

Covid-19 contagion intensifies in U'khand

More than 2,000 cases reported for fifth consecutive day; 24 patients succumb on Monday

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The second wave of the contagion of Covid-19 which is sweeping across Uttarakhand is showing no signs of abating. This wave is infecting people with an alarming intensity and is proving fatal. On Monday the state health department reported 2160 new patients of the disease while death of 24 patients of the disease was reported.

which is very high. The cumulative tally of the patients in the state has now mounted to 126193 and the death toll has increased to 1892 in the state. The health department discharged 532 patients from different hospitals of the state following their recovery from the disease on Monday. A total of 102899 patients have recovered from the disease in the state and the recovery percentage has now dropped further to 81.54 and the sample positivity rate is 3.75 percent.

22 from Chamoli, seven from Bageshwar and four from Pithoragarh on Monday. The state now has 18864 active patients of the disease which is the highest ever since the pandemic started on March 15 last year. Dehradun continues to be at the top of the table of active cases of the disease with 7583 patients, Haridwar has 5310, Nainital 1944, Udham Singh Nagar 1102, Pauri 827, Tehri 670, Almora 308, Rudrapur 259, Champawat 249, Chamoli 192, Uttarkashi 182, Bageshwar 145 and Pithoragarh 93 active cases of Covid-19.

Covid surge taking heavy toll on Doon

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The provisional state capital of Dehradun is reeling under a severe onslaught of Covid-19. Apart from having the highest number of active patients, Dehradun also accounts for a lion's share in the number of deaths from the disease in the state. Out of the total 1892 deaths reported so far in the state, Dehradun alone accounts for 1087 deaths. On Monday 22 out of total 24 deaths were reported from Dehradun. Here eight deaths were reported from

Government Doon Medical College (GDMC) hospital. Similarly seven deaths from All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh, four from Kailash hospital and three from Mahant Indresh hospital, Dehradun were reported. Two deaths were reported from HNB Base hospital Srinagar on the day. Dehradun also has the highest backlog of untested samples of the disease. In the 25743 samples are yet to be tested out of which 8024 are in Dehradun only.

CM reviews situation, directs stricter checks on people arriving in U'khand

Secretary assures all necessary arrangements made for treatment

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Chief minister Tirath Singh Rawat reviewed the Covid-19 status in the state with senior officials on Monday evening. Directing officials to ensure strict enforcement of CM guidelines, he said that all educational institutes in all districts should be closed. People from other states should be allowed to enter the state only with an RT-PCR negative report. The portal used earlier should be reactivated for registration of natives returning to Uttarakhand. All precautions should be observed to ensure

that the medical health workers and other frontline workers do not get infected. The vaccination drive should also be stepped up. Earlier while addressing the media, the secretary-in-charge Pankaj Pandey informed that there is no need to panic though Covid guidelines should be followed to the letter. Of the total active cases, about 13,500 patients are in home isolation while about 5,000 are in various hospitals. Currently more than 7,000 isolation beds are vacant in the state along with more than 2,500 oxygen support bed, 363 ICU beds and 463 ventilators. Regarding the vaccination, he said that there is no shortage of



vaccines in the state. He also added that there is no shortage of oxygen in the state. Regarding Remdesivir injection, he said that though these might be a little less in the whole country, the same will be supplied shortly to the state. The secretary said that the state has all arrangements for treatment but to break the chain of infection, it is essential to strictly observe the Covid guidelines.

Covid-19 pandemic

AIIMS Rishikesh shuts down general OPD

Emergency care, telemedicine service to remain functional

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In view of increasing contagion of Covid-19, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh has decided to close its OPD service. The hospital authorities have decided that all general patients other than emergency ones would be screened through telemedicine OPD. The hospital Administration has reserved more than 300 beds for the treatment of Covid-19 patients and has claimed that the number of beds would be increased to 500 when required.



The director of AIIMS Rishikesh, Dr Ravikant said that in view of Covid-19 pandemic, it is advisable for general patients to avail benefit of the AIIMS telemedicine services. He added all types of emergency services would continue like before.

The dean hospital administration, Dr U B Mishra said that the hospital has reserved more than 300 beds for Covid-19 patients. There are 80 beds in the ICU facility and 100 ventilators are available in the hospital for the treatment of severe Covid patients. An

emergency centre has also been set up in AIIMS for Covid patients. Here procedures related to screening and hospitalization of Covid-19 patients will be done," he said. Telemedicine phone numbers at AIIMS-R General Medicine - 7217014335 Pulmonary Medicine-- 730289304 Dentistry - 9619181125 Clinical Plastic Surgery - 8791237706 Radiotherapy - 7417970228 Medical Oncology-- 8865989205 Clinical Haematology-- 8865989235 Urology - 8126542780 Psychiatry - 9084976174 Obstetrics and Gynaecology - 7060005851

U'khand Congress sets up Covid control room

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Taking cognizance of increase in the cases of Covid-19 in the state, the Uttarakhand unit of Congress party has set up a control room in the state headquarters of the party. The Vice President of Uttarakhand Congress Suraj Kant Dhasmana said that the Congress president Sonia Gandhi has directed the Congress party leaders and workers to stand with the general public during the time of crisis. He said that on the directive of Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Pritam Singh a Covid-19 control room has been set up at the Rajiv Bhawan. The Covid-19 control room includes Vice President of the party, Kant Dhasmana, state general secretary Navin Joshi, chairman of social media department Shilpi Arora, state secretary Kavindra

Ishwal, state secretary Vikas Nand and Vijay Bhat. Dhasmana said that the PCC president has asked all the presidents of the organisation-aided districts of the party to help the people in the districts and forward necessary information to the PCC. He said that the PCC president has written a letter to the chief minister Tirath Singh Rawat and has assured him that the Congress party would cooperate with the government in this time of crisis. Expressing deep concern on the increase in the death rate, shortage of Remdesivir, Oxygen and ventilators, Dhasmana demanded that immediate corrective measures should be taken. He also said that the PCC would direct the chief secretary, health secretary, director general health services and all district magistrates to cooperate with the Covid-19

14 ventilators of Roorkee hosp non functional: Qazi

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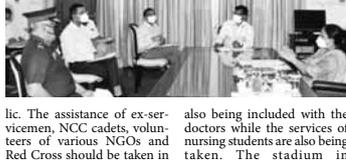
The Congress MLA from Manglaur assembly constituency of Haridwar Qazi Nizamuddin has claimed that 14 ventilators bought last year for the Roorkee government hospital are still lying unused in the hospital. In a statement released in social media, the Congress leader who is Covid-19 positive and is in home quarantine alleged that these ventilators were brought in the Roorkee hospital in June 2020 and they are yet to be made operational. Accusing the BJP government of its inhuman attitude and pathetic approach he said that it is unfortunate that on one hand people are dying of lack of oxygen and ventilators, the ventilators in Roorkee hospital

control room of the Congress party.

Guv directs measures to step up efforts against Covid surge

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Governor Bansi Maurya directed the health secretary to step up efforts being undertaken to check the spread of Covid in the state. Chairing a meeting to review the situation in the state, the governor said that work should be done by the administration on a war footing to check the contagion with the help of the pub-



lic. The assistance of ex-servicemen, NCC cadets, volunteers of various NGOs and Red Cross should be taken in efforts against Covid. She directed the health secretary to take a meeting soon with the district magistrates of the six most affected districts-Dehradun, Haridwar, Udham Singh Nagar, Nainital, Pauri and Tehri. The health secretary in-charge Pankaj Pandey said that the health department had recently received 300 new doctors, MBBS final year students are

also being included with the doctors while the services of nursing students are also being taken. The stadium in Haldwani has been converted into a Covid care unit. The governor directed the health director general Dr Tripti Bahuguna that the best practices of other states should be adopted in Uttarakhand. Public awareness should be raised especially among women and children to maintain social distancing, wear masks and maintain sanitation, said Maurya.

Ajay Kothiyal finally joins AAP

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After weeks of speculation, Colonel (ret'd) Ajay Kothiyal took the plunge and finally joined the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Monday at the Mission Uttarakhand Navratri event of the party. Kothiyal joined the party in the presence of the state in-charge of the party, Dinesh Mohaniya and the state president of AAP, S S Kaler. Talking about joining AAP in the event, Kothiyal said that he has started a new journey in his life and he is quite overwhelmed with the constant support he receives from Uttarakhand's public. He also thanked Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and Mohaniya for giving him the opportunity to join AAP in order to work for the development of the people here. During his virtual address from Delhi, Kejriwal also welcomed Kothiyal into the party

and called him a true soldier. Apart from this, he also said that he is happy to be a part of the development of the state across Uttarakhand for which they had struggled to get a separate state. He said that for the last 20 years, Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have ruled the party in alliance with each other's support. Despite being the ruling party in the State many times, none of the party actually held any investigation into any accusations against each other's party members, asserted Kejriwal. He also said that BJP is ruling the state for the last four years and now, they have appointed a new chief minister who is revoking and retracting all the decisions made by the previous CM of four years. "Is the BJP now playing a joke with Uttarakhand public?" asked Kejriwal. He said that despite having most of the resources in

the State, the BJP and Congress failed to achieve any development in the State. He said that AAP is ready to tackle all the issues and would provide upgraded facilities in the field of education and health among others on the basis of Delhi's model of development. Meanwhile, the party did not announce Kothiyal as the chief ministerial candidate for the upcoming assembly elections in Uttarakhand but Mohaniya hinted at this possibility in his post on playing a joke with Uttarakhand public," asked Kejriwal. He said that despite having most of the resources in



called his life in service of the country and everybody is proud of him and they found all good traits in Kothiyal. He asserted that the presence of Kothiyal would strengthen the presence of AAP in

Uttarakhand politics. Considering the support AAP is getting in the State, Mohaniya added that his party would emerge as the best alternative during the 2022 assembly elections.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICE
In my Army service records my son's name wrongly entered as PREMIESSE. Her correct name is PREMIESSE. G & it should be updated for all future purposes. No. 14419227M Hav (Dresser) A Gyanadosh, Address: 177 Med Regt, C/o 56 APO vide affidavit dated 26 Mar 2021 Rajender Singh Negi Court Compound Dehradun.

Transport department gears up to issue online green cards

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The Uttarakhand Transport Department is all set to start an online service with new software to issue green cards to vehicles with up to 10 seats using Char Dham from next

month. As per the officials, the drivers of the commercial vehicles who would be going to Char Dham Yatra in May would be provided with an online service to apply for a green card. The commercial drivers of up to 10 seater vehicles will get auto-approval for the green card after providing required details and fee submission.

The drivers of commercial vehicles of more than 10 seats can apply online for the green

cards too but they will have to bring their vehicle for the fitness test in the transport office to get the green card. Informing about this, the regional transport officer (enforcement) in Dehradun, Sandeep Saini said that the transport department has prepared the software to issue green cards online and a trial session has also been done. After the State Government's approval of the software within the next few days, the department would start the procedure to make it available online, stated Saini.

PM Arden shares leadership lessons with UPES student

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Nancy Bora, a student of UPES pursuing B.A. in Journalism and Mass Communication, received a letter from Jacinda Arden, the prime minister of New Zealand. Bora had written to Arden to get her perspective on leadership lessons for a project she and her other classmates had been working on. "We decided to make a documentary on the prime minister of New Zealand as she is globally applauded for her leadership style and wrote to her," said Bora.



In her official letter to Bora, Arden shared some pertinent leadership lessons. She stressed on leading with kindness, importance of leaders working hard, following passion and leading to change. "The New Zealand PM also shared, "I knew I could be Prime Minister and a mother, not

FORM NO. URC-2
Advertisement giving notice regarding registration Under Part of Chapter 303 (Particulars Section 17(1) of the Companies Act, 2013 and Rule 4(1) of the Companies Act, 2013 and Rule 4(1) of the Companies Act, 2013, as applicable in the State of Uttarakhand. Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of sub-section (2) of Section 366 of the Companies Act, 2013, an application has been made to the Registrar of Companies Central Registration Centre (CIRCULAR) at M/S SHANTI TRADERS, a partnership firm, 34/113 may be registered under part of Chapter 303 of the Companies Act, 2013, as applicable in the State of Uttarakhand. M/A ARJANTA ENTERPRISES PRIVATE LIMITED. All the particulars of the Company are as follows: To carry on business of manufacturing and trading of all types of rice and food products. 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Cong States' doubt on jobs stoked 2nd wave: Vardhan

PNM ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Monday hit back at former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for his 'offer of constructive cooperation' on Governments Covid-19 management, saying "history shall be kinder" to the senior Congress leader if his valuable advice was followed by his own party leaders.



Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Monday hit back at former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for his 'offer of constructive cooperation' on Governments 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 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 country and playing with the lives of our countrymen. A sitting chief minister of your party created a dubious world record of sorts by being the only head of government directly inciting people against an indigenously developed vaccine! Some Congress leaders even shamed the vaccines in public but took their doses in private, quietly," he charged.

"A word of advice from you to them even if it had been done in private by you may have ensured better protection from these people. Knowing your penchant for constructive cooperation, which you have said you always believed in, I would assume that you did advise them and yet, quite clearly, your advice has been in vain," the minister said.

Vardhan said the former PM's advice is not get tempted to go by absolute numbers, but to go by percentage of population and yet, quite clearly, your advice has been in vain, the minister said.

PM's advice is not get tempted to go by absolute numbers, but to go by percentage of population and yet, quite clearly, your advice has been in vain, the minister said.

British PM cancels India visit on corona surge

PNM/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.

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 Arundhan 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



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.

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 same.

Terminating the cancellation as a 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 along 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 in the country, the worries 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.

Lok Sabha Speaker and India Presiding Officers' Conference (APOC), Om Birla, chaired a meeting of presiding officers of the Legislative Bodies in India and other Leaders on the subject of "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

Doctors upset over VIPs' getting special Covid treatment

PNM ■ 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 Subrangan 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

PNM ■ 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 (6,682 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 affected in similar manner," said 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, anticoagulants, etc - was working.

forefront of the Covid-19 pandemic and yet have no facilities available when they test positive for the virus. "I 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 senior 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, who then turn further resources 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".

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



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

The Congress on Monday said the BJP-led Centre should make probe agencies NIA, CBI and the CID go after black-marketers 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 Fadnis of hoarding Remdesivir, saying a BJP leader holding on to the drug at a "high price" people are scrambling to arrange it is a "crime against humanity".

Taking to Twitter, Priyanka tagged a video of top Maharashtra BJP leaders, including Fadnis, arguing why 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. Fadnis claimed the director was picked up because the BJP managed to get permissions in place for the supply of the drug to Maharashtra.

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

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 or our reliance on others," he added.

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"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 or our reliance on others," he added.

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.

LS Speaker holds meet of presiding officers on coronavirus status

PNM ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker and India Presiding Officers' Conference (APOC), Om Birla, chaired a meeting of presiding officers of the Legislative Bodies in India and other Leaders on the subject of "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 collectively 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

PNM ■ 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 (EPO/AF) 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.

DRDO develops Oxygen Delivery System to tackle virus

PNM ■ 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 into a state of hypoxia, which is fatal in most cases.

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 level 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).



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"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

Holding once again the BJP 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 Kaliganj 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 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 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

PNB ■ 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-ported 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 in-charge 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 Asanol... 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 during a 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 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 that 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 at 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

PNB ■ LUCKNOW

Upset with the Uttar Pradesh Government's failure to contain 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 case loads.

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 as the State Election Commission for holding the panchayat polls. Economy, economy and economy is the only thing 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 that is of no use to you 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 failed to act 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 10 per cent of the population at any given point of time. If hospitals and medicines go off 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.

Regarding such a situation, the night curfew in the name of Corona Curfew and the weekend Curfew are nothing else but mere eye wash.

"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 per cent 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 is 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 fully 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. The government is studying the review meeting the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the Government is not in favour 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 to 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.

"Through 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-civic 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 panchayat 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 Ar-15 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 recalled 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 Subzar Ahmad Ganie of Sephora Kulgam and Amir Ahmad Bhat resident of Malibugh, Imnamsahib Shopian. PNB

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 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 MS 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 has to 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 12,000 beds in Thane district 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 across districts. 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 basic 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 state's district 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, fertilizer 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 Government to dismiss the newly appointed Minister of Health 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 concerning the shortage of Remdesivir 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 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 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.

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 Sarusujal 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 (TTAACD).

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 TTAACD headquarters in Khumlung, 20 km north of Agartala.

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

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 TTAACD.

In the April 6 elections to the TTAACD (result of which declared on April 10), of the 28 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 TTAACD on the advice of the state government.

The results of the elections to the TTAACD are a major setback for the BJP-alliance, which wrested power in Tripura in 2018 after defeating the CPI-M led Left front that ruled the state for 25 years. However, the BJP for the first time won nine seats in the TTAACD 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 TTAACD, which has a jurisdiction on over two-thirds of Tripura's 10,491 sq km area and is home to over 12 lakh people, of which 90 per cent are tribals.

The opposition CPI-M, which was governing the TTAACD 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 TTAACD while TIPRA Motha had recently raised the demand for a 'greater Tripura land' (greater areas for the indigenous tribals). Both the demands were, however, strongly opposed by all the political or party, including the BJP, the CPI-M and the Congress.

The TTAACD 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. IANS

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 year old. We have booked the accused under POCSO act as well," the officer said. IANS

Remove bottlenecks for investment in State, Rajasthan CM tells officers

Jajpur: 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 at the Chief Minister's residence 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. IANS



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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 'batuhs' (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 Mahamandaleshwar Swami Avdeshanand 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 hasmi 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

What Modi really means to people

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



PRAFULL GORADIA

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 *adharma* (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 technology 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 electrically, 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 paeans 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 superhero 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-19 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 George's 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 of 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)

understanding of life. The second wave is having a devastating effect on lives and livelihood and is pushing people to live in the shadow of death and despair. The anxiety and suffering caused by the pandemic is a reality for us. Lockdown-like curbs have exacerbated hardships in many parts of the country. The general feeling is that no one can predict what will happen next.

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

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 innocuous on part of any one State can weaken our fight against the Coronavirus.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

attacked our country and we are its helplessness 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

I am in the UAE for a bilateral visit and not an India-specific agenda. My agenda is UAE-Pakistan and not India-Pakistan.

Pakistan Foreign Minister — Shah Mahmood Qureshi

If your script is not good, your acting won't come off well, and I say this even for theatrical releases. Why should you have weaker scripts just because it is in the theatrical space?

Actor — Boman Irani

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 help and struggling for each vital, one BJP leader is hoarding the injection.

Congress leader — Priyanka Gandhi

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 6,713 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", understandably 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.

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 court 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 Malhotra'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.)

Export subsidies face WTO challenge



UTTAM GUPTA

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

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 subsidising 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 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), and levies 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 interim, 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

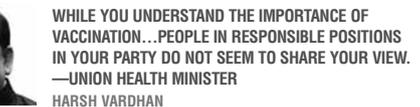
WE MUST RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO LOOK AT THE NUMBERS BEING VACCINATED, AND FOCUS ON THE PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION VACCINATED.

—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

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 drugery, 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.



POONAM SEWAK

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

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



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-

bitation 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 *pani 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 licensed 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.

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 the 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 negotiations underway at the White House, would nearly double 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 National 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 US is back in rejoining the international 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.

"They feel very confident just with the positioning of the bodies after the impact that there was no one driving that vehicle," Herman told KHOU-TV.

Deputies said the car was traveling fast and failed to navigate a turn before running off the road, hitting a tree, and bursting into flames on Saturday night. The identity of the victims had not been released by Sunday afternoon.

KHOU reported that one was 69 and the other was 59. Tesla did not immediately

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, 11 cops held in custody have been 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 'sahri'," 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

Release detained journalist, Japan urges Myanmar

Yokyo: 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

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 Berdamou Agouma came a day after the military declared that a rebel column had been "decimated" by air and ground forces. "We don't die. It is not immediately possible to independently confirm the military's claims given the remote location where the fighting took place.

Confusion and fear mount-

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 after a Moulvi's visit to the Mohammadpur police station.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate, Debdash Chandra Adhikary, passed the order after the sub-inspector of the police station, Md Sajedul Haque, submitted the complaint to 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.

"Five days ago, the government was talking about terrorists in the Faya area, but today we are told that the rebels are in the Mda 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

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 curbing 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

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 top judiciary 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.

Navalny is the only member of the European Union, Germany and others urged the Russian leadership to provide adequate medical treatment to Navalny. IANS

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 Railway Station, New Delhi. L10E10003111981

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 no.

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 SPOs 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

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. local time. It took off a few feet from the ground, hovering in the air for about 20 to 30 seconds, and landed.

After this feat, the team will now attempt additional experimental flights of incremental length 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 atmosphere 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. 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.

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, Jashyn, were in a car parked in the McDonald's 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 the father was shot in the torso and taken to the same hospital, where his condition was listed as serious, police said. AP

PUBLIC NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No-23, New Rohtak Road, Karoli 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 same has 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 on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	T. DHIR, Hema, B-151 A, Ground Floor, Puri Pehladpur, New Delhi. L10E10003111981	Free Hold Flat No. L-1/222-B, 1st Floor, Without Tenure Rights, DDA Flats, Category-I/G, Kalkaji, New Delhi	18-Dec-2019 / 18-Dec-2019 / 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: 15 April 2021
Place: Delhi NCR
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to all concerned that M/s. Shri Ram Shyam Sharma & Co. is a registered firm in Delhi, India. It is in respect of residential property, 4-B, Sector-11, Noida, Distt. Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP had executed a will deed on dated 18.11.2020 in respect of residential property, 4-B, Sector-11, Noida, Distt. Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP. The said will deed was registered in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Noida, Distt. Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP on dated 18.11.2020. The said will deed was registered in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Noida, Distt. Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP on dated 18.11.2020. The said will deed was registered in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Noida, Distt. Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP on dated 18.11.2020. The said will deed was registered in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Noida, Distt. Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP on dated 18.11.2020.

S. S. GUPTA ADVOCATE
Ct. No. - 209, Karolbagh Courts, Delhi-32

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 sell-off.

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 from 882.61 points or 1.81 per cent.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty tanked 258.40 points to 1,779.45.

PowerGrid was the top loser in the Sensex pack, slumping 4.17 per cent, followed by ONGC, Indus 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 restrictions 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 sectors 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 sentiment 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 amid session weakness. 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 gained 58.92 per cent against 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 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 relations without 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 working capital 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 problems 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 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 confining or other audio visual 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.

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'Britcoin' 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.

The bank said the new currency, if it comes to pass, would be a new form of digital money for use in households and businesses and would exist alongside cash and bank deposits, rather than replacing them.

Digital currencies, which are only available in digital or electronic form, are already being explored or even implemented in several other countries.

With many proponents drawing inspiration from the success of Bitcoin and other so-called private cryptocurrencies.

However, digital currencies, like the one being considered in the UK are different in a key sense to Bitcoin as they are issued by state authorities.

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 SAFT (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 and Winmore Leasing and Holdings.

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 share of 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 Drupa raises \$147M at \$2B valuation

Pune: Cloud data protection and management company Drupa 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 Newberg

New Covid surge may upend fuel demand recovery

New Delhi: Rising coronavirus

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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 coverage and the claims process.

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.

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE. Table with columns: SR. NO., NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH, NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER, OPENING DATE, AMOUNT, WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH, NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL. Includes items for cable trenching, vehicle hiring, and construction work.

WESTERN RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGE & VARIOUS OTHER WORKS. Deputy Chief Engineer (Construction), Western Railway, Mumbai. Includes details for bridge construction and other works.



pioneer HEALTH

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



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 you control your 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.

COVIDCARE

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 premature 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.



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 Kunal 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 illnesses 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 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

ovarian disease (PCOD), musculoskeletal conditions, gastro-intestinal disorders and neurological disorders are some of the diseases which have been effectively cured. The list, however, is very long," he says.

He feels that given the benefits of the treatment, homeopathy should be promoted even more through activities of the Ministry of AYUSH and other relevant departments. "There should be a clear focus on popularising homeopathy and for making it available at the primary, secondary, and tertiary care level. All major hospitals should have departments of homeopathy and offer it to anyone who may want it. Homeopathy should also be considered as an add-on to conventional medicines wherever it cannot replace it," he adds.

Practitioners of conventional medicine should also understand that homeopathy is an extremely effective option which should be suggested and supported if the patient is desirous of it.

"Not only this, research interest in homeopathy has grown and higher quality research involving homeopathic medicines is increasing. Homeopathy has demonstrated its ability to address emerging clinical entities time after time. During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic homeopathic interventions were found to have a protective effect against it and homeopathic medicines are being used in the management of COVID-19 as well," Banerjee says.

NO ROOM FOR AGEING

PASCALLE 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 natural channels, 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-ageing ingredient. Involved in tissue repair, Hyaluronic acid improves wrinkles, skin elasticity and photaging signs," Pascale Mora, Director of 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 ageing 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.

DadiKa Kehna

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, it 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 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 can 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 lower 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 pair a similar summer season inside our home for a new refreshing look?

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 wellbeing 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 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 *Kirki 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.



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.



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.

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, tar, pulse, body fat, recovery, calendar, clock, temperature.

LIFELONG LIF54 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.

TRENDBLAZER

DHAWAN HAS A LOT OF EXPERIENCE. YOU CAN TALK TO HIM ABOUT ANYTHING. END OF THE DAY, WHAT HE'S GIVING TO THE TEAM IS COMMENDABLE

—RISHABH PANT



TODAY

VS

LIVE FROM
STAR SPORTS NETWORK

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

Abramo came 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 the Royals.

Bravo (20 not out off 8 balls) smashed a huge six off the last ball of the innings from Mustafizur Rahman (1/37) to ensure the Super Kings got close to 190.

Faf du Plessis top scored with 33 off 17 balls as the CSK batsmen got starts but couldn't capitalise on them after being put in to bat.

Young Chetan Sakariya (3/36 from 4 overs) was the best bowler for Rajasthan while Chris Morris finished with 2/33 despite conceding 15 runs in his final over.

Dhoni, in his 200th match as CSK captain, came in to bat at No 7 but could not get going as quickly as he would have liked. He, however, managed two boundaries in his 17-ball 18 before being beaten by an off-cutter by Sakariya only to give a catch to Jos Buttler. He survived a run-out chance and a few anxious moments in his brief knock.

Ambati Rayudu (27, 17 balls, 3 sixes) and Suresh Raina (15, 15 balls, 1 four, 1 six) added 45 runs in quick time for the fourth wicket before the former perished going for an attacking shot on the off-side off Sakariya.

Sakariya struck again a few balls later, getting Raina to hit one straight to the keeper. CSK slipped to 2 for five in 15th over.

Rayudu hit sixes off successive deliveries in Tewatia's second over, scoring 14 runs as he and Raina attempted to take advantage of the



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.

SCOREBOARD

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS (188-9)

Ruturaj Gaikwad c Dube b Mustafizur 10
Faf du Plessis c Parag b Morris 33
Mooen 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
Dwayne Bravo not out 20
Shardul Thakur not out (Samson/Mustafizur) 1
Deepak Chatur not out 0
Extras (b 1, lb 4, w 8, nb 1, p 0) 14
Total (9 wickets, 20 Overs) 188
Fall of Wickets: 25-1 (Ruturaj Gaikwad, 3.5), 45-2 (Faf du Plessis, 5.4), 78-3 (Mooen 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 4-0-32-2
Rahul Tewatia 3-0-21-1
Rohan Parag 1-0-16-0

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

Tewatia had begun well by conceding only five runs in his opening over and got ride of Mooen 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 go to Shivam Dube off Rahman. He fell for 10 (13 balls, 1 four) after adding 25 runs for the first wicket with fellow opener Dhoni.

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.

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

Mayank wasn't stressed about low scores



PKBS batsman Mayank Agarwal plays a shot during his innings.

Back in form with a scintillating half-century, Punjab Kings' Mayank Agarwal says he wasn't 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 who they executed after the 12 overs, they went into death bowling and executed it beautifully," Mayank said.

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."

boundarymeter

4s	346
6s	147

PLAYER	RUNS
1. Shikhar Dhawan (DC)	186
2. Glenn Maxwell (RCB)	176
3. KL Rahul (PBKS)	157

PLAYER	WKTS
1. Harshal Patel (RCB)	9
2. Rahul Chahar (MI)	7
3. Avesh Khan (DC)	6

MOST SIXES	RUNS
1. Deepak Hooda (PBKS)	8
2. Glenn Maxwell (RCB)	8
3. Sanju Samson (RR)	7

SUMMER SLAM



Kolkata Knight Riders teammates Prasidh Krishna, left, and Kuldeep Yadav wearing PPE kits pose for photos in flight as the team travel to Chennai for upcoming IPL matches.

MURALITHARAN DISCHARGED
Sri Lankan legend Muralitharan was discharged on Monday after undergoing a coronary angioplasty at a city hospital in Chennai. The former spinner, who is part of the Sunrisers Hyderabad support staff, went for the planned procedure on Sunday. Muralitharan would rejoin the SRH squad after undergoing the mandatory seven-day quarantine period.

PLAY WITH POSITIVE MINDSET: DHAWAN
DC batsman Shikhar Dhawan who played match winning 92 against Punjab Kings says Delhi Capitals will have to play with a positive mindset against Mumbai Indians. "They (MI) have played three games in Chennai, so they know the conditions there. For us the challenge will be to switch on mentally according to the wicket and prepare our plan. Then we just have to go out there and implement the plan and play with a positive mindset and look to win the game."

'WAS WORRIED ABOUT MY TECHNIQUE'
Prithvi Shaw says he had started 'worrying' about his technique after being dropped in Australia before roaring back to form in domestic cricket, thanks to a few technical changes he made in his game. After getting dropped from the Test side after the first Test in Australia, I started worrying about my technique on why I was getting bowled. Even if it was a minor mistake, I wanted to minimize that. I started working on it there itself," said Shaw.

	P	W	L	NRR	PTS
1. RCB	3	3	0	+0.750	6
2. DC	3	2	1	+0.453	4
3. MI	3	2	1	+0.367	4
4. CSK	2	1	1	+0.616	2
5. RR	2	1	1	+0.052	2
6. KKR	3	1	2	-0.633	2
7. PBKS	3	1	2	-0.967	2
8. SRH	3	0	3	-0.483	0

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

VENUE: CHIDAMBARAM STADIUM, CHENNAI

HEAD TO HEAD

Matches	28
Delhi Capitals	12
Mumbai Indians	16

LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

- MI beat Delhi Capitals by 5 wickets in Abu Dhabi
- Mumbai Indians won by 9 wickets against DC in Dubai
- Mumbai Indians defeated Delhi Capitals by 57 runs in Dubai (Qualifier 1)
- Mumbai Indians beat Delhi Capitals by 5 wickets in Dubai (Final)

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 Chennai stadium so far.

Out of six matches played here, three times 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.

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 something 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.

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 Mumbaier needs to convert his starts into big scores.

Delhi opted for Australian Steve Smith on Sunday but, as they are next playing on the slow Chepauck track, they might go back to Ajinkya Rahane, who is looking better suited for such tracks.

Skipper Rishabh Pant has the ability to take any attack to the

201

Kieron Pollard with 201 sixes in 150 innings of 167 matches, is the only MI batsman to smash 200 or more sixes in IPL

194

Rishabh Pant who hit 194 fours in 71 innings of as many matches, needs just six fours to become only second batsman after Virender Sehwag (266 fours in 79 innings) to complete a double century of fours for Delhi Capitals in IPL

cleaners. The DC team management was hoping that the top-order fires in unison against the defending champions, to whom they had lost in the final last year.

Their pace attack is led by South African Kagiso Rabada and Chris Woakes, and the two have been impressive so far. They have an additional option in Anrich Nortje, who has also joined the squad.

Delhi played four pacers in the game against Punjab, but in Chennai, they could play more spinners as the track is conducive for the slower bowlers.

short passes

INDIA OPEN POSTPONED
NEW DELHI: The India Open Super 500 tournament was 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 Vinika and Afriya Pattnay 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 has 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 on 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.



Spurs sack Mourinho

PTI ■ 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 pitch the club for Wednesday's Premier League clash with Southampton and the League Cup final.

UEFA confirm 36 team CL reform

AFP ■ 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.

European football's main governing body announced a number of changes to the competition on Monday amid reports of a rival Super League formation which could see 12 of the biggest clubs on the continent breakaway.

The changes are slated to come into effect in 2024, with fixtures set to be played on Thursdays and Wednesdays, and a play-off round added to the first stage.

UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin has outlined the main reasons behind the reform in an official statement, which reads: "This new format supports the status and future of the domestic game throughout Europe as well. It retains the principle that domestic performance should be key to qualification and reconfirms the principles of solidarity."

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.

Each team will play a total of 10 games home and away, with the top eight automatically qualifying for the last 16, and those finishing between ninth and 24th to compete in two-legged play-offs to decide who else makes the knockout stage.

The competition, that finishes lower than club will exit European competition completely, and the last 16, quarter-finals, semi-finals and final will all continue with their original format.

The calendar has yet to be worked out to accommodate four additional matches but they will be played between September and January, while France has been handed a fifth qualifying spot from Ligue 1.