a senior leader, we expect that you shall offer the same advice and wisdom to your own party leaders as well," Vardhan stated.

Doctors upset over VIPs' getting special Covid treatment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Junior doctors of various colleges under the banner of the Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA), an association of medical professionals, are an anguished lot during the Covid-19 pandemic. Reason? They are unhappy at the preferential treatment given to the VIPs while members of the medical fraternity and the common man suffer in want of timely medical facilities.

The FAIMA also alleged that several politicians have been calling their members to their residence for check-ups and testing.

In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, they minced no words as they noted that there are separate VIP counters at several Centre-run Government hospitals that offer Covid testing only to politicians and ministers.

"But doctors have no separate counter for testing," as per the letter which is signed by FAIMA President Dr Rakesh Bagdi, Vice-President Dr Amarnath Yadav and General Secretary Dr Subbrankar Datta.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) too have taken up the FAIMA's cause, seeking Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention.

In its separate letter addressed to PM Modi, the IMA said: "The working doctors are anguished at the undue stress due to this VIP culture and preferential treatment for politicians, bureaucrats, party work-

No proof of younger people at greater corona risk: ICMR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The earlier claims of younger people getting affected more in the second wave is proving to be false if one goes by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) data from hospitalised Covid-19 patients during the first and the second spell of the pandemic.

Sharing the data, the ICMR on Monday said, "There was no evidence of the younger population being at greater risk in the ongoing wave and that the proportion of death in the hospitalised patients also hasn't changed between the two waves. Rather the studies reflect that there is no change in the age profile, older people are still more prone to this virus. One more thing that is very prominent is the shortness

of breath has increased in the covid positive patients due to which the demand for oxygen cylinders has also increased."

However, what has changed is more hospitalised patients (47.5 pc) reporting shortness of breath in the second wave than in the first (41.7 pc), significantly raising the requirement of supplemental oxygen in the country in the ongoing wave, said the study.

Also more asymptomatic people have been admitted to hospitals in the second wave, of which the ICMR has done interim analysis and larger studies are ongoing.

More than 70 per cent of the hospitalised Covid patients in both waves have been over 40 years old, data from 9,485 patients (6,642 between September and

November 2020 and 1,405 between March and April 2021) shows.

Only a marginally higher number of youth (0 to 18 years) have been hospitalised this time — 5.8 per cent as against 4.2 per cent last year despite the opening up of economic activities, Dr Bhargava said citing the study data.

"The proportion of 30- to 40-year-olds has remained static at 21 per cent between the two waves. The conclusion is that there is no overarching extra risk to the youth of becoming COVID positive this time. There has been no shift in the age prevalence of COVID in India. The older people continue to be more vulnerable," Member Health NITI Aayog Dr VK

Paul said today. AIIMS-New Delhi Director Randeep Guleria cautioned people against irrational use of Remdesivir noting that no study in the world had shown it reduced mortality.

"Remdesivir is only to be used in moderately ill COVID patients who are hospitalised, and have very low oxygen levels and lung damage. It is of no use in mild patients.

In fact, the UK has only given paracetamol, hydration and multi-vitamins to mild patients and that's the way management," he said, noting that Remdesivir was no magic bullet and this anti-viral injection was not meant to be taken at home.

On plasma therapy, the AIIMS Director said large studies in India had shown it was not useful in COVID patients.

On Tocilizumab, he said it was meant for severely ill COVID patients in whom cytokine storms had set in and no other treatment—steroids, anti-coagulants, etc — was working.

ers etc and decreasing morale of many frontline workers."

In the letter signed by IMA national president Dr J.A. Jayalal and honorary secretary-general Dr Jayesh M. Lele, the IMA has urged the PM to "direct officials and streamline this at the earliest and prevent burn out of front line workers"

The FAIMA's letter highlights that how doctors are at the

forefront of the Covid-19 pandemic and yet have no facilities available when they test positive for the virus.

"...we wish to inform you that doctors being at the forefront of the epidemic are risking their own lives but what we receive in return is standing in long queues for Covid testing, no bed or ICU availability when tested positive for our own

self," it read.

The association added that "priority is being given to all the so called politicians and party workers who have actually held rallies and increased the spread of virus"

"Majority of the politicians call doctors at their residence which has no legal order from the medical Superintendent but is carried out informally," the let-

ter also pointed out.

For this, it added, they call on doctors working in Government hospitals, which in turn further reduces and limits the medical manpower available.

Therefore, the association strongly opposed the prevalence of this VIP culture and urged the Prime Minister to "look into the matter seriously".

British PM cancels India visit on corona surge

PNS /PTI ■ NEW DELHI/LONDON

In view of the alarming Covid-19 situation in India, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has cancelled his visit next week. He was scheduled to arrive on April 25. He will now hold a 'virtual' dialogue with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the coming days.



Minister Boris Johnson will not be able to travel to India next week," Downing Street said in a joint statement on behalf of the British and Indian governments.

This is the second time that the British Prime Minister's visit was cancelled. He was invited as the Chief Guest for this year's Republic Day parade. However, he postponed his visit due to the outbreak of corona in the UK then.

Giving details of the latest postponement, the ministry of external affairs said here on Monday Johnson will not visit India next week in view of the coronavirus pandemic. The ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said the decision was taken as per mutual agreement by both sides.

"In view of the prevailing Covid situation, it has been decided by mutual agreement that the prime minister of the United Kingdom will not visit India next week," he said.

Bagchi said the two sides will be holding a virtual meeting in the coming days to launch plans for a transformed India-UK relationship.

"In the light of the current coronavirus situation, Prime

As part of the UK's post-Brexit Global Britain engagement as a non-member of the European Union (EU), all eyes have been on a proposed Enhanced Trade Partnership (ETP) with India which will pave the way for a full-fledged Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in the future. The ETP was expected to take firm shape during Johnson's visit this month but it remains to be seen how that progresses given the cancellation.

Modi is invited to the G7 Summit in Cornwall in June, with India among the guest countries. That is now likely to be their next face-to-face meeting, if Modi is able to travel for the summit.

Termining the cancellation as frustrating, Johnson said it was "only sensible" to call off the visit. "Narendra Modi and I have basically come to the conclusion that, very sadly, I won't be able to go ahead with the trip," Johnson told reporters, during a visit to Gloucestershire soon after the Downing Street announcement.

"I do think it's only sensible to postpone, given what's happened in India, the shape of the pandemic there. Countries around the world including our own have been through this - I think everybody's got a massive amount of sympathy with India, what they're going through," he said.

CBI, NIA should go after hoarders of Covid medicines: Cong



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday said the BJP-led Centre should make pro agencies NIA, CBI and the ED go after black-marketeers and hoarders of medicines used for coronavirus treatment in place of "using them to target political opponents".

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra too accused former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis of hoarding Remdesivir, saying a BJP leader holding on to the drug at a time when people are scrambling to arrange it is a "crime against humanity".

Taking to Twitter, Priyanka tagged a video of top Maharashtra BJP leaders, including Fadnavis, arguing with police officials after the Mumbai Police questioned a pharma company director following information that thousands of vials of the

Remdesivir drug, critical in COVID-19 treatment, were to be flown out of the country.

"At a time when people from every corner of the country are requesting for being provided with Remdesivir, and many are struggling to procure a bottle of Remdesivir to save their lives, a BJP leader, who was in responsible position, hoarding Remdesivir is a crime against humanity," Priyanka said.

The Mumbai Police on Sunday said they had information that the Remdesivir stock was going to be flown abroad as air cargo, despite a ban on the export of the drug. Fadnavis claimed the director was picked up because the BJP managed to get permissions in place for the supply of the drug to Maharashtra.

"Strict action should be taken against people hoarding and black marketing vaccines, injections and medicines. The government should bring in

Jaishankar rejects criticism over export of vaccines

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday strongly rejected criticism over India's export of coronavirus vaccines, saying there were global commitments for a variety of reasons, including for procurement of raw materials for production of the doses.

At an online interaction, the external affairs minister said India prioritised vaccination of its people while describing those who questioned why the country was exporting at all as "non-serious" people.

Several political leaders, including Congress's Rahul Gandhi, slammed the government for exporting over 60 million doses of coronavirus vaccines when the country was reeling under increasing demands of the doses.

The government has almost stopped export of the vaccines following a sudden spike in coronavirus infections.

In his address at the national leadership conclave of All India Management Association (AIMA), Jaishankar said as the situation

became tough in India, the government apprised various countries about it and most of them understood.

"Today as the foreign minister, I am pushing other countries, particularly some big countries, saying please keep the raw materials flowing for vaccines to be made in India.

"Why am I doing that because the fact is that there are global supply chains; very few things are made exclusively in one geography, very few societies can say we are autonomous of our reliance on others," he added.

the NIA, CBI and the

Directorate against black-marketeers and hoarders of injections and vaccines. When you can use them to target your political opponents, why not utilise them sensibly against black-marketeers and hoarders who are today creating all these problems in the country?" former Maharashtra CM Ashok Chavan said at AICC Press conference.

The Mumbai police on Saturday night questioned

Rajesh Dokania, director of Bruck Pharma, a Daman-based pharmaceutical manufacturing company that manufactures Remdesivir vials, following information that thousands of vials of the Remdesivir drug critical in coronavirus treatment were to be flown out of the country. Fadnavis had rushed to the police station.

"When a person caught by Gujarat police for black marketing of remdesivir is questioned by Mumbai police, Fadnavis gheraos the police

station along with some BJP leaders. Do you want to help the public or the black-marketeers," Chavan asked.

Chavan also demanded that the Centre spells out a plan on vaccine supplies and be transparent about it.

About former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh writing to his successor Narendra Modi suggesting five measures to battle the COVID-19 crisis, Chavan said the suggestions from the opposition should be taken in a positive way.

DRDO develops Oxygen Delivery System to tackle virus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In its effort to shore up the ongoing effort to face the challenge of Covid pandemic, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed SpO2 (Blood Oxygen Saturation) supplemental Oxygen Delivery System.

Though this is basically for troops deployed at high altitude where oxygen is scarce, the system can also prove to be a boon during the current covid situation, DRDO officials said here on Monday.

Giving details, they said the system developed by Defence Bio-Engineering & Electro Medical Laboratory (DEBEL) delivers supplement-

tal oxygen based on the SpO2 levels and prevents the person from sinking in to a state of Hypoxia, which is fatal in most cases, if sets in.

Hypoxia is a state in which the amount of oxygen reaching the tissues is inadequate to fulfill all the energy requirements of the body. This is exactly the situation that gets replicated in a COVID patient due to the virus infection and has been a leading factor in the current crisis.

The electronic hardware of the system is designed for functioning at extreme altitudes featuring low barometric pressures, low temperatures and humidity. The software safety checks incorporated into the system are critical in

ensuring the functional reliability of the system in field conditions.

The system reads SpO2 levels of the subject from a wrist-worn pulse oximeter module through wireless interface and controls a proportional solenoid valve to regulate the oxygen supply to the subject. The oxygen is delivered from a lightweight portable oxygen cylinder through nasal nares. The system is available in various sizes from one litre and one kg weight with 150 litres of oxygen supply to 10 litres & 10 kg weight with 1,500 litres of oxygen supply which can sustain for 750 minutes with a continuous flow of two liters per min (lpm).

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker and LChairman, All India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC), Om Birla, chaired a meeting of presiding officers of the Legislative Bodies in India and other Leaders on the subject "Prevailing Covid-19 Situation - Role and Responsibility of Public Representatives".

Apart from the Presiding Officers of State Legislatures, Ministers of Parliamentary Affairs, Chief Whips and Leaders of Opposition in State Legislatures also joined the Virtual Meeting.

Birla observed that after more than a year of the crisis of COVID-19, the pandemic has resurfaced with new challenges. He noted that the new strain of corona infection is spreading more rapidly than last year which is a matter of grave concern.

The Lok Sabha Speaker further said that governments are making all necessary efforts at

their level. But in this hour of crisis, the legislature also has to fulfill its duty more promptly. He exhorted the people's representatives to fulfill their duties in the spirit of solidarity and collectivity and contribute to the society and the country in getting relief from the pandemic.

Birla urged the Presiding Officers to sensitize the public, through the people's representatives of their respective States, to follow the Corona Protocol. He asked the public representatives to create awareness that personal caution is the most potent weapon in the fight against corona infection and any negligence can prove to be extremely dangerous.

Birla also gave suggested that people's representatives may engage with social organizations to check the spread of the pandemic and all representative institutions including the Gram Panchayats and local bodies in urban areas may be motivated to make extensive efforts to reduce the corona infection.

UPSC defers interviews for Civil Services examinations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has deferred interviews for civil services examination 2020 due to a surge in coronavirus cases, according to an official statement issued on Monday. The civil services examination is conducted annually by the UPSC in three stages -- preliminary, main and interview -- to select officers of Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) among others.

The dates for interviews and recruitment test, when candidates and advisers are required to travel from all parts of the country, will be reviewed from time to time, it said. "Revised schedules of the same will be notified on the website of the UPSC," the statement issued by the Commission said.

In its special meeting, the UPSC considered rapidly changing circumstances,



health considerations, lockdown restrictions including social distancing norms and aggravating situation enforced due to the pandemic on Monday. "The Commission has decided that it will not be possible to conduct examinations and interviews for the present," it said.

The Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EO/AO) Recruitment Test 2020 scheduled to be held on May 9, therefore, stands deferred, the statement said. "The personality tests (interviews) of

the Indian Economic Service/Indian Statistical Service Examination, 2020 (scheduled from 20th-23rd April, 2021); the civil services examination, 2020 (scheduled from 26th April-18th June, 2021) and the recruitment tests are also deferred till further notice," it said.

"As and when dates are decided for the deferred tests/interviews, it will be ensured that candidates are given a notice of at least 15 days," the UPSC said.

EC didn't club polls on BJP wish: Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Responsible for increasing numbers of corona cases in Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said that she had requested the Election Commission with folded hands to club the last three phases of elections into one but the poll body would not listen because the BJP Government did not want that to happen.

Banerjee who was addressing a rally at Kaliaganj in North Bengal said, "I have requested the Election Commission with folded hands to wrap up remaining three phases of elections on a single day or at least combine the last two phases in one so that at least one day of contamination

is saved but they would not listen to it because the BJP does not want it."

Attacking the saffron outfit and all its national leaders for "camping in Bengal without having any consideration for the surging corona cases," the Chief Minister said "they are bringing lakhs of outsiders for campaigning without checking their health status and infecting the people of Bengal... the voters will definitely take note of this insensitivity."

The Chief Minister had earlier said that she would not conduct big rallies in Kolkata and limit her public meetings to small 30-minute shows. The BJP leadership however said that the Chief Minister's decision to shrink her public programmes in Kolkata only after

the poor attendance in her road-show on Sunday.

"There were only a few hundred people in Mamata didi's road show... she does not want more embarrassment and so she is hiding behind the excuse of corona... had she been so sensitive then why had she been organizing big rallies in earlier phases?" BJP leader JP Majumdar said.

Speaking to the media at Malda, Banerjee also announced early summer vacations for the government schools in Bengal.

"As a precautionary measure we are declaring summer vacations early and further decision would be taken only after the month of June... I would request the private schools to follow suit too," she

said adding her Government was taking all the precautionary measures to contain a second surge of the pandemic.

On the Class X and XII examinations, the West Bengal Chief Minister said "we will soon take a decision about secondary and higher secondary examinations" which are scheduled to take place in May and June.

On the question of lockdown she asked people not to get panicked. "There is no reason to be panicked... we are not thinking of lockdown immediately because it does not solve the situation... instead of force we want to deal the situation tenderly... let the people cooperate and let us cooperate with them."

Reacting to the Chief

Minister's allegations Home Minister Amit Shah said that "the BJP is the not the authority to decide on the modalities of elections... it is for the Commission to decide... it had called an all-party meeting after which they cut down campaigning by a day in every phase... then they gave us some instructions and we are following it... now rest is with the Commission."

Wondering why the Chief Minister would not attend the meetings called by the Centre to discuss the pandemic issue his ministerial colleague Ravi Shankar Prasad said "election is a constitutional obligation undertaken by the Election Commission... whatever directions they have given we are following."

EC shifts 4 IPS officers in Bengal

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Election Commission on Monday shifted four senior police officers ahead of the sixth phase of elections in Bengal.

These officers include Nagendranath Tripathi the IPS officer who handled the Nandigram elections. He has been posted as Superintendent of Police Birbhum a districted ill-reputed for violence and political murders. He replaces Miraj Khalid. Birbhum SDPO Abhishek Roy has also been replaced with Nagaraj Devarakonda, OPS.

Incidentally TMC strongman and Birbhum district president Anubrata Mandal recently went on record saying that he did not rule out violence in the elections.

The other officers shifted

Meanwhile, even as political violence continued in Bengal the BJP candidate from Old Malda in North Bengal was shot at by unidentified miscreants on Sunday evening

are Asansol --- also a politically volatile place --- SP Suresh Jain who has been replaced with Mitesh Jain. Similarly Burdwan East SP Bhaskar Mukherjee has been replaced with Ajeet Kumar Singh IPS.

Meanwhile, even as political violence continued in Bengal the BJP candidate from Old Malda in North Bengal was shot at by unidentified miscreants on Sunday evening.

Saffron candidate Gopal Chandra Saha was shot at from close range and the bullet lodged inside his neck. The condition of the BJP leader was stated to be stable after the doctors at Malda Medical College

conducted a two-and-half-hours' surgery to extract the bullet. The BJP pointed fingers at the Trinamool Congress and staged road blockades even on Monday.

Elsewhere a BJP worker Akil Pramanik was found mysteriously hanging near his home at Kalyanpur village in Kalna sub-division of East Burdwan district. The party men alleged a TMC hand in his death alleging the local Trinamool leaders had been threatening him for thwarting attempted rigging by the TMC men during the fifth phase of polling on April 17.

TMC and BJP workers clashed elsewhere at Duttabad near Bidhanagar in north-eastern fringes of Kolkata too. Reports of violence also came in from parts of Nadia and South 24 Parganas.

HC orders one-week lockdown in 5 UP cities

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Upset with the Uttar Pradesh Government's efforts to curb the spread of corona infection, the Allahabad High Court has directed the administration to impose a one-week lockdown from tonight in five big cities of the state with high caseloads.

The five cities where lockdown would be imposed are: Lucknow, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Kanpur and Gorakhpur. The court ordered that the lockdown will commence from Monday night (tonight) and will end on April 27 morning.

A division bench comprising Justice Siddhartha Varma and Ajit Kumar passed the order on a PIL filed by different people and organisations here on Monday.

The bench came down heavily on the UP government as well on the State Election Commission for holding the panchayat polls. "Economy, economy and economy is the only tune that the government is all the time harping upon, but bread and butter if you take to a person who needs oxygen and medication, it will be of no use to him. You may have grocery shops full of eatables and industries which produce bikes and cars but all this won't be of any use if your medical shops run out of stock of life-saving drugs like Remdesivir in

the current surge of the pandemic. It is a shame that while the Government knew of the magnitude of the second wave it never planned things in advance," Judges said in their order.

The bench further said if hospitals are not able to provide beds and oxygen we are sure that cities like Prayagraj, Lucknow, Varanasi, Kanpur and Gorakhpur cannot provide medical aid to even 10 percent of the population at any given point of time. If hospitals' staff and medicos go ill for the relentless services to cure people in the pandemic,

people would start losing their lives and all pomp and show of development would be of no avail.

The court said in such a situation, the night curfew in the name of Corona Curfew and the weekend Curfew are nothing else but mere eyewash.

"It was probably an effort to show that our last order had been taken care of. We are, however, not satisfied at all. We see people are largely not following our order for putting masks on their faces nor, the police could ensure 100 percent masking to date," the order said.

Yogi Govt against complete lockdown

Lucknow: Despite a clear directive from the Allahabad High Court to impose lockdown in five cities, the State Government clarified that in view to protect the livelihood of the poor, the Government will not go for complete lockdown. In a statement a government spokesman said here on Monday that the number of cases of corona has gone up and strictness is mandatory to control corona. "Government has taken many steps and in future it will take stricter decisions," he said. The spokesman further said: "It's mandatory to save lives but it is equally important to save livelihood of the poor and therefore lockdown will not be imposed in

cities. In many sectors people are willfully closing down their institutions." There are indications that the state government will move the Supreme Court tomorrow. The High Court, earlier, came down heavily on the government and ordered lockdown in five cities with high case load till April 26. Earlier during the review meeting the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the Government is not in favor of complete lockdown like Delhi had announced on Monday. He said instead of complete lockdown, officials should be instructed to increase the availability of oxygen and strict action with those violating the Covid protocol.

Night curfew in Kerala as fresh cases over 13K

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Even as Kerala Government declared night curfew from Tuesday onwards on account of the grave situation in the State due to Covid-19, a civic body chief has come out in the open for the indifferent and callous approach of the administration towards pandemic control measures.

The Department of Health announced that 13,644 new persons were diagnosed with Covid-19 and 21 deaths were recorded till 6 pm Monday taking the total number of patients in the State to 1.25 lakh, T M Zakeer Hussain, chairman of Perumbavoor Municipal Council lambasted the Kerala Government for its indifference towards covid control measures taken by the civic bodies in the State.

"Though the Municipal Council had prepared a comprehensive pandemic control programme to be implemented from March 5, the Department of Health ordered us to stop all kinds of preventive measures planned by us. They told us that it was the responsibility of the State Government and the civic

bodies need not bother about such responsibilities," said Hussain while addressing a town hall meeting convened by him late Monday evening.

The young Municipal Chairman, who is known for his pro-active measures said that the civic body which he heads was the wealthiest local self-government body in Kerala. "But the concentration of power in certain agencies and refusal of the State Government to cooperate with the civic bodies has resulted in the pathetic position.

The civic bodies had prepared an action plan to control the spread of the pandemic but the intransigence of the State administration from the beginning of the break out of the disease has led to the present scenario," said Hussain, a Congress leader.

The night curfew would be in place for the next 14 days. All private tuition classes have been banned and only on-line classes would be allowed. The Universities in the State have postponed the degree and post graduate examinations following the intervention of Governor Arif Mohammed Khan.

All religious festivals and social gatherings that include the famous Thrissur Pooram would be held only symbolically with no crowd. The Pooram usually features 70 caparisoned elephants resplendent with colorful umbrellas and spectacularly designed fans. The festival attracts at least a million viewers from India and abroad and concludes with magnificent fireworks designed aesthetically by specially trained explosive makers of Thrissur.

Many civic body chiefs like panchayat presidents and block panchayath presidents alleged that the deterioration in Covid-19 in the State was due to the intransigent attitude of the State administration towards the local body governments.

"We do not have any problems in the Chief Minister, Health Minister and the CPI(M) walking away with the entire credit. But they should have incorporated us in the measures devised to counter the pandemic," said Basheer, a former civic body member who opted out of election because of his disappointment with the centers of power in the state.

2 Hizbul Mujahideen ultras killed in J&K

Jammu: Two terrorists belonging to the pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist outfit were neutralised by the joint team of security forces in the Zeipora area of Shopian on Monday.

The security forces also recovered one Under Barrel Grenade launcher along with one AK rifle and pistol from the encounter site. According to a police spokesman, a joint cordon and search operation was launched by Police, 34RR and 178 Bn CRPF in Zeipora area of Shopian on the basis of a specific intelligence input.

During the search operation as the presence of terrorists got ascertained they were given an opportunity to surrender, however, they fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party, which was retaliated leading to an encounter.

In the ensuing encounter, two terrorists were killed and their bodies were retrieved from the site of encounter. They have been identified as Sabzar Ahmad Ganie of Shepora Kulgam and Amir Ahmad Bhat resident of Malibugh, Imamsahib Shopian. **PNS**

Ramdesivir allocation to Maha must be need based, Bombay HC directs Centre

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Directing the State Government to release 10,000 vials of Remdesivir vials to Nagpur district immediately, the Bombay High Court on Monday told the Centre that if Maharashtra accounted for 40 per cent of Covid-19 infections in the country, "then it is only right to say that 40 per cent of Remdesivir injections are allotted to this state."

Holding that the allocation of Remdesivir vials "has to be need-based and not on any other factors that are not relevant," a Nagpur division bench of the Bombay High Court -- comprising Justices Sunil Shukre and SM Modak -- observed that if Maharashtra accounted for 40 per cent of the cases, then the allocation of Remdesivir injections to the state should also be in the same percentage.

"If contribution towards COVID-19 cases is 40 per cent from Maharashtra, then it is only right to say that 40 per cent of Remdesivir injections are allotted to this state. The allocation should be need-based and not on any other factors that are not relevant," Justice Shukre said.

The HC bench's observations should be seen in the light of the fact that Remdesivir is listed for use by critical COVID-19 patients and the

Centre's decision to ban the export of the drug last week in view of the sudden surge in the pandemic case and consequent increase in demand for the medicine.

Pulling up the disproportional allocation of Remdesivir vials to various districts in the state, the HC bench noted that the available statistics showed some "arbitrariness" in the district-wise distribution of Remdesivir vials by the State and this is required to be stopped forthwith. Maintaining that it did not understand the logic behind allocating 5,000 vials of Remdesivir for 2,000-odd beds in Thane as against the allocation of just 3,000 vials for more than 8,000 COVID-19 beds in

Nagpur, the HC bench observed: "There appears to be a disparity and some arbitrariness in the distribution of Remdesivir vials to Nagpur district. The vials are not being released in proportion to the requirement."

Noting that while on April 13 and April 18, not a single vial of Remdesivir was allotted to Nagpur, on April 17 only 500 vials were allotted to the orange city, the HC bench said: "This has severely affected the administration of health care to COVID-19 patients in Nagpur. The possibility of mortality because of lack of Remdesivir cannot be ruled out. It is the solemn duty of the state government to save and preserve each precious life."

Maha Deputy CM asks dist officials to set up oxygen plants near hospitals

Mumbai: Keeping in view of the surge in Covid-19 cases and shortage of liquid Oxygen in Maharashtra, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Monday directed the district collectors and municipal commissioners to set up liquid Oxygen manufacturing plants in vicinity of major hospitals across the state. Speaking at a meeting of district collectors and municipal commissioners through video

conferencing, the deputy chief minister asked the top officials in the districts to take steps to start oxygen manufacturing plants next to hospitals in the next two to three weeks. Meanwhile, Pawar asked the officials at the district level to obtain as much as liquid Oxygen as possible from paper, petroleum, fertiliser and refinery companies to meet the immediate needs at various hospitals in the state.

REMDESIVIR SHORTAGE ROW

BJP urges Maha Govt to dismiss Min Malik for making allegations against Centre

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Opposition BJP on Monday urged Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari to recommend the dismissal of NCP Minister Nawab Malik from the State Cabinet and registration of an FIR for making baseless allegation against the Union Government regarding Remdesivir vials, floating rumours and creating disaffection in the minds of the people about the Centre.

Upping the ante against the statements made by senior NCP leader and Minority Affairs Minister Nawab Malik against the Centre for its discriminatory attitude towards the Maharashtra Government over the supply of Remdesivir vials, State BJP president Chandrakant Patil shot off a memorandum to the Governor seeking Malik's dismissal from the State Cabinet and registration of an FIR against him for creating disaffection in the minds of the people about the Centre.

In its memorandum, Patil cited the following tweet put by Malik on April 17, 2021: "It is sad & shocking that when the Government of Maharashtra asked the 16 export companies for #Remdesivir, we were told that the Central Government has asked them not to supply the medicine to #Maharashtra. These companies were warned, if they did, their license would be cancelled".

The State BJP chief said that though Malik had made a serious allegation against, he had not provided any proof to substantiate his allegation. "This tweet has been widely discussed in social media. In my opinion, the minister has committed a crime".

Among other things, Patil charged that the State Minister had made a baseless allegation against the Centre and in the process had created disaffection in the minds of the people in the state about the Union government. He alleged that despite being a state minister, Malik had --through his allegation against the Centre -- had tried to undermine the constitutional machinery in the country.



Workers construct a Covid care centre at Sarusujai Stadium, as coronavirus cases surge, in Guwahati on Monday

PTI

New party takes charge of Tripura tribal autonomous council

Agartala: After a landslide victory, the newly formed "TIPRA Motha", which in the April 6 elections had defeated the ruling BJP-IPFT alliance, took over the governance of the politically important Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC).

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Sunday announced that they would boycott the swearing-in-ceremony of the newly elected members and no leaders of the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura was seen at the event held at the TTAADC headquarters in Khumulwng, 20 km north of Agartala.

TIPRA Motha's ally Indigenous Nationalist Party of Tripura's (INPT) General Secretary Jagadhish Debbarma was elected new Chairman of the TTAADC and Purnachandra Jamatia has been chosen as new Chief Executive Member (CEM).

The CEM and the other Executive Members of the TTAADC would take the oath on Tuesday. The 'TIPRA Motha' chairman and Tripura's royal scion Pradyot Bikram Manikya Deb Barman said that following the principle of 'one man, one post' he opted out of the CEM race.

Amalgamating various local tribal-based parties and leaders and members of other parties, the 'TIPRA Motha' (tribal unity) headed by Deb Barman was formed just a few months ago and scripted a new political history by capturing the 30-member TTAADC.

In the April 6 elections to the TTAADC (result of which declared on April 10), of the 28 elective seats (two nominated by the members), the 'TIPRA Motha' won 18 seats, the BJP secured nine seats while one seat went to an Independent candidate. Two members of different tribal communities were nominated by the governor in the TTAADC on the advice of the state government.

The results of the elections to the TTAADC are a major setback for the BJP-alliance, which wrested power in Tripura in 2018 after defeating the CPI-M led Left parties that ruled the state for 25 years. However, the BJP for the first time won nine seats in the TTAADC though its junior ally IPFT, despite being a major tribal-based party, drew a blank.

Tripura's oldest tribal-based party INPT, a former ally of the Congress, is also a part-

ner of the 'TIPRA Motha', and its two candidates, secured victory in the polls to the TTAADC, which has a jurisdiction on over two-thirds of Tripura's 10,491 sq km area and is home to over 12,16,000 people, of which 90 per cent are tribals.

The opposition CPI-M, which was governing the TTAADC until May 17 last year, has also suffered a setback in the elections though it has a strong base among the tribals ever since the Left movement started in Tripura in the early 40s.

The IPFT has been agitating since 2009 for the creation of a separate state by upgrading the TTAADC while TIPRA Motha had recently raised the demand for a 'greater Tipra land' (greater areas for the indigenous tribals). Both the demands were, however, strongly opposed by all the political major parties, including the BJP, the CPI-M and the Congress.

The TTAADC was constituted under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution in June 1985 for the socio-economic development of the tribals, who always played a significant role in Tripura politics. **JANS**

Two bar girls raped in Patna, accused held

Patna: Two bar girls including a minor were allegedly raped by an orchestra organiser in Patna on Sunday, an official said here on Monday. The accused has been arrested. The victims were brought from Chhattisgarh for a dance performance in an orchestra event. The organiser Vipin Giri, a resident of Fatehpur under Naubatpur police station in Patna, promised them a month-long job in the orchestra. The victims contacted the local police on Monday morning and gave written complaints against the accused. Subsequently, a police team raided Giri's house and arrested him.

"As per the statement of victims, the accused allegedly forced them into prostitution in Patna which they resisted. Hence the accused Vipin Giri held them captive in a house. On Sunday, he came in a drunken state and allegedly raped them one by one," said Vimlesh Kumar SI Naubatpur police station.

"We have conducted medical examination of victims which confirms rape. One of the victims claimed that she is below 18 years old. We have booked the accused under POCSO act as well," the officer said. **JANS**

Remove bottlenecks for investment in State, Rajasthan CM tells officers



Jaipur: Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said that new projects should be started in a timely manner by removing the bottlenecks in investment in the state. He said that in the last two years, the state government has implemented many important policies and programs to increase investment in the state. Rajasthan Investment Promotion Scheme (RIPS-2019), Rajasthan Industrial Development Policy - 2019, one-stop shop system and single window system are providing various facilities to entrepreneurs and investors. He instructed the officers that every

possible effort should be made to increase investment in the state.

Gehlot was addressing the first meeting of the Board of Investment (Board of Investment) constituted under the Rajasthan Enterprises Single Window Enablement and License (Amendment) Act, 2020 through video conference on Monday. He said that the state government has formulated a tourism policy to promote tourism in the State. This time, an allocation of Rs 500 crore has been made in the budget for the Tourism Development Fund.

J&K logs 1,516 new Covid cases, active cases cross 12K

Jammu: An alarming Covid-19 spread continued in J&K on Monday as 1,516 new cases came to light during last 24 hours and the number of active cases crossed the 12,000 mark.

Officials said of the new cases, 768 were from the Jammu division and 748 the from Kashmir division while 813 patients were discharged from different hospitals after recovery.

Six patients more succumbed, taking the number of people killed by coronavirus in J&K to 2063. So far, 148,208 people have been infected with coronavirus in J&K out of which 133,981 have recovered. The number of active cases has risen to 12,164 out of which 4,813 are from the Jammu division and 7,351 are from the Kashmir division. **JANS**



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Faith put to test?

The seers' response to the PM's Kumbh appeal must not be seen as weak-willed or forced

The ongoing pandemic has ravaged everyone alike. It doesn't matter if one is a common citizen, a bureaucrat, politician or a sadhu (seer) or belongs to which gender, the Coronavirus just doesn't discriminate. The virus is spreading like a wildfire and has put to test not only the economies, Governments and the healthcare infrastructure, but also faith and religion. The Maha Kumbh Mela at Haridwar, earlier slated to close on April 30, now wears a deserted look — after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to keep the remaining part of the Mela "symbolic" in the backdrop of the surging COVID-19 cases. With the pilgrims and seers leaving Haridwar, the skeptics may view it any way they like but no one should see it as a defeat of faith. Here, the matter of faith and religiosity needs to be seen through the prism of science — the philosophy as followed and professed by the great Indian monk Swami Vivekananda. The silent exodus from Haridwar proves yet again that for the flag-bearers and followers of the world's most ancient or primordial religious order — the 'Sanatan dharma' — science is as sacrosanct as faith. This is what our seers have done and this is exactly what they have been doing since ages. We should be thankful to the seers for heeding the PM's appeal and deciding to vacate the site. For thousands of 'batuks' (new inductees) and numerous others who must have



been waiting to participate in the major religious event, giving up on the *Shahi Snan* (royal bath) or cutting short their stay is no mean sacrifice.

But they have done so willingly to serve the greater cause of humanity by helping to break the transmission chain. The Kumbh is not only about 'Snan' (holy bath); it is in fact like a universe in microcosm — representing the very idea and soul of existence. But it's always good to surrender one's interests willingly when it's a question of the greater good of humankind. This behaviour is in sharp contrast to the Tablighi Jamaat members' — spitting on policemen and volunteers, urinating/defecating openly inside their quarantine centres and abusing doctors and nurses. It's really for the reader to decide for herself/himself which behaviour is close to fundamentalism and which one is sympathetic, accommodative and humane. After the Prime Minister's appeal, Juna akhada's Acharya Mahamandaleswar Swami Avdhesanand Giri announced the formal conclusion of the Maha Kumbh Mela for their followers, saying that the remaining *Shahi Snan* should be observed symbolically on April 27. Many people assert that COVID-19 is here, and maybe will stay for long, but the Kumbh — which represents the primeval culture and its ethos in a nutshell — certainly has been around much longer. It's a good time to remember the famous lines by poet Iqbal: "Kuchh baat hai ki hasti mit-ti nahi hamaari, sadiyon raha hai dushman daur-e-zamaan hamara." It doesn't matter if that *dushman* (enemy) be as mighty as the Coronavirus. With faith by our side, we shall surely win.

PICTALK



Passengers at the Anand Vihar terminal after the Delhi Government announced a six-day lockdown

PTI

The guides

Rahul and Mamata show the way, curb election rallies in view of the explosion in COVID cases

As the number of COVID-19 cases rises exponentially, in West Bengal that is currently witnessing the Assembly elections as well as elsewhere in the country, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee have taken a major decision in the larger interest of the State's population. While the Congress scion has cancelled all his public meetings in West Bengal, the TMC chief will not campaign in Kolkata anymore. Both the leaders have reportedly taken this decision in view of the rising COVID-19 infections in the State. While voting in three of the eight-phase Assembly elections is yet to be held, the State on Saturday registered its highest single-day spike of 7,713 new COVID-19 cases, taking the tally to 6,51,508. The death toll rose to 10,540 after 34 fresh fatalities were reported. Around the same time, 2.6 lakh new COVID-19 patients were detected across India in a single day. While Mamata will hold only one "symbolic" meeting in the State capital on the last day of campaigning, which is April 26, her election rallies in all other districts of the State will not be longer than 30 minutes.

For his part, Rahul — who had only recently reached the State to campaign for the Congress candidates — has suspended all his public rallies there and advised all political leaders to "think deeply about the consequences of holding large public rallies under the current circumstances", understandingly inviting plaudits from senior leaders of his party. The Congress leader had earlier taken a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the BJP's star campaigner praised the people of West Bengal for turning up in large numbers for his political rally on Saturday. Rahul's move is certain to create pressure on the other main players in the fray, most notably the BJP and the TMC. While one is free to align with any political party or ideology, nobody is entitled to put the lives of anybody else on the line simply for the sake of amassing votes, especially in these sordid times. In this light, the decision by Rahul and Mamata deserves unregulated praise as, if nothing else, it puts the lives of the people of the State at greater premium than the lust for votes to form the next Government in West Bengal. Needless to say, other leaders would do well to take a leaf out of this sensible development.



What Modi really means to people



PRAFULL GORADIA

Even before becoming the Prime Minister, and ever since, Modi has scaled newer peaks of popularity, both at home and abroad

Member of Parliament from Arunachal Pradesh Tapir Gao, speaking in Parliament on April 1, described Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi as an avatar of God who is taking the country in the right direction. Gao said that Modi's work for tea plantation workers in West Bengal and Assam is "like an avatar of *Bhagwan*". Ladakh's MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal hailed the PM as a *yug purush* (man of the era) for realising BJP ideologue Syama Prasad Mookerjee's dream. Mookerjee had opposed the special status to Jammu & Kashmir.

An ordinary mortal, I am unable to either corroborate or contradict these opinions. All I can do is to quote from the *Gita*. Chapter 4 of the *Bhagwad Gita*, delivered by Krishna to Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra, states: "Whenever and wherever there is a decline of the practice of *dharma*, O Bharat (Arjuna), and a predominant rise of *adharm* (evil) — I incarnate Myself. To deliver the pious and annihilate the evildoers, as well as to re-establish *dharma*, I appear, era after era."

From the time I first met Modi by chance at the Vadodra airport in 1991 and had a 15-minute chat, I feel I met someone extraordinary. He was then the general secretary of the Gujarat BJP — the party had yet to come to power in the State. We remained in touch after that and until he became the PM, when I realised that he had flown to another planet and I had remained where I was.

In his first term as the Gujarat Chief Minister, his name and fame had spread across the State to West Bengal and as far as Assam. The Bengali elite, which generally looked down on the BJP as communal, invited Modi to the Calcutta Club for a seminar on the Uniform Civil Code. Years later, in 2006, at Mumbai's Shanmukhananda Hall, Modi addressed a packed audience, speaking about his introduction of new technologies for agriculture in Gujarat. He revealed that earlier, at a



party rally in Guwahati, he had been interrupted by the audience who said they would rather hear about how he was tackling infiltrators from Bangladesh. Modi told the Mumbai audience to tumultuous applause that his reply was that in Assam, people were oppressed by Bangladeshis but, in Gujarat, it was the Bangladeshis who felt oppressed by Modi.

In 2013, Modi was chosen as the BJP's prime ministerial candidate by the RSS without consulting the party's bigwigs; the ambitions of the latter would come in his way. It had never happened before. This was the measure of his popularity having spread throughout the country while he was busy with Gujarat. I was flabbergasted when I saw him on television as the PM for an exclusive lunch with Queen Elizabeth II at the Buckingham Palace and, on the same visit, addressing the British Parliament. Such honour has not been showered on any Indian leader — not even Jawaharlal Nehru. Soon thereafter, Modi addressed the US Congress, which only PV Narasimha Rao had done before. All this for a man who only until a few years ago had been denied a visa by Washington, with London



MODI'S CHARISMA HAS NOT BEEN CIRCUMSCRIBED BY THE BORDERS AND SHORES OF INDIA. THE COUNTRY HAS RISEN IN THE EYES AND MINDS OF THE WORLD. A TELLING EXAMPLE IS INDIA'S RESPONSE TO THE LATEST ROUND OF CHINESE REVANCHISM, PARTICULARLY THE GALWAN INCIDENT

being hesitant. This denotes that Modi has a rare charisma that travels electronically, not merely electrically.

The flash of his charisma has not halted here. As the PM, he made friends with President Barack Obama. The next American President, Donald Trump, went gaga over him, sumptuously demonstrated at the 'Howdy Modi' rally at Houston, Texas, in September 2020. Earlier, Modi had commanded a similar performance in London, when then British PM David Cameron was present and delighted.

Modi's charisma has not been circumscribed by the borders and shores of India. The country has risen in the eyes and minds of the world. A telling example is India's response to the latest round of Chinese revanchism, particularly the Galwan incident on the Ladakh border, wherein China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) stealthily intruded and killed 20 Indian soldiers. Not only did the Indian Army hit back to inflict 40 or more casualties on the Chinese, it also occupied several strategic peaks along the Ladakh border, signalling its intent to escalate the conflict. More importantly, Modi did not issue mere protests from

Delhi, as the previous PMs had done, but landed in Ladakh at our Army's forward base, barely miles from where the PLA is stationed across the Line of Actual Control, sounding India's determination to roll back any Chinese adventurism. Beijing is now talking about the benefits of bonhomie and peace with India.

Pakistan remained a bogey until Modi came to power. Educated Indians would generally caution why New Delhi couldn't be too tough with Pakistan because of the 20 crore Muslims in India! Without harming a single hair of any Indian, Modi has silenced Islamabad to the extent that General Bajwa, Pakistan's *de facto* ruler, has started singing peans of peace.

Prior to Modi, the behaviour of India's political class made our people equate themselves with Pakistan. India's image in the world alternated between that of a cat and a rat. Modi has made the world believe that India is truly a lion. Readers may assess what this gentleman truly is — a human being, a superhuman or an avatar.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CREMATORIUMS CAN BECOME HOTSPOTS

Sir — It is time to set up makeshift crematoriums and designate more burial grounds for the COVID casualties. With the second wave, the spectre of COVID has become even more frightening for all of us. The catastrophic spike in cases is coupled with a high death toll. The crematoriums and burial grounds are struggling to keep up, as the bodies pile up.

Why are crematoriums and morgues not considered a priority in our country by the policymakers? How many more pandemics do we need to understand the importance of such places? The non-functional morgues and crematoriums in Mumbai were in a pathetic and deplorable condition even before COVID-19 invaded our lives. The tender for the reconstruction of a morgue at St Georges Hospital is yet to be floated. The urgent need for a functional crematorium and morgue in Mumbai is being felt now more than ever, so that every citizen who ends up there can have a semblance of dignity in death.

No less weightage should be given to the dignity of those who have died as compared to the safety of the living. We are facing a shortage of crematoriums and burial grounds. As a result the dead, both COVID and non-COVID victims, and their loved ones have to wait a long time for the last rites. The overcrowding and long wait could turn these locations into virus hotspots. There is also the question of the safety of crematorium and burial ground workers. Is anyone listening?

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

THE ONSLAUGHT OF PANDEMIC

Sir — To say that India is in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic is to state the obvious. The Lancet's COVID-19 Commission forecasts that at the current rate of the runaway infection, there could be 2,300 deaths every day by the first week of June. The situation is so grave that UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has again deferred his visit to India. The pandemic has brought about a profound change in our thinking and

Distribute the vaccine fairly



This refers to the editorial 'Fighting blindfolded' (April 19). I concur with the editorial view that the Governments and the scientific community are struggling hard to pin down the virus and the pandemic, but to no avail. However, it has been noticed that Indian vaccine manufacturers are unable to comply with the contractual terms and conditions laid down by the UK — the country that has given the license and technology to manufacture Covishield.

Since the stocks of the domestic vaccine supplies are limited, the imports of vaccines approved by the European Medical Agency or US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA)

should be managed accordingly. The Centre and State Governments are not focussing on the percentage of the population that has not been vaccinated yet. It is important to increase the vaccination efforts. Some school teachers, bus, taxi and three-wheeler drivers, municipal and panchayat workers and advocates should be considered for vaccination irrespective of their age.

The Government should also explain how it will ensure the distribution of vaccines among different States in a fair and transparent manner. Since the last one year, COVID-19 has posed a serious challenge to the world and India and has drastically changed our behaviour and the way of life. In the meantime, the lockdown announced by the Delhi Government is a welcome step. Such restrictions are needed in Haryana and other neighbouring States as well. We all have a collective responsibility in our fight against the pandemic. The insouciance on part of any one State can weaken our fight against the Coronavirus.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

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attacked our country and we are its helpless victims. It is spreading like wildfire. Many State Governments have imposed restrictions on the movement of people, including night curfews. Vaccination, oxygen and hospital bed scarcity continue to haunt people. They are unable to get vaccinated in the Government facilities due to the shortage of shots. People are reeling under fear. At this point, night curfew seems to be meaningless and does not serve the desired purpose since most of the people are already locked in their houses during night. It should rather have been in the afternoon. Also, police should not deal with people who come out during curfew hours in a high-handed manner.

Sravana Ramachandran | Chennai

POLICE MUST ACT SENSITIVELY

Sir — The double mutant Coronavirus has

SOUNDBITE

The production of Remdesivir is adequate. We have banned exports as a precaution but in panic people are buying in bulk, which is leading to a shortage.



Union Home Minister — Amit Shah



Pakistan Foreign Minister — Shah Mahmood Qureshi



Actor — Boman Irani



Actor — Hardik Pandya, who hasn't bowled at all in the first three matches of Mumbai Indians, could be bowling in this Indian Premier League (IPL).



Head coach of Mumbai Indians — Mahela Jayawardene



When people are pleading for Remdesivir and struggling for each vial, one BJP leader is hoarding the injection.



Congress leader — Priyanka Gandhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

GIVE JUSTICE TO WOMEN LAWYERS



KALYANI SHANKAR

Justice has always been represented in a feminine form. Everyone has seen the statue of Lady Justice wearing a blindfold and holding a beam balance and a sword. But unfortunately, women are far from being adequately represented in the judiciary and do not have much of a role to play in our judicial system. Women have become the country's President, Prime Minister, Chief Ministers and Governors. They have occupied other constitutional positions but a woman has never graced the office of the Chief Justice of India (CJI). There have been voices calling for the better representation of women in the judiciary. Recently, CJI SA Bobde lamented this gap, just days ahead of his slated retirement on April 23. Let alone being elevated to the post of CJI, many women judges cross their retirement age even before reaching the Supreme Court. In India as in other countries, including the US and Britain, the number of women judges is dismal. It was only in 1981 that US President Ronald Reagan appointed Sandra Day O'Connor as the first-ever woman judge of the Supreme Court, to fulfil his campaign promise.



The International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ), a non-governmental organisation with approximately 4,000 members in 100 countries, believes that women judges are unique in advancing women's rights throughout the world. Attorney-General KK Venugopal had also observed that "improving the representation of women in the judiciary could go a long way towards a more balanced and empathetic approach in cases involving sexual violence." In its plea to the Supreme Court, the Women Lawyers Association has said that the representation of women in the apex court was "abysmally low" as it brought to the court's notice that the top court had seen only eight women judges and only one out of 25 High Courts (HC) in the country has a woman Chief Justice (CJ Hima Kohli of Telangana HC). There are only 73 women out of total 661 judges in HCs while there is no single woman judge in five HCs, namely, Manipur, Meghalaya, Patna, Tripura and Uttarakhand. Further, only 12 women have been designated as senior counsels by the top court so far.

The judiciary is a male-dominated field. More importantly, the seniority tradition plays a significant role in choosing the Chief Justice. Naturally, when the number of designated senior women lawyers is disproportionately low, the chances of women becoming judges also remain minimal. There are many reasons for women not getting the top slot. CJI Bobde observed that many women lawyers had declined judgeship citing domestic responsibilities. But women lawyers counter that point saying that many successful men lawyers had also declined to become judges. Further, the income of a successful lawyer is much more than the perks and the salary of a judge, though there is prestige attached to the position.

The problem also trickles down to the lower courts where there are fewer women judges despite no shortage of women entering the legal profession. Some States have a reservation policy for women lawyers in the lower courts but it is missing in the HCs and the Supreme Court. Women comprised 44 per cent of candidates who have qualified the 2019 Common Law Admission Test for National Law Universities. After Justice Indira Banerjee's superannuation from the top court recently, Justice Indira Banerjee is the only woman judge in the apex court, which has the sanctioned strength of 34 judges.

Currently, the Supreme Court has five vacancies. Up till now, only eight women judges have graced the apex court. There is no shortage of brilliant women HC judges and lawyers in the country who, if elevated to the top court on time, can become the CJI. The timely appointment of more women judges is the way forward. For this, the Supreme Court collegium should take the initiative.

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)



POONAM SEWAK

Globally, women are increasingly being recognised for their important role in the management of water resources. Every International Women's Day, there is much noise about the inclusion of women in water programmes and the heart-breaking statistics regarding drudgery, school absenteeism and so on. Many platitudes are offered but before the end of March, everything fizzles out, until the next year. The Global Gender Gap Index 2020 ranked India at 112 out of 153 countries, with an overall unemployment rate of 9.1 per cent. Urban unemployment was at 8.8 per cent and unemployment among women was 18 per cent.

Any water supply hurdles lead to a substantial economic and social impact that disproportionately affects females. For instance, the time and

The writer is vice-president, programme & partnerships, Safe Water Network. The views expressed are personal.

Export subsidies face WTO challenge

The leeway to withdraw subsidies was meant for those developing nations which in 1995 had GNI in excess of \$1,000 per capita. It can't be availed by India, which is in a different category



UTTAM GUPTA

The Coronavirus pandemic played havoc with the economy of the country during the first half of last year. However, exports were beginning to look up in March — touching a record \$34 billion which was higher than \$33 billion in March 2019 — and signalling a sharp increase during the current fiscal. But now, the exporters face a triple whammy. First, they have not received export benefits worth approximately ₹35,000 crore under the Merchandise Export from India Scheme (MEIS). Under the MEIS, which was withdrawn on January 1 this year, exporters were eligible for duty credit scrip — a jargon to compensate for their loss on payment of duties — amounting to two-five per cent of the freight-on-board value of the shipment. Against a total approved amount of ₹55,000 crore, the Union Government has released just about ₹20,000 crore (mostly claims for 2019-20) thereby leaving a gap of ₹35,000 crore.

This has led to a liquidity crunch. And, with the Budget provision for export subsidy during 2021-22 being just ₹13,000 crore, the situation is unlikely to improve and will seriously impede the exporters' capacity to ramp up supplies to meet the resurgent demand from key global markets, particularly the US and EU.

Second, the Government has not yet notified the refund rates under the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme, which replaced the MEIS in January. Under the RoDTEP, exporters are eligible for reimbursement of various embedded taxes and levies paid on inputs consumed in exports — but not subsumed by the Goods and Services Tax (GST). A committee headed by former Commerce Secretary GK Pillai tasked with determining the refund rates, after an exhaustive exercise involving scrutiny of embedded levies on 8,000-9,000 tariff lines, had submitted its recommendations in March.

However, it will be some time before the Finance Ministry's Revenue Department — currently vetting the recommended tax remission rates — notifies them. The exporters need to factor in these while firming up contracts for supplies to importers. Although, eventually they will get the refunds retrospectively (from January 1) once the rates are notified, not knowing them in advance creates uncertainty with regard to their ability to decide what price to charge. If, the notified rate turns out to be lower than what the exporter has actually built into the offer price, he will be subjected to a loss.

The above two factors i.e. the delay in release of pending dues under the erstwhile MEIS and the delay in notification of refund rates under the RoDTEP, make for a deadly combination hampering the ability of exporters to sustain the tempo of revival in exports, buoyant demand conditions notwithstanding. Add to this a third factor which relates to the vulnerability of the Indian export subsidy regime to challenge at the World Trade Organisation (WTO). In early 2018, the US had challenged at least half a dozen of India's export subsidy schemes, including the MEIS. The US Trade Representative (USTR) argued that the schemes provide financial benefits to Indian exporters, creating an "uneven playing field", thereby enabling them to sell goods



MEANWHILE, INDIA HAS ABOLISHED THE MEIS AND LAUNCHED RODTEP. THE OFFICIAL THINK TANK MAY FEEL THAT THE NEW SCHEME IS 'COMPLIANT' WITH THE WTO'S NORMS. BUT 'DAMOCLES' SWORD STILL HANGS OVER US AS THE US HAS ALREADY ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO EXPLAIN THIS SCHEME AND ITS STRUCTURE, AND MAY EVEN FOLLOW THIS UP BY CHALLENGING IT AT THE WTO

The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.



at a cheaper rate, which was detrimental to the interests of US manufacturers and workers. Even as export subsidies violate the WTO's rules, a limited exception was made for specified developing countries that may continue to provide export subsidies temporarily until they reach a defined economic benchmark of \$1,000 per capita gross national income (GNI). Further, developing countries that had a GNI of over \$1,000 per capita at the time when the WTO was set up in 1995, were allowed eight years to wind up their export promotion schemes.

India's GNI being below the \$1,000 per capita-mark, it initially availed of the exemption from no export subsidy obligation. But in 2015, it surpassed the threshold, thereby pushing it into the "no-exemption" zone. The USTR has accused India of not just continuing with subsidies, but further expanding their scope (the MEIS launched in 2015 was rapidly expanded to include more than 8,000 eligible products, nearly double the number of products covered at its inception).

Accordingly, it wanted India to withdraw the subsidies. But the latter insisted on a transition period of eight years that, too, from 2017 when the WTO notified the fact of its crossing the threshold. The Indian stance is anomalous.

India had ample opportunity to plan. It had 20 years available (1995 to 2015) to get adjusted to

a WTO-compatible scenario. That was not done and when the D-day arrived, it wanted more time, which was a totally illogical move. The leeway to withdraw subsisting export subsidies within the eight-year time frame was meant for those developing countries which in 1995 had GNI in excess of \$1,000 per capita. It can't be availed by India which falls in a different category.

The Indian position being untenable, the decision of the WTO Dispute Settlement Panel (DSP) has gone against New Delhi. We appealed against the DSP decision before the appellate authority of the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) and a verdict is yet to come. Meanwhile, India has abolished the MEIS and launched RoDTEP. The official think tank may feel that the new scheme is "compliant" with the WTO's norms. But Damocles' sword still hangs over us as the US has already asked the Government to explain this scheme and its structure, and may even follow this up by challenging it at the WTO.

The confidence of Team Modi stems from the fact that the RoDTEP is a scheme only for the reimbursement of duties on exported products; hence, there is no financial support from the Government. The duties considered in fixing the refund rates include all the levies that are not subsumed by the GST. These are taxes on crude oil, natural gas,

petroleum products such as petrol, diesel, ATF, electricity, mandi tax, stamp duty, besides embedded central GST and compensation cess (under GST), the cess is levied on the so-called demerit products in the highest slab of 28 per cent and the proceeds thereof to be used for compensating the States for the shortfall in revenue).

Given the highly complex nature of these duties and the wide variations between the Centre and the States, it may not be easy to justify giving remission for each one of them. A better way of ensuring that exports are not hamstrung is to bring all the aforementioned products under the GST, besides abolishing all local taxes. The compensation cess will anyway go on March 31, 2022 — as per the extant law. As for the embedded central GST, mechanisms are available for its refund under the GST scheme which treats exports as zero rated. This will require a fundamental change in the extant approach of "first burdening exporters with taxes, then refunding" to one whereby "taxes are not levied in the first place or their burden is kept at a bare minimum." While, this transition may take some time, in the interregnum, remission rates under the RoDTEP should be notified without any further delay. All outstanding dues to exporters should be promptly cleared to enable them to ramp up supplies for catering to the resurgent demand.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

WE MUST RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO LOOK AT THE NUMBERS BEING VACCINATED, AND FOCUS ON THE PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION VACCINATED.

—FORMER PRIME MINISTER
MANMOHAN SINGH



WHILE YOU UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF VACCINATION... PEOPLE IN RESPONSIBLE POSITIONS IN YOUR PARTY DO NOT SEEM TO SHARE YOUR VIEW.

—UNION HEALTH MINISTER
HARSH VARDHAN

Women's participation missing in water resource management

To encourage female participation, the Govt has made it obligatory for each water committee to have 50 per cent women members

effort spent in water collection hits women's income-generation ability, impacts attendance of girls in schools and interferes with the time required to tend to the sick at home. Therefore, women quickly see the advantages of investing in water treatment infrastructure and often play a crucial role in convincing the community to undertake its construction, operation, maintenance and management.

For decades, studies have examined the role of women in the water sector. They have found substantial improvements in the governance, transparency and sustainability of water supplies when men and women are involved in equal measure than when women are involved only marginally or not at all. Water projects that involve women in design planning and operations are more sustainable than those that do not. Yet, women make up less



POONAM SEWAK

The writer is vice-president, programme & partnerships, Safe Water Network. The views expressed are personal.

than 17 per cent of the water, sanitation and hygiene labour force and only a fraction of policymakers, regulators, management and technical experts. The participation of women in the water sector is often assumed to be a rural issue. Women are significantly missing in utilities which can draw benefits such as lower levels of non-revenue water losses, improved cash flow and more resources for investment in infrastructure and increasing service quality. This will lead to the engagement of fewer Government subsidies which can be utilised for other essential services. The key to driving user-centred design improvements and reforms across the urban water sector in developing countries is to create conditions that can attract, retain, and promote women in roles in which they can shape the design, construction and reha-

bilitation of new and existing water supply systems. India has set an ambitious goal, as part of the Jal Jeevan Mission (Rural) to provide functional household tap connections, piped water services to its entire population at an outlay of \$90 billion by 2025. To bridge the gender gap, the Government has tied up with the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Kendra to train women in masonry and impart them skills to become electrical and motor mechanics. To encourage

women's participation, the Government has made it obligatory for each paani samiti (water committee) constituted for water supply management to have 50 per cent women members. Through the situation is changing, the Government should put greater emphasis on building Self-Help Groups into a competitive alternative to private operators. Providing safe drinking water to 1.35 billion people in urban and rural India is a huge challenge. The emergence of COVID-19 has further accentuated the need for clean water. Prioritising women's engagement to regulate water programmes will ensure effective usage of water resources.

In India, where women have been trained and licenced as hand pump mechanics, customers rate female mechanics as more accessible and responsive than their male counter-



parts. As a result, in areas served by women mechanics, there is more preventative maintenance and fewer breakdowns. Many of these women understand that a broken hand pump results in girls/women having to travel greater distances to collect water, losing productive time and increasing risks to their safety.

Initially, society found it futile to train women, but with repeated success, the female workforce not only became active participants but also modified the entire management of community water systems. The work-life balance for women has been significantly disturbed in these challenging times. However, it has taught women to multitask and manage the household while diligently working from home. With a male-dominated Indian economic system, there is an

urgent need to rectify the gender imbalance by driving awareness, through knowledge-sharing and developing a sense of decision-making and entrepreneurship among women. With successful revenue streams driven by women-led businesses, the Government has also started focusing on promoting women entrepreneurship covering rural, semi and urban geographies.

To bring down the patriarchal barriers and make significant progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6, it is essential to create a successful Private-Public-Partnership (PPP) model for upskilling and teaching women groups especially regarding post-work gaps, mentoring and feedback process. Through the bottom-up approach of the PPP model, economic opportunities need to be created to promote the well-being of women.

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Biden pressed on emissions goal as climate summit nears

Washington: When President Joe Biden convenes a virtual climate summit on Thursday, he faces a vexing task: how to put forward a nonbinding but symbolic goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that will have a tangible impact not only on climate change efforts in the US but throughout the world.

The emissions target, eagerly awaited by all sides of the climate debate, will signal how aggressively Biden wants to move on climate change, a divisive and expensive issue that has riled Republicans to complain about job-killing government overreach even as some on the left worry Biden

has not gone far enough to address a profound threat to the planet.

The climate crisis poses a complex political challenge for Biden, since the problem is harder to see and far more difficult to produce measurable results on than either the pandemic relief package or the infrastructure bill.

The target Biden chooses "is setting the tone for the level of ambition and the pace of emission reductions over the next decade," said Kate Larsen, a former White House adviser who helped develop President Barack Obama's climate action plan.

The number has to be achievable by 2030 but aggressive enough to satisfy scientists and advocates who call the coming decade a crucial, make-or-break moment for slowing climate change, Larsen and other experts said.

Scientists, environmental groups and even business leaders are calling on Biden to set a target that would cut US greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030.

The 50 per cent target, which most experts consider a likely outcome of intense deliberations underway at the White House, would nearly double the

nation's previous commitment and require dramatic changes in the power and transportation sectors, including significant increases in renewable energy such as wind and solar power and steep cuts in emissions from fossil fuels such as coal and oil.

Anything short of that goal could undermine Biden's promise to prevent temperatures from rising more than 1.5 degrees Celsius, experts say, while likely stirring up sharp criticism from international allies and Biden's own supporters.

The target is significant, not just as a visible goal for the

US to achieve after four years of climate inaction under President Donald Trump, but also for "leveraging other countries," Larsen said.

"That helps domestically in the battle that comes after, which is implementing policies to achieve that target. We can make a better case politically at home if other countries are acting at the same level of ambition as the US?"

The 2030 goal, known as a Nationally Determined Contribution, or NDC, is a key part of the Paris climate agreement, which Biden rejoined on his first day in office. It's also an important marker as Biden

moves toward his ultimate goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

"Clearly the science demands at least 50%" in reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, said Jake Schmidt, a climate expert at the Natural Resources Defense Council, a leading environmental group.

The 50% target "is ambitious, but it is achievable," he said in an interview. It's also a good climate message, he said: "People know what 50% means - it's half."

Whatever target Biden picks, the climate summit itself "proves the U.S. is back in rejoining the inter-

national effort? to address climate change, said Larsen, now a director at the Rhodium Group, an independent research firm.

The summit is "the starting gun for climate diplomacy" after a four-year "hiatus" under Trump, she said. John Kerry, Biden's climate envoy, has been pressing global leaders in person and online ahead of the summit for commitments and alliances on climate efforts.

Nathaniel Keohane, another former Obama White House adviser and now a vice president at the Environmental Defense Fund, said experts have coalesced around the

need to reduce emissions by at least 50 per cent by 2030.

"The number has to start with 5," he said, adding, "We've done the math. We need at least 50%."

The 2030 target is just one in a sometimes overlapping set of goals that Biden has outlined on climate. He also has said he expects to adopt a clean energy standard that would make electricity carbon-free by 2035, along with the wider goal of net-zero carbon emissions economy-wide by 2050.

Biden's climate adviser, Gina McCarthy, acknowledged that the sheer volume of numbers can be confusing. **AP**

US: Authorities say no one was driving Tesla before deadly crash

Houston: Two people were killed in the fiery crash of a Tesla and authorities say there was no one in the driver's seat, although it is not clear whether the car's driver-assist system was being used.

A Harris County constable told television stations in Houston that there was a person in the front passenger seat and another in a rear passenger seat after the wreck in the Houston suburb of Spring.

Harris County Precinct 4 Constable Mark Herman said authorities are certain that no one was driving the car at the time of the crash.

respond to an email requesting comment.

Federal traffic-safety officials are investigating several Tesla crashes in which the vehicle's Autopilot function may have been used, including crashes in which cars drove under tractor-trailers.

The company warns customers that its driver-assist system, called Autopilot, is not an autonomous-driving programme, and that they must pay attention and be ready to take control of the vehicle.

However, the National Transportation Safety Board said last year that the design of the system allows drivers to avoid paying attention and fails to limit where Autopilot can be used.

Banned Pak outfit frees 11 cops

Islamabad: Pakistani Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid on Monday announced that after a successful round of negotiation with Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), the banned outfit had released 11 policemen taken hostage from Lahore a day earlier.

"First round of negotiations have been successful which have led to TLP releasing the policemen it had held hostage. The second round of negotiations will begin after 'sehri'", The Express Tribune quoted the Minister as saying in a video message.

The 11 hostages included a Deputy Superintendent of Police.

On Sunday, clashes erupted between TLP members and police at Multan road in Lahore, leaving "a few" group

supporters killed and more than 100 injured, according to sources.

For at least three days, TLP protesters have choked Pakistan, staging sit-ins at the main highways.

Angry mobs have had violent confrontations with the security forces, resulting in martyrdom of three police officers, while hundreds others were critically injured due to the torture and assault they suffered in the hands of the TLP protesters.

On April 14, the Pakistan government decided to put a ban on TLP under the anti-terrorism law, the summary of which was later approved by the Prime Minister.

In November last year, the TLP had staged a sit-in in Rawalpindi demanding expul-

sion of the French Ambassador over publication of blasphemous caricatures.

The protest brought the capital Islamabad and other major cities to a complete standstill as highways were blocked by the protesters and violent confrontations with tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannons were used by security forces to disperse the mob.

However, the group ended the protest after reaching an agreement with the government, claiming that all of its four demands had been accepted.

The government had agreed to involve Parliament to decide the matter of expulsion of French Ambassador within three months. **IANS**

Release detained journalist, Japan urges Myanmar

Tokyo: The Government in Tokyo on Monday called on Myanmar to release a freelance Japanese journalist detained by security forces in Yangon.

Speaking at a news conference here, Government spokesman Katsunobu Kato said Tokyo was asking for the early release of the journalist, who was arrested at home on Sunday evening in Yangon, Myanmar's largest city, reports dpa news agency.

Kato did not identify the journalist, but Japanese media named him as Yuki Kitazumi, a former reporter for the Nikkei Business Daily, who now lives in Yangon.

Kitazumi has been under investigation for allegedly disseminating "fake news", Kyodo News reported, citing the Japanese Embassy in Myanmar.

He has been transferred to Insein prison in the city, where many political detainees are

incarcerated, according to Kyodo.

In late February, the journalist was also briefly detained by security forces while covering an anti-coup rally, the report said.

On Saturday, the junta granted amnesty to more than 23,000 prisoners as Myanmar began marking its traditional New Year festival, state-run broadcaster MRTV reported, though it was unclear whether anti-coup protesters were among those set free.

The February coup has prompted widespread protests, to which soldiers have responded with a violent crackdown on the population.

Nearly 2,850 have been arrested, and at least 598 have been killed, including 48 children, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), a non-profit organization. **IANS**

GLOBE TROTTER

AUS PM CALLS ENQUIRY INTO VETERAN SUICIDES
Canberra: Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison on Monday announced a royal commission into the suicides of current and former defence personnel. Morrison acknowledged the "human cost" of defence deployments, saying he hoped that the long-awaited inquiry would act as a "healing process", reports Xinhua news agency.

B'DESH EXTENDS LOCKDOWN
Dhaka: Bangladesh has decided to extend the nationwide lockdown for yet another week to counter the spike in coronavirus infections, an official said on Monday.

AFGHAN SECURITY KILLS 9 MILITANTS
Kabul: Nine militants have been killed and three others injured in cleanup operations conducted by Government forces in Afghanistan's Helmand province, police said on Monday. A large number of arms and munitions were also seized from the Taliban hideouts in the operations launched on Sunday, Xinhua news agency quoted the police as saying.

KARACHI SEES SPIKE IN STREET CRIMES
Karachi: Karachi has witnessed an unprecedented spike in the number of street crimes during the January to March period this year, that claimed the lives of 98 people, a media report said on Monday.

CHINA TO OPEN NAME OF ITS 1ST MARS ROVER
Beijing: Beijing will announce the name of its first Mars rover on the Space Day of China, which falls on April 24, according to authorities on Monday. Nanjing, capital city of Jiangsu province, will host the main events marking this year's Space Day of China, Lyu Bo, an official of the China National Space Administration (CNSA), said while addressing a press conference on Monday.

Chad's Army says 300 rebels killed as capital is on alert

N'djamena (Chad): Chad's military claimed that it has killed some 300 rebels advancing on the capital, N'Djamena, as the Government on Monday deployed tanks and other armed vehicles in the city's streets. The death toll given on state television and radio by army spokesman

Azim Bermandoa Agoua came a day after the military declared that a rebel column had been "decimated" by soldiers. It was not immediately possible to independently confirm the military's claims given the remote location where the fighting took place.

Confusion and fear mount-

ed in the capital as rumours swirled on social media about whether the Chadian rebels still posed a threat after the weekend clashes.

"Five days ago, the government was talking about terrorists in the Faya area, but today we are told that the rebels are in the Mao area," said high school teacher Jean Djimasse, suggesting that the rebels appear to have moved closer to the capital. "We don't know exactly what is going on."

The Government called for calm as residents of the capital lined up to purchase fuel and stocked up on food at markets. **AP**

Top Hefazat leader sent to 7-day custody for attempt to murder

Dhaka: A Dhaka court on Monday placed radical outfit Hefazat-e-Islam's joint secretary general Mamunul Haque on seven-day remand in a case filed last year at the Mohammapur police station.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate, Debdash Chandra Adhikary, passed the order after the sub-inspector of the police station, Md Sajedul Haque, submitted the remand prayer before the court.

The police said the militant top leader and the preacher will be interrogated at the DB office on security grounds and for the source of his huge expenses.

A joint team of the Tejaagon division police and the DMP's detective branch had arrested Mamunul from Jamia Rahmania Arabia Madrasa in Mohammapur on Saturday afternoon.

In November 2020, Mamunul had called for the government to remove the upcoming statue of the father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, claiming that statues were prohibited to Islam. Later, he had clarified that he 'did not mean

to disrespect' the Bangabandhu.

Mamunul and his Hefazat colleagues had led a series of protests against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh on March 26-27, leading to violence that claimed several lives.

Following Mamunul's arrest, the Deputy Police Commissioner of Tejaagon zone, Harun-or-Rashid, said that Mamunul and other Hefazat leaders have been accused in several cases, including planned attacks on police stations, which are being investigated.

Rashid said that Mamunul is being monitored for quite some time and the investigation into the 2020 case of vandalism and violence is going on. As many as 17 cases have been filed against Mamunul and other cohorts of the radical outfit in connection with the violence in the Baitul Mukarram area in Dhaka during Narendra Modi's two-day visit to Bangladesh.

Mamunul is one of the 17 people accused in the case, filed with the Paltan police station. **IANS**

Egypt says 11 killed in train crash north of Cairo

Cairo: A passenger train derailed on Sunday north of Cairo, killing at least 11 people, Egyptian authorities said. It was the latest of several rail accidents to hit the country in recent years.

Four train wagons ran off the railway at the city of Banha in Qalyubia province, just outside Cairo, the railway authority said in a statement. Videos on social media showed wagons overturned and passengers escaping to safety along the railway. The train was travelling to the Nile Delta city of Mansoura from the Egyptian capital, the statement said.

The Health Ministry said in a statement that besides the dead, at least 98 people were injured, with most of them suffering from broken bones, cuts and bruises.

At least 60 ambulances were sent to the scene and the injured were taken to nearby hospitals, the ministry added.

Salvage teams could be seen searching for survivors and removing the derailed wagons. It was not immediately clear what caused the train to derail. Prosecutors said they were investigating the causes of the crash.

The state-run Ahram daily reported that authorities have detained at least 10 railway officials, including the train driver and his assistant, pending an investigation into the crash.

Last week, at least 15 people were injured when train carriages derailed in the Nile Delta province of Sharqia. **AP**

Delegate: Progress in Iran N talks but end 'far away'

Berlin: High-level talks in Vienna aimed at bringing the United States back into the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran are moving ahead with experts working on drafting proposals this week, but a solution remains "far away", Russia's delegate said Monday.

The U.S. Unilaterally left the agreement, which promises Iran economic incentives in return for curbs on its nuclear programme, in 2018 under then President Donald Trump, who said it needed to be renegotiated and imposed crippling sanctions.

In response, Iran has steadily been violating the restrictions set by the deal, by enriching uranium far past the purity allowed and stockpiling vastly larger quantities, in a thus-far unsuccessful effort to force the other countries involved to provide economic relief that would offset the American sanctions.

US President Joe Biden wants to return Washington to the deal, and Iran has been negotiating with the five remaining powers - Germany, France, Britain, China and Russia - for the past two weeks on how that might take place. Diplomats from the world powers have been shuttling between the Iranian delegation and an American one, which is also in Vienna but not talking directly with the Iranian side. **AP**

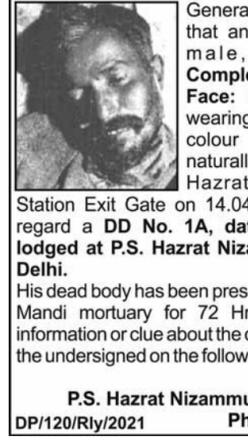
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APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male, **Age:** 45-48 years, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Height:** 5'7", **Face:** Long, **Built:** Normal, was wearing Pink colour T-shirt and Blue colour Lower, was found dead naturally Out Side of Footpath at Hazrat Nizamuddin Railways Station Exit Gate on 14.04.2021 at 12:25 AM. In this regard a DD No. 1A, dated 14.04.2021, has been lodged at P.S. Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station, Delhi.

His dead body has been preserved for identification in Sabji Mandi mortuary for 72 Hrs. Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.

SHO
P.S. Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station, Delhi
DP/120/Rly/2021 Ph.: 011-24358593, 24356743

SL tightens security over 2nd anniversary of Easter bombings

Colombo: Sri Lankan Police on Monday said security has been beefed up in all churches across the island nation ahead of the second anniversary of the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings, which killed over 250 people and injured at least 500 others.

Police spokesperson DIG Ajith Rohana said authorities were informed that various religious masses, activities, and events were being planned to commemorate the victims, and as a result additional security personnel have been deployed in all churches island-wide, reports Xinhua news agency.

"The Police Headquarters has issued a special message to the officers-in-charge (OICs) of police stations and senior officers of territorial divisions including Senior DIGs, DIGs, SSPs and SPs to monitor the situation," Rohana said.

"We have informed all stations to provide maximum security in respect of events," he added.

The Easter terror attack by suicide bombers in April 2019 was one of the worst violent incidents recorded in Sri Lanka's history. **IANS**

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The Easter terror attack by suicide bombers in April 2019 was one of the worst violent incidents recorded in Sri Lanka's history. **IANS**

Navalny's health 'satisfactory' after move to prison hospital

Moscow: Detained Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny is in "satisfactory" condition after he was moved to a prison hospital, the country's jail authority said on Monday.

"Alexei Navalny's health condition is considered to be satisfactory. A general practitioner examines him every day," dpa news agency quoted the federal penitentiary authority as saying in a statement.

"The patient has given his consent that vitamins be prescribed to him," the statement said, adding that the hospital where he was moved is specialized in "dynamic observation of such patients."

Navalny has been on hunger strike for more than two weeks to protest the lack of

medical care in the prison camp.

His team has repeatedly sounded alarms about his deteriorating health, warning of possible heart failure.

On Sunday, the US, the European Union, Germany and others urged the Russian leadership to provide adequate medical treatment to Navalny. **IANS**

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PUBLIC NOTICE

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	T DHIR, Hema, B-151 A, Ground Floor, Pul Pehladpur New Delhi LBDEL0000311981	Free Hold Flat No- L-1/222-B, 1st Floor, Without Terrace Rights, Dda Flats, Category- LIC, Kalkaji, New Delhi	18-Dec-2019 Rs. 40,93,051/-	30/09/2019

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date : April 20, 2021 Place: Delhi NCR **Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited**

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to all concerned that Mrs. Manorama Sharma W/o Late Shri Hari Shankar Sharma R/o L-46, Sector-11, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP had executed a will deed on dated 16.11.2012 in respect of residential property L-46, Sector-11, Noida, Distt. Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP passed away on 25.11.2013. Late Mrs. Manorama Sharma had executed a registered WILL in favour of her Son-in-law Mr. Brij Gopal Sharma S/o Late Shri Ram Babu Sharma L-46, Sector-11, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP. The WILL is duly registered in the office of Sub-Registrar, Noida, vide Book No. 3, Volume No. 462 on pages 121 to 134 as Document No. 2997 on 16.11.2012. So, it is informed to all concerned that the said residential property L-46, Sector-11, Noida, Distt. Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP is going to be transferred in favour of Mr. Brij Gopal Sharma S/o Late Shri Ram Babu Sharma L-46, Sector-11, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP. If anyone has/have any objection he/she may file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Housing Department (F) of the Noida Authority within 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice.

S.K. GUPTA (ADVOCATE)
Ch. No. D-209, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi-32

NASA launches helicopter on Mars in historic feat

AP ■ WASHINGTON

In a historic feat for humankind, NASA on Monday successfully launched the first powered, controlled flight of its Ingenuity Mars Helicopter on another planet.

The mini helicopter began its flight approximately at 3:45 p.m. (India time) and the data was received at NASA headquarters around 4:25 p.m. (India time). It took off a few feet from the ground, hovered in the air for about 20 to 30 seconds, and landed.

After this feat, the team will now attempt additional experimental flights of incrementally farther distance and greater altitude. After the helicopter completes its technology demonstration, Perseverance rover will continue its scientific mission.

"Every step we have taken since this journey began six years ago has been uncharted territory in the history of aircraft," Bob Balaram, Mars Helicopter Chief Engineer at JPL, said recently.

The mini helicopter flew to Mars while being attached to the belly of NASA's Perseverance rover, which made a February 18 touch down on the Red Planet.

The original flight date of April 11 shifted several times as engineers worked on preflight checks and a solution to a command sequence issue. It also survived its first night alone on Mars' frigid surface.

The sole mission of Ingenuity, a technology demonstration, is to conduct flight tests in the thin atmos-

phere of Mars; the helicopter carries no science instruments.

Within 30 Martian days, or sols (a Martian day is 24.6 hours), on the surface, Ingenuity will complete its testing, and Perseverance's scientific exploration of Jezero Crater will kick into high gear.

The Perseverance rover will provide support during flight operations, taking images, collecting environmental data, and hosting the base station that enables the helicopter to communicate with mission controllers on Earth.

The data returned could benefit future explorations of the Red Planet -- including those by astronauts -- by adding the aerial dimension, which is not available today.

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Girl killed outside McDonald's in Chicago: Police

Chicago: A 7-year-old girl was killed and her father seriously injured in a shooting outside a McDonald's outlet in Chicago on Sunday.

Jontae Adams and his daughter, Jaslyn, were in a car in a McDonald's parking lot in the Homan Square neighbourhood on Sunday afternoon when they were shot, Chicago police said.

A McDonald's employee who asked not to be named told the Chicago Sun-Times that two people got out of a grey car in the drive-thru and started shooting at Adams' car.

The girl, who has three siblings, was shot repeatedly and was taken to a hospital where she was pronounced dead. Her father was shot in the torso and taken to the same hospital, where his condition was listed as serious, police said. **AP**

Markets in tailspin as Covid woes resurface

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Sensex plunged 883 points while the Nifty crashed below the 14,400-level on Monday as the worsening Covid-19 situation in the country triggered an across-the-board selloff.

Fresh lockdowns announced by some states have stoked concerns over the economic recovery, while another sharp drop in the rupee also weighed on risk appetite, traders said.

After crashing over 1,469 points in early trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex pared some initial losses to close at 47,949.42, down 882.61 points or 1.81 per cent.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty tanked 258.40 points or 1.77 per cent to finish at 14,359.45.

PowerGrid was the top loser in the Sensex pack, slumping 4.17 per cent, followed by ONGC, IndusInd Bank, Kotak Bank, L&T, Bajaj Finserv, Asian Paints and

M&M.

Only Dr Reddy's and Infosys managed to end in the green, rising up to 1.58 per cent.

"Domestic equities, which were looking resilient for last couple of days, fell sharply on sharp spike in COVID-19 cases across the country and enhanced economic restrictions imposed by several states. Announcements of wider mobility restriction by Rajasthan and Delhi governments dented investors' sentiments," said Binod Modi, Head Strategy at Reliance Securities.

Barring pharma and IT, which remained resilient, all key sectoral indices witnessed sharp correction. Financials and automobiles witnessed steeper correction. Notably, volatility index soared by over 11 per cent, which does not augur well, he added.

Investor wealth tumbled by Rs 3.53 lakh crore on Monday, with the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies standing at Rs 201.77

lakh crore.

India's total tally of COVID-19 cases crossed 1.50 crore with a record single-day rise of 2,73,810 new coronavirus infections, while the active cases surpassed the 19-lakh mark, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Monday.

Sector-wise, BSE realty, capital goods, power, auto, industrials, finance and telecom indices plunged up to 3.96 per cent, while healthcare index closed higher.

Broader BSE midcap and smallcap indices skidded up to 1.93 per cent. Global equities were in a better shape as investors awaited key corporate earnings. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Seoul and Tokyo ended on a positive note.

Stock exchanges in Europe were also largely trading with gains in mid-session deals.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.25 per cent lower at USD 66.60 per barrel.

₹ tanks 52 paise as fresh lockdown measures unnerve investors

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee plunged by 52 paise to close at 74.87 against the US dollar on Monday as fresh lockdown measures by some states to control spiralling cases of Covid-19 unnerved investors and stoked fears of forex outflows.

Losses in the domestic equity markets also weighed on the rupee which was the worst performer among Asian currencies on Monday, analysts said. At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened lower at 74.80 against the greenback and touched a low of 75.05 in day trade. Weakness in the US dollar and losses in crude oil, however, capped the rupee's fall and the local unit recovered some of the losses to close at 74.87, registering a fall of 52 paise over its previous close. On Friday, the rupee had settled at 74.35 a dollar. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.49 per cent to 91.11.

FIDC seeks inclusion of education in ECLGS

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Industry Development Council (FIDC) has urged the Government to include the education sector under the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS).

The NBFC body in a letter to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman noted that the business of many NBFCs include education loans to students to finance their higher education expenses in India and abroad and education institution loans

(EIL) for financing education infrastructure growth needs of schools, colleges and universities.

Last week, the government had expanded the scope of ECLGS 2.0 and said that Special Mention Accounts-1 (SMA-1) will now be eligible for credit under the scheme.

SMA-1 borrowers in the healthcare sector and 26 other high stress sectors as identified by the Kamath Committee are now eligible under ECLGS 2.0.

Noted that the education Sector was excluded from the scope of ECLGS, FIDC said that all the other sectors have been allowed to operate with significant relaxations whereas educational institutions are still closed.

"It is a well-established fact that educational institutions have a deep social and economic impact and depriving the sector of adequate and timely support will have serious consequences for the nation as a whole.

"We believe that inclusion

of education sector under ECLGS will not only provide regular source of funding to educational institutions enabling them to cope up with short term liquidity problem arising out of closure of schools/colleges etc, but also the cash flows would be more aligned to the elongated repayment term," the letter said.

The lending institutions would also be able to cover the risk of educational infra loan portfolio and it would provide an enhanced business opportunity as well, it said.

New Covid surge may upend fuel demand recovery

New Delhi: Rising coronavirus infections, prompting a slew of local lockdowns across the country, are threatening to slow recovery in fuel demand as stronger containment measures will hit economic activity, officials said on Monday.

After Maharashtra, Delhi and Rajasthan have imposed limited period lockdowns, which will impact travel and business activity. Other states have implemented curfews at different times of the day and of varying durations.

"The first casualty of such measures is mobility and a resultant fuel consumption," a senior official at a public sector oil marketing company said.

A record 2,73,810 coronavirus infections on Monday pushed overall cases to more than 1.5 crore, making India the second-worst affected nation after the US, which has reported more than 3.1 crore infections. India's deaths from Covid-19 rose by a record 1,619 to nearly 1.8 lakh.

Diesel, petrol, jet fuel and LPG demand all declined in the first half of April from a month earlier and the trend is likely to worsen in the second half with more states imposing restrictions. India's most used fuel, diesel consumption slipped 3 per cent over the previous month while petrol sales were down 5 per cent, the official said.

Indian Overseas Bank EGM in May to allot preferential shares to Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Overseas Bank on Monday said it has convened an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) next month to seek shareholders' approval for issuance of preferential shares to government for ₹4,100 crore capital infusion in 2020-21.

The EGM will be held on May 12, 2021 through video conferencing or other audio visual means, the bank said in a regulatory filing.

The meeting will consider and pass the resolution to create, offer and allot up to 246,54,23,932 shares of ₹10 for cash at issue price of ₹16.63 per equity share including premium of ₹6.63 aggregating to ₹4,100 crore on preferential basis to Government of India, it said.

With a view to comply with BASEL III requirements relating to capital adequacy, there is an ever increasing need to raise capital, the lender said.

'Bitcoin' digital currency being considered by UK: Rishi Sunak

AP ■ LONDON

British authorities are exploring the possibility of creating a new digital currency that Treasury chief Rishi Sunak indicated could be known as "Britcoin".

The Bank of England and the Treasury said Monday that they will work together to assess the benefits of a central bank digital currency, at a time when cash payments are generally on the decline, partly as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Sebi exempts Anurag Benefit Trust from open offer obligations

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Monday exempted Anurag Benefit Trust from making open offers following the proposed acquisition of shares in West Leisure Resorts Ltd and Winmore Leasing and Holdings Ltd.

The orders came after Sebi received applications from the trustee of Anurag Benefit Trust seeking exemption from the applicability of SAST (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) Regulations in the matter of

proposed acquisition of shares in the two firms.

The trust is a family trust, whose trustees and beneficiaries are promoters or immediate relatives of the promoter of the two companies.

Lalita Devi Jatia, who is the promoter of the two firms, holds 71.04 per cent and 58.92 per cent equity shares of West Leisure Resorts and Winmore Leasing and Holdings respectively.

Under the proposed acquisition, the trust proposed to acquire 71.04 per cent equity shares of West Leisure Resorts

from Jatia.

In addition to the direct acquisition, the trust also proposed to acquire shares in Winmore Leasing and Holdings, member of the promoter group (which is owned and controlled by promoter and or immediate relatives of the promoter) resulting in an indirect acquisition of shares or control in West Leisure Resorts.

In the case of Winmore Leasing and Holdings, the trust proposed to pick up Jatia's entire 58.92 per cent stake in Winmore Leasing and Holdings.

Maha bank employees' federation to launch campaign against privatisation bid

Mumbai: Maharashtra State Bank Employees Federation (MSBEF) said it will launch a state-wide campaign on Tuesday against the Centre's proposal to privatise some state-run banks.

In the Union Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced privatisation of two state-run banks as part of the government's disinvestment plan for the fiscal 2021-22.

Through the public campaign, members of the bank employees' federation will seek support from people across all

the districts against the privatisation move, MSBEF said in a statement on Monday.

In view of the restrictions on account of Covid-19, the members will use various audio-visual mediums to reach out to the people for their support. The federation, which is affiliated to the All India Bank Employees' Association, said its members will obtain signatures from people on a petition against the privatisation, addressed to the PM and the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.

India-born Druva raises \$147M at \$2B valuation

Pune: Cloud data protection and management company Druva on Monday announced it has raised \$147 million led by CDPQ, a global investment group, taking its valuation to \$2 billion.

The latest funding also has a significant investment by New York-based Neuberger Berman. Founded by CEO Jaspreet Singh and Milind Borate (co-founder and CTO) in Pune in 2008, the entire R&D work at the company is being done from India.

Metro Railway, Kolkata
Kolkata's Pride
COMPREHENSIVE AMC OF MICROLOCK EI SYSTEM

Dy. Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer/M, Metro Railway, Kolkata for & on behalf of the President of India, invites e-Tenders against Open Tender due to open on 14.04.2021 at 15:30 hrs. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Name of Work : Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract of Microlock EI (Electronic Interlocking) System installed at Noapara Carshed for a period of 5 years. Tender Value: Rs. 97.93,980/- . Completion Period: 60 months. The tender can be viewed at website <https://www.ireps.gov.in> The tenderer/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate & must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/bidders can participate on e-Tendering. All relevant papers must be uploaded at the time of participating in e-Tender.

Tender Notice No. : S&T/Work_20-2020, Dated : 16.04.2021

FASTER • SAFER • SMOOTHER • CLEANER

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that a lady namely **Sumitra** alongwith 2 child (Shilpi- Age: 14 years & Chaw-Age: 8 years), W/o Paritosh, R/o G-272, Jahangir Puri, Delhi, Age: 33 years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Built: Medium, Wearing: Blue Colour Suit, Black Salwar and chappal in her feet has been missing from her home since 08.04.2021 at 10.00 am. In this regard a DD No. 51A dated 11.04.2021 has been registered at P.S. Jahangir Puri, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing lady but no clue has come to light so far. if any one having any information about this lady please inform undersigned.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.nic.in SHO
Ph. : 011-24368638, 24368641 P.S. Jahangirpuri, Delhi
Fax : 011-24368639 Ph. : 011-27631600, 27636000
DP/760/NW/2021 8750870228

SBI General launches helpline for health insurance customers

Chennai: Non-life insurer SBI General Insurance Company Ltd on Monday said it has launched "Healthline", a 24x7 helpline service for its health insurance customers.

Healthline service has a dedicated toll free number and mobile number that will be attended by a customer service team 24x7 to address the queries of customers related to risk cover and the claims procedure.

According to Managing Director and CEO P.C.Kandpal, considering the situation with regard to the pandemic, customers would need servicing and support for their health insurance.

SR. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	HVPNL	REPAIRING OF H-TYPE OUTDOOR CABLE TRENCHES (ODCT) COVERS IN YARD AT 220 KV S/STN. HVPNL, KARNAL (NIT NO. 36/TSKNL/2021-22 DT. 16-04-2021)	16.04.2021 23.04.2021	2.94 LACS	www.hvnpn.org.in	01722583789 pro@hvnpn.org.in
2	HVPNL	REPLACEMENT OF 11 KV PANEL SET AT 220 KV S/STN SHAHABAD (NIT NO. 4/AMB/220 KV SHAHABAD/2021-22 DATED: 15.04.2021)	15.04.2021 29.04.2021	1.53 LACS	www.hvnpn.org.in	01722583789 pro@hvnpn.org.in
3	HVPNL	CREATION OF 01 NO. 33KV LINE BAY AT 132KV S/STN. HVPNL, MADHOSINGHANA TO ACCOMMODATE 33KV S/STN. BAKRIANWALI APPROVAL CODE 3B2350* (NIT NO. 01/XEM/TS/SRS/2021-22 DATED 16.04.2021)	16.04.2021 26.04.2021	3.26 LACS	www.hvnpn.org.in	01722583789 pro@hvnpn.org.in
4	DHBVN	NIT OF SUPPLY, TESTING, INSTALLATION & COMMISSIONING OF ELECTRIC LINES UP TO 11KV VOLTAGE	13.04.2021 05.05.2021	05.69 CRORE	www.dhbvn.org.in	01662-223302 ceophsar@dhbvn.org.in
5	UHBVN	ONE NO. JEEP FOR XEN TRIV, UHBVN DHULKOTE (AMBALA)	CLOSING DATE 07.05.2021	4.45 LACS ANNUAL	www.uhbvn.org.in	9315334822 sestores@uhbvn.org.in
6	UHBVN	ONE NO. ERTIGA/CAR FOR SE STORES & WORKSHOPS, UHBVN DHULKOTE (AMBALA)	CLOSING DATE 07.05.2021	5.30 LACS ANNUAL	www.uhbvn.org.in	9315334822 sestores@uhbvn.org.in
7	UHBVN	NIT NO.1/SK-1/2021/2022 DATED 15.04.2021 FOR HIRING OF 1 NOS. VEHICLE (HALF BODY JEEP/ MAHINDRA CAMPER) OPEN FROM BACK SIDE FOR USE S.D.O (OP) SUB DIVISION UHBVN TARAORI UNDER XEN S/U DIVN. NO.1, UHBVN, KARNAL.	CLOSING DATE 29.04.2021	6000/-	www.uhbvn.org.in	9315457383 xenopus1karnal@uhbvn.org.in
8	THE SONIPAT COOPERATIVE SUGAR MILLS LTD, SONIPAT	PURCHASE OF C.S. AND C.I. ITEMS + 11 OTHER WORK	16.04.2021 27.04.2021	1.50 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9728310002 sonipatsugar@gmail.com
9	THE ROHTAK CO-OP MILK PRODUCERS UNION LTD, ROHTAK, A UNIT OF HODCF LTD.	ONE TIME & WHOLE YEAR SALE OF SCRAP I.E OLD POLYTHENE SCRAP, GATTA, PLASTIC TRAY, IRON, TYRE, TUBE, SS SCRAP ETC	16.04.2021 26.04.2021	1.50 LACS	www.vitaindia.org.in	vitarohtak@gmail.com
10	HARYANA STATE ROADS & BRIDGES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED	CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT AND PREPARATION OF DPR FOR PROPOSAL FOR 4-LANING OF RAI-MALIKPUR (RAJASTHAN BORDER) NANGAL CHOUDHARY- NARNALU MOHINDERGARH DADRI ROAD KM. 30.50 TO 34.86 AND 35.60 TO 84.82 INCLUDING BYE PASS OF VILLAGE NANGAL SIROHI WITH STRENGTHENING OF INTERNAL REACH AND CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL TWO LANE ROB PARALLEL TO THE EXISTING TWO LANE ROB AT MOHINDERGARH (FORMERLY OLD NH 148-B) IN MOHINDERGARH DISTRICT	15.04.2021 05.05.2021		https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01274-256660 dgm2rerwari@gmail.com
11	MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE ISMAILABAD	CONSTRUCTION OF STREET FROM THASKA ROAD TO S.C. SHAMSHAN GHAT WARD - 3 & 4 OTHER WORKS	17.04.2021 24.04.2021		https://etenders.hry.nic.in	secymcsmailabad@gmail.com
12	MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, PANCHKULA	SUPPLY/PROVIDING OF MOVABLE MOBILE TOILET VAN IN MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, PANCHKULA	CLOSING DATE 28.04.2021	49.41 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9050060000 xenmcpkl@gmail.com
13	MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, ROHTAK	LETTING OUT ADVERTISEMENT RIGHTS ON PUBLIC TOILETS AND BUS QUE SHELTER OF MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, ROHTAK + 1 OTHER WORK	16.04.2021 23.04.2021	NIL	www.etenders.hry.nic.in	lomcrohtak@gmail.com
14	MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, ROHTAK	CONST. OF STREET FROM DRAIN TO WATER TANK AT VILLAGE GARHI BOHAR, ROHTAK + 8 OTHER WORK	16.04.2021 26.04.2021	204 LACS	www.etenders.hry.nic.in	xenmrohtak@gmail.com
15	HSAMB BHIWANI	RE-CONST. OF 2 NOS. BRICK MASONRY SEWER MANHOLE AND 1 NO. NEW RCC MANHOLE, PROVIDING AND LAYING DI RISING MAIN FROM DISPOSAL NGM BHIWANI TO STP PHED BHIWANI-DADRI ROAD FOR DISPO BHIWANI	CLOSING DATE 29.04.2021	29.15 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	eebhiwani.hsamb@gmail.com
16	THE BALLABGARH COOP MILK PRODUCERS UNION LTD	TO PROVIDE MANPOWER IN DIFFERENT SECTIONS IN MILK PLANT, BALLABGARH + 5 OTHER WORK	16.04.2021 23.04.2021	AS PER TENDER ITEMS	www.vitaindia.org.in	9968604725 vitablbg@gmail.com
17	HSAMB PANCHKULA	CONSTRUCTION OF LINK ROAD FROM VILL. KHATAULI TO KHERI IN THE NOTIFIED AREA OF MARKET COMMITTEE BARWALA, CONSTITUENCY & DISTT. PANCHKULA. + 2 OTHER WORK	19.04.2021 18.05.2021	EMD 5.60 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9417095657 xenpanchkula.hsamb2020@gmail.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in RO NO. 2645

No. of lots	Description of property to be sold with names of co-owners where the property belongs to the defaulter and any other persons is	Revenue assessed upon the property or any part thereof	Details of any encumbrances to which the property is liable	Claims, if any, which have been put forward to the property and other known particulars bearing on its nature and value.
1.	Hypothecated vehicle namely make "PAJERO/2 8 GL" having the registration no. UP-14DT-0022	No information	No information	No information

15. The particulars specified in the Schedule have been stated to the best of the information of the undersigned, but the undersigned shall not be answerable for any error, mis-statement or omission in this proclamation.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal at New Delhi on this 18.03.2021.

(Dattatrey Bajpayee)
Additional Charge Recovery Officer- I DRT-II, Delhi

WESTERN RAILWAY
CONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGE & VARIOUS OTHER WORKS

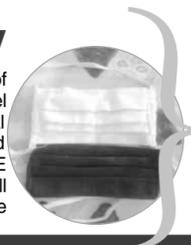
Deputy Chief Engineer (Construction), Western Railway, Surat invites offer through e-tender portal www.ireps.gov.in (Single packet system) for the following tender: Tender No. Dy.CE(C)ST/166(R).

Name of Work: Construction of Bridge No. 441 at Km 264/11-13 between Udina & Surat Stations including associated works for 3rd Line in Connection with Udhna- Jalgaon Doubling Project in Mumbai Division of Western Railway, NIT Value: ₹ 8.44,07,940.88. EMD: ₹ 0.00/-.

E-Bid Closing Date: 07/05/2021 at 11.00 hrs. E-Bid Opening Date: 07/05/2021 at 11.30 hrs. Instruction to the tenderers: (1) Only e-offers submitted online through e-tender portal will be considered. Please note that printed offers will not be entertained. (2) The date of tender, terms & conditions and scope of work are uploaded and are available in electronic format on our website www.ireps.gov.in

Reusing is Key

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Mandi have developed a novel virus-filtering, self-cleaning and antibacterial material that can be used to make and reuse face masks and other PPE equipment. The new masks can kill microbes and are solar light-cleanable



NO ROOM FOR AGEING

PASCALE MORA, Director Scientific Communications, L'Oréal, speaks with MUSBA HASHMI about the benefits of adding hyaluronic serum in skin regime and other things



We all, by now, must have been lured into adding hyaluronic acid into our skin regime. However, not many of us might know what makes it so sought-after. It is the fact that it has multi-healing properties. "Hyaluronic acid is part of natural glycosaminoglycan present in the skin. This molecule has water retention properties, forms network, gives rigidity and structure to the derm. It is a reference for dermatologists, that is why it is well-known. It is used in cosmetics as an anti-aging ingredient. Involved in tissue repair, Hyaluronic acid improves wrinkles, skin elasticity and photoaging signs," Pascale Mora, Director Scientific Communications At L'Oréal India, tells you. Change in weather, associated with cold, humidity percentage or sun exposure might contribute to the occurrence of skin discomfort and even some skin disorders such as redness, dryness, itching (cold, dry environment), a thickening of the epidermis (sun), skin imperfection (hot weather, sweating). Other external factors such as pollution may also exacerbate weather-induced damages such as sun exposure and in term increase aging signs. This, in return, add to the need of keeping your skin hydrated — for which hyaluronic acid is best known for.

"Simple tips would be to provide a regular hydration of the skin, an adapted photoprotection and to ensure a proper cleansing in a daily routine. UVs are responsible for 80 per cent of ageing signs, so photoprotection is really a must," Mora says.

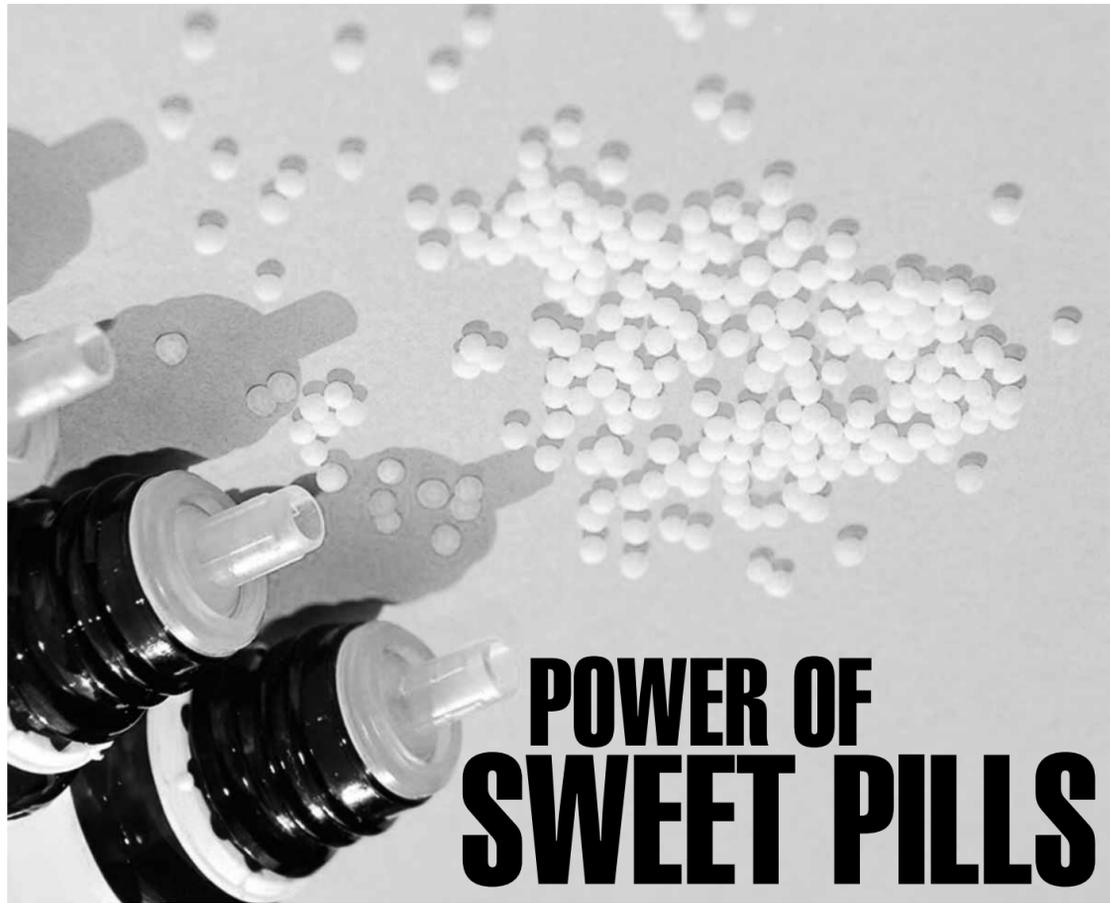
However, everything comes with a price. So does your beauty. In order, to reduce the burden on the environment, L'Oréal has come up with Green Sciences Range.

"The term Green Sciences means all the scientific knowledge ranging from innovative agricultural practices to environmentally friendly processing techniques (biotechnologies, fermentation, extraction, maceration, distillation, etc.) to the formulation of renewable ingredients," Mora tells you.

Biotechnologies for example have recently made very significant scientific progress and many start-ups are developing to exploit the full potential of yeasts and microorganisms to produce ingredients traditionally obtained using petrochemical processes.

"The development of these technologies will contribute to ecological transition, but many economic challenges related to investments and the cost of the transition need to be solved. It is important to adopt a long-term perspective in this field," Mora adds.

This is, she says, a huge challenge. "For the time being and as the knowledge stands, we do not think we will be able to achieve this for 100 per cent of our products by 2030. However, it remains our ultimate goal," she says.



POWER OF SWEET PILLS

Time and again, homeopathy has proved its effectiveness in managing lifestyle diseases. MUSBA HASHMI speaks with DR KALYAN BANERJEE who busts myths related to the treatments and tells how it is taking centre stage

How many times do we actually take to homeopathy for curing lifestyle diseases? Rarely. Why? Because we believe it is a tedious treatment. However, the fact of the matter is it isn't.

"This is a misconception. Homeopathic medicines can act within minutes of consumption. In cases of acute headaches, high fever and acute asthma, homeopathic medicines can provide relief in a very short span of time. However, when addressing a skin condition which is considered incurable or a long-standing case of Diabetes for example, the medicines show an apparently slow but incremental effect," Dr Kushal Banerjee, Consultant Homeopath, Dr Kalyan Banerjee's Clinic, tells you.

In fact, for those who are still skeptical of homeopathy's effectiveness in the management of lifestyle diseases, Dr Banerjee tells you that the importance of lifestyle and providing lifestyle advice to patients was understood first by homeopaths, much before conventional medicine. "The holistic approach employed in homeopathy helps provide extremely effective management of a wide range of lifestyle related conditions like hypertension, elevated cholesterol, Diabetes, and various other disorders. In many cases exclusive homeopathic management of these conditions is undertaken. In advanced or old cases, homeopathy provides a clear add-on benefit to ongoing allopathic

medicines," he explains. With that being said, there are people who have long understood the effectiveness and the advantages of homeopathy over the conventional medicine and have been demanding the same for years.

"Patients have been demanding homeopathic treatment ever since it was discovered. Now, greater awareness of the adverse effects of conventional medicine is fuelling even more interest in homeopathy. Patients have ready access to information about the harmful effects of medicines they may be taking and are looking at options to reduce or stop allopathic medicines," Banerjee tells you.

Also, since homeopathy attempts to address the root cause of disease, patients fed up with their recurring illness and the temporary nature of the relief provided with conventional medicines are turning to homeopathy. Practitioners of conventional medicine are also beginning to acknowledge the important role homeopathy can play in the management of difficult illnesses.

Now if this leaves you wondering what all diseases are in homeopathy's cure list, Banerjee is here to your rescue.

"Homeopathy is a complete system of medicine and has a very wide scope. Allergic conditions of the skin and respiratory system, lifestyle and endocrinological disease, gynaecological conditions including infertility, poly-cystic

Homeopathic medicines can act within minutes of consumption. In cases of acute headaches, high fever and acute asthma, homeopathic medicines can provide relief in a very short span of time

DOCYARD
DR PRAVEEN JHA

MD, DM, Consultant Gastroenterology

REGENCY SUPERSPECIALITY HOSPITAL, LUCKNOW



CARE FOR YOUR LIVER



WORLD LIVER DAY
APRIL 19

Accumulating too much fat is not good for your body and not even for your liver because when too much fat builds up on your liver then a person often undergoes fatty liver issues. A liver is called a fatty liver if it has more than 5 per cent of it is fat. Consuming too much alcohol gives rise to fatty liver but there are still many cases of fatty liver disease, which is not because of alcohol intake. A number of fatty liver conditions fall under the broad category of non-alcoholic liver disease (NAFLD), which is one of the most common liver diseases in adults and children in India.

The unfortunate part of this NAFLD is it often gets undiagnosed because the symptoms of it are ordinary like fatigue, tiredness and weakness. Generally, when we experience this symptom often but we never blame it on NAFLD and rather the sleepless nights we spent on movie binge. Another common symptom of alcoholic fatty liver is nausea. If the disease has led to an advanced complication, then you may have all the signs and symptoms of cirrhosis of the liver such as loss of appetite, yellowing of the skin, itching, easy bruising and tiredness. With the passage of time, the undiagnosed NAFLD causes serious liver conditions called as non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) besides other NCDs including heart disease, diabetes and kidney disease.

To promote liver fat loss, one should have a diet rich with olive oil, nuts and avocados. You can also take protein because it has been found that protein reduces liver fat by 20 per cent

Dietary strategies for getting rid of fatty liver: ■Cut back on carbs, especially refined carbs ■According to various research, only 16 per cent of liver fats come from your diet and a major part arrives from the fatty acids in their blood. So, it's essential that we control our diet as excess carbohydrates in our body often gets converted into fat. The accumulation of fat in the liver increases with the consumption of fructose-rich foods and beverages. So, if you're on a fruit diet, the chances are that your body weight will increase by 2 per cent but your fat accumulation in your liver will increase by 27 per cent.

■Include food that promotes loss of liver fat ■In addition to cutting back on carbs and avoiding excess calorie intake, there are certain foods and beverages that may be beneficial for fatty liver. To promote liver fat loss, one should have a diet rich with olive oil, nuts and avocados. You can also take protein because it has been found that protein reduces liver fat by 20 per cent. Even catechins present in green tea decreases liver fat and inflammation in people with NAFLD. ■Quench your thirst with water

In summers, there is a tendency of gorging on fruit juices as compared to drinking water. But, fruit juice isn't advisable to drink when you have fatty liver diseases. Fruit juice can increase the fat accumulation in the body. Drink water because it helps the liver move toxins through its own cellular systems and speed them on their way out of your body.

■Exercise can help reduce liver fat ■Usually, a person with a BMI over 30 is prone to this disease. Physical activity is essential to reduce both body and liver fat. High-intensity interval training (HIIT) has also been shown to be beneficial for decreasing liver fat. Even low-intensity exercises are equally beneficial. But one needs to do it regularly.

COVID CARE

CINNAMON: With the nation witnessing the second and apparently the more dangerous wave of COVID-19, boosting immunity, apart from masking and sanitising, has taken the centre stage. If one has to sell something off, all that is needed is to call it an immunity booster and it will run out of the shelves at the speed of light.

But one needs not look for such an ingredient in the markets, it is right in the kitchen. Cinnamon, widely used as a flavouring agent, is loaded with powerful antioxidants, such as polyphenols. It has anti-

inflammatory properties. Not only this, cinnamon as a spice is also known for its immunity boosting properties. Just add it in your *kadha* and you are good to go.

It is also linked to a reduced risk of heart disease, the world's most common cause of pre-mature death. It keeps cholesterol, triglycerides and blood pressure under check.

Apart from the beneficial effects on insulin resistance, cinnamon can lower blood sugar by several other mechanisms. So now you have more than one reason to add it in your daily routine.

DadiKaKehna

Acidity is common, both in adults and children. ROSHANI DEVI shares home remedies that can help give you instant relief without you having to run to the doctor



Burning or scratching sensation in stomach? Without a second thought, you are down with acidity. While many believe *garam masala* is poison for acidity, chewing on two-three cloves won't do any harm. Instead it will help treat acidity.

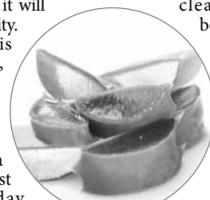
If clove is not your thing, try eating banana. Many people recommend that one eats a banana at least once a day because it is good for the stomach and helps reduce bloating. The fibre ensures that smooth movement in the intestines.

We all know how good aloe vera is for our health. The juice of the plant can

soothe the stomach lining. Curd helps as well. It has natural bacteria that keeps the digestive system healthy.

Basil leaves or tulsi can give you instant relief from acidity. Ensure that you clean the leaves before. Eat a few leaves or boil three-four of them in a cup of water for a few minutes. Sip on the liquid frequently.

Then there is the good old *chhach* or buttermilk. Next time you get acidity drink a glass of it. Buttermilk contains lactic acid that normalises acidity. Add black pepper and or a teaspoon of ground coriander leaves.



Grass that keeps you healthy

A fantastic source of vitamins and minerals, wheatgrass is packed with Vitamins A, C and E, iron, magnesium, calcium and amino acids, says GURPREET SINGH

Wheatgrass is the newest ingredient to hit the natural health scene, popping up everywhere from juice bars to health food shops. Wheatgrass is made from the newly sprouted leaves of *Triticum aestivum*, a common wheat plant. It's easy to grow and prepare at home, or you can buy it as a juice, powder, or supplement. It can help with anything from liver detoxification to immune system improvement.

A fantastic source of vitamins and minerals, wheatgrass has an abundance of Vitamins A, C, and E, iron, magnesium, calcium, and amino acids. Eight of the 17 amino acids are considered necessary, which means your body can't make them, and you have to get them from food. Wheatgrass produces chlorophyll, a pigment linked to a range of health benefits.

Helps in weight loss Wheatgrass juice has

become a common addition to many people's diets as a fast and easy way to lose weight. Wheatgrass includes thylakoids, which are tiny chlorophyll-containing compartments in plants that absorb sunlight for photosynthesis. Although there is no evidence that wheatgrass alone can help you lose weight, some studies have shown that taking thylakoids supplements can help you lose weight. In one small study, adding thylakoids to a high-carb meal increased feelings of satiety as compared to a placebo. Similarly, a study found that supplementing with thylakoids improved satiety by slowing stomach emptying and increasing the release of hunger-suppressing hormones.

Reduces cholesterol Although some cholesterol is needed for the production of hormones and bile, too much cholesterol in the blood may obstruct blood flow and increase

the risk of heart disease. Many studies have found that wheatgrass help lower cholesterol levels. Wheatgrass has symptoms that were strikingly similar to prescription medications used to treat elevated blood cholesterol. A controlled group study showed that supplementing a high-fat diet with wheatgrass helped lowered total cholesterol and increased "good" HDL cholesterol after 10 weeks.

Aids in blood sugar levels Headaches, thirst, frequent urination, and exhaustion are just a few of the signs of elevated blood sugar. High blood sugar levels can lead to serious consequences such as nerve damage, skin infections, and vision problems over time. Wheatgrass has been shown to help keep blood sugar levels in check.

Eases inflammation Inflammation is a natural immune system response that

protects the body from injury and infection. On the other hand, chronic inflammation is thought to play a role in diseases like cancer, heart disease, and autoimmune disorders. Wheatgrass and its components have been shown in several studies to help minimise inflammation.

Precautions: Wheatgrass is usually thought to be healthy for people with celiac disease or gluten sensitivity; this is because gluten is only found in wheat kernel seeds, not in the grass. However, if you have a gluten allergy, you can consult your doctor before eating wheatgrass and only consume gluten-free items. Some people experience nausea, headaches, or diarrhoea after having wheatgrass supplements. It's best to cut down on your intake if you're having harmful effects.

The writer is Managing Director, Jivo Wellness Pvt Ltd



Bollywood
 'If your script is not good, your acting won't come off well.'
 —Boman Irani

SHADES OF YELLOW

Whenever we think of summers, the colour instantly pops up in our mind and instills eclecticism with its cheery vibes. How about giving your home a new refreshing look with it

Whether it's your whole house or one room at a time, the summer season is perfect to play around with the cheerful shades of yellow.

With spring officially bidding adieu to the long lazy, hazy and dark days, Summer 2021 is all about welcoming vibrancy and positive energy to our interiors. Whenever we think of summers, yellow colour instantly pops up in our mind and instills eclecticism with its cheery vibes. How about we paint a similar summer season inside our home for a new refreshing look?

Here we recommend these three decor ideas that are easy to crack and will truly reflect the sheer beauty of summers.

BEAT THE HEAT WITH PANTONE

This year demands the perfect balance of colours around you and what better than Pantone 2021 shades. So as you go about splashing hues of 'Illuminating' and 'Ultimate Gray' in your living area, which is the most



highlighted space of your house, it is important to marry the two colours thoughtfully. Your walls call for a soothing tone like this Sheer Concrete laminate by NewMika from the house of Greenlam Industries Ltd, whose light grey shade will effortlessly lead to comfort, conversation and camaraderie in the room. Now pair the brightness of a yellow armchair against your calming walls to achieve the perfect blend. You can also create a sense of well-being in the room by bringing in the summer breeze with an indoor plant on a wood table.

GOOD MORNING SUNSHINE

The colours we choose for our walls have a high influence on our mood and energy. Therefore, we need to choose happy, positive and encouraging colours especially for the area dedicated to studying or reading. To infuse vibrancy and serenity at the same time, welcome the magic of sunshine inside your house. Try light mustard yellow for your walls, bringing the sunrays to them, and the freshness of the sky with a light blue cushion for your nook. Amplify the tranquil vibes by placing white

framed artworks on your walls as statement pieces. Lastly, keep your furniture wooden and minimal to complete the look that will help you relax and peacefully enjoy your me-time.

SAY IT WITH YELLOW

Your bedroom is meant to give you solace after a long tiring day and at the same time kickstart your day every morning making you feel refreshed. Now, that you have enough reasons to rejig your bedroom this summer, we suggest opting for clas-

sic white like Zulfa White by from Greenlam, which will add freshness and bring restfulness to your space. Since this laminate comes with dimensional stability, you can use it in any climatic condition without worrying about replacing it seasonally. To add some distinction in your interiors, a yellow woven cushion can do all the talking while making it very fun and pleasing to your eyes. Remember to keep your bedding wrapped in solid shades and you are all set to enjoy your morning tea or those refreshing summer coolers in your little paradise.



Real, relatable and clutter breaking

Actor **AYUSHMANN KHURRANA** says that the audience wants to see a different form of heroism on screen

On the ninth anniversary of *Vicky Donor*, actor Ayushmann Khurrana reveals that he was very jittery about the reaction that he would receive from the audience as an unconventional hero in his debut film.

"It's been nine years but it definitely seems like it happened yesterday. I can still feel the rush I felt on the release day nine years back. I was confident of the script but very jittery about the response that I would get from the audience as a lead actor," says Ayushmann.

He adds, "I remember all the phone calls with my family and friends, how they kept telling me that the viewers would welcome me because I have put in my best. I was an outsider just starting to write my own destiny and I was thrilled with the prospect of what life had in store for me. I owe so much to *Vicky Donor*."

Ayushmann credits director Shoojit Sircar for his fantastic debut that became a runaway success at the box office. He says, "I owe everything to Shoojit Sircar for his vision and trust in me as an actor. I owe it to Ronnie Lahiri and Juhi Chaturvedi. It was a film that was trying to change the language of cinema in India and I'm so proud to have been a part of it."

The actor says the success of *Vicky Donor* told him that the audience wants to see a new hero on screen. He says, "It's a film that told me to dream, to be bold, gutsy and risky about content choices, and most importantly told me that the audience wants to see a different form of heroism on screen. They want something real, relatable, endearing and they want to see good cinema that has clutter breaking stories."

"*Vicky Donor's* incredible success helped me stay on course to continuously disrupt the industry narrative with my choice of cinema. I can assure you that I will constantly try doing so through my brand of storytelling," adds Ayushmann.

NO INDUSTRY IS DIFFERENT: RASHMIKA

Actor Rashmika Mandanna started her career with Kannada film and successfully entered Telugu and Tamil films. She is now set to make her Bollywood debut with *Mission Majnu*, followed by her role in the Amitabh Bachchan-starrer *Goodbye*. Rashmika feels there is no difference when it comes to working in any industry.

"I believe every team, director, crew member work differently. So, if the same cast is working with different team, they become different. So, none of them are the same (individually) but no industry is different. Everyone is just a storyteller," she says.

Rashmika has been leading in the film industry as an actress since her 2016 debut with *Kirik Party*. However, the Hindi debut happened only recently, in Badshah's music video *Top Tucker*.

"I think it's just the time because before COVID hit, I had no time because I was doing so many South films and I didn't feel at that time that I should do Bollywood (films). Once COVID hit and other projects slowed down, I felt it was the right time to do it and that's when *Mission Majnu* and *Goodbye* came. There is no particular reason why I didn't do it earlier even though I had a couple of Hindi film offers but I feel now is the right time," she says.



The last few days have been troubling because of the unfortunate comeback of the second wave of COVID-19, restricting public gathering, meetups, closing of spas and gyms. While staying home to be safe will be your new normal again, giving a hold on your fitness won't be something that you have to worry about as here is a list of indoor exercise cycles, which can help you stay fit and healthy. Choose the best that suits your budget and requirements.

TREAD ONE: An indoor spin bike that combines excellent-quality hardware and software. It enables people to do their daily home-workout. A full HD (1920x1080) rotatable screen allows people to have a seamless life-like workout from the comfort of their homes without regretting not going to gyms. This is built to offer an immersive and comprehensive fitness experience, and act as a perfect one-stop fitness solution for modern-day fitness enthusiasts across diverse ages and backgrounds.

With live streaming, on-demand videos and leaderboards option, this bike is a must to have as your home workout equipment. It is designed to bring holistic and challenging workouts in a more accessible and efficient way.

DOLPHY: This Dolphy

TREND TOOL Home sweat home

Second wave of COVID-19 does not have to bring your fitness journey to a halt. Here is a list of indoor exercise bikes, which can help you stay fit and healthy



exercise spin bike stands out as it comes with various specifications that can improve your home workout game. It has self-balanced wide paddles with adjustable straps fit to any size user, adjustable handles to keep your water bottles and comfort-

able pop-pin seat slider with horizontal and vertical adjustments, which help deliver a great fit while working out.

DECATHLON 500 SELF POWERED: This bike is comfortable and easy to mount as it

builds strength and motivates one to work out at home. It has a soft saddle, toe clips and adjustable handlebar that puts one's body at ease while also protecting it from potential injuries an intense workout can cause. The screen on it shows distance

rode, how long you've been riding, current rpm, current speed and calories burned. When you stop, it automatically pauses after a few seconds, then shows average rpm over your ride and average rate. Do you think you need more?

AFTON FU 50: This smart upright bike is the ideal fitness companion for your home. With eight levels of manual resistance, it offers a smooth and comfortable workout. Its attractive design will make this piece of fitness equipment look stunning even if you place it in your living room. By being in front of your eyes, you can make sure you do not skip your fitness regime. It has some amazing console features, which display scan, speed, distance, time cal, rpm, thr, pulse, body fat, recovery, calendar, clock, temperature.

LIFELONG LIF 54 FITPRO: This Lifelong LIF54 FitPro stationary exercise belt bike has six kg Flywheel Adjustable Resistance, which is best for cardio, weight loss and strength training at home. The LCD monitor on it is the best to track your speed, time, calories, distance and heart rate. It can help you understand your exercise situation quickly and effectively. It even has a VR (virtual reality), which helps make your exercise much more fun and engaging.

TREND BLAZER



VIDYUT LAUNCHES HIS BANNER

Bollywood action star **VIDYUT JAMMAL** launched his home production banner, Action Hero Films, on Monday.

"The viewers have embraced and loved me in every character, and this time around I am donning the role of a producer with their blessings. It's my turn to give as good as I got. I see this as an opportunity to empower talented people," said Vidyut, who has completed a decade in the film industry.

fairtalk KAREENA KAPOOR KHAN



'We went for a holiday to Tuscany and we had all these amazing brick oven pizzas and I came back gaining eight kilos because all I did was watch that chef make pizza's day in and day out. It was like an art, making a pizza is easy but starting from scratch and actually doing it the way they do is an art.'

dailytalk KANGANA RANAUT



'Yesterday was the wedding anniversary of my parents. Growing up they lied to us that it was a conventional arranged marriage. It's only much later *nani* (grandmother) told us they had a raging affair. Papa saw mom at a bus stand returning from college, took that bus every day till she noticed him.'

SHARON PLANS A TELL-ALL BOOK

British television personality **SHARON OSBOURNE**, who got into a heated discussion about her friend Piers Morgan with *The Talk* host Sheryl Underwood, says she didn't sign any gagging order and is all set to write a tell-all book about what happened.

A huge uproar ensued after Osbourne expressed support for Morgan on the show, when the latter was heavily trolled for criticising Meghan Markle for her opinions about English royalty on Oprah Winfrey's show recently.





BOUNDARY METER

4s 346

6s 147

PLAYER

- Shikhar Dhawan (DC) 186
- Glenn Maxwell (RCB) 176
- KL Rahul (PBKS) 157

PLAYER

- Harshal Patel (RCB) 9
- Rahul Chahar (MI) 7
- Avesh Khan (DC) 6

MOST SIXES

- Deepak Hooda (PBKS) 8
- Glenn Maxwell (RCB) 8
- Sanju Samson (RR) 7

Bravo takes CSK to 188

DJ impresses in his late cameo which includes six off final ball as others fail to convert good start into big score

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A cameo from Dwayne Bravo towards the end of the innings helped Chennai Super Kings post 188 for nine against Rajasthan Royals at Wankhede Stadium on Monday. CSK lost wickets towards the end with the batsmen going for big hits and also in the face of some good bowling by Royals.



Chennai Super Kings batsman Dwayne Bravo attempts to hit ball for a six during his unbeaten 20 run innings against Rajasthan Royals at Wankhede Stadium. IPL20.com

IT WAS ON APRIL 19 IN 2008 THAT CSK PLAYED THEIR FIRST-EVER IPL GAME, HERALDING MS DHONI'S CAPTAINCY DEBUT IN YELLOW AND 13 YEARS LATER ON MONDAY, HE CAPTAINED CHENNAI SUPER KINGS FOR 200TH TIME

SCOREBOARD

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS (188-9)

Ruturaj Gaikwad c Dube b Mustafizur 10
 Faf du Plessis c Parag b Morris 33
 Moeen Ali c Parag b Tewatia 26
 Suresh Raina c Morris b Sakariya 18
 Ambati Rayudu c Parag b Sakariya 27
 Ravindra Jadeja c Samson b Morris 8
 MS Dhoni c Buttler b Sakariya 18
 Sam Curran run out (Mustafizur/Samson) 13
 Dwayne Bravo not out 20
 Shardul Thakur run out (Samson/Mustafizur) 1
 Deepak Chahar not out 0
 Extras (b 1, lb 4, w 8, nb 1, p 0) 14
Total (9 wks, 20 Overs) 188

Fall of Wickets: 25-1 (Ruturaj Gaikwad, 3.5), 45-2 (Faf du Plessis, 5.4), 78-3 (Moeen Ali, 9.2), 123-4 (Ambati Rayudu, 13.2), 125-5 (Suresh Raina, 13.5), 147-6 (MS Dhoni, 17.2), 163-7 (Ravindra Jadeja, 18.3), 174-8 (Sam Curran, 19.1), 180-9 (Shardul Thakur, 19.4)

Bowling

Jaydev Unadkat 4-0-40-0
 Chetan Sakariya 4-0-36-3
 Mustafizur Rahman 4-0-37-1
 Chris Morris 4-0-33-2
 Rahul Tewatia 3-0-21-1
 Riyan Parag 1-0-16-0

fifth and sixth bowlers (Tewatia and Riyan Parag) employed by Royals skipper Samson.

Tewatia had begun well by conceding only five runs in his opening over and got ride of Moeen Ali (26 off 20).

Opener Ruturaj Gaikwad's struggles continued as his attempt to hit his way out saw him miscue a pull only to see it lob to Shivam Dube off Rahman. He fell for 10 (13 balls, 1 four) after adding 25 runs for the first wicket with fellow opener du Plessis.

Faf showed intent and waded into Unadkat in the fifth over, hammering three fours and one six before an ambitious shot brought his downfall off Morris' bowling.

Mayank wasn't stressed about low scores



PBKS batsman Mayank Agarwal plays a shot during his innings. ©IPL

Back in form with a scintillating half-century, Punjab Kings' Mayank Agarwal says he wasn't too stressed about not firing in the first couple of IPL matches and tried to stick to the things that worked for him in the last edition.

Mayank, who had amassed 424 runs in the last season in the UAE, had scored 14 and 0 against Rajasthan Royals and Chennai Super Kings to make a dismal start to the ongoing season.

However, the 30-year-old from Bangalore found his touch on Sunday as he smashed a sizzling 36-ball 69 to help Punjab post 195 for four against Delhi Capitals.

"I wasn't thinking too much, I planned to do and keep the mindset that worked for me last year. I thought last match I had a good ball, I didn't want to stress too much about it and wanted to look forward and so stuck to what worked for me," he said during a virtual press-conference.

"I was batting well in the nets, I was getting into good positions, it was about holding shape and I don't want to live in the previous games and I am happy how I batted."

The total, however, didn't prove enough as last year's runners-up Delhi Capitals romped home in 18.2 overs, riding on opener Shikhar Dhawan's 49-ball 92.

"I thought it was a good total. It wasn't as easy in the first innings and I thought dew played a factor coming in the second innings," Mayank said.

"I thought Delhi Capitals batted exceedingly well, also there was a dew factor. Credited to Delhi bowlers how they executed after the 12 overs, they went into death bowling and executed it beautifully."

Asked how can dew be countered to make it an even contest, Mayank said: "I don't think we can do much about it as players. It boils down to execution under pressure and practising that. Those are the things which are under our control."

Delhi eye revenge against MI Chennai wickets not unplayable: Mahela

KEY PLAYERS

SHIKHAR DHAWAN
 Gabbar is in good form and was the highest run scorer in both the matches Delhi's won this season

RAHUL CHAHAR
 Rahul was the wrecker-in-chief against KKR and SRH helping MI defend 150 run target with ease

PTI ■ CHENNAI

A battle royale is in the offing as heavyweights Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals cross swords, looking to outsmart each other here on Tuesday. Up against a resurgent side, defending champions MI will need to address their middle-order woes if they are to go for a third consecutive win. Mumbai skipper Rohit Sharma has got starts

and he would be keen to convert it into a big one and so would be Quinton de Kock.

MI have the likes of Suryakumar Yadav, Ishan Kishan, Kieron Pollard, Hardik Pandya and his brother Krunal, who can pummel any attack into submission on their day, but they are yet to fire on all cylinders.

The Mumbai bowlers, led by pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, have been splendid in the last two games when they successfully defended low scores of 150 and 152 respectively. Strike bowlers Bumrah (3 wickets) and New Zealander Trent Boult (6 wickets) have been exceptional at the death.

Leg-spinner Rahul Chahar, whom bowling coach Shane Bond described as a "wicket-taking bowler", has grabbed seven wickets in last two games.

Meanwhile, for Delhi Capitals, the biggest positive has been the form of Shikhar Dhawan, who is the leading scorer so far in the tournament with 186 runs.

Dhawan and young Prithvi Shaw form a lethal opening combination, but the Mumbai skipper needs to convert his starts into big scores.

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The wickets in Chennai are not unplayable but challenging being on slower side, insisted Mumbai Indians head coach Mahela Jayawardene as teams batting first have dominated the matches played at the Chepauk stadium, so far.

Out of six matches played here, thrice teams managed 150-plus score and five times the team that has batted first won the match.

"They are not unplayable wickets. They are good, competitive wickets. And adapting to challenges is always the key for any batsmen or any team. We have been consistent with that approach, it is challenging, but our bowlers have adapted pretty well," Jayawardene said ahead of the team's game against Delhi Capitals.

The 43-year-old former Sri Lanka batsman also said all-rounder Hardik Pandya

Mumbai Indians head coach Mahela Jayawardene during team's nets session. ©mipaltan

has not yet bowled this season due to the niggle he picked up during the ODI series against England.

"We were looking forward for him to be bowling this season but after those matches against England, the last ODI, I believe he picked up niggle, so that is something that we are nursing at the moment."

Jayawardene however exuded confidence that the team would be able to use Hardik's services as a bowler.

"We don't want to risk it, because it is important that we make sure that he (Hardik) is in a position to comfortably come in and bowl. So hopefully in the next few weeks, with a bit of work and all that, we might see him bowling."

"It is not that we are deliberately trying to not bowl him, we would love to have him bowling, but as soon as the niggle is off and he is comfortable, we should be able to use that asset as well," he said.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION BARGARH

e-Procurement Notice No. ONLINE-BGH-01 OF 2021-22

1	Name of the Work	Construction of 11 (Eleven) Nos. building works during 2020-21 in the district of Bargarh.			
2	EMD	Bid Security Declaration			
3	Other details	As per DTCN			
Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender online for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender
		From	To		
1	2	3	4	5	6
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Bargarh	ONLINE-BGH-01 OF 2021-22	5.5.21 at 11.00 A.M.	12.5.21 upto 5.00 P.M.	12.5.21 up to 1.00 PM	15.5.21 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.

Executive Engineer R.W. Division, Bargarh

OIPR-25062/11/0001/2122

NATIONAL HYDROLOGY PROJECT (NHP) STATE PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT (SPMU), ODISHA

H. P. Building, Unit VIII, Delta Square, Bhubaneswar-12. e-mail : dddapbbsr@gmail.com

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL INVITATION FOR BIDS (RFP)

e-Procurement Notice (Single Envelope Bidding Process) Loan No. 8725-IN Date: 19.04.2021

BID REFERENCE: NHP/RFP-2 OF 2021-22

Deputy Director, Data Archiving & Publishing & Procurement Officer(SW), SPMU, NHP-Odisha, HP Administrative Building, Delta Square, Bhubaneswar-751012 invites tenders through e-procurement platform online from eligible bidders for - Consultancy services for preparation of Plan, Design, Estimate and Supervision of Interior works for establishment of state Hydrological Data Centre in 8th floor (Right Wing) of Rajiv Bhawan, Bhubaneswar. Bidding documents are available on line on www.tendersodisha.gov.in which is free of cost. The bidder shall be responsible for downloading and incorporating any addendum uploaded in the e-procurement portal.

(a)	Start date of availability of RFP document (for download from e-procurement portal)	20.04.2021 from 11:00 Hrs
(b)	Last date of availability of RFP document (for download from e-procurement portal)	05.05.2021 at 16:00 Hrs.
(c)	Start date of e-Bid Submission	29.04.2021 at 16.00 Hrs.
(d)	Last date of e-Bid Submission	05.05.2021 up to 16.00 Hrs.
(e)	Time and date of opening of bids Technical Part	06.05.2021 at 11.00 Hrs.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

DD, DA&P & Procurement Officer(SW), SPMU, NHP-Odisha HP Administrative Building, Delta Square, Bhubaneswar-751012

OIPR-32256/11/0001/2122

shortpasses

INDIA OPEN POSTPONED
NEW DELHI: The India Open Super 500 tournament was on Monday postponed due to the raging Covid-19 cases. The \$400,000 India Open was scheduled to be held behind closed doors in Delhi from May 11 to 16.

INDIA ASSURED OF 4 MEDALS
NEW DELHI: Asian champion Vinka and Alfiya Pathan were among the four Indian boxers who progressed to the semifinals of the youth world championships in Kielce, Poland. Gitika and Poonam are the other two boxers.

NAPOLI END INTER STREAK
NAPLES: Christian Eriksen claimed a point for Serie A leaders Inter Milan whose 11-match winning streak ended with a 1-1 draw at Napoli on Sunday. But Inter still have a comfortable margin (9 pts) at the top of the table.

REAL HELD BY GETAFE
MADRID: A depleted Real Madrid delivered a major boost to Atletico Madrid's title hopes on Sunday by drawing 0-0 with Getafe in La Liga. Atletico had thrashed Eibar 5-0 to reignite their own fading challenge and their victory proved even more valuable after Real's goalless draw.

UEFA DELAY FINAL DECISION
MONTREUX: UEFA will announce the final decision over the host cities for this year's delayed Euro 2020 on Friday, with Munich, Bilbao and Dublin in danger of being dropped from the list if the trio cannot welcome spectators to stadiums. Agencies



Spurs sack Mourinho

AFP ■ LONDON

Jose Mourinho was sacked by Tottenham on Monday just six days before they play Manchester City in the League Cup final as the Portuguese boss paid the price for a turbulent campaign.

Mourinho, 58, was dismissed after only 17 months in charge, even though he could have led the club to their first silverware since 2008.

Tottenham have been struggling in their bid to qualify for the Champions League via a top-four finish in the Premier League. They are currently seventh, five points behind fourth placed West Ham, and suffered a shock Europa League last-16 exit against Dinamo Zagreb.

"The club can today announce that Jose Mourinho and his coaching staff have been relieved of their duties," a Spurs statement said.

Tottenham's academy coach Ryan Mason will take first-team training this week and is set to pick the team for Wednesday's Premier League clash with Southampton and the League Cup final.

UEFA confirm 36 team CL reform

LONDON: UEFA has given the green light for a 36-team Champions League reform which will include a single league format to replace the group stage. The changes are slated to come into effect in 2024, with fixtures set to be played on Thursdays instead of

Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and a play-off round added to the first stage. The traditional group stage concept which has seen four teams compete in eight pools with the top two qualifying for the last 16 will be scrapped in favour of a single league including 36 teams.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

Office of the Superintending Engineer, Mechanical Circle, Bhubaneswar

Email Address: semechircle104@gmail.com

e-Procurement Notice No.-SEM/MDB-1/2021-22

A-53

- Name of the Work : Mechanical Gate Works
- No. of Works : 06 (Six)
- Category of executors : SSI Units registered under DIC/ NSIC/ MSME for Irrigation Shutters / Hydro mechanical gates.
- Bid Identification No. : SEM/MDB-1A/2020-21 to SEM/MDB-1F/2020-21
- Estimated Cost : Rs. 11,27,165.00 to Rs. 18,17,735.00
- Period of Completion : 30(Thirty) calendar days
- Date & time of availability of bid documents in the Portal : From dt.23.04.2021 (10.00 AM) to dt.03.05.2021(5.30 PM)
- Last date/ time for receipt of bid in the Portal : Dt.03.05.2021 (up to 5.30 PM)
- Date and Place of opening of Bid: Dt.04.05.2021(04.00 PM onwards in the Olo the undersigned)
- Name of the Officer inviting bid : Superintending Engineer, Mechanical Circle, Bhubaneswar

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>

Sd/-
 Superintending Engineer,
 Mechanical Circle
 Bhubaneswar

OIPR-34056/11/0001/2122

OTHER SPORT