

OPINION 6
WEST BENGAL'S
LAGGING ECONOMY

MONEY 9
FPIS PULL OUT ₹7,622 CR
SO FAR IN APRIL

SPORT 12
CSK BEAT RCB
BY 69 RUNS

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Delhi gets just 48% of O2 demand

Supplier INOX throws in the towel; situation unlikely to improve soon

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI
More than 50 Covid-19 patients have suffocated to death for want of oxygen in Delhi hospitals in recent days, but the demand-supply mismatch continues to play havoc. The critical gap between demand and supply of medical oxygen stands around 300-320 Metric Tonnes (MT) per day in Delhi alone.

Despite heart-rending tales of patients dying painful death for want of oxygen, the situation may not improve any sooner. Adding to the worry, INOX Air Product Private Limited, the main supplier to Delhi hospitals, has warned the State Government that it will not be able to meet the

increased demand because of production constraints.

INOX in their letter to Udit Prakash, Secretary, (Health and Family Welfare), Delhi Government said, "The demand for medical oxygen has increased exponentially on April 21 and INOX will not be able to cater to such increased demands as we have production constraints."

INOX is providing oxygen to 45 hospitals across the NCT of Delhi.

"INOX has a contractual relationship with these hospitals and is providing medical oxygen as per the terms of these contracts, out of the list of hospitals mentioned by the Delhi Government in a letter dated April 22, 2021, please note the

INOX has no contract with UK hospital, Santosh hospital, Holy Family, and therefore will not be able in a position to supply oxygen to these hospitals," INOX has said.

The letter further reveals that the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has directed INOX to dedicate 100 MT per day of medical oxygen in Delhi.

"INOX being committed to providing the maximum quantity possible, on April 18, 2021, supplied 117 MT, on 19 April

supplied 115 MT, on April 20, 141 MT and on April 21 supplied 115 to the listed hospitals mentioned in Annexure A, the supplies made by INOX was over and above the quantity directed to be supplied by MOHFW," it said.

It's clear from the letter that despite the clamor, INOX will not be able to do anything to meet the demand of Delhi hospitals. In that situation, the Delhi Government will have to entirely rely in alternative

source of oxygen for which Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is making desperate pleas to industrial houses to come to rescue of Delhi.

Incidentally, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Sunday claimed the Centre is providing adequate quantity of oxygen to the Delhi Government and blamed the Kejriwal administration for the failure in removing distribution bottlenecks.

Continued on Page 2

No walk-in for Covid jabs, CoWIN registration must

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As India gets ready to inoculate its billions of adult population from May 1, the Government on Sunday made it clear that no walk-ins will be allowed as registration will be mandatory on CoWIN portal. The details of the rate of the vaccines will be displayed on the portal.

The vaccines will also not be sold at pharmacists or chemist shops in the open market. Covishield manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII) will be given at ₹400 per dose to States and ₹600 per dose to private hospitals, while Bharat Biotech's

Vaccines' rates to be displayed on portal

Covaxin will be available at ₹600 per dose at the vaccination sites set up by the States while in private hospitals, the dose will cost ₹1,200.

The beneficiaries can make an informed choice at the time of booking an appointment at a private vaccination centre.

The Government is expecting an increase in demand for the vaccine once it opens up for all those aged 18-44 years. The registration for these categories will begin on the CoWIN platform and Aarogya Setu App from April 28. The inoculation process and documents to be provided to get the jab remain the same.

However, those aged 45 years and above can still avail the facility of on-site registration to get jabs, officials said.

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Maha, Rajasthan, Odisha to provide free vaccines

Mumbai/Jaipur/Bhubaneswar: After few States already announcing free vaccine, now Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Odisha Governments will provide vaccines for free to adult citizens below 45 years.

Biotech for Covaxin shelf life extension

New Delhi: Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech on Sunday sought DCGI nod to extend the shelf life of its Covaxin. A few months ago Covishield manufacturer Serum Institute of India (SII) too had moved the top drug regulator for a similar request and had got approval too. However, while the DCGI gave nod to SII to extend Covishield shelf life from six to nine months, the WHO has rejected SII's proposal, citing insufficient data.

With a tally of 832 deaths, the State surpassed the earlier highest Covid-19 toll of 773 recorded on Friday. P5

O2 DATA OF APRIL 22 Delhi's demand: 700 MT Allocated: 480 MT Delivered: 380 MT	O2 DATA OF APRIL 23 Delhi's demand: 700 MT Allocated: 480 MT Delivered: 309 MT
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O2 DATA OF APRIL 24 Delhi's demand: 700 MT Allocated: 490 MT Delivered: 335 MT
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O2 DATA OF APRIL 25 Delhi's demand: 700 MT Allocated: 490 MT Delivered: awaited



Source: Delhi Govt

Lockdown in Delhi extended till May 3

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The ongoing lockdown in Delhi has been extended by another week, with the national Capital still showing a high positivity rate despite a marginal drop in the daily coronavirus figures.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said saying the severity of Covid-19 is unabated and positivity rate has been as high as 36 per cent in the last few days.

The lockdown imposed on April 19 night will now continue till 5 am on May 3, he said. Before extension, it was scheduled to end at 5 am on April 26.

Liquid O2 only for medical purpose, raise production, Govt asks plants

New Delhi: The Centre on Sunday barred the use of liquid oxygen for any non-medical purpose and asked manufacturing units to maximise its production and make it available to the Government

for medical use. The order by Union Home Secretary came amid a scarcity of medical oxygen in many parts of the country, particularly in Delhi, that have been hit by a fresh wave of the pandemic.

4 suffocate in Rewari hospital

Rewari: Four critical Covid patients died due to scarcity in oxygen supply at Viral Hospital in Rewari district of Haryana on Sunday. The hospital administration has accused the State Government of stopping the truck of oxygen which was on its way from Bawal city to the hospital on Sunday afternoon. The Government rejected the charge.

'Corona curfew' extension in Bhopal till May 3

Bhopal: The "corona curfew" imposed in Bhopal of Madhya Pradesh to tackle the surge in Covid-19 cases has been extended till May 3, an official said on Sunday. The curfew in the State capital was set to end at 6 am on April 26.

It has been extended in Bhopal and Berasia town of the district till 6 am on May 3, an order by Collector Avinash Lavaniya said.

Covid-19 IN INDIA	
TOTAL CASES: 1,73,06,300 (+3,54,533)	
DEATHS: 1,95,116 (+2,806)	
RECOVERED: 1,42,96,640 (+2,18,561)	
ACTIVE: 28,07,333	
MAHARASHTRA: 42,95,027	
KERALA: 14,05,656	
KARNATAKA: 13,39,201	
UTTAR PRADESH: 10,86,625	
DELHI: 10,27,715(+22,933)	

PIOs campaign to press Biden, WHO to help India fight Covid surge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Americans in the US have launched a campaign on online platform change.org to press the Biden administration and the WHO to help India counter the second wave of Covid surge.

Nearly 34,000 PIOs have signed the online petition to move the US Government to provide assistance like lifting the embargo on raw materials used for making anti-Covid vaccines and cheaper antiviral drug Remdesivir as also medical grade oxygen logistics.

The current Covid-19 situation in India is dire. In many parts of the country, cases are doubling every 5 days, and the unofficial death count may be as high as 17,000/day. The country is running out of hospital beds, oxygen supplies, and critical drugs such as Remdesivir. Fewer than 5% of eligible population has been vaccinated and there are reports of double or triple



Pic: Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

mutants that may be resistant to vaccines," states the online petition.

It further said, "The Biden administration and the World Health Organization need to help India face this challenge."

The petition also urged the US Government and the WHO to provide assistance through actions like providing access to essential ingredients and the know-how for mRNA vaccines so that vaccine manufacturers in India can manufacture these vaccines.

Continued on Page 2

In damage control, US to rapidly deploy more Covid support to India

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US will rapidly deploy additional support to India and its health-care heroes amid the horrific Covid-19 outbreak, Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said.

Blinken's remarks came as pressure grew on the Biden administration to ship Covid-19 vaccines along with several life-saving medical supplies to India.

"Our hearts go out to the Indian people in the midst of the horrific Covid-19 outbreak," Blinken said in a tweet on Saturday night.

"We are working closely with our partners in the Indian Government, and we will rapidly deploy additional support to the people of India and India's health-care heroes," Blinken added.

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said the United States is deeply concerned by the severe Covid outbreak in India.

"We are working round the clock to deploy more supplies

COUNTRIES COME TO RESCUE INDIA!

- More than 600 pieces of vital medical equipment, including ventilators and oxygen concentrators, will be on their way to India, the UK Government said on Sunday
- The German Defence Ministry on Sunday said it's examining the possibility of providing a mobile oxygen generator and other aid to India
- Saudi Arabia to ship 80 metric tonnes of oxygen to India
- Oxygen, ventilators from Singapore sent to help in India's Covid-19 crisis

and support to our friends and partners in India as they bravely battle this pandemic. More very soon," Sullivan said.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said on Friday that the US was working closely with Indian officials at both the political and experts' level to identify ways to help address the crisis.

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CAPSULE

82 KILLED IN INFERNO IN IRAQ'S COVID-CARE WARD
Baghdad: The death toll from a massive fire in a Baghdad hospital for coronavirus patients rose to 82 Sunday, as anxious relatives searched for those missing and the Government suspended key health officials for alleged negligence.

EMINENT VOCALIST RAJAN MISHRA DIES OF COVID
New Delhi: Renowned Hindustani classical vocalist Pt Rajan Mishra died due to Covid-19 complications at a hospital here on Sunday evening.

UMAR KHALID TESTS +VE, ISOLATED WITHIN JAIL
New Delhi: Former JNU student Umar Khalid has tested positive for Covid-19, and has been isolated within the Tihar Jail premises here, officials said.

DEATH TOLL IN AVALANCHE IN CHAMOLI RISES TO 12
Gopeshwar: The death toll in an avalanche in Chamoli district rose to 12 on Sunday.

2nd Covid wave like storm, shaken nation: PM in Mann Ki Baat

'Centre has put its entire might to help States in battle against pandemic'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday described, in his monthly radio talk "Mann Ki Baat", the second Covid-19 wave as a "storm" that has "shaken the nation" but sought to assure that the Central Government has put its "entire might" to assist State Governments in their efforts to win the battle.

Prime Minister said to emerge victorious, this time around, all should accord pri-

ority to "scientific and expert advice".

"After successfully tackling the first wave, the nation's morale was high. However, this storm (2nd wave) has shaken the nation," said Modi who during his talk interacted with a range of medical professionals and even an ambulance driver, and listened to their experiences on the ground zero of Covid-19 and took their suggestions.

Those who spoke to the Prime Minister told him how available medicines are able to reduce the impact of coronavirus and that "vaccine hesitancy" among people had considerably reduced following the spread of awareness and counseling.

Continued on Page 2

Smokers & vegetarians less prone to Covid-19

New Delhi: Smokers and vegetarians were found to have lower sero-positivity, while those with blood group "O" may be less susceptible to coronavirus, according to a survey by an top research body.

The pan-India serosurvey, conducted by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), studied the presence of antibodies against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes the coronavirus disease (Covid-19), and their neutralisation capability to infer possible risk factors for infection.

The study, done by a team of 140 doctors and scientists, assessed 10,427 individuals in more than 40 CSIR laboratories and centres in urban and semi-urban settings, and their family members.

PTI

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Sero-positivity lower in smokers & vegetarians, says CSIR survey

New Delhi: Smokers and vegetarians were found to have lower sero-positivity, while those with blood group 'O' may be less susceptible to coronavirus, according to a survey by an top research body.

The pan-India serosurvey, conducted by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), studied the presence of antibodies against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and their neutralisation capability to infer possible risk factors for infection.

The study, done by a team of 140 doctors and scientists, assessed 10,427 adult individuals working in more than 40 CSIR laboratories and centres in urban and semi-urban settings, and their family members. These people voluntarily participated in the study. The survey suggested that despite COVID-19 being a respiratory disease, smoking might be acting as the first line of defence due to its role in increasing the mucous production.

It, however, cautioned that there was a need for focused mechanistic studies to understand the effect of smoking and nicotine on coronavirus infection.

"Smoking is known to be severely detrimental to health and associated with multiple diseases and this observation should not be taken to be an endorsement, especially given that the association is not proved to be causal," the paper stressed. It indicated that vegetarian food rich in fiber might have a role to play in providing immunity against COVID-19 due to its anti-inflammatory properties by modification of gut microbiota.

The survey also found that those with blood group 'O' may be less susceptible to infection, while 'B' and 'AB' were at a higher risk. Sero-positivity was highest for blood group type 'AB', followed by B, it said, adding that blood group 'O' was found to be associated with a lower positivity rate.

Shantanu Sengupta, one of the co-

authors of the paper, said the paper was recently peer-reviewed.

Earlier, two studies from France and similar reports from Italy, China and New York reported lower COVID-19 infection rates among smokers.

A study by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which examined over 7,000 people in the US who tested positive for COVID-19, also had similar findings.

Interestingly, the study found that only 1.3 per cent of survey participants were smokers, compared to the CDC report that 14 per cent of all Americans smoke. Similarly, UCL (University College London) academics that looked at 28 papers across the UK, China, France and the US, and found the proportions of smokers among hospital patients were lower than expected.

One of its studies showed that in the UK, the proportion of smokers among COVID-19 patients was just five per cent, a third of the national rate of 14.4 per cent. **PTI**

66,191 new cases in Maha, 832 deaths

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

With no let in the continued surge in the fatalities and infections in Maharashtra, the daily Covid-19 deaths shot up further to 832 on Sunday, while 66,191 more people tested positive in various parts of the state.

A day after the pandemic claimed 676 lives and left 67,160 people infected in the state, the Covid-19 crisis worsened as Maharashtra notched an all-time record of 832 deaths while the number of infections dropped marginally to 66,191.

With a tally of 832 deaths, the state surpassed the earlier highest Covid-19 toll of 773 recorded on Friday.

With 832 new deaths, the Covid-19 toll climbed from 63,928 to 74,760. Similarly, with 66,191 fresh infections, the total positive cases rose from 42,28,836 to 42,95,027 in the state.

As 61,450 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged

The total 'active cases' in the State rose from 6.94,480 to 6,98,354. The fatality rate in the State stood static at 1.51 per cent

from the hospitals since the second week of March last year went up to 35,30,060. The recovery rate in the state for the first time in several days rose from 82.02 per cent to 82.19 per cent.

The total 'active cases' in the state rose from 6.94,480 to 6,98,354.

The fatality rate in the state stood static at 1.51 per cent.

While Pune accounted for a maximum 1,07,503 "active cases" in the state, Nagpur stood second with 80,624, followed by Thane (79,888), Mumbai (75,498), Nashik (42,898), Chandrapur (22,762), Ahmednagar (22,317)

Latur (20,468), Satara (17,483), Palghar (17,111), Aurangabad (16,324), Solapur (15,451), Raigad (14,481), Jalgaon (13,499), Beed (13,028), Nanded (11,542), Parbhani (11,189), Bhandara (10,578) Gondia (9,186) and Nandurbar (6,258).

Of the 2,57,49,543 samples sent to laboratories, 42,95,027 have tested positive (16.68 per cent) for COVID-19 until Sunday.

Currently, 42,36,825 people are in home quarantine while 29,966 people are in institutional quarantine.

Mumbai reports 5,542 cases, lowest in April

PNS ■ MUMBAI

In a clear indication of steady decline in the number of infections in Mumbai, the number of infections came down to 5,542, while it logged 64 deaths in various parts of the metropolis.

With 5542 fresh infections, the total number of infections in the country's commercial capital rose to 6,28,651. Similarly, with 64 deaths, the total deaths climbed 12,783.

A look at the number of infections in the metropolis since April 4 clearly indicated that the cases have been coming down steadily.

The tally of infection April 4 is follows: April 4: 11163, April 7: 10428, April 9: 9200, April 11: 9000, April 13: 7898, April 15: 8217, April 16: 8839, April 18: 8400, April 19: 7381, April 20: 7214, April 21: 7684, April 22: 7410, April 23: 7221, April 24: 5888 and April 25: 5542.

Andhra reports 12,634 new Covid cases, 69 deaths

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh continued to reel under the second Covid wave, reporting an all-time daily high of 12,634 cases, and 69 deaths, on Sunday.

The state medical authorities said that the new infections have taken the cumulative tally to 10,33,560 in the 24 hours ending 10 a.m. on Sunday, while the death toll reached 7,685 with the fresh fatalities.

During the past 24 hours, seven of the state's districts recorded more than 1,000 cases each. Srikakulam district reported the highest number of cases at 1,680 followed by Chittoor with 1,628, Guntur

with 1,576, Nellore with 1,258, Kurnool with 1,158, Anantapur with 1,095, and Visakhapatnam with 1,051.

Other districts which reported over 500 cases include East Godavari with 952, Vizianagaram with 692, and Krishna with 641 cases.

Prakasam saw 353 cases, West Godavari 331, and YSR Kadapa 219.

Meanwhile with 4,304 persons recovering from the infection in the last 24 hours, the total number of recoveries stand at 9,36,143.

Authorities said 62,885 tests were conducted in Andhra Pradesh over the preceding 24 hours. **IANS**

Yogi Government to bear cost of treatment of Covid patients

Lucknow: The Yogi Adityanath Government on Sunday announced that it will now bear the cost of treatment of Covid patients even in private hospitals.

Additional Chief Secretary, Information, Navneet Sehgal said that hospitals have been asked not to turn away patients. "In case there are no beds available in government hospitals, the patients will be sent to a private hospital and the state government will bear the entire cost of treatment," he said.

According to a government release, the last rites of every Covid casualty will be done as per the religion of the patient and the state government will bear the cost. Directives in this regard have been sent to officials in rural and urban areas in the state. **IANS**

Goa logs highest single-day spike of 2,293 Covid cases

Panaji: Goa has reported 2,293 fresh Covid cases, the highest single-day count so far, pushing the tally to 77,477, health officials said on Sunday.

Meanwhile, 24 more patients have died in the past 24 hours, taking the overall toll to 1,017 in the state, officials added.

According to the Health Ministry, the active cases in Goa have climbed to 13,689. **IANS**

Mistaken identity — 'dead' woman comes alive

Jhansi (Uttar Pradesh): In a bizarre situation, a 65-year-old woman, who had been declared dead due to Covid by Jhansi medical college authorities, was found alive a day later.

According to reports, the woman Rajkumari Gupta, 65, was declared dead on Friday by the hospital authorities due to Covid.

As per reports, Rajkumari had been admitted to the hospital on April 23 and 'died' on the same day. She was having a sore throat, fever and cough with breathing problems.

The matter came to light on Saturday after some people contacted her relatives at her house. Later, a video clip also went viral in which Rajkumari was seen standing in the balcony of her house saying that she had recovered and was quite fit.

Dr Narendra Singh Sengar, the principal of the Jhansi medical college, said that it was a matter of mistaken identity as a woman of similar name had died of Covid on late Thursday night. **IANS**



A city street wears a deserted look during Covid-induced lockdown in Chennai on Sunday

Centre discriminating against Bihar in Covid support: Tejashwi

Patna: Lashing out at the Centre for discriminating against Bihar by not allocating oxygen and vaccine doses proportionate to its requirements, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Sunday said that despite being under a "double-engine" government, the state is not getting its due.

In damage...

From Page 1
State Department Deputy Spokesperson Jalina Porter also told reporters that the US continues to work closely with India to facilitate the movement of essential supplies and also address the bottlenecks of the supply chains.

Several US lawmakers, eminent Indian-Americans and the powerful US Chambers of Commerce have voiced their concerns over the situation in India and have asked the Biden administration to extend assistance, release vaccines and other raw materials critical for India.



A view of Sissu lake after the snowfall in Lahaul-Spiti on Sunday

No walk-in for Covid jabs...

From Page 1
From May 1, the present system of private Covid-19 vaccination centres receiving doses from the Government and charging up to ₹250 per dose from people will cease to exist and private hospitals will procure directly from vaccine manufacturers.

According to the Liberalised Pricing and Accelerated National Covid-19 Vaccination Strategy, Covid-19 vaccination centres that receive doses from the Centre for eligible population groups comprising healthcare workers, frontline workers and people above the 45 years of age. Vaccine manufacturers would make an advance declaration of the price for 50 per cent supply that would be available to State Governments in the open market before May 1. Based on this price, States, private hospitals, industrial establishments may procure vaccine doses from manufacturers.

Private hospitals would have to procure their supplies of Covid-19 vaccine exclusively from the 50 per cent supply earmarked for "other than the Government of India channel". The price charged for vaccination by private hospitals would be monitored, said the official.

While those aged 18 to 44 years will be eligible to receive a vaccination on payment from any of the private Covid vaccination centres (CVCs), citizens below 45 years shall also be eligible to receive a jab from a government CVC in a State or Union Territory which decides to lower the minimum cut off age for eligibility.

Any unutilised vaccine stock will have to be returned to the Cold Chain Point from where the stocks were issued. The State/UT Governments must make a careful assessment of the potential for full utilisation of such vaccine doses up to April 30, before issuing any further stock to the private CVCs, as per the official.

PIOs campaign to press Biden, WHO to ...

From Page 1
It also sought to send medicines such as Remdesivir at low cost to address shortages, provide medical grade oxygen and logistical support to set up ICU beds.

"Collectively, we cannot defeat this virus unless all parts of our planet have this virus under control. And right now, all hell has broken loose in the second-most populous country in the world and unless the US Government steps in to help, we are going to see unimaginable suffering in India in the coming days, not to speak of the risk of those variations spreading to other parts of the world," states the petition.

Indian American Ashish Srivastava told The Pioneer, "We are very concerned about the unfolding scale of Covid-19 pandemic in India and stand in solidarity with the people of India."

Srivastava, a banker by profession, further said the Indian community is pressing the Biden administration to lend timely assistance to effectively fight the pandemic.

Delhi gets just 48% of O2 demand

From Page 1
On the other hand, e Kejriwal said there was a huge gap between demand-supply. Kejriwal has written to leading industrialists of India, seeking their help to meet the critical gap between demand and supply of medical oxygen which is 300-320 Metric Tonnes (MT) per day require to treat critical Covid 19 patients.

"Though Centre has increased Delhi's oxygen quota again from 480 to 490 metric tonnes, problems of accessing it remains a big issue. While Delhi's requirement is 700 metric tonnes, what's reaching us is only 330-335 metric tonnes," Kejriwal said, making the announcement of lockdown extension to contain virus spread. According to the Delhi Government data, Delhi's demand is 700 Metric tonnes per day to treat critical patients while the city has a quota of 480-490 MT per day as allocated by the central administration to catering the need of the medical institution.

With the rise in Covid19 cases, the demand for oxygen has also increased. As on April 22, only 380 MT was delivered against the allocated 480 MT and demand which is 700 MT. The gap of 320 MT supply of oxygen leads to current situation when 25 patients died in one hospital very recently. A Delhi Government official said since medical institutions directly approach oxygen distribution companies, why should the State Administration face the heat.

While the Government has also set up a portal where manufacturers, suppliers and hospitals will update oxygen details after every two hours for maintaining transparency, there is a yawning gap between demand and the supply. Further, on April 23, Delhi received only 309 MT of oxygen against 480 MT allocated, on April 24, the national capital received 335 MT, with 10 MT increased by the Center.

While the gap between demand and supply remained the same with 300 MT supply of oxygen. On April 19, the Delhi Government formed a 24-member oxygen audit committee to monitor the oxygen stock and distribution. Udit Prakash, a nodal officer appointed to coordinate with central authorities for oxygen distribution.

The private hospitals in Delhi are dependent on the big oxygen maker and distributor like INOX. These hospitals directly purchased from INOX like companies where these days some discrepancies in the distribution have been noticed. Recently several hospitals have complained about the disruption in supply from INOX in Delhi, the city administration also made a war room works round the clock to ensure the supply of oxygen when SOS is alarmed.

2nd Covid wave like storm...

From Page 1
Prime Minister, on his part, said his Government is doing everything to help out States in their efforts to tide over the 2nd wave of the pandemic.

"The Government of India is applying its entire might to give a fillip to the endeavours of State Governments. The State Governments too are trying their best to fulfill their responsibilities," said the Prime Minister. In his 76th episode of radio programme Modi suggested that the pandemic had returned with a vengeance.

"I'm speaking to you at a time when Covid-19 is testing our patience and capacity to bear pain. Many of our loved ones have passed away. After successfully tackling the first wave, the nation's morale was high and it was confident. But this storm (second wave) has shaken the nation," he said. Modi said vaccination is the right guard against the coronavirus and stressed the need to get vaccinated by all. From May first youngsters above the age of 18 would also be able to get vaccinated.

Prime Minister asked people to not to get swayed by the rumors about vaccines.

"In this period of Corona crisis, all are getting aware of the importance of vaccine ... so it is my appeal that don't get swayed by any rumor about the vaccine. You all must be knowing that people above 45 years of age can benefit from the free vaccine that has been sent to all state governments by the government of India," he said.

Modi said now the corporate sector companies too will be able to participate in the programme of administering vaccine to their employees.

Stating that "free vaccine programme would continue in future", he asked the States to extend the benefit of this free vaccine campaign of the government of India to maximum number of the people of their State.

Sardar Patel Covid centre in South Delhi to reopen today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The ongoing lockdown in Delhi has been extended by another week, with the national Capital still showing a high positivity rate despite a marginal drop in the daily coronavirus figures.

However, people in the national Capital will have a sigh of relief as the Sardar Patel Covid Care Centre (SPCCC) at Radha Soami Satsang Beas in South Delhi will resume operation on April 26 from 10 am.

The 'Standard For Admission' of patients will be strictly followed and all laid down protocols will also be

adhered to, the South District administration said, adding that the patients will be referred by respective District Surveillance Officer (DSO) of respective Delhi Districts. No walk in admission will be made.

"Patients will have to first report at the reception after initial documentation, their physical examination will be done thereafter he or she will be admitted to the Hospital at their allotted bed. A kit will be provided to them after their admission," it said.

All medical treatment, medicines, food and other facilities will be provided free of cost here and services including stress counselling will also be provided.

The facility has been revived considering the unprecedented surge in COVID-19 cases, a senior official associated with the facility said.

"We are ready with a 500-bed facility at the SPCCC with the help from the MHA, medical and paramedical staffers from the ITBP have been deployed. We have all the equipment, drugs and consumables," he said.

The 10,200-bed facility was inaugurated on July 5 last year and was operated by the Indo-

Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). The centre was 1,700-feet-long and 700-feet-wide - roughly the size of 20 football fields - and had 200 enclosures with 50 beds each.

It was closed in February when the number of cases in Delhi had reduced significantly. The facility had admitted

patients referred by 11 city hospitals, including the AIIMS and the Safdarjung Hospital.

The national Capital reported a staggering 357 deaths on Saturday due to Covid-19 as hospitals in the national Capital continued to grapple with a severe shortage of medical oxygen.

G'gram Police turns 20 PCR van into ambulances

Issues helpline number for Covid patients

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

Gurugram Police, which is doing everything in its capacity to help those who need help in the crucial times in view of the coronavirus pandemic, now it's another initiative, the local police have turned 20 PCR vans of its fleet into temporary ambulance and begins 24x7 helpline number 999999953 to help patients suffering from covid infections.

This was informed by KK

Rao, the Commissioner of Gurugram police during a virtual meeting which was joined by the Municipal Corporation Gurugram (MCG) Commissioner, Vinay Pratap Singh and officials of the Gurugram Metropolitan Department Authority (GMDA) on Sunday.

To avail this facilities the users can call, send messages or WhatsApp on this number the Gurugram Police will help the needy in every possible way with the help of the district administration.

Apart from this, any person can also give their suggestions in this regard. If somewhere, due to Corona epidemic, someone black-marketing of medicines, oxygen gas or other / equipment can also be reported. Action will be taken by Gurugram Police as per rules immediately.

"In view of Covid-19 infections, it came to fore that the public is having difficulty in getting an ambulance at the time of need or is unable to afford it. Hence, 20 PCR of Gurugram Police have been

turned into ambulance for the convenience of common people. These ambulance have been equipped with necessary equipment. All these ambulances will be free to serve the patients with confirmed beds in the hospital. These are being deployed at different places in Gurugram district so that people can be helped without any delay," K.K. Rao, commissioner of Gurugram police said.

The police chief informed that, due to the high number of corona infection, a large number of people are seeking admission in the hospital and due to non-availability of beds in the hospital, there is an

atmosphere of sudden fear in the people, while in some cases the person don't required hospital admission but the infected person wants to seek the advice of a doctor.

For this, a group of skilled doctors have also been added in this group, who will talk to the patient through video call and after seeing the condition of their disease, they will be advised to stay at home or isolation, to get treatment, medication etc," Rao said, adding that as per doctor advice medicine will also be delivered to the patient at his doorsteps by the team of Gurugram police. Efforts will be made to get the

medicine to the patient within 4-5 hours. It has been agreed to many pharma companies that will provide medicines'.

Rao said, Water canon vehicles will be used by the district police to disperse the crowd and disinfection vehicles in collaboration with the MCG.

"Water canon will be deployed at different locations in Gurugram district which will be sprayed in crowded areas, market, more infected places so that this infection does not spread more. Chemical used for disinfection will be provided by MCG," Rao added.

Police take Covid challenge, serve people amid crisis

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Beside maintaining law & order in the city, Delhi Police officers are responding to various SOS calls received at Police Control Room (PCR) and Twitter. In the past couple of days, many city hospitals have made SOS calls to various police stations seeking help in arranging oxygen cylinders for the hospitals.

In North district, on Saturday around 40 oxygen cylinders and four other big oxygen cylinders were arranged by Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Vijender Singh and Constable Hariom to NKS Hospital in two instances.

"They got cylinders filled from Bawana for NKS hospital and shifted those timely to hospital," said a police official.

The Safdarjung Hospital was running low on oxygen when the staff of hospital contacted police and urged them to provide clear pass to oxygen tanker which had taken long route due to ongoing farmers agitation at city borders.

"Then ERV of Safdarjung police station reached sector-62, Noida and escorted oxygen carrying truck. The ERV took wrong carriage way and made it reach Safdarjung Hospital, when oxygen was left only for 10 mins. Life of more than three hundred patients was saved due to prompt and timely action of Police," said police.

After receiving SOS message, a green corridor was also provided for 20 cylinders in Delhi's east district.

Police said that Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) and a bike of New Ashok Nagar police station were engaged to coordinating with Dharamshila Hospital authority.

"The police team formed a Green Corridor by taking painstaking efforts in providing supply of 20 big oxygen cylinders to Dharamshila Hospital, Vasundra Enclave Delhi at 10.30 PM from Seth Agency Ballabgarh, Faridabad. More than 110 patients are under treatment here in Dharamshila Hospital and oxygen supply was going dry in Hospital," said

a senior police official.

In Shahdara district, the ESI hospital, Vivek Vihar have 200 beds and out of these, 5 are ICU beds while 70 beds are with oxygen facility.

"On April 24, around 10:30 PM, the medical superintendent of ESI hospital intimated SHO of Vivek Vihar police station that the available oxygen at hospital is left for 1.5-2 hours. The lives of patients are at high risk and requested SHO/ Vivek Vihar to do the needful," said a senior police official.

"After receiving SOS information, Inspector Ajay Kumar, the SHO of Vivek Vihar police station contacted the Covid helpline of GNCTD numbers. The ACP Vivek vihar Mayank Bansal also made call to his counter part from the District Administration in order to avert any worse situation from happening," he said.

"At around 03:15 AM, SDM of Vivek Vihar contacted SHO and assured for providing oxygen support but that would take sometime. In the meantime, SHO/ Vivek Vihar sent the police staff with vehicle and staff of ESI hospital to Bawana oxygen plant and Bhardwar Gas Plant, Kanjhawala, Delhi for availing the oxygen cylinders in the night and requested the concerned PS/SHOs for help," Chinmoy Biswal, DCP Crime and spokesperson of Delhi Police.

"When no oxygen could be supplied to the ESI hospital for few hours, inspector Ajay Kumar requested the private hospital Gupta Multispecialty Hospital, Vivek Vihar on personal goodwill to borrow three oxygen cylinders from there," Biswal added.

"Further, due to timely Liaisoning with SDM Vivek vihar by the SHO, the Hospital could get three more oxygen cylinders from Yamuna Sports Complex and The same were immediately provided to ESI Hospital. Later on, 10 more cylinders were also provided by the district administration based on the calls made to oxygen helpline provided by GNCT," he added.



Patient and relatives wait for admission to LNJP Covid-19 hospital in New Delhi on Sunday. Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

CM spending crores on publicity, doing nothing to augment O₂ supply: Maken

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former Union Minister and Congress General Secretary Ajay Maken blamed both the Centre and the Delhi Government for failing to sanction and construct even a single Oxygen storage plant in the national capital.

Maken said that of the eight PSA (Pressure Swing Adsorption) Oxygen plants planned for Delhi, only one has been set up as the Union Health Ministry informed the Delhi High Court on Tuesday.

The admission came when oxygen shortages have left Covid-19 patients gasping in Delhi, he said.

PSA units are small oxygen generation units, which are usually attached to Hospitals in its premises or nearby. Unfortunately, the Delhi Government did not deem fit to even sanction a single PSA oxygen plant, he said.

If we look at neighbouring Congress ruled Rajasthan, 37 PSA Oxygen plants were sanctioned out of which, 24 are up and functional and rest of the 13 are in advance stages of completion.

4 patients die in Gurugram hosp for want of O₂

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

Amid the oxygen shortage crisis in several parts of the country, Four Covid-19 patients admitted in Gurugram's Kathuria Hospital died due to lack of oxygen on Sunday.

The hospital claimed that oxygen supply was over by 11 am on Sunday.

The hospital also claimed that it didn't get oxygen supply despite repeated requests to the district administration and the health department.

Around 50 covid patients were admitted in the hospital. At the same time, due to the depletion of oxygen," Dr. A.K. Kathuria, the director of the hospital, has accused the authorities and the administration for the lack of oxygen.

"Oxygen crisis arose at the Kathuria Hospital at 11 am on Sunday and the lives of 50 patients who were admitted at the hospital covid patients were at risk due to lack of supply of oxygen, the breath of patients started getting stuck and there was chaos. Doctors and other staff tried to handle the patients but four serious patients died due to lack of oxygen," Dr Kathuria said.

Dr. Kathuria said that he had demanded oxygen to the district administration and the



health department only at around 6.00 am at that time only 10 cylinders were left but the district administration did not pay heed on my request. The hospital required 50 cylinders per day.

"Oxygen demand was not sent to the drugs department from the hospital. When we received an information about lack of oxygen, two cylinders were sent to the hospital immediately," District Drug Controller Amandeep Chauhan said.

Chief medical officer, Dr Virender Yadav said, since the oxygen supply did not fall under his jurisdiction but will inquire about the matter.

"The cause of death would be ascertained after a detailed investigation. The reason behind the mishap was lack of oxygen or something else will be cleared after an inquiry," Yadav said.

"At present Kathuria Hospital has 3 hours of oxygen left. The hospital has reportedly asked the authorities for more supply of oxygen," district spokesperson said in a statement.

80 auto tippers deployed to lift waste from house of +ve patients

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) has taken additional measures to lift bio-medical waste and municipal solid waste (MSW) from the homes of Covid positive patients.

SDMC Mayor Anamika said that a total of 80 auto tippers have been deployed especially for this work. Nearly 250 kilograms bio-medical waste and nearly 200 metric

tonnes of municipal solid waste have been lifted till Sunday from homes where Covid-19 patients are in isolation.

The Mayor said that with the help of 80 auto tippers, nearly 20 kilograms bio-medical waste and 20 metric tonnes MSW is being lifted from Covid affected homes every day.

Anamika further said garbage is being lifted by adopting all safety precautions and its disposal is being done properly. "Waste is being collected at

a dedicated centre and then it is being sent at Okhla waste-to-energy plant for incineration. Staff deployed for this work has been taking all precautions. They have been wearing PPE kits so they could not get affected with Covid virus. They are also going through medical checkup and are being made aware about safety norms," he said.

She further said that massive sanitization drive is being carried out in all four zones. Mainly containment zones, quarantine centres, Covid testing centres, hospitals etc are being sanitized.



Delhi Prisons Dept encouraging inmates to get vaccinated

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After the Central Government allowed vaccination for everyone above the age of 18 from May 1, the Delhi Prisons Department has started informing inmates about their eligibility to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and asking them to get the required documents from their family members for the process. According to Sandeep Goel, the Director General (DG) of Prisons, the officials are encouraging the inmates to get the job.

"The prison officials are informing the inmates that now all of them will be eligible for the vaccination. We are encouraging them to get vaccinated. The process is already on inside the jails for prisoners above 45 years of age," said the DG.

There are a total of 20,300 inmates in the three jails of the Delhi Prisons Department -- Tihar, Rohini and Mandoli. More than 450 inmates have been vaccinated so far, a senior jail official said, adding that none of them reported any complications.

The vaccination drive for the inmates started on March 18. On April 17, around 50 eligible inmates were vaccinated at a COVID vaccination centre established at Rohini Jail.

The officials said they are asking the family members of the inmates to send the

required documents through WhatsApp to the jail officer for the vaccination process.

The prisons department has set up COVID-19 vaccination centres inside Tihar and Rohini Jails.

According to data shared by the prisons department, 241 fresh cases of coronavirus have been reported among the inmates since March 2021. Of them, 14 have recovered and there are 227 active cases.

Similarly, 60 staff members have tested positive for the virus since March 2021. None of them have recovered yet, the data said.

In view of the spiralling coronavirus cases in the national capital, the officials said they are taking several measures to ensure that the infection does not spread inside the prisons.

Inmates are no longer allowed to gather inside the library or for music and sports activities. The jails have been divided into several wards and movement of inmates cannot move between these wards, the officials said.

"We have sensitised the inmates about the virus and they have been told to maintain social distancing norms," he said.

The first coronavirus case was reported in Rohini Jail on May 13, 2020. Two COVID-19 positive inmates of Mandoli Jail died on June 15 and July 4, 2020. Both were senior citizens.

In This Phase Of Covid Infection, Follow Safety Norms For Its Prevention

Vaccination is to be started for people above 18 years of age

Registration starts from 28 April

Priority to Work-From-Home in areas which are most affected by Corona

Instructions for minimum gathering of people in social and family events

Stay aware and Spread awareness, We will fight and get success

Stay Alert, Stay Safe

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana | www.prharyana.gov.in | @Cmohry | @DiprHaryana

India-French naval drill Varuna-2021 begins



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Signifying close defence ties between the two countries, the 19th edition of the Indian and French Navy bilateral exercise 'Varuna-2021' in the Arabian Sea started on Sunday and will last for three days. This drill comes weeks after the Quad countries participated in a naval exercise led by the French Navy in the Indian Ocean.

Giving details of the Varuna series this year, navy officials said here the Indian Navy has deployed guided missile stealth destroyer Kolkata, guided missile frigates Tarkash and Talwar, fleet support ship Deepak, with Seaking 42B & Chetak integral helicopters, a Kalvari class submarine and P8I Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft.

The French Navy is represented by the Aircraft Carrier Charles-de-Gaulle with Rafale-

M fighter, E2C Hawkeye aircraft and helicopters, Horizon-class Air defense destroyer Chevalier Paul, Aquitaine-class multi-missions frigate Provence with a Caïman M helicopter and Command and supply ship Var. The Indian side is led by Rear Admiral Ajay Kochhar, Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet, while the French side is headed by Rear Admiral Marc Aussedat, Commander Task Force 473.

The three-day exercise will see high tempo-naval operations at sea, including advanced air defence and anti-submarine exercises, intense fixed and rotary wing flying operations, tactical manoeuvres, surface and anti-air weapon firings, underway replenishment and other maritime security operations.

Units of both navies will endeavour to enhance and hone their war-fighting skills to demonstrate their ability as an

Wheat harvesting at its peak in Haryana, Punjab, UP despite lockdown

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a second wave of pandemic which forced the States and Union Territories to impose lockdown like curbs, over 81 per cent wheat crop harvesting was completed so far while harvest of pulses and oilseeds has been fully completed. As per the agriculture ministry's data, about 99 per cent wheat harvesting completed in Rajasthan, 96 per cent in Madhya Pradesh, 80 per cent in Uttar Pradesh, 65 per cent in Haryana and 60 per cent in Punjab.

"Harvesting is at its peak in Haryana, Punjab and UP and is likely to be completed by the end of April 2021. As of now, about 81.55 per cent of the total sown area of wheat (315.80 lakh hectare) has been harvested in the country," the ministry said.

As per the data, in case of pulses which were sown in 158.10 lakh hectare, harvesting has been completed for gram, lentil, urad, moong and field peas. For sugarcane, out of the total sown area of 48.52 lakh hectare, harvesting has been completed in Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, and Telangana. Up to 98 per cent harvesting has been completed in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.

Whereas in Uttar Pradesh, 84 per cent has been completed and this will continue till mid-May 2021. Farmers are harvesting rabi (winter) crops

sown in the 2020-21 crop year (July-June). Wheat is the main rabi crop.

In case of rice sown in 45.32 lakh hectare in the rabi season, harvesting has been completed in 18.73 lakh hectare so far. Rabi rice harvesting is almost complete in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Amongst the oilseed crops, harvesting of rapeseed mustard has been completed 100 per cent in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Assam. It is almost complete in Haryana (99.95 per cent) and for Punjab, around 77 per cent has been harvested. Over 62 per cent groundnut grown in 7.34 lakh hectare has been harvested so far.

The ministry said that as a result of the proactive steps taken, harvesting of rabi crops is on schedule and timely procurement is also being ensured for the benefit of the farmers. Amidst the current pandemic situation, farmers and agriculture labourers are sweating and toiling against all adversities to make sure that food reaches our homes, it said.

"Their silent efforts, coupled with timely intervention by the Central and State Governments, have ensured that there is minimal or no disruption to harvesting activities," it added. "Thus, the harvesting of crops is on schedule and the efforts of the farmers need to be lauded and recognised," the ministry said.

Oxygen Express on its way to provide succour to Covid-19 patients

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With all eyes on Indian Railways to pump oxygen to the Covid patients battling for their survival across the country, the national transporter is making it possible to deliver more than 140 MT liquid oxygen in the next 24 hours with nine tankers on the run to reach their destinations.

Besides severe crisis of beds in hospitals, the Ministry of Railways on Sunday re-mobilised its initiative of Covid Care Isolation Coaches which was devised during the initial wave of the pandemic last year.

Nearly 4,000 Covid Care Coaches with 64,000 beds, have positioned at various railway stations in the country, some of which have already served the isolation needs of patients in the first wave of Covid. In Delhi, 50 coaches (with 800 beds) are deployed at Shakurbasti station (4 patients are currently admitted & 25 coaches (with 400 beds) are made available at Anand Vihar Terminal.

To the much relief of patients, hospitals, authorities, five Oxygen Express Train was scheduled to reach Lucknow by Sunday night and remaining four containers of LMO which started from Bokaro are expected to reach Lucknow on Monday morning. One Oxygen Express train carrying four tankers (around 70 Metric



tonnes of LMO) departed from Delhi from Raigarh, Chattisgarh on Sunday night.

So far, Oxygen Express have run between Mumbai to Vizag via Nagpur to Nashik and Lucknow to Bokaro and back. A total of 10 containers having nearly 150 tonnes of liquid Oxygen have been carried so far.

A senior railway ministry official said the railways have informed Delhi Government to obtain the road tankers and further the national transporter are ready for the movement of oxygen containers on container wagons from Durgapur to the national Capital.

"Indian Railway is fully prepared to carry Oxygen on several routes. For the delivery of more Oxygen to Maharashtra, Railways has planned to transport LMO from Jamnagar to Mumbai and for Nagpur/Pune from Vizag/Angul. Indian Railways has mapped the route from Angul to Secunderabad to deliver Liquid Medical Oxygen for Telangana. For Andhra Pradesh, it has been planned to transport oxygen Angul to Vijayawada," mentioned the official.

For Madhya Pradesh, the railway has mapped the route from Jamshepur to Jabalpur.

Further, as a measure of preparedness, Covid Care coaches have been readied to serve as additional health care facility for isolation of Covid patients with mild symptoms. These coaches have now been additionally fitted with conveniences viz. coolers, jute-mats to cater to the current hot weather conditions.

In this regard, the State Governments have been advised on the Modalities & Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in place and the availability of Covid care coaches.

At Nandurbar (Maharashtra), 21 coaches (with 378 beds) are positioned and currently, 55 patients are admitted at this facility.

Defence units set up 650 beds for Covid-hit civilians

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

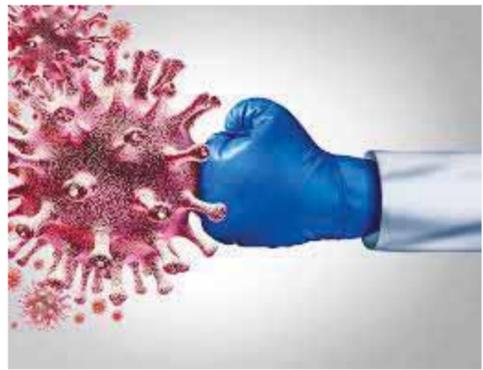
A day after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's directive to open up health facilities to civilians for Covid treatment, defence public sector undertakings (PSU) on Sunday set up more than 650 beds besides activating health centres in 25 places in various States all over the country. The Indian Navy also deployed oxygen express to cater to island territories like Lakshadweep.

The Defence Minister on Saturday while reviewing the preparations by his ministry to fight the pandemic had ordered the PSUs and Ordnance Factories to throw open their health facilities for civilians. He also assured that the defence ministry will provide all possible help to the State Governments.

Following his directions, a 180-bed Covid care centre, with ICU, oxygen and ventilator support, set up by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is functional in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

It has also prepared a 250-bed facility in Bengaluru and handed over to municipal authorities under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). A 70-bed facility in Koraput, Odisha and a 40-bed hospital in Nasik, Maharashtra are also operational, defence ministry officials said here on Sunday.

Work has also been undertaken by the HAL to set up a 250-bed Covid care facility in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. It is expected to be operational in the first week of May. Further, the HAL is planning to provide more ventilators and oxygen



points at Bangalore and Lucknow.

The Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) is providing Covid care services, including oxygen beds, at their facilities in 25 places in Maharashtra, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Odisha and Uttarakhand. It has earmarked nearly 60 per cent of its existing strength for Covid-19 care.

Giving details, officials said precisely, 813 beds out of total strength of 1,405 are now reserved for Covid patients. These facilities are in Pune, Ambernath, Nagpur, Bhandara, Chanda, Varangaon and Bhusawal in Maharashtra and at Ishapore and Kolkata in West Bengal. Other places where the OFB is providing its facilities for COVID care are Kanpur (2), Shahjahanpur (1) and Muradnagar (1) in Uttar Pradesh; Jabalpur (3), Itarsi (1) and Katni (1) in Madhya Pradesh; Avadi (1), Aruvankadu (1) and Tiruchirappalli (1) in Tamil

Nadu; Medak (1) in Telangana; Dehradun (1) in Uttarakhand and Badmal (1) in Odisha.

Several defence PSUs such as Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), BEML Limited, HAL, Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) and Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) have also fast-tracked procurement of oxygen plants to deliver to local government hospitals in different states under CSR.

The Indian Navy ships under Headquarters, Southern Naval Command at Kochi are progressing with the mission of Oxygen Express in order to render support to the local administration of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep (UTL), navy officials said here.

In the early hours on Sunday, INS Sharda, based at Kochi, undertook transfer of essential medical supplies to Kavaratti, Lakshadweep.

The stores consisted of 35 Oxygen cylinders, Rapid Antigen Detection Test (RADT) kits, Personnel

Air India to ferry 636 oxygen concentrators from United States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Air India is all set to bring 636 oxygen concentrators from private entities on its two US-India flights in the next two days. According to the officials, Air India has planned to bring around 10,000 oxygen concentrators for private entities in the coming weeks to meet the demand amid the second wave of pandemic.

The first flight, carrying 318 oxygen concentrators weighing over 5,600 kg will take off from New York and is scheduled to land in Delhi on Tuesday. The second flight too will carry 318 concentrators will depart from New York airport and land in Delhi on April 28.

Air India spokesperson said the airline is prepared to shoulder the responsibility of carrying oxygen concentrators or any consignment into India. "Obviously, Air India with its experience of international operations and wide-body fleet is fully capable of carrying a large volume of cargo consignments," the spokesperson mentioned.

"It goes without saying that we will continue to play a major role in transporting oxygen (equipment) and serve our nation in whatever role assigned to us," he said.

Various hospitals across the country continue to grapple with a severe shortage of medical oxygen on Sunday even after receiving emergency supplies.

Don't panic as virus tends to change colour after certain time: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reputed doctors to the likes of AIIMS Chief Randeep Guleria and member of Maharashtra's Covid-19 task force Dr Shashank Joshi on Sunday said that there was no need to panic as every virus has a habit to change the colour.

They also said that while the second wave is severe, recovery rate is also faster.

They also said that there was no need to run after oxygen and anti-viral drug remdesivir, the comments coming amidst reports of surge in cases and shortage of medical oxygen from hospitals across the States.

Member of Maharashtra's Covid-19 Task Force, Dr. Shashank Joshi warned that the way people are running after Remdesivir they should stop doing that. "This medicine has a limited role. It should be taken only when people are put on oxygen in a hospital, strictly as per the Doctor's advice. It is important for all people to understand this," he said.

"... one thing about this medicine is that one has to stay 2-3 days less in the hospital and it aids in clinical recovery. And this medicine works only when it is taken in the first 9-10 days and it is to be taken only for five days."

In an interaction with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during Mann ki baat, he said

that mutations keep on happening the way we change our clothes, the virus keeps changing its colours. Hence, there is nothing to fear and we shall overcome this wave too. However, one needs to be alert medically.

He pointed out that Covid has a 14 to 21 day's timetable, in which one should avail of the doctor's advice. He pointed out that 98 per cent people recovered with an injection called Heparin for thinning blood.

"Hence, it is not at all required to run after all these expensive medications. Whenever this medicine is available, it should be given only to appropriate people. On this, many myths are doing the rounds," said Dr Joshi who was awarded the Padma Shri in 2014.

He also pointed out that treatment protocol must be as per the doctor's advice.

Joshi also observed that many people start clinical treatment very late because they believe that the illness will subside on its own, something that should not be done.

Dr Guleria in a separate talk on a TV channel too did not favor Remdesivir. He said it's not a magic bullet. "It's given to only patients who are hospitalised, have moderate to severe disease & whose oxygen saturation is below 93... Don't misuse Oxygen & Remdesivir. Most patients can recover by isolating at home."

Bharat Biotech seeks DCGI nod to extend shelf life of Covaxin

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech on Sunday sought DCGI nod to extend the shelf life of its Covaxin. A few months ago, Covishield manufacturer Serum Institute of India (SII) too had moved the top drug regulator for a similar request and had got approval too.

However, while the DCGI gave nod to SII to extend Covishield shelf life from six to nine months, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has rejected SII's proposal, citing insufficient data. Shelf life is the length of time for which an item remains fit for use.

Sources said Bharat Biotech has written to the DCGI to increase the shelf life of its Covaxin from six months to 24 months. Originally the shelf life of the vaccine was determined to be six months when stored at 2-8 degrees Celsius.

"Now, we are herewith applying for the extension of shelf life from six months to 24 months when stored at 2-8 degrees Celsius," according to reports in agencies.

It said that the biotech manufacturer has submitted updated accelerated and real-time stability data of Covaxin along with the justification for the extension of shelf life.

The development comes a day after Bharat Biotech announced that it will supply Covaxin to State Governments at ₹600 for a dose and to private hospitals at ₹1,200 per dose. The company also said that it will export the vaccine at \$15-20 (₹1,124-1,499) per dose.

Covaxin has been developed jointly by Bharat Biotech, Indian Council of Medical Research and the National Institute of Virology (NIV).

The inoculation is based on the coronavirus sample isolated by the NIV. It also is the first indigenous vaccine against coronavirus.

Recently published Phase III trial data shows that Covaxin has an overall interim clinical efficacy of 78 per cent and 100 per cent efficacy against severe Covid-19 disease.

Covaxin has also shown resistance against multiple variants of coronavirus, including the double mutant variant. "ICMR study shows Covaxin neutralises multiple variants of SARS-CoV-2 and effectively neutralises the double mutant strain as well," ICMR recently announced.

Twitter, FB, delete 100 posts critical of Govt's mishandling of Covid

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Twitter and other social media platforms have removed about 100 posts and URLs after the Government asked them to remove content that was critical of the handling of the current medical crisis or spreading fake news around the pandemic. Twitter said it has notified the impacted account holders of its action taken in response to a legal request from the Indian government, while Facebook did not comment on the issue.

Sources said the companies have complied with the order. However, it wasn't immediately known what the removed posts were.

Meanwhile, Government

sources said the IT Ministry, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Home Affairs, asked the social media platforms to remove the posts and URLs (uniform resource locators) "prevent obstructions in the fight against the pandemic" and disruption of public order due to the said posts.

They added that the order was issued in view of the misuse of social media platforms by certain users to spread fake or misleading information and create panic about the pandemic in the society "by using unrelated, old and out of the context images or visuals, communally sensitive posts and misinformation about COVID-19 protocols". Although reports suggested that the posts critical of govern-

ment handling of the medical crisis were asked to be removed, sources said the government is open to criticism and suggestions in the collective fight against Covid-19. However, they said it is necessary to take action against those users who are "misusing" social media during this grave humanitarian crisis for unethical purposes.

Twitter removed or restricted access to more than 50 posts in the past one month at the behest of the government, including tweets that criticized its handling of the coronavirus pandemic. Other posts removed showed pictures and videos of a recent Maoist attack in Chhattisgarh. Earlier this year, more than 500 accounts were suspended and access to

No bail to criminals with blinkered vision: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has said that courts should not enlarge history sheeters on bail with a "blinkered vision" and must consider the impact of their release on witnesses and innocent members of the family of the victim.

A bench headed by Chief Justice (now retired) S A Bobde made the observation while setting aside the order of the Allahabad High Court granting bail to an accused.

The top court said that there is no doubt that liberty is important, even that of a person charged with crime but it is important for courts to recognise the potential threat to the life and liberty of victims/witnesses, if such an

accused is released on bail. "It is needless to point out that in cases of this nature, it is important that courts do not enlarge an accused on bail with a blinkered vision by just taking into account only parties before them and the incident in question."

"It is necessary for courts to consider the impact that release of such persons on bail will have on witnesses yet to be examined and innocent members of the family of the victim who might be the next victims," the bench also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian said.

Referring to its earlier verdicts, the apex court said when a stand was taken that the accused was a history sheeter, it was imperative for high courts to scrutinise every

aspect and not capriciously record that the accused was entitled to be released on bail on the ground of parity.

"We find in this case that the high court has overlooked several aspects, such as the potential threat to witnesses, forcing the trial court to grant protection," it said.

The bench said the Allahabad High Court granted bail to the accused in this case on very liberal terms, such as the execution of a personal bond to the satisfaction of jail authorities and the furnishing of sureties within a month of his release.

The high court has simply ignored the antecedents of the accused and the potential to repeat his acts by organising his criminal activities, the bench said.

Don't sermonise, work towards mitigating crisis: Didi to Modi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "delivering leisurely speeches on Mann ki Baat" while corona was taking its toll on the nation.

The Chief Minister who also held the Election Commission of India responsible for multiplying corona cases in Bengal said "instead of sermonizing the people on Mann ki Baat, the Prime Minister should work towards mitigating the pandemic crisis ... there the people of the country are suffering and here he is delivering speeches in Man ki Baat."

Saying that the people wanted performance and not his personalized speeches Banerjee said "who wants to listen to his Mann ki Baat? ... none ... still he con-

tinues with it ... instead of talking Mann ki Baat he should talk of the pandemic."

Banerjee said "there is shortage of medicine, there is no infrastructure, there is no oxygen and people are dying without it ... here from Bengal oxygen and other medicines are being diverted to Uttar Pradesh ... please arrange for these on priority basis and postpone your Man ki Baat for the time being."

The Chief Minister also hit out at the Election Commission for playing the role of a "mirror of the BJP". She said "EC is nothing but BJP's mirror ... we asked them to conduct the elections in lesser phases but they stretched it to eight phases ... they brought in more than 2 lakh central forces without conducting any tests on them ... they infected the people in Bengal."

Criticising the Commission for letting the BJP's criminals to rig the elections Banerjee said the "EC is controlling the mischief mongers in Kolkata, Asansol and elsewhere ... they are influencing the SPs" and turning a blind eye on the way the BJP was splurging money to win the elections.

"The BJP has turned on a hosepipe of cash" and the EC was not taking note of this, she said attacking the State police officers too for "submitting to the diktats of the Commission." She said "there are some police officers who get afraid of the EC and surrender before it but they forget that after the elections the EC will go and the State Government will remain for five years," adding once again that she would move the Supreme Court after elections challenging the alleged prejudiced conduct of the Commission.

Seventh phase polling in Bengal today

PNS ■ KOLKATA

With Bengal going into the seventh phase of elections on Monday, the Election Commission has decided to deploy 89,600 paramilitary personnel to ensure free and fair polling.

Elections will take place for 34 Assembly seats across 5 districts across North and South Bengal. While elections will be held for 6 seats each in Malda and South Dinajpur districts, nine constituencies each will go to polls in Murshidabad and West Burdwan districts. Polling will also be held for four constituencies in South Kolkata that include the up-market areas of Ballygunge and Rashbehari apart from Bhawanipore the ex-constituency of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

More than 86 lakh voters are likely to exercise their franchise to decide the fate of 284 candidates amid rising cases of corona. Bengal on Saturday registered its highest-single day spike of 14,281 corona cases, taking the total number of cases to 7,28,061. Government sources said 59

more people died of the disease on Saturday taking the toll to 10,884.

Following a High Court directive the Election Commission has issued strict protocols during the voting process in all the 12,068 polling stations. All eyes are likely to be the Bhawanipore seat from where the Chief Minister is the sitting MLA and a voter too. In the Lok Sabha elections the Trinamool Congress had trailed the BJP from this seat by a few thousand votes. Banerjee is contesting from Nandigram seat this time round.

From Bhawanipore, Bengal Power Minister with a clean image Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay is contesting against BJP's Rudranil Ghosh a noted film actor, who left the Left post 2011 to join TMC and left the Trinamool to join the BJP early this year.

Among other notables are State Minister Firhad Hakim who is seeking re-election for a third consecutive term from the Kolkata Port constituency. BJP candidate Lt General (Retired) Subrata Saha is contesting against TMC's Mayor-in-

Council Debashis Kumar from the Rashbehari seat. From Ballygunge veteran Bengal

Minister Subrato Mukherjee is contesting against CPI(M)'s Fuad Halim and BJP's Loknath Chatterjee.

TMC candidate dies of Covid; Babul Supriyo tests positive

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Yet another candidate succumbed to the dreaded corona virus with Trinamool Congress nominee from Khardaha constituency Kajal Sinha succumbing to the disease on Sunday morning. Sinha was contesting in the place of "indisposed" Bengal Finance Minister Amit Mitra.

Expressing her "shock" Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee tweeted "Very, very sad. Shocked. Kajal Sinha, our candidate from Khardaha, succumbed to Covid. He dedicated his life to serving people & just fought a tireless campaign. He was a long-serving committed member of @AITCOfficial. We will miss him. My condolences to his family & his

admirers (sic)."

She said "even in his death Kajol ensured that his party wins the elections and we are sure that he will win from Khardaha," in North 24 Parganas.

Earlier this month, Congress candidate from Shamsheganj Rezaul Haq and RSP nominee from Jangipur Pradip Kumar Nandi, had succumbed to the disease. Elections to Jangipur and Shamsheganj, both in Murshidabad district would be held in mid-May.

Meanwhile, Union Minister and BJP candidate from Tollygunge Babul Supriyo has once again tested positive to the corona virus, the actor-turned-politician tweeted on Sunday.

Tamil Nadu CM to convene all-party meeting today to review Covid situation

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Jolted by the unabated increase in the number of Covid-19 patients all over the State since the conclusion of the election to the Legislative Assembly, Tamil Nadu is resorting to an "undeclared total lock-down" from Monday. Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy has called for an all-party meeting on Monday to take stock of the latest position in the State due to Covid-19.

According to sources in the Chief Minister's Office the topic of opening the Sterilite Plant owned by Vedanta Group may figure in the meeting. The management of the Company has reportedly told the State Government to re-open the oxygen plant in the company so that more oxygen

cylinders could be made available to States facing shortage of oxygen. The Sterilite Plant was shut down in May 2018 following allegations of environmental pollution because of the copper manufacturing plant.

In addition to the controls and restrictions which were declared a ten days ago, Tamil Nadu Government has asked all malls, theatres, shopping complexes to be shut down with effect from Monday morning.

All gyms, theatres, parlours, spas, swimming pools. Sporting centres, auditoriums, bars, meeting halls and all temples have been declared out of bound.

On Saturday, the State diagnosed 14,842 new cases of Covid-19 and fatalities of 80 across the State which made the Government crack the

whip. From early morning on Monday, Tamil Nadu will become out of bound for people from all States in the country other than the union territory of Puducherry.

Those seeking entry into the State have to furnish registration. Through the rules have been tightened in Tamil Nadu, it will take weeks for any reduction to be visible in the number of Covid-19 cases. J Radhakrishnan, health secretary, who is in the field throughout the day told reporters on Sunday that the state has created a seamless system to manage patients. "I request the people not to panic as we have a fool-proof mechanism functional throughout the State. Tamil Nadu has stocked all medicines and vaccines and oxygen cylinders to meet any emergencies," said Radhakrishnan.

Uninterrupted oxygen supply being ensured in Rajasthan, says CM



Jaipur: Uninterrupted supply of oxygen is being ensured in the State. On Saturday, the Indian Air Force aircraft C17 Globe Master took over and flew from Jodhpur to Jamnagar with 3 empty tankers. Tankers will be filled with oxygen from Jamnagar by road. Two 30-ton tankers will reach Jodhpur. While a 15 tonne oxygen tanker will reach Udaipur in the early hours of Sunday.

It is noteworthy that in a virtual meeting of the Chief Minister with the Prime Minister on Friday, an Army aircraft was agreed to transport oxygen. After the meeting, the tanker has been taken from Jodhpur to Jamnagar by air cargo today. This will save the time it takes to reach the tanker via road.

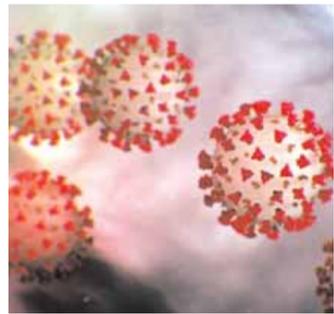
Kerala records highest daily rise of 28,469 Covid cases

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Normal life has come to a standstill all over Kerala since Saturday morning as the State Government declared lock-down during the weekend came into operation. The important thoroughfares were barricaded and police resorted to scrutiny of men and vehicles plying in the open despite the government led by Pinarayi Vijayan asking the people to stay indoors during the weekend.

Most of the hotels and resorts across the State wore a deserted look. By Sunday evening the Government issued a release stating that 28,469 persons were diagnosed with Covid-19. This is the highest spike to be recorded in the State on a single day since the disease was reported from Thrissur in Kerala in Feb 2020.

Kerala has 1.4 million Covid-19 patients as on Sunday evening and the death toll mounted to 5110. According to the release, Ernakulam topped the table of districts with 4468 and Kozhikode closely followed with



3998 new patients. Chief Minister Vijayan has convened an all party meeting to find out the mood of the State and discuss the possibility of a total lock down. K R Gowri (102) veteran Marxist leader has been hospitalised because of age related issues and her condition is said to be critical following infection.

Puducherry sees daily Covid cases cross 1,000 mark

IANS ■ CHENNAI

Puducherry on Sunday saw its daily Covid tally cross the 1,000 mark for the first time since the outbreak of the pandemic, as it reported 1,008 fresh cases and 24 deaths.

Meanwhile, 476 patients recovered in the last 24 hours. The Union Territory has 7,288 active cases on Sunday, out of which 5,901 are in home isolation/treatment.

Puducherry saw the maximum number of cases with 815 followed by Karakkal at 101, Mahe 52 and Yanam 40.

With the fresh deaths, the death toll stands at 748, with Puducherry having the maximum fatalities (598).

2,381 coronavirus cases in J&K

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

On the first day of the 'Corona Curfew' the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir recorded the highest ever tally of 21 deaths in one single day while the highest number of 2,381 coronavirus positive cases were reported on Sunday taking the tally of active positive cases close to 20,000 cases.

Previously, the highest daily count was recorded on April 21 when 2204 people had tested positive for the virus.

Meanwhile, the State Executive Committee Sunday decided to alter the night curfew timings within municipal/Urban local body limits of all districts of J&K. As per the new order the night curfew shall be enforced from 8 pm to 6 am instead of 10pm to 6am. The committee also decided that all paid public parks in the UT of J&K shall remain closed for visitors till further orders.

According to the media bulletin issued by the

Department of Information and Public Relations, 2381 new positive cases of coronavirus were reported which included 848 from Jammu and 1533 from Kashmir division.

Regarding the fresh COVID-19 deaths, the bulletin said, 11 deaths were reported from Jammu Division and 10 from Kashmir taking the tally of deaths due to Covid-19 to 2147.

Providing district wise breakup of the cases, the bulletin said, Srinagar reported 748, Baramulla 200, Budgam 137, Pulwama 72, Kupwara 114, Anantnag 108, Bandipora 24, Ganderbal 35, Kulgam 78, Shopian 17,

Jammu 449, Udhampur 57, Rajouri 98, Doda 14, Kathua 50, Samba 39, Kishtwar 5, Poonch 37, Ramban 50 and Reasi 49. Moreover, they said, 866 more COVID-19 patients have recovered—227 from Jammu Division and 639 from Kashmir. The number of active cases has raced to 19558 in J&K—8189 in Jammu and 11369 in Kashmir.

BMC receives 1.58 L fresh vaccine doses, to resume vaccination in all city centres from today

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Amid the shortage of vaccines faced by it, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Sunday received 1.58 lakh vaccines, a stock that will help the BMC undertake smooth vaccination for three days from Monday.

Confirming the development, Mumbai Municipal Commissioner I S Chahal said here in the evening: "We have received 1.5Lakh stock of covishield today. All vaccination centres in Mumbai shall be functional tomorrow. However, Covaxin will be available only at select centres for 2nd dose due to extremely limited existing stock."

Of the 1.58 lakh vaccines received by the BMC, 1.5 lakh doses are of Covishield vaccine, while the remaining 8,000 are Covaxin doses.

Official sources said that the received stock was stored at the BMC's Regional Vaccine Storage Center at Kanjurmarg in north-east Mumbai. "We have started the distribution of vaccines from Kanjurmarg to all the immunization centers of the BMC and also the Government and private centres, keeping in view their average daily requirement," a BMC spokesperson said.

"Vaccine delivery began late in the evening after stockpiling. Those who have not taken the vaccine stock today will be able to carry the vaccine stock from 8 am tomorrow. In view of this,

vaccination is likely to start late on Monday at some centers," the spokesperson said.

The BMC spokesperson said that with the availability of vaccines, private centers will also be able to undertake vaccination for at least the next three days.

The BMC, meanwhile, appealed to all concerned to cooperate with its administration and the health system.

In the last few days, owing to limited availability of covid vaccines, the vaccination had been temporarily stopped at some centers from time to time.

"The vaccination campaign is being planned on a daily basis keeping in view the available stocks of vaccines as the priority is given to the second dose recipients," Chahal said.

Alluding to the earlier shortage of medical oxygen in the metropolis, Chahal said: "All issues relating to Oxygen supply under MCGM stands resolved now. Supply situation is normal."

Meanwhile, the stock of covacin vaccine is very limited in the available vaccine stock and the vaccine will be given preference to those who take a second dose at a few centers.

Under the Covid-19 Prevention Vaccination Campaign, the BMC and State government have set up 59 Vaccination Centers, while a total of 132 Vaccination Centers have been set up at 73 private hospitals in the metropolis.

Covid hits AMU hard, 3 teachers die

IANS ■ ALIGARH (UP)

In the past seven days, the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) has lost three faculty members and five retired professors to Covid.

Thirty faculty and staff members have tested positive and have been admitted to AMU's Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, as have 12 consultants, 20 resident doctors and some paramedical staff members of the medical college.

AMU officials said noted critic and senior faculty member at the department of Urdu, Prof Maula Bakhsh Ansari, 58, faculty member of the Sunni theology section, Prof Ehsanullah Fahad, 50, and in-charge of leather and footwear technology section at University Polytechnic AMU and Saeed Uzzaman, 51, were serving faculty members who have passed away in the past two days.

"Prof Ansari had been admitted to a private hospital and died within a few days on Wednesday. He had not been tested for Covid-19, but he had symptoms of the disease," said former director of the Urdu Academy AMU, Rahat Abrar.

Ansari had been working on six projects of books on stylistics, critical studies and cultural studies. They are yet to be published.

Fahad, meanwhile, had been admitted to AMU's medical college

for Covid-19 treatment. "After his report came negative, he was moved to the non-Covid ward. But he died two days later of post-Covid complications," medical college principal Prof Shahid Ali Siddiqui said.

A day later, Uzzaman passed away. "His Covid-19 test report was negative but he had symptoms like fever and cough. He died in Meerut, where he had gone to attend his mother's cremation," principal of University Polytechnic Prof Arshad Umar said.

Five retired faculty members have also died with Covid-19-related complications in the past one week. They are Prof Rizwan Husain, 84 (English), Prof Vakeel Jafari, 90 (physics), Prof Humayun Murad, 80 (zoology), Prof Saeed Zafar, 75 (former chairperson of the department of psychology), and Prof Iqbal Ali, 70 (former principal, University Polytechnic AMU).

"Rizwan died of a cardiac arrest but had been in isolation at home after his daughter-in-law tested positive. His wife and son, too, have been infected," Husain's brother-in-law Prof Syed Ali Nadeem Rezavi, also a faculty member at AMU, said.

On Monday, Jafari passed away. "My father was in Delhi at the time.

He had fever and congestion," his son Rehan Jafari said.

Two days later, on Wednesday, Murad died with similar complications.

"He had been admitted to a private hospital with fever and weakness. When his condition started deteriorating, he was referred to the (AMU) medical college, where he tested positive for Covid-19. He died within two days of admission," former media adviser of AMU Jaseem Mohammad said.

Iqbal, on the other hand, died a day later in Kanpur. "He had been admitted to the hospital with a complaint of fever and throat ulcer. He passed away within a day," a senior faculty member at the University Polytechnic said.

With a spate of such cases, those associated with university faculty bodies have sought an upgrade in Covid-19 support facilities.

"We urgently need to increase the number of oxygen beds and ventilators and (step up) deployment of medical staff," Aftab Alam, former secretary of the AMU Teachers' Association and former member of the AMU Executive Council wrote in an open letter to the university and medical college administrations.

"We also need to create dedicated facilities for teachers and university staff," he stated.

Family travels 90 km with body from Agra to perform last rites

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

The conditions are becoming frightening day by day due to corona. Situation is that there are queues in the crematoriums. Loco pilot Prempal Singh, who died of corona infection, did not get the land for the last rites at the crematorium in Agra.

It is alleged that the family was asked to leave the dead body there. It was told that if the number comes after three days, they will call for cremation. In such a situation, the family travelled 90 km and performed the last rites at the crematorium of exhibition Ground in Aligarh.

Krishna Kumar Lodhi, son of loco pilot Prempal Singh, told that the father was giving duty in the railway. Two days ago, he was given off from duty when his health worsened. Subsequently, Corona was investigated. It came to the notice that father Prempal Corona was infected. He was rushed to the hospital at 10:30 in the morning. He died before reaching the hospital. After this, when the neighbors were sent to the crematorium, it was found that they would have to wait for three days. Only then will the funeral be held.

Presently the family is a resident of Avadhupuri Colony located in Bodla area of Agra. Prempal was originally a resident of Chandoli elder Sadhu Ashram, Harduaganj, Aligarh. After talking to relatives here, it was decided that the funeral will take place at exhibition Ground. On information, the family came to Aligarh with the dead body. The last rites were performed here late in the evening on Saturday.

TN: Migrant workers split on returning home amid Covid spike

Chennai: Migrant workers employed at the industrial units in Coimbatore and Tiruppur in Tamil Nadu are split on returning to their hometowns, as some still prefer to stay back at their workplaces amid the raging second wave of the Covid pandemic.

Tiruppur has around 2.5 lakh migrant workers from West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha. However, a large section of them had returned to their hometowns after the Covid outbreak last year in March, but came back to their workplaces after the situation slightly improved.

Aslam Mohammed, a tailor at a garments unit in Tiruppur, who hails from Uttar Pradesh's Azamgarh, told IANS: "Me and my family, including my wife and two small kids, will be staying back here at Tiruppur. Last time, we were in distress as I had lost all my savings while returning to my hometown, but this year the company has organised health screening and diagnosis for the workforce and also provided us free ration. So, I prefer to stay here and continue with my job."

Rajendra Mahapatra, 34, another worker at a packaging unit in Tiruppur, said: "Last year during the pandemic, we had suffered a lot as there were no trains or private vehicles to take me and my friends back to our hometowns. We were stranded for many days and final-

ly reached our native place after much difficulties. But this time, I am prepared and will be travelling back to my hometown in Odisha next week and so I have already booked my tickets."

In Coimbatore also, migrant workers are in a fix on whether to return to their hometowns or stay back at the workplaces. While, some with their families prefer to stay back, others are in a rush to return to their homes.

Selvaraj Manikantan, 26, a worker with a leading pump making unit in Coimbatore, told IANS: "I am here with my wife and a young child. If we travel now, we might get stranded and hence, I am staying back here along with my family members."

Many of the migrant workers have booked tickets by air from Coimbatore and Chennai. While some migrant workers prefer to leave by air, as the travel time will be reduced, but some have pulled themselves back from flying because of the high prices of the air tickets.

Sudendra Singh, a worker at a garment unit in Tiruppur, is flying to his hometown in Bhopal.

"The flight charges are quite expensive but I do want to be with my parents and my family. Hence I have booked an air ticket to Bhopal," the 34-year-old said. IANS



Labourers carry decorative road lights during Government imposed weekend lockdown in Prayagraj on Sunday

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Not done yet

The IIT-Kanpur scientists say the number of COVID infections would peak around mid-May

The worst is yet to come. It hardly matters whether we are ready for it or not but in the coming days we will likely witness more cases of infection and more deaths due to the Novel Coronavirus. Even as the nation is battling the pandemic's second and more virulent wave, facing shortages of medical oxygen, hospital beds and medicines, there is no respite in sight except when the COVID curve will follow a downward trend which is expected after it reaches its second peak around mid-May. The wave travels in the form of a crest and trough, just like tsunami. Scientists at the Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur (IIT-Kanpur) have predicted that the active cases in India could peak to 33 lakh-35 lakh between May 11-15. However, the number would also fall sharply and, by the end of May, might witness a dramatic reduction. These scientists have predicted that Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Telangana may see a new high by April 25-30 while Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh may have already touched their peak. Earlier this month, the mathematical modelling approach had forecast that active infections in India would peak by April 15 but it didn't come true. However, with the SARS-CoV-2 virus mutating fast into lethal and more infectious strains, it's hard to tell how many more people will lose their lives before this wave subsides. The Government opening vaccination for all adults beginning May 1

will also be a major factor as it may help mitigate the deadly virus.

Since vaccination develops immunity, covering a major part of the population would certainly help. Though it is no panacea but, as claimed by the doctors and scientists, a vaccinated person stands a much better chance of recovering early if s/he gets infected than somebody who hasn't been inoculated. However, scientific data show that the second wave has reached the rural areas. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emphasised the need to ensure that the pandemic doesn't impact villages while asking the residents to enforce COVID-appropriate behaviour at all times. He underscored that the challenges are more this time and the villagers need both the doses. It's hard to picture the nation's plight if the accursed virus starts infecting villages with the same pace it has played havoc in the urban areas. This development, given the poor state of health-care infrastructure in villages, could be devastating. Many villages don't have even proper primary healthcare or basic health facilities and villagers are often forced to rush to cities in the case of an emergency. In such a scenario, the villagers will have no option but to come to the city hospitals which are already reeling under immense pressure and lack of resources. Such a situation may lead to total chaos in the sectors of health, economy, unemployment *et al.* Therefore, we must not be insouciant or complacent in our fight against Coronavirus. Strictly following the COVID-appropriate behaviour — wearing a mask, sanitising hands, maintaining social distance — and getting vaccinated are the only things that will help humanity get out of the clutches of the pesky virus.

PICTALK



An earthmover removes snow after a fresh spell of snowfall at Keylong, Lahaul Spiti

PTI

Free speech

Politicians have always made tall promises during polls, but seldom honoured their word

In the elections of yore, the electorate was wooed by promises of the delivery of free sewing machines, mixer grinders and, sometimes, bicycles. Since the latter half of the 1980s, as coalition Governments at the Centre by rag-tag parties came into fashion but these kept duelling with other satraps during the Assembly polls, they started enticing the voters with gold bangles, earrings, washing machines and suchlike. Of course, as the technology advanced and the stakes in forming a Government grew higher, the political parties zestfully loosened their purse strings and started promising the households modern gadgets like laptops. Needless to point out, the wads of good old currency notes and the bottles of certain liquefied brown substance have remained perennial favourites, both of the giver and the recipients, and retain their position! However, as they say, change is the only constant in life and one must, therefore, keep pace with the changing times. So, beginning the Assembly elections circa 2020, the political parties changed tack and started proffering the franchise-holders, you guessed it, free vaccine shots against the "Wuhan virus".

This was just about the time when the Coronavirus pandemic was raging on, crumbling the lives and livelihoods of people abroad and at home, making them change their outlook towards a materialistic and ostentatious lifestyle and turning them into more puritanical and life-valuing humans. Strictly following the adage that a body is the temple of the soul and, therefore, must be kept healthy, the politicians tried to charm the voters with what was the biggest need of the hour — Anti-Corona jabs, for free! Well, it appears that the gambit did really pay off in the Bihar elections. Taking a leaf out of its successful experiment, the BJP has now played the same card in the volatile West Bengal election, which still has to witness two more rounds of polling on April 26 and April 29. Interestingly, Mamata Banerjee's TMC was this time first off the block in airing this promise. Let the parties promise you the moon, dear voter, but it's your sacred duty not to compromise your franchise for fear, favour or enticement. After all, the BJP's "free vaccination" pledge in Bihar was obviously a mere rhetoric, a figzigg, and it still lags in the total number of vaccinations compared to most other big States.

West Bengal's lagging economy

Since Independence, Bengal has fallen from being an advanced industrial State to a graveyard of industries



PRAFULL GORADIA

Upon Independence, West Bengal was one of the most industrialised States in India. The British entrepreneurs had invested a great deal in a variety of enterprises, ranging from jute mills, coal mines engineering, tea gardens *et al.* Paradoxically, it was under the British rule that the well-known Industrial Disputes Act was passed when the Government in Britain was that of the Labour Party. The trade unions, both in the country and particularly in West Bengal, happened to be communist-dominated. Between the law, the unions and their conduct, it was not always easy to work. The managements had little expertise on industrial law because the said Act came into being as late as 1947. West Bengal had to endure many instances of labour violence. The worst incident was in a leading company's factory; two British foremen were thrown into the furnace as the gruesome fallout of a labour protest. There were also several other incidents in various industrial plants.

Coming to another point, due to the national movement as well as the Second World War, very little investment had been made in the industries in India, Bengal being no exception. By the end of the war, it was high time for most of the industry to refurbish and modernise. At the time, with a new India in an uncertain state, the British owners were reluctant to put in new money. They, therefore, began to sell their companies whenever an Indian buyer offered a reasonable price. They found that there was no dearth of buyers because a fair number of Indian businessmen had plentiful profits from the Second World War. Very few of them had the knowledge or experience of industry. What the British offered were going concerns. Regrettably, not a single one of these British relinquishments was picked up by ethnic Bengalis. In other words, there were quite a few Indian buyers of these British firms, but none



from the soil of West Bengal.

The growing of jute as an alternative to rice was encouraged by the mills; this led to agricultural advancement. The jute-growing areas until then were in East Bengal. Otherwise, farming was left alone in those early years. The idea of three crops a year did not really exist. After the kharif crops were harvested, most farms appeared barren.

But skewed agriculture and stalled progress in industry weren't West Bengal's only problems. The Partition had hit the State in a big way, with more than three-fourths of its territory going to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The oppressed people from East Pakistan flowed into West Bengal. A large number of these people had only farming skills, but there were no farms to give them occupation. As a rough guess, about one-third of the State's population is from the East.

The deterioration of the State's economy could be seen in Calcutta. Few of today's generation would believe that the city's iconic Park Street, until 1950, looked almost like a street in London. Thereafter, Park Street was relegated to only a place of nostalgia.



A HISTORICAL REASON FOR WEST BENGAL'S ECONOMY BEING SLOW TO GROW IS ITS PEOPLE'S INDIFFERENCE TO BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY. THUS, SIZEABLE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES SLIPPED THROUGH BENGALI FINGERS WHICH, IN TURN, SLOWED DOWN THE ECONOMY OF THE STATE

Incidentally, unlike Punjab, Bengal saw mostly a one-way traffic in Partition; only a few families migrated to East Pakistan. Over a period of time, illegal infiltration from the East to the West was a perennial complaint since the late 1960s. All in all, the State's population is well over nine crore. But the growth in West Bengal's population was not accompanied by a commensurate economic growth. On the contrary, from an advanced industrial State, it became a graveyard of industries.

West Bengal's economy now depends on three crops a year and general trading. A historical reason for its economy being slow to grow is its people's indifference to business and industry. In 1793, Lord Cornwallis introduced his famous Permanent Settlement whereby zamindars would collect the revenue for all times to come. Sub-zamindaris were permissible; as a result, a large number of well-to-do and rich families came into being, especially as prices of produce rose and, with them, the earnings. Even if they earned more, they had to pay the Government the same as in 1793.

The much written-about

Bengal renaissance was attributed to this class. By a strange coincidence, there grew a distaste for business and industry. Bengal's banik (the trader caste) is an OBC and not a twice-born, as he is in the rest of India. Thus, sizeable business opportunities slipped through the Bengali fingers which, in turn, slowed down the economy of West Bengal. In contrast, Gujarat has prospered but there is no great secret to it. The baniyas, the business community there, are only about six per cent of the population. But almost every community in the State is keen to get into business, including the adivasis who form 16 per cent of the State's population. It is not difficult to explain a simple business proposition in a Gujarat village. Not everyone enjoys music; in contrast, every Bengali enjoys music, but business would be the liking of very few.

After Bidhan Roy, the early great Chief Minister who died in 1964, Bengal has not had a CM who was economy savvy.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HANDLE COVID-19 CRISIS EFFECTIVELY

Sir — In 2020, it was the sight of millions of daily wagers walking on the national highways of India, fleeing the cities for their villages that defined the COVID-19 crisis in the country. Now, in 2021, the country's callous and short-sighted response to the second wave is chillingly captured at overrun graveyards and cremation grounds. The second wave of COVID-19 is sweeping through India with the ferocity of an inferno; misplaced triumphalism, complacency and wilful incompetence have brought us to our knees. And the official numbers India just reported, the world's largest single-day spike, with more than 3 lakh cases over the last 24 hours and more than 2,100 deaths, seem far from actual. In cities across India, the tragedy is the same: Hospitals are turning away patients because they no longer have beds, oxygen shortage, medicines are not available at pharmacies. In this hour of national emergency, there is a huge gap in demand and supply of the medical oxygen. Many of those dying during this second wave seem quite young. At most funeral sites, almost all the dead are under the age of 50 years; some were in their late 20s.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

COURTS COME TO THE RESCUE

Sir — The pungent remarks of the Delhi High Court to the Central Government, "beg, borrow or steal", to arrange oxygen cylinders in hospitals underline the grim situation due to the pandemic. As many as 12 High Courts had issued orders on the supply of oxygen and medicines, on updating availability of beds, on imposing lockdowns, on providing facilities for migrant workers, on strict implementation of the COVID guidelines for elections and related issues. Even the Supreme Court took suo motu cognisance of some of the key issues related to the COVID-19 management, including the supply of oxygen and essential drugs and declaration of lockdowns. A Bench led by Chief Justice of India SA Bobde said there is "almost a

Govt must ensure oxygen supply



This refers to the editorial 'A matter of life' (April 24). I endorse the opinion of the editorial that it's a critical time to ensure that oxygen delivery takes place directly from the plants to hospitals without any hiccups. Due to the heavy rush of Coronavirus patients in most hospitals of Delhi and the NCR, the availability of oxygen is adversely affected and has fallen to critically low levels. The country is struggling with a second wave, raising more fears about its overwhelmed healthcare system. Crowds have formed outside hospitals in major cities which are filled to capacity. A number of people have died while waiting for oxygen. It has become a matter of concern as it

is a matter of life and death for those who are on medical oxygen in hospitals. Several appeals indicating shortage of oxygen have also been filed in the Delhi High Court. There seems to be grave mismanagement in the medical and allied sector in the country. According to the Union Health Ministry, only 33 oxygen production plants have been set up so far, whereas the requirement is to install more than 162 plants. It shows the weakness of public health infrastructure in the country. It is shameful that the High Courts have to intervene to ensure smooth transportation of trucks carrying oxygen cylinders plying between States. Taking suo motu cognisance of this problem, the Supreme Court has appreciably made a suggestion to bring in a national policy. The problem of resolving the issue of oxygen supply to hospitals needs to be dealt with on war footing by the Centre and State Governments collectively. No politics should be done at the times of crisis and all the power centres must act together and cooperate with one another in the fight against pandemic.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

The Government has decided to airlift 23 mobile oxygen-generation plants from Germany as several States are reeling under an acute shortage of medical oxygen. It is a welcome step. Each plant will have a capacity to produce 40 litre of oxygen per minute and 2,400 litre every hour.

The Government has already announced vaccination for all above 18 years from May 1 and, for the successful implementation of this massive programme, the Government has to ensure sufficient supply of the vaccines, to which end these must be imported urgently in large quantities. Fighting alone, one can maybe win a battle, but certainly not a war.

Kavya Shah | Ujjain

THE WORST IS YET TO COME

Sir — The second wave of COVID-19 has hit India hard. The entire nation is gasping in its wait for medical oxygen. There is an acute shortage of oxygen, injections and other medical aids necessary to combat the pandemic and, according to health experts and virologists, the worst is yet to come. To defeat the virus, international cooperation is the crying need of the hour.

SOUNDBITE

Under the Prime Minister's far-sighted leadership, we have started a special campaign to provide oxygen in the country through the PM CARES Fund.

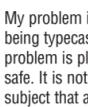


Union Home Minister — Amit Shah



Looking forward to working with India's Prime Minister Modi's new partnership to achieve our climate and energy goals, making this a core pillar of our bilateral cooperation.

US President — Joe Biden



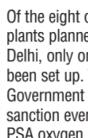
My problem is not being typecast, my problem is playing safe. It is not the subject that affects me as much as the banners you choose to go with.

Actor — Suniel Shetty



I'm on the right track but need to make minor adjustments in training to be fully fit when the main event takes place in July.

India's woman wrestler — Vinesh Phogat



Of the eight oxygen plants planned for Delhi, only one has been set up. The Delhi Government did not sanction even a single PSA oxygen plant.

Congress leader — Ajay Maken

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

ASSURING FUTURES

Paradigms of creativity and collaboration alone can lead to recovery, rebuilding and stable futures



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Most of the communities, perhaps periodically, recall their glorious past in order to show their grandeur. In other cases a narrative is created of the ethnic greatness. Still on other occasions some virtue is picked and held out as an ideal where other communities should be aspiring to arrive. The list is endless. It is commonly believed by people globally that when the sun rose for the first time, the rays had fallen on their city first. It's hard to counter such sentiments as they are often rooted in mythologies. However, if such mythologies are scientifically analysed, the psychology of communities could be far better understood. On the other hand, the history of nation-building (which is essentially a post-19th century phenomena) is unfortunately overlaid with historical references to the leaders who led the unification movement. What began as the German and the Italian unification has had many versions, especially in the Third World countries. This is also so, because, as the empires liquidated, issues of nationalism had to be resolved. Geography helped to resolve many of these identities as in the case of Australia and New Zealand. But, these were exceptions. The unification of hundreds



of islands as Indonesia, left the contentious issues of the identity of some islands. The Philippines and China are still arguing over the sovereignty affiliations of certain islands. Border disputes take many forms and ultimately logic takes a back seat and the real world forces call the shots. Even small countries have split further into smaller segments and there is a constant struggle between the ethnic forces. Speaking of technology — it binds, but only up to a certain point. The fundamentals of technologies can vary, based on the scientific principles that have been used in developing them. Further, various attempts to create an effective international system for achieving peace and development had some assumptions in common but several differences in its rollout. Compare the experience of the League of Nations with that of the United Nations.

All this raises a simple question. How close are we to recognising that Mother Earth can only have a shared future? Sociologists are studying cases of couples who do not want children because they anticipate a fundamental climate change in future. An increasing number of women prefer to freeze their ovum in labs for getting them fertilised at a suitable time. Perhaps, human civilisation has never experienced so many possibilities of fundamental changes in so many dimensions of human life as is evident today. This is a great opportunity for thinkers and doers alike, to put their heads together and envision a future where good sense prevails rather than might. Mutual accommodation is the key rather than assertion. This cannot be a poetic dream as revealed by the troubled experiences of the last 15 months or so. A lot of fundamental experiences have emerged on the limitations of science, technology, human ingenuity and the ability to cope. Today, faith and clarity have become more existential to human development than perhaps ever before.

The pandemic is a wake-up call for humanity. Might alone is a tempting plank to rule the world. But like everything else, the power of the mighty declines and the same stories of struggle begin resurfacing till new power centres emerge. Paradigms of creativity and collaboration can alone lead to recovery, rebuilding and stable futures. This may not be a poet's dream. It may not even be a philosopher's postulates. It need not come out of somebody who would claim to save the world. It is a simple recommendation that makes sense.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal.)

The ethnicities of Pakistani cricket

Is cricket really the unifying factor in Pakistan? What does the ethnic composition of its sports teams tell us about the socio-politics of the country?



NADEEM PARACHA

Cricket is the only thing that unites the country, is perhaps the most often-repeated statement one hears in Pakistan. Even though this is mostly said in a light-hearted manner, it directly stems from an overarching feeling within Pakistani society that, as a republic, the country is severely polarised on numerous social and political issues.

This is not a recent feeling, as such. It has been around for decades now. But the meaning behind this sentiment runs deeper than just the fact that cricket brings together an antipodal set of people that were clubbed together as a nation in 1947. Pakistan's cricket team is, to a certain extent, a composite of the country's various ethnic groups. But this was not always the case. Interestingly, the composition of the team has clearly reflected the manner in which different ethnic communities of the country have engaged with or were engaged by the State.

Cricket was not always the country's favourite sport. Till the early 1980s, just like in India, field hockey was the most popular sport in Pakistan, so much so that in the 1960s it was declared the country's national sport. And for good reason. Till the mid-1980s, Pakistan's hockey sides dominated the sport in the international arena, winning three of the first five Hockey World Cup events.

And even though Pakistan won its fourth Hockey World Cup in 1994, by then cricket had clearly become more popular and the prowess of the hockey side had gone into a gradual decline. The hockey teams were almost always made up of players from Punjab. The rest of the players were from Karachi, mainly Urdu-speaking (Mohajirs). The cricket teams too almost entirely constituted men from Punjab's capital Lahore and from Karachi that was/is Sindh's capital but has a Mohajir majority.

Early in the history of the country, Punjabis and Mohajirs were its two dominating groups in the fields of economics, politics and sports. They also dominated hockey and cricket teams. Both the sports could not gather much interest, though, outside the major cities of Punjab and beyond Karachi and Hyderabad in Sindh.

The Bengalis of then East Pakistan and presently Bangladesh often criticised the hockey and cricket boards for neglecting talent from the Bengali-majority region. Similar laments were aired by Sindhi, Baloch and Pakhtun nationalists. A 1967 issue of the Sindhi newspaper 'Ibrat' quoted the Sindhi nationalist scholar and activist GM Syed as describing cricket and hockey as sports that the country's Urdu-speaking and Punjabi babu (elite) played.

Just before a 1969 Test match against New Zealand in Dhaka in former East Pakistan, the Yahya Khan dictatorship asked the selectors to select a Bengali player, Roquibul Hassan, after Bengali nationalists threatened to disrupt the match. He was played as the 12th man. And when he did get selected in the squad as a playing member, in March 1971 against an International XI, a civil war was already threatening to erupt in East Pakistan.

In 2019, he told the 'Financial Express' that he put a sticker saying "Joy Bangla (Long live



'CRICKET IS THE ONLY THING THAT UNITES THE COUNTRY' IS PERHAPS THE MOST OFTEN-REPEATED STATEMENT ONE HEARS IN PAKISTAN. EVEN THOUGH THIS IS MOSTLY SAID IN A LIGHT-HEARTED MANNER, IT DIRECTLY STEMS FROM AN OVERARCHING FEELING WITHIN PAKISTANI SOCIETY THAT, AS A REPUBLIC, THE COUNTRY IS SEVERELY POLARISED ON NUMEROUS SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES

The writer is a journalist and author of international repute. The views expressed are personal. Courtesy: Dawn



Bangla)" on his bat as a protest against "West Pakistan's treatment of Bengalis."

In 1976, just before a Test match in Hyderabad, Sindh, Sindhi nationalists were quoted in the November 1976 issue of 'The Cricketer' as follows: "It is ironic that even during the regime of a Sindhi Prime Minister (Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto), there wasn't a single Sindhi player in the country's hockey or cricket sides."

Javed Miandad, the 19-year-old Pakistani batsman from Karachi who had made his Test debut the same year, responded by saying that even though he wasn't Sindhi-speaking, being from Karachi made him a Sindhi. In 1983, newspapers quoted General Fazle Haq, the then Governor of North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) which is the present-day Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as saying that Pakhtuns do not like cricket. He claimed they were more interested in football. Ironically, the Governor was a member of General Zia-ul-Haq's military regime.

Integrating the country's non-Punjabi and non-Mohajir ethnic groups into the country's mainstream scheme of things did not begin in earnest until 1973 onwards. But by then East Pakistan had separated after a vicious civil war to become

Bangladesh. And, in 1973, an armed insurgency had erupted in Balochistan.

However, the process of gradually acculturating the Pakhtun in the ways of the State and the mainstream economy had already been initiated from the 1960s onwards by the Ayub Khan regime. Ayub was of Pakhtun descent. The Bhutto Government (1971-77) led by the Sindhi Prime Minister, proceeded to do the same with the Sindhis. But this also meant the slow erosion of the status of the Mohajirs as an elite group and their resentment in this context often played out on the cricket field.

For example, in 1968, during a Test match against England, crowds at Karachi's National Stadium booed when the team's captain Saeed Ahmad came in to bat. Ahmad was a Punjabi from Lahore who had replaced Karachi's Hanif Mohammad as captain. The sense and perception of being ousted from elite institutions would increasingly come to impact the Mohajir psyche in the country.

This is one reason why there is always a lot of hue and cry from various quarters in Karachi when a cricketer from Karachi loses the captaincy or is dropped from the side. This is always explained as a conspiracy to marginalise the

Mohajirs. Nevertheless, whereas the project to bring the Pakhtun into mainstream matters of the State and society continued, the process to do the same with the Sindhis was rudely interrupted by the fall of the Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto regime in 1977 and the manner in which the General Zia-ul-Haq dictatorship mishandled, rather manhandled, the reaction of the Sindhis when General Zia-ul-Haq decided to send Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to the gallows in 1979.

It was only from the late 1990s that the Pakistan cricket team began receiving Pakhtun talent. Today, there are more Pakhtun players in the country's team than there are from Karachi. What's more, Sindhi players have recently proven their talent, enough to be selected for teams playing in the country's premier cricket league, the Pakistan Super League and for Pakistan.

This can be seen as being at least one aspect of the mainstreaming of the Sindhi community that began in the 1970s but which had gone off the track in the 1980s. It was put back on this path mainly by the successive provincial Governments headed by the Pakistan Peoples Party in Sindh, which continues to co-opt Sindhi nationalist ideas by putting them in a federalist context.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

WHEN THE CENTRE HAS REALLOCATED THE (OXYGEN) QUOTA, WHY ARE UP AND HARYANA BEHAVING LIKE THEY ARE FIGHTING WITH DELHI?

—DELHI DEPUTY CM
MANISH SISODIA



INITIALLY, THERE WERE SOME ISSUES BUT THOSE HAVE BEEN RESOLVED. THERE WILL BE NO PROBLEM REGARDING OXYGEN SUPPLY NOW.

—HARYANA CM
MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR

Leaders Summit on Climate: The last chance saloon

The world needs 50 per cent emissions cut by 2030 to stay below the +1.5°C limit. But that does not seem to be working out at all. So what now?

You can tuck your head between your knees and kiss your target of "not more than 1.5° Celsius warming" goodbye. The maverick US President Donald Trump is out and sensible Joe Biden is in the White House. And you will hear a lot of talk about meeting that never-exceed +1.5° Celsius limit. The blather that began on April 22, when the US president convened his virtual 'Leaders Summit on Climate', will end in November in Glasgow with Conference of the Parties (COP)-26, the five-yearly United Nations climate meeting where the commitments actually get made.

However, it is already clear that the Glasgow meeting cannot keep the warming under +1.5° Celsius. That target was close to impossible when they adopted it at the



GWYNNE DYER

last big climate summit in Paris in 2015, and that train has now left the station.

This is not a licence for despair. Cutting greenhouse gas emissions is still important and urgent, but the issue is now also how to deal with much more dangerous warming. We will need new strategies and new technologies to contain the damage, but first — how can we know for sure that we will go through +1.5° Celsius by 2035, or possibly even by 2030?

By the numbers. The scientific consensus is that 430-435 parts per million (ppm) of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will commit us to +1.5° Celsius. We are now at 415 ppm, and in an average year we put about another 2.5 ppm into the atmosphere. So we have at the most 20 ppm left to play with before we commit to +1.5° Celsius,

and we will cover that distance by 2029. Or rather, we'll get there by then if we don't cut our emissions very fast.

In fact, we have to cut them by half in 2030 if we want to be safe. But even in the plague year of 2020 we only cut our emissions by seven per cent. Most years we don't cut them at all.

It's the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that tell the tale. NDCs were an innovation of the Paris Climate Summit in 2015, designed to break the deadlock that had paralysed previous summits.

Instead of arguing endlessly about how much emissions each country should cut, every nation was just asked how much it was willing to reduce. They'd presumably be too embarrassed to say "nothing", so at least that



way we'll get something done. By the way, this was why Donald Trump looked so foolish when he demanded to renegotiate the US emission cuts that his predecessor Barack Obama had promised. There was no negotiation in 2015. Each country's obligation was whatever it offered. The only person Trump could have renegotiated with was Obama, and only if he had a time machine.

Anyway, here we are in 2021, and theory was that at this summit (originally scheduled for 2020) every country would raise its target for emissions cuts. We need 50 per cent emissions cuts by 2030 to stay below the +1.5° Celsius limit. How's that working out?

Russia and the UK are the stars among the major countries, offering 70 per cent and 68 per cent cuts in their emissions respectively compared to 1990 (but that's only because they massively de-industrialised in the 1990s). The whole European Union (EU) will make 55 per cent cuts compared to 1990. If everybody else did the same, we'd be home and dry by 2030. The US says 50-52 per cent cuts and Canada says 40-45 per cent cuts, but only compared to 2005. (They moved the goalposts.)

Japan says 46 per cent cuts, but only compared to 2013. Mexico and Australia are in the mid-20s, India and Indonesia won't set a number at all but New Delhi did announce an 'India-US Climate and Clean Energy Agenda, 2030 Partnership'. India also reiterated its promise to install 450 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity by 2030. China says it will try to "peak" its emissions by 2030 (i.e. they will continue to grow every year until 2030).

In other words, the countries responsible for more than half the world's emissions are making no promises (their NDCs contain no numbers). Some, like China and India, will still be raising their emissions throughout this decade. Even if those who make promises actually keep them, we will end up in 2030

with a global cut of 30 per cent at best. So wave goodbye to "no more than 1.5° Celsius of warming." What do we do now? Starting with COP-26, we start developing ways to get carbon dioxide back out of the atmosphere i.e. Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR), and to hold the heat down while we work on that through Solar Radiation Management (SRM). And we work as fast as we can to get our emissions down, because the other stuff is just short-term techno-fixes.

CDR and SRM were both discussed at the 2015 summit, but now we need to start spending serious money on them. We're going to need them in the 2030s, and neither the science nor the technology will be ready overnight. Ten years might be enough. It had better be enough.

Italy becomes 3rd EU State to fully vaccinate 5 mn people

FIANS ■ ROME
Italy's coronavirus vaccine rollout hit a major milestone, though it appeared unlikely the country would reach its end-of-month target for daily vaccinations. The country's Ministry of Health reported on Saturday that five million Italian residents had been fully vaccinated, making Italy the third European Union (EU) member state to reach that milestone, following Germany and France, Xinhua news agency reported.

A total of 17.3 million people in Italy have received at least the first dose of a vaccine, which means that around 28.5 per cent of the country's population is partially vaccinated. The Italian vaccine rollout, which was launched on December 27, 2020, had seen problems so far, including a four-day pause in the distribution of the AstraZeneca vaccine amid worries about blood clots in some patients. Earlier this month, the distribution of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was halted

before it was set to start due to similar safety worries. But the govt started limited use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine Wednesday, with more doses expected to arrive next week. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine requires just one dose for full effect. All the other vaccines approved for distribution in Italy -- the AstraZeneca, BioNTech/Pfizer and Moderna -- require two doses. Italian General Francesco Paolo Figliuolo, the country's Covid-19 Emergency Commissioner, set a goal ear-



lier this month of administering at least 500,000 jabs a day by the end of April. That target no longer appears feasible despite recent developments, according to statistician Giovanni Sebastiani, who was quoted by the ANSA news agency as saying the daily vaccination rate should reach 350,000 per day by the end of the month, up from fewer than 300,000 per day currently. In an interview with Bloomberg, Fabrizio Curcio, head of the country's civil defence agency, admitted the

500,000-vaccination-per-day goal was unlikely to be met, though he said the target would be reached by early May. He said his main worry was whether vaccine supplies would allow that level to be sustained. "We will reach half a million daily shots by early May, but what will matter will be keeping it over time," Curcio said. "This is crucially linked to the availability of vaccines." Curcio said the earlier temporary halt in the distribution of the AstraZeneca vaccine "has weighed not only

because there have been delays but because it has affected public trust." "We measure this loss of confidence with cancellations at around 30 per cent to 40 per cent in some areas, about 10 per cent on average across the country," he said. Meanwhile, 275 candidate vaccines are being developed - 91 of them in clinical trials - in countries including Germany, China, Russia, Britain and the United States, according to information released by the World Health Organization on Friday.

Bangladesh closes border with India amid rise in Covid-19 cases

PTI ■ DHAKA
Bangladesh on Sunday closed its border with India for two weeks in view of the sharp increase in the coronavirus cases in the neighbouring country. "We are closing it (border) for the passengers for the time being..." Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told reporters. "Bangladesh took the decision in view of rapid increase of coronavirus infection in India," he added. He said that the land routes for people's movement to and from the neighbouring country would be closed for two weeks but the goods-laden vehicles would be allowed to operate. "The higher authorities have decided to close the borders for two weeks...The land routes with India will be shut from April 26," Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal told the Kalerkantha newspaper.

Pakistan offers relief materials to India to help fight Covid-19

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD
Pakistan has offered to provide relief support, including ventilators, to India to help the country fight the deadly wave of Covid-19 and said the two countries can explore possible ways of further cooperation to mitigate the challenges posed by the pandemic. The Foreign Office in a statement late Saturday night said Pakistan was ready to send specific items quickly once the modalities were worked out. "As a gesture of solidarity with the people of India in the wake of the current wave of COVID-19, Pakistan has offered to provide relief support to India including ventilators, Bi PAP, digital X ray machines, PPEs and related items," according to the statement. It said that the authorities concerned of Pakistan and India can work out modalities for quick delivery of the relief items.

Defining numbers from Biden's early days, from jobs to virus

AP ■ WASHINGTON
President Joe Biden's opening months in office have been a whirlwind of activity during the pandemic and the start of an economic recovery. He is facing a sharp increase in the number of migrant children at the U.S.-Mexico border, the tragedy of mass shootings and lingering tensions over racial inequities, the environment and the legacy of his predecessor, Donald Trump. A look at some defining numbers from his first 100 days in office: 2.67 million - Average number of vaccines administered daily during the past week, up from roughly 1.5 million when Biden was inaugurated. 4,380 - COVID-19 deaths on the day Biden became president, Jan. 20. 677 - COVID-19 daily death average for most recent seven-day period. All told, including before Biden's pres-

idency, 569,000 Americans have died from the pandemic. USD 1.9 trillion - Sum of the debt-financed coronavirus relief package that the administration says will help vaccinate the country and restore the 8.4 million jobs lost to the pandemic. 1.38 million - How many jobs have been added during the Biden presidency through March. 161 million - How many direct checks were sent to people as part of the relief package, nearly as many as previous payments approved during the Trump presidency despite tighter standards for qualifying. 38 per cent - The estimated decline in Black poverty from the relief package, which the Biden administration says would help to close racial gaps on the economy. 1.57 per cent - The interest charged on a 10-year U.S. Treasury note, substantially lower than the 4.6 per cent charged in 2001 when the federal government last ran a

budget surplus. 18,890 - Number of children traveling alone who tried to cross the Mexican border in March, the highest total since the number was first tracked in 2009. 40 - Number of executive orders signed by Biden, the highest of any recent president. His most recent order was sanctions against Russia. Many of the orders overturn Trump-era policies on migration and labor issues. A March 7 order seeks to promote voting access in what appears to be an answer to Republican efforts in many states to tighten voting standards following Trump's loss. 10 - Number of mass-casualty killings in the United States in which at least four people died, not including the shooter. 2,500-3,500 - The number of U.S. Troops in Afghanistan. Biden has committed to withdraw them by the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks.

Merkel urges Germans to accept 'tough' virus restrictions

AP ■ BERLIN
Chancellor Angela Merkel has urged Germans to accept nationwide pandemic restrictions that came into force at midnight, resulting in a 10 pm-5 am curfews, further limits on personal contacts and access to non-essential stores in regions with high

infection rates. In her weekly video address Saturday, Merkel acknowledged the new rules are "tough" but insisted they are needed to curb the spread of the virus in the country. Germany's disease control agency on Friday reported 23,392 newly confirmed cases and more

286 deaths from COVID-19. Since the start of the pandemic, Germany has recorded almost 3.3 million cases and 81,444 deaths. Merkel says the new measures, which automatically start regions with more than 100 newly reported cases a week per 100,000 inhabitants, are "urgently needed."

UK official caught Covid-19 during India visit aimed at securing vaccine: Report
London: A British government official, who visited India last month to secure vaccine supplies for the UK, has tested positive for COVID-19 on his return and is among those believed to have unwittingly carried the so-called Indian variant of the contagion to Britain, according to a media report on Sunday. **PTI**

Brazil sees nearly 3,000 Covid-19 deaths
Sao Paulo: Brazil reported 2,914 deaths from Covid-19 in 24 hours, raising the national death toll to 386,416. According to the Health Ministry, 14,237,078 people in Brazil have so far tested positive for the virus, after tests detected 69,105 new Covid-19 cases in the past 24 hours, Xinhua news agency reported on Saturday. **IANIS**

Russia records 8,828 new Covid-19 cases
Moscow: Russia confirmed 8,828 new Covid-19 infections over the past 24 hours, taking the nationwide tally to 4,753,789, the official monitoring and response center said. The national Covid-19 death toll rose by 399 to 107,900 in the past day, while recoveries grew by 9,254 to 4,380,468, Xinhua news agency reported on Saturday. **IANIS**

Jerusalem tension triggers Gaza-Israel fire exchange

AP ■ JERUSALEM
Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip toward Israel resumed Saturday evening after a day-long pause despite calls for calm from the United Nations and threats by Israeli leaders to retaliate fiercely. Tensions in Jerusalem as Palestinians clashed with Israeli police and far-right Jewish groups prompted the heaviest cross-border violence in months between Israel and Gaza. Militants fired a rocket toward Sderot town in southern Israel and it was intercepted by air defenses, the military said. Early Saturday, militants in the Gaza Strip fired some three dozen rockets into Israel, while the Israeli military struck back at targets operated by the ruling Hamas group. The barrage of rocket fire came as hundreds of Palestinians clashed with Israeli police in east Jerusalem. The clashes, in which at least four police and six protesters were injured, have become a nightly occurrence throughout the Muslim holy

month of Ramadan and show no signs of stopping. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says he held talks with top security officials about Gaza and Jerusalem. He said he instructed officials to be ready for every scenario in Gaza. In Jerusalem, he said Israel would guarantee freedom of worship for everyone, and he appealed for calm. "We ask now for people to obey the law and I call for a calming of tempers on all sides." The UN envoy to the region, Tor Wennesland, condemned the violence and said the United Nations was working with all sides to restore calm. "The provocative acts across Jerusalem must cease. The indiscriminate launching of rockets towards Israeli population centers violates international law and must stop immediately," he said. "I reiterate my call upon all sides to exercise maximum restraint and avoid further escalation, particularly during the Holy month of Ramadan and this politically charged time for all."

Meanwhile, Israeli chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Aviv Kochavi, is weighing a series of steps for possible responses, and preparations if the situation continued to escalate, the military said in a statement. He also postponed a trip to the United States that was scheduled for Sunday. The US also appealed for calm, while neighboring Jordan, which serves as the custodian for Jerusalem's Muslim holy sites, condemned Israel's actions. Jerusalem, home to holy sites sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims, has long been a flashpoint in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In 2014, similar tensions erupted into a 50-day war between Israel and Gaza's ruling Hamas militant group. The Israeli military said a total of 36 rockets were fired into Israel throughout the night. It said six rockets were intercepted, while most of the others landed in open areas. There were no reports of injuries or serious damage, but the incoming rocket fire set off air-raid sirens throughout southern Israel.

China commissions three advanced naval ships

PTI ■ BEIJING
China has commissioned three main battle warships, including a nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, a large destroyer and the country's largest amphibious assault ship that can carry around 30 helicopters and hundreds of troops. The ships were commissioned at a ceremony on Saturday attended by President Xi Jinping at Sanya, China's main naval base in the disputed South China Sea in Hainan province. The vessels commissioned included the Type 075 amphibious assault ships, which can carry an estimated 30 helicopters and hundreds of troops. It is China's largest amphibious assault ship with an estimated displacement of about 40,000 tonnes, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Sunday. The Type 091V submarine is believed to be the second-generation class of China's nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines, replacing the old Type 091I, state-run China

Daily reported. The Type 055 is the most powerful destroyer in the Peoples Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) which is equipped with new types of air-defence, missile-defence, anti-ship and anti-submarine weapons, the report said. The new additions are part of the massive modernisation of the PLAN which included the aircraft carriers. China has built two aircraft carriers. Official media reports say China plans to have six aircraft carriers. China's defence budget this year crossed USD 209 billion. Much of its military modernisation focussed on massive expansion of the navy and the air force as Beijing stepped up its assertive role in the disputed South China Sea and Taiwan, where the US too is stepping up its presence. Beijing claims most part of the 1.3 million square mile South China Sea as its sovereign territory. China has been building military bases on artificial islands in the region also claimed by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Indonesia says 53 crew of lost sub are dead, wreckage found

AP ■ BANYUWANGI
Indonesia's military on Sunday officially said all 53 crew members from a submarine that sank and broke apart last week are dead, and that search teams had located the vessel's wreckage on the ocean floor. The grim announcement comes a day after Indonesia said the submarine was considered sunk, not merely missing, but did not explicitly say whether the crew was dead. Officials had also said the KRI Nanggala 402's oxygen supply would have run out early Saturday, three days after vessel went missing off the resort island of Bali. "We received underwater pictures that are confirmed as the parts of the submarine, including its rear vertical rudder, anchors, outer pressure body, embossed dive rudder and other ship parts," military chief Hadi Tjahjanto told reporters in Bali on Sunday. "With this authentic evidence, we can declare that KRI Nanggala 402 has sunk and all

the crew members are dead," Tjahjanto said. An underwater robot equipped with cameras found the lost submarine was lying in at least three pieces on the ocean floor at a depth of 838 meters (2,750 feet), said Adm. Yudo Margono, the navy's chief of staff. That's much deeper than the KRI Nanggala 402's collapse depth of 200 meters (655 feet), at which point water pressure would be greater than the hull could withstand, according to earlier navy statements. The wreckage is located 1,500 meters (yards) to the south of the site where the submarine last dove Wednesday, off Bali's northern coast, Margono said. The underwater robot was deployed by Singaporean vessel MV Swift Rescue provided the images, while the Indonesian vessel KRI Rigel had scanned the area where the submarine was believed to have sank using multibeam sonar and a magnetometer, Tjahjanto said.

Armenian PM resigns ahead of snap parliamentary elections

IANIS ■ YEREVAN
Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Sunday announced his resignation to pave the way for scheduled snap parliamentary elections in June. "In order to implement the decision on holding snap parliamentary elections on June 20, today I resign from the position of the Prime Minister of Armenia," Pashinyan said in a televised address to the nation. He said the party he leads will participate in the elections and that he would be the party's candidate for Prime Minister, the Xinhua news agency reported. According to the Constitution of Armenia, snap parliamentary elections are possible only when the prime minister resigns and no new prime minister is nominated. Earlier in March, Pashinyan said Armenia would hold early parliamentary elections on June 20 and that he would resign in April.

Iraq Interior Ministry: 82 killed in Baghdad hospital fire

AP ■ BAGHDAD
Iraq's Interior Ministry said Sunday that 82 people died and 110 were injured in a catastrophic fire that broke out in the intensive care unit of a Baghdad hospital tending to severe coronavirus patients. Negligence on the part of hospital authorities has been blamed for the Saturday night fire, which initial reports suggest was caused when an oxygen cylinder exploded in the ward of Ibn al-Khatib hospital. Iraq's prime minister fired key hospital officials hours after the catastrophic incident. Among the dead were at least 28 patients on ventilators battling severe symptoms of the virus, tweeted Ali al-Bayati, a spokesman of the country's independent Human Rights Commission. The commission is a semi-official body. Firefighters rushed



Damaged hospital beds are placed outside the Ibn Al-Khatib hospital after a fire in Baghdad, Iraq on Sunday

Doctors at the scene were frazzled by the chaos unfolding around them. They said numerous burned bodies were carried out by paramedics from the hospital floor. The fire came as Iraq grapples with a severe second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

Afghan airstrikes kill 12 militants in eastern Ghazni province

IANIS ■ GHAZNI (AFGHANISTAN)
Afghan fighting planes targeted the Taliban hideouts in the restive Muqar and Gilan districts of eastern Ghazni province on Saturday, killing 12 insurgents and injuring six others, the Defense Ministry said in a statement on Sunday. The short statement also noted that a good quantity of arms and ammunitions of the militants were also destroyed during the air raids, the Xinhua news agency reported. According to the statement, over two dozen militants had also been killed during the clean-up operations in the neighbouring Wardak province on Saturday. The Taliban outfit has not made a comment yet

Afghan gun battle leaves 5 militants dead in Badakhshan

IANIS ■ FAIZABAD (AFGHANISTAN)
Five militants have been confirmed dead as a clash erupted in Shahr-e-Bazarg district of northern Badakhshan province on Sunday, provincial Government spokesman Sanabullah Rohani said. The clash flared up after a group of Taliban militants attacked the police checkpoints in Shahr-e-Bazarg district early Sunday morning and police returned fire. Killing five insurgents and forcing the militants to flee, the official said. Eight more militants sustained injury in the firefight, Rohani further said without providing more details, the Xinhua news agency reported.

French protesters call for trial for Jewish woman's killer

AP ■ PARIS
Crowds gathered Sunday in Paris and other French cities to denounce a ruling by France's highest court that the killer of Jewish woman Sarah Halimi was not criminally responsible and therefore could not go on trial. Thousands of people filled the Trocadero Plaza in Paris, in front of the Eiffel Tower, answering a call by Jewish associations, organizations fighting anti-Semitism and other groups who say justice has not been done. The announcement that the killer would not be sent to trial sparked outrage among the French and international Jewish community. Halimi, a 65-year-old Jewish woman, died in 2017 after being pushed out of the window of her Paris apartment by her neighbour, Kobil Traoré, who allegedly shouted

The ruling from the Court of Cassation, issued earlier this month, said there was enough evidence to show the act had anti-Semitic motives
"Allahu Akbar" ("God is great" in Arabic). Traoré admitted pushing her. The ruling from the Court of Cassation, issued earlier this month, said there was enough evidence to show the act had anti-Semitic motives. However, the court said that a person who committed a crime while being in a "delirious state" cannot be sent to trial - even if the state was caused by the habitual use of illegal drugs. Traoré used to smoke heavy quantities of cannabis. "According to unanimous opinions of different psychiatry experts, that man was presenting at the time of the facts

a severe delirious state," the court said in a statement. Under French law, people cannot be held criminally responsible for actions committed while fully losing their judgment or self-control due to a psychiatric disorder. Traoré has been in a specialized unit of a psychiatric hospital since Halimi's death. French President Emmanuel Macron has called for a change in French law, in an interview with Le Figaro newspaper. "Deciding to take narcotics and then going mad" should, not in my view, remove your criminal responsibility," Macron said. He also expressed his support for the family. Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Morette tweeted on Sunday that he will present a bill at the end of May to plug a legal vacuum in French law regarding the consequences of the voluntary use of drugs.

Major ports to waive oxygen cargo charges

PIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has directed all major ports to waive all charges levied by the port trusts and to give priority to oxygen and related consignments for berthing.

The decision has been taken in view of the excessive requirement of oxygen and related equipment in the country.

"The Government of India has directed all Major Ports, including the Kamarajar Port Limited, to waive-off all charges levied by Major Port Trusts (including vessel related charges, storage charges etc.," said an official statement.

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has also asked the ports to accord highest priority in the berthing



sequence to the vessels carrying consignments of medical grade oxygen, oxygen tanks, oxygen bottles, portable oxygen generators, oxygen concentrators, steel pipes for manufacturing oxygen cylinders and associated equipment for the next three months, or until further orders.

The ministry also asked port chairpersons to personally supervise logistic operations to ensure unhindered movement of such consignments for

berthing of such vessel on top priority in the port, unloading of oxygen related cargo, coordination with Customs and other authorities for speedy clearance and documentation and expeditious evacuation of oxygen related cargo from port.

In case the vessel is carrying other cargo or containers in addition to oxygen related cargo, waiver of charges on pro-rata basis, considering the overall cargo or containers handled at port, should be provided for oxygen related cargo to such vessels. The ministry will monitor the details of such vessels, cargo and time taken in the port from the time vessel entered in the port limits to exit of cargo from port gate.

Oil min tells ONGC to sell oilfields, hive off drilling, other services

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The petroleum ministry has told India's largest oil and gas producer ONGC to sell stake in producing oil fields such as Ratna R-Series to private firms, get foreign partners in KG basin gas fields, monetise existing infrastructure, and hive off drilling and other services into a separate firm to raise production.

Amar Nath, additional secretary (exploration) in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, on April 1 wrote to Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) Chairman and Managing Director Subhash Kumar giving a seven-point action plan, 'ONGC Way Forward' that would help the firm raise oil and gas production by one-third by 2023-24.

The action plan, reviewed by PTI, calls on ONGC to consider sale of stake in maturing fields such as Panna-Mukta and Ratna and R-Series in western offshore and onshore fields like Gandhar in Gujarat to private firms while divesting/privatising 'non-perform-

ing' marginal fields.

It wanted ONGC to bring in global players in gas-rich block KG-DWN-98/2 where output is slated to rise sharply by next year, and the recently brought into production Ashokenagar block in West Bengal. Also identified for the purpose is the Deendayal block in the KG basin which the firm had bought from Gujarat government firm GSPC a couple of years back.

The ministry also wants the company to explore creating separate entities for drilling, well services, logging, workover services and data processing entities.

This is the third attempt by the oil ministry to get ONGC to privatise its oil and gas fields under the Modi government. In October 2017, the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons, the ministry's technical arm, had identified 15 producing fields with a collective reserve of 791.2 million tonnes of crude oil and 333.46 billion cubic metres of gas, for handing over to private firms in the hope that they would improve upon the baseline

estimate and its extraction.

A year later, as many as 149 small and marginal fields of ONGC were identified for private and foreign companies on the grounds that the state-owned firm should focus only on big ones.

The first plan couldn't go through because of strong opposition from ONGC, sources aware of the matter said.

The second plan went up to the Cabinet, which on February 19, 2019, decided to bid out 64 marginal fields of ONGC. But, that tender got a tepid response, they said adding that ONGC was allowed to retain 49 fields on condition that their performance will be strictly monitored for three years.

The ministry note of April 1, 2021, said two years have elapsed since the Cabinet decision and non-performing fields need to be identified for divestment and privatisation.

It suggested market-friendly bid terms such as lower royalty rates and complete marketing and pricing freedom.

Govt to meet bidders on Monday for 2nd tranche of commercial coal mine auction

Kolkata: The Centre will meet prospective Bidders on Monday for 67 mines offered for sale in the second tranche of the commercial coal mining auction, industry sources said.

This is the highest number of mines on offer in a particular tranche after the commencement of the auction regime in 2014.

"The Govt has called for a pre-bid interaction on April 26 after it postponed the April 15 meeting. SBI Caps will give a presentation on the tender process while Central Mine Planning and Design Institute and the nominated authority will also be present there.

"As the country is grappling with a raging second wave of COVID-19 cases, a final call on the number of coal blocks that may go under the hammer may be taken during the meeting," the sources told PTI. Nineteen mines were auctioned in the first-ever tranche of commercial coal mining auction held last year with the premium quoted by the successful bidders in the range of 9.5-66.75%.

The agreements between

the Ministry of Coal and the successful bidders were signed in January this year.

Of the 67 mines offered by the ministry, 23 are under Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act and 44 under Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act. The blocks on offer are a mix of mines with small and large reserves, coking and non-coking mines spread across six states - Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

The coal ministry had said the government was moving towards adopting a "rolling auction" mechanism. Coal is the first mineral resource, where this mechanism is being implemented in which a pool of blocks will always remain available for auctions.

The govt expects that commercial coal mining will bring in new investments, create huge employment opportunities and boost socio-economic development in coal-bearing states, and a market-based coal economy will help the nation become Aatmanirbhar in the availability of the resource. PTI

Steel makers supply 1.43 lakh MT medical oxygen since Sept: Official data

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Steelmakers have supplied about 1.43 metric tonne (MT) liquid medical oxygen to various parts of the country for the treatment of coronavirus patients.

From September 2020 to April 22, 2021, the total LMO supplied by the steel industry - including public and private sectors - was 1,43,876.283 MT, of which the contribution of steel CPSEs stood at 39, 805.73 MT, as per data provided by the Steel Ministry.

Private steel companies supplying oxygen are Tata Steel, ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AMNS India), JSW Steel, Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (JSPL) and Vedanta ESL, while state-owned firms are Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) and Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL).

Oxygen from steel plants is being supplied to states like Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Delhi, Madhya

Pradesh, among others.

On Thursday, Tata Steel said it is supplying 300 tonne of LMO daily to various states. Meanwhile, AMNS India increased its daily supply limit to 210 tonne. JSW Steel and JSPL said they are supplying 185 tonne and 100 tonne per day, respectively.

While RINL is transporting 100 tonne daily LMO; SAIL in a tweet on Thursday said it is supplying on an average 600 tonne oxygen per day. All the companies are making efforts to increase their daily supply limit. On the contribution of steelmakers, Union Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said: "I thank all steel companies for coming together and responding to the call of the nation and working 24x7 to produce LMO. We will together fight the COVID-19 pandemic".

SRTMI Director Mukesh Kumar said the role of integrated steel plants has grown beyond being a steel producer in times of pandemic. They have shown they are not just steel producing units.

APAC countries may witness uneven pace of recovery

PIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Countries in the Asia Pacific Region may witness an uneven pace of recovery where in some economies may revive faster than others, according to a report by Asian Development Bank, UNDP and UNESCAP.

Noting that the Covid-19 pandemic is an asymmetric shock it said that countries have been affected differently and the result may be greater economic divergence both within and between countries in the region.

"Without concerted and collaborative policy actions, there is a real risk of a so-called 'K-shaped' recovery in which some groups or countries recover much faster than others," said the report titled 'Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Leaving No Country Behind'.

It noted that pandemic has caused economic and social devastation across the Asia-

FALLING PRODUCTIVITY AND A RELIANCE ON EXPORTS HAD MADE A DENT IN ECONOMIC GROWTH

Pacific region. It has destroyed tens of millions of jobs and livelihoods and will reverse much of the region's progress in reducing poverty and ending hunger, as well as adversely affect health and education prospects.

The poor and vulnerable, including women, migrant workers, daily wage laborers, and other informal sector workers, have been hit the hardest. Policymakers have focused on containing the virus and meeting peoples' immediate needs.

"While governments recognize the potential of pursuing more environmentally sustainable development as part of

recovery in a region on the frontlines of the climate crisis, tangible action has been limited," it said.

Pre-existing vulnerabilities have only compounded the impact of the pandemic, the report said, adding that the economic performance of many countries in the Asia-Pacific region had already been deteriorating before the pandemic. Falling productivity and a reliance on exports had made a dent in economic growth. Similarly, income inequality had been rising and was widely acknowledged as a key challenge, along with weak health and social protection systems, it said.

COVID-19 IMPACT

FPIs pull out ₹7,622 cr so far in April

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Overseas investors withdrew a net ₹7,622 crore from Indian markets in April so far as a surge in Covid-19 cases and the consequent restrictions imposed by various states dent investors' sentiment.

According to the depositors' data, overseas investors pulled out ₹8,674 crore from equities, but invested ₹1,052 crore in the debt segment.

The total net withdrawal between April 1-23 stood at ₹7,622 crore.

Previously, FPIs invested ₹17,304 crore in March, ₹23,663 crore in February and ₹14,649 crore in January.

FPIs have been "net sellers in the equity markets for five weeks in a row now", noted Himanshu Srivastava, associate director - manager research,



Morningstar India.

Srivastava said the recent spate of net outflows could be largely attributed to the enormous surge in the COVID-19 pandemic in India, which has led several states to impose restrictions to bring the situation under control.

While the impact of a more severe second wave of the pandemic on the economy is yet to be ascertained, it has definitely dashed hopes of an early economic recovery, he further

added. For investment in the debt segment, he said, "The uncertainty in the equity markets has made the Indian debt markets relatively attractive from the short-term perspective".

VK Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services noted that as per the general trend in the market, there is selling in stocks like the banking sector, and buying shares with global linkages like IT, metals and pharma.

"FPIs also are more or less following this trend," he said. Investments might turn positive again once the COVID-19 cases start declining and as the effects of the vaccination catch on, said Harsh Jain, co-founder and COO at Groww.

OMCs keep fuel prices unchanged for 10th straight day

PIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol and diesel prices were unchanged across the four metros for the 10th day in a row. In the national capital, petrol was sold for ₹90.40 per litre. Price of the fuel in Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata were ₹96.83, ₹92.43 and ₹90.62 per litre, respectively.

Similarly, price of diesel also was unchanged for the 10th straight day. In Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, the fuel was sold for ₹80.73, ₹87.81, ₹85.75 and ₹83.61 per litre, respectively. Prices remained unchanged despite high crude oil prices. Brent crude prices are currently above the \$66-per-barrel mark. The June contract of Brent crude on the Intercontinental Exchange (ICE) is currently trading at \$66.11 per barrel, higher by 1.09% from its previous close.

India to be top spender on security solutions in APAC in 2021

PIANS ■ SINGAPORE

Driven by increased cloud adoption and massive work-from-home migration, Australia and India will account 26 per cent of the overall security spending in the Asia-Pacific region in 2021, according to the IDC.

Australia and India are the next two largest countries in terms of security spending due to the presence of large number of businesses catering to domestic as well as international customers.

Overall, spending on security hardware, services, and software in Asia/Pacific is expected to reach \$23.1 billion in 2021 - an increase of 12.6 per cent over the previous year.

IDC expects investment on security related products and services to grow at a five-year CAGR of 13.3 per cent over the forecast period (2019-24) and reach \$35 billion by 2024.

"In Asia/Pacific, invest-

Overall, spending on security hardware, services, and software in Asia/Pacific is expected to reach \$23.1 billion in 2021 - an increase of 12.6% over the previous year

ments on security-related products and solutions (endpoint security, VPN, and firewalls) will experience double-digit growth in 2021 due to the increased spending by both governments and enterprises (particularly in the banking, telecom, and professional services industry)," explained Sharad Kotagi, Associate Market Analyst at IDC IT Spending Guides, Customer Insights and Analytics.

The industries that are seeing the greatest increase in security spending this year are state/local government (18.5 per cent), transportation (13.9 per cent), and retail (13.7 per cent) -- driven by increased focus on data security, e-com-

merce, work from home, digitalization of logistic monitoring, payments, and contracts.

"While leading organisations are starting to adopt a more platform-based approach, the majority are still buying point-solutions to address specific concerns. This majority needs to change their mindset and invest more strategically into their security architectures," says Simon Piff, Vice President of Trust, Security, and Blockchain Research at IDC Asia/Pacific.

Security hardware will be the second largest of the security market, dominated by network security needs -- including firewalls, intrusion detection and prevention, unified threat management, and virtual private networks.

Large (500-1,000 employees) and very large businesses (more than 1,000 employees) will be responsible for two thirds of all security-related spending in 2021, said the IDC report.

CSK chairman Sabaretnam passes away

He was also associated with the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

PIANS ■ CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings Chairman and Director L. Sabaretnam passed away here on Sunday following a massive heart attack. He was 80.

Survived by two daughters and two sons, he headed the Chettinad Cement Corporation and was an independent Director on the board of Indian Oil Corporation and Chennai Petroleum Corporation Ltd.

He was President of Madras Chamber Of Commerce and Industry and was also associated with the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

He joined as a consultant of India Cements Ltd before taking over the reins of the Chennai Super Kings Cricket, the CSK.

DPIIT's control room started working from Apr 24; gets 12 queries on day one

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A control room set up by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade to monitor internal trade, delivery and logistics of essential commodities during the pandemic has started functioning from April 24 and received 12 queries on day one, which are under resolution, an official has said.

On the first day of its functioning, the control room received six queries from Maharashtra, three from Madhya Pradesh, two from Delhi and one from Karnataka, the official added.

Manufacturing, transportation, distribution, wholesale or e-commerce companies facing difficulties in transportation and distribution of goods or mobilisation of resources can reach out to officials on - (011) 23062383, 23062975 or dpiit-control-room@gov.in.

"Issues reported by stake-

holders through this control room are taken up with the concerned state/UT governments," the official said, adding "different types of queries are under the resolution. Major set of query pertains to logistics and permission of transporta-

tion of goods across the states".

The nature of queries raised by stakeholders includes medical delivery boys not permitted to travel by local train for delivery of medicine (Mumbai), seeking permission for manufacturing.

Companies raise ₹14,517cr via equity issues in February

PIANS ■ MUMBAI

Indian companies raised funds worth ₹14,517 crore through equity issue in February, according to SEBI data.

In January, they had raised ₹11,517 crore through equity issue in the previous month.

Companies raised ₹,658 crore through initial public offerings (IPOs) in February, lower than ₹4,933 crore raised through IPOs in January, as per the SEBI bulletin for March 2021. A total of ₹2,999 crore

were raised through equity rights issue during the month under review, up from Rs 81 crore in January.

"During February 2021, there was one rights issue mobilising ₹2,999 crore compared to one rights issue mobilising ₹81 crore in January 2021," it said.

An amount of Rs 7,861 crore was raised through private placement of equity (preferential allotment and QIP) during January 2021, against Rs 6,503 crore during January 2021.

Over 81pc wheat area harvested: Govt

PULSES & OILSEEDS HARVEST OVER AMID PANDEMIC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Sunday said over 81 per cent of wheat sown area has been harvested so far, while harvest of pulses and oilseeds has been completed amidst the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

Farmers are harvesting rabi (winter) crops sown in the 2020-21 crop year (July-June). Wheat is the main rabi crop.

Releasing the latest data, the Agriculture Ministry said: "As a result of the proactive

steps taken, harvesting of rabi crops is on schedule and timely procurement is also being ensured for the benefit of the farmers."

Amidst the current pandemic situation, farmers and agriculture labourers are sweating and toiling against all adversities to make sure that food reaches our homes, it said. "Their silent efforts, coupled with timely intervention by the Central and State Governments, have ensured that there is minimal or no disruption to harvesting activities," it added.

In case of wheat, the ministry said about 81.55 per cent of the total sown area of 315.80 lakh hectare has been harvest-

ed in the country.

About 99% wheat harvesting completed in Rajasthan, 96% in Madhya Pradesh, 80% in Uttar Pradesh, 65% in Haryana and 60% in Punjab, it said. "Harvesting is at its peak in Haryana, Punjab and UP and is likely to be completed by the end of April 2021," it added.

In case of pulses which were sown in 158.10 lakh hectare, harvesting has been completed for lentil, urad, moong and field peas.

For sugarcane, out of the total sown area of 48.52 lakh hectare, harvesting has been completed in Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, and Telangana.

Up to 98% harvesting has been completed in Bihar,

Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. Whereas in Uttar Pradesh, 84% has been completed and this will continue till mid-May 2021. In case of rice sown in 45.32 lakh hectare in the rabi season, harvesting has been completed in 18.73 lakh hectare so far. Rabi rice harvesting is almost complete in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Amongst the oilseed crops, harvesting of rapeseed mustard has been completed 100 per cent in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Assam.

Expression of Interest

CONSULTANTS FOR PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES OF PREPARATION OF BID DOCUMENTS

Reference No. : WR/Engineering/Consultancy/EPC Projects/01/2021.

Western Railway, intends to prepare **Shortlist of Consultants for Preparatory Activities of Preparation of Bid Documents and Associated Documentation / Drawings and Bid Process Management for Inviting EPC and PMC Services and their Finalization for Various Civil Engineering Projects over Western Railway.**

The consulting services include preparation of Bids and Bid process Management for EPC and PMC tenders and their finalization for various Civil Engineering Projects over Western Railway as per the scope defined in Indicative Terms of Reference. The Indicative Terms of Reference (TOR) for this assignment can be found at www.wr.indianrailways.gov.in

The shortlisted consultants will be considered for issue of RFP for the above indicated projects separately for each project for selection of consultant.

Western Railway now invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The shortlisting criteria are:

- The firm should have Minimum Experience of 3 major similar assignments completed in past 7 years for infrastructure surface transport projects with preference for experience on Railway (includes DFCCIL, RVNL, MRVC projects and similar)/Metro projects.
- Minimum average annual consultancy turnover of past 5 years should be ₹ 1 Cr.
- The firm should have qualified and experienced Key Professionals as per requirement given in Terms of Reference.

Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub consultancy to enhance their qualifications.

Consultant will be selected in accordance with the QCBS method set out in the Railway Board's Guidelines issued vide Letter No. 2017/Trans/01/Policy dated 27/11/2017 for various Civil Engineering projects over Western Railway.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours between 10:00 hrs. to 17:00 hrs. on working days.

Expression of Interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person or by email) by 17/05/2021. The Consultant shall submit EOI in not more than 50 pages (Fifty) covering above mentioned relevant required details.

Address for Correspondence :

- Manjul Mathur, CBE/WR,** Office of PCE Western Railway, 2nd Floor, WR HQ Building, Churchgate, Mumbai - 400020. Email : cbejwrl@gmail.com
- Himanshu Sharma, DY/CE/Design/WR** Office of PCE Western Railway, 2nd Floor, WR HQ Building, Churchgate, Mumbai - 400020. Email : dycedwr@gmail.com

Western Railway
www.wr.indianrailways.gov.in

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Bollywood
 'I believe that if you are invested in your work, the audience will be invested in your story.'
 —Rasika Duggal

A NEW BEACON OF OPPORTUNITIES

Social commerce is giving birth to several businesses in India. This is likely to continue in the years to come with the e-commerce industry undergoing a paradigm shift, says PULKIT AGRAWAL

The pandemic accelerated the growth of India's e-commerce industry and social commerce has emerged as a model of success for non-english speaking audience in India. According to research done by Statista, India's e-commerce market is expected to grow upto US\$200 billion by 2026. Moreover, as per the recent survey by PayPal, India is leading the Asian market for social commerce and is likely to turn into a \$100 billion vertical of e-commerce by 2025.

Social commerce is an amalgamation of social media and e-commerce, wherein the users are getting aware and educated through community interactions for performing transactions online and it has been growing rapidly.

The reason behind such success of social commerce in the country is the strong regional connection and the role of a personal referral. Moreover, the number of buying and selling groups on social media platforms, messaging apps, video sharing or photo sharing apps is also an affirmation that online socialising and shopping are highly compatible.

This was evidently witnessed in 2020 when a large population was under lockdown, but a combination of home-grown ideas and social commerce brought success to many. Sellers have been able to establish their niche. There has been a visible growth in new sellers joining these platforms, building an online presence while increasing their customer base.

So, how are social media platforms playing a critical role?

Smartphone usage in India has grown five times in the span of five years. With affordable data charges, around 700 million smartphone users in India have affordable data as of 2020. The figures help understand how easy access via smartphones to the online market is changing the dynamics of e-commerce.

While some social media platforms have integrated 'Buy' buttons, other apps like Trello, which allows users to share their experiences, rec-



ommendations and reviews for various categories by making videos, have launched Trello Shop, allowing users to buy products recommended by Key Opinion Leaders on the platform via the platform itself. On the other hand, there are messaging apps which are offering success to small businesses as they use different features to showcase their products.

With many sellers using messaging apps for business, some companies have come up with chatbots for retailers, which help them manage a

large number of orders with the help of Artificial Intelligence.

In this regard, it also becomes important to ask what are the key drivers leading to the rise of social commerce. A few of them are:

Personalisation: It provides both the buyer and seller with an opportunity to interact, like in a traditional market set-up. In this virtual reality, one can ask questions anytime from anywhere, clear doubts and ask for more information about the product.

Trust-building: Direct interaction between the seller and the buyer builds trust. It also makes the seller accountable in case the customer is not satisfied with the product. They can directly reach out to the seller if they want to refund or exchange. Once that trust is built between the two parties, the seller is likely to get more customers on the basis of recommendations.

Convenience: The traditional e-commerce websites require buyers to

sift through a large amount of information to find exactly what they are looking for. Meanwhile, social commerce brands provide personalised sets of products to customers, which fit his/her taste.

Ease of communication: Another reason behind the increasing popularity of social commerce is the ease of communication it provides to its customers. It provides the option of letting its users converse in several Indian regional languages, further gaining trust and reliability among more and more customers. Even though e-commerce websites are also moving towards covering all native languages, social commerce is much quicker in providing end-customers with the comfort of providing information in their language.

Price advantage: The sellers on social media offer much more attractive prices as they have no overhead costs like space, manpower or dead inventory. Another reason for low prices is the lower customer acquisition cost. The platforms also offer customers the facility to bargain to get the best price in case of bulk orders or group buying.

The way forward: It is, therefore, fair to mention that social commerce is giving birth to several businesses in India. This is likely to continue in the years to come with the e-commerce industry undergoing a paradigm shift. We are also set to witness an expanding customer base in social commerce with lowering overhead expenses and increasing interest from investors and companies. A new beacon of opportunities, social commerce still has unexplored avenues. Language and ease are likely to play a major role in this shift. While e-commerce websites are here to stay, social commerce is definitely going to be a tough competitor.

(The writer is the co-founder and CEO of Trello.)

WEBBED



TIME TO DANCE

When a ballroom dancer's shot at a crucial tournament is jeopardized, a street dancer must face his own painful past and step up as her new partner. Starring Isabelle Kaif and Sooraj Pancholi, the film releases on Netflix on May 7.



THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW

Confined to her home by agoraphobia, a psychologist becomes obsessed with her new neighbors — and solving a brutal crime she witnesses from her window. Starring Amy Adams, Gary Oldman and Anthony Mackie, the film releases on Netflix on May 14.



SARDAR KA GRANDSON

A devoted grandson's mission to reunite his ailing grandmother with her ancestral home turns into a complicated, comic cross-border affair. Starring Arjun Kapoor, Neena Gupta, Rakul Preet Singh, the film releases on Netflix on May 18.

Made mistakes but it's fine: Suniel

Actor Suniel Shetty, who has been a part of Bollywood for three decades now, says his problem is not being typecast but playing safe.

The 59-year-old star made his Bollywood debut in 1992 with the action drama *Balwan*, and was soon slotted as an action hero. Over the years, he made his mark in the genre with films such as *Mohra*, *Border*, *Kaante* and *Sapoot* among others, though he also played the funnyman (the *Hera Pheri* series, *Awara Paagal Deewana*), the romantic anti-hero (*Dhadkan*), the offbeat protagonist (*Hu Tu Tu*), and the odd villain's role (*Main Hoon Na*).

In the new generation, actors as diverse as Tiger Shroff and Ayushmann Khurrana have made a mark by sticking to a particular kind of cinema.

"I guess over a period of time, whether it is Ayushmann Khurrana or Tiger Shroff, they will also start experimenting. What's very important is to get an image and they have a definite image for themselves. These two names can only be appreciated, hats off to them," Suniel said.

"My problem is not being typecast, my problem is playing safe. It is not the subject that affects me as much as the banners you



'No risk means you are no actor according to me. Make your own style'

choose to go with like, 'I will only work with XYZ, who's the director?' That means you don't have your own judgement," he said.

"Keep aside Ayushmann and Tiger from that lot because they have gone with subjects, directors and not just gone with banners," the actor, who last month hosted a show titled *21 Din Wellness In* on BIG FM, said.

Suniel feels the new generation actors have to create an individual style. "No risk (means) you are no actor according to me. Make your own style. Look at Tiger, Ayushmann, they are self-made. All of us were self-made. Yes, we made mistakes but there were Akshay Kumar and Ayaz Devgn, who came out with flying colours," he said.

He added, "There was a Suniel Shetty who failed after a few years because he believed in the subject but the marketing failed."

Suniel feels his journey in Bollywood will help his son Ahan pave his path, now that the latter is all set to enter the film industry.

"What I am trying to say is, I am talking about box-office. We start with box-office and how people react. Nobody will risk a ₹50-crore film with Suniel Shetty today but they will risk a ₹500-crore film with Akshay Kumar. Like I said, I made mistakes but that is fine. Probably that experience will be used by my son," he said.

Suniel is happy how his run in Bollywood has shaped up. "It is an unbelievable journey. I am grateful is all I can say," he concluded.

—IANS

And, it's a match! Online dating apps continue to be much in demand and use among people of different age groups. In fact, many are constantly glued to these apps to find the one that clicks with their vibe. Sure, these apps have made the search for a match faster and easier than before.

While dating is well and alive, many factors influence the behaviour of daters and their online dating experience. The major concerns while using a dating app, preferences while searching for a suitable match and relevance of dating apps in finding a soulmate differ for everyone due to different opinions. A dating platform, QuackQuack, where one can meet several verified local singles and like-minded people for dating and matchmaking, has shared some key insights into daters' behaviour regarding the relevance and safety of dating apps to find that 'special someone'.

The report revealed users' opinion on three key parameters — major concerns while using dating apps, sharing using dating app with friends and family and using a dating app to find a soulmate. The responses were categorised gender-wise as well as age-wise. The three age groups were 18-20, 21-30 and 31 and above.

MAJOR CONCERNS

When asked about the major concern while using a dating app, 65 per cent people in the age group 18-20, 52 per cent of people in the age group 21-30 and 43.4 per cent people in the age group 31 and above felt safety as their primary concern. On the other hand, fake profiles were the major concern for 41.5 per cent



Made in heaven... or hell?

An online dating platform shares some key insights into daters' behaviour regarding the relevance and safety of apps to find their special someone

of people and 37 per cent of people in the age group 31 & above and 21-20 respectively. Further, very few people were bothered about friends/family finding their profile on a dating app.

Talking about gender-wise concerns, women (67 per cent) were most concerned about safety while using a dating app whereas men were equally worried about safety (44 per cent) and fake profiles (43 per cent).

WILLINGNESS TO TELL FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Majority of people — 51 per cent, 52 per cent and 59 per cent between the ages 18-20, 21-30 and 31 above — wouldn't tell anyone about using a dating app

out of the fear of being judged. On the contrary, 48 per cent of people in the age group 18-30 didn't mind sharing if asked.

USING APPS TO FIND SOULMATES

Surprisingly, the majority of people in all age groups i.e. 83 per cent would prefer using a dating app to find their soulmate, considering matrimonial apps will mostly pressurize them for marriage and wouldn't help much in finding their life partner. On the contrary, 17 per cent of people in all age groups would prefer matrimonial apps.

Further, 82 per cent of men and women would prefer using a dating app to find their soul-

mate as compared to 18 per cent of men and women who would prefer a matrimonial app for finding their soulmate.

Speaking about the survey report, Ravi Mittal, founder and CEO of QuackQuack, said, "Dating apps continue to grow in popularity. Both men and women across different age groups are equally using these apps to find a perfect date. While they date online; there are various concerns, trends and preferences that influence their dating experience. Our recent report provided key insights into all these parameters. The statistics were interesting and reveal a lot about evolving behaviour of today's daters."

TRENDBLAZER



STAY AT HOME IF YOU CAN: APARSHAKTI

Actor **APARSHAKTI KHURANA** requested fans to stay at home and not venture out, along with a stylish picture that captures him sitting with his hands folded.

"Haath jodd kar keh raha hun (I say this with folded hands), stay at home if you can," he captioned the image.

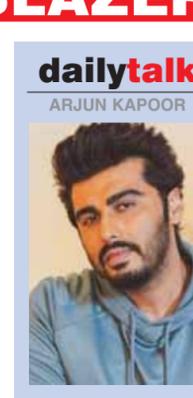
On the work front, Aparshakti will be seen in the film *Helmet* and webseries *Stardust*.



fairtalk

AMIT SIAL

'I keep getting film options, but I won't do anything that sidelines me anymore. I am getting my due on OTT. The good thing about working on OTT is all stories do great justice to the characters. Every character has a backstory and a track. I have had film offers. I have refused some of them and accepted a couple. One of them is almost ready to be released.'



dailytalk

ARJUN KAPOOR

'The reason behind doing the film *Sardar Ka Grandson* was my grandparents. You can only tell a story if you relate to it. You don't only have to relate to the character, but you relate to the overall emotions of the story. It is a film that needs to be felt. It is coming at a time in which you need to value your near and dear ones.'

AMY HOPES TO HAVE ANOTHER BABY

Actress-comedienne **AMY SCHUMER** hopes to have another child, although she has quit the idea of getting pregnant again through in vitro fertilization (IVF).

On an episode of *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, guest host Ashley Graham asked Schumer if she wanted another kid. "Oh God, I hope so. We're trying to figure it out. I mean, you know, it's like, there's nothing better," she replied, adding that she was "working on it currently."



Expression is true freedom

Here's why bottling your emotions may affect your health



When we spend time diagnosing and reflecting back at the lifestyles of people who have cancer, diabetes, hypertension, autoimmune diseases, we find emotions are one commonality among 90 per cent of the cases. Even in our consults, there is one question we ask almost every patient of ours — Do you have any suppressed emotions? What happened in your life six months back or the time when you first got diagnosed with this issue? And, believe it or not, we find

that each of them did have some kind of stress or emotional downfall in their lives. Most of them begin to open up and share how they have been living with unresolved emotions for years, some since childhood. Unforgiveness, anger, guilt, resentment, jealousy, grief, hurt — pent up over years altogether.

Emotions literally translate into energy in motion. Any emotion — negative or positive is energy at the end of the day and it is supposed to flow. Suppressing the energy and

allowing it to bottle up can affect our health in a huge way. Even science has established that unprocessed emotions manifest in the physical body in some or the other way. If you're feeling low, depressed and are struggling with emotions, you lack the ability to express.

Express, express, express... it is everything and it is very natural. No matter what it takes. It could be via talking, writing, recording your own voice note and deleting, journaling or even setting up a consul-

tation with an expert life coach or emotional counsellor. Simply by sharing suppressed emotions, clients start to feel so much better, so imagine what expressing emotions on a regular basis can do.

As humans we are designed to communicate and this is the building block of life.

The first step in this is to learn how to be okay with not being okay. It is okay to have a bad day. It is okay to fail. It is okay to have a fight or argument in a relationship. Feel every emotion you are going

through. If it makes you cry, cry and shed those tears. There is a reason why humans have the mechanism of crying when we are sad. It's only when we feel these emotions, do we allow them to die their natural death. We think that using external aids like drinking, binge eating, watching, drugs, shopping, etc is the solution, but in reality, it isn't. It is only pushing your real emotion deeper and deeper within you, rusting your soul.

Expression is true liberation and freedom. —IANS



Role of youth in nation building

Youngsters must work towards creating harmony and peace for the betterment of society, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI

There is a general feeling today that in the present social set-up, the youth are deprived of the opportunities of growth and development and also participation in the affairs of the family, state and society. Therefore, it is thought that the youth are disappointed, disillusioned and restless, which is one of the reasons why they indulge in violent and destructive activities. One thing which is universally recognised in regard to the youth is that they, in general, have energy, stamina, strong will and zest for life. But certain other valuable characteristics of youth, which can be great tools for social transformation are not fully realised or utilised by society. As a result of which they get confused and disturbed. One such important personality trait of the youth is that they strongly aspire to do something new. They want change, not status-quo. They are not tied down to the past and, instead, have openness to accept new things. Hence, it is easier for them to adapt to any kind of change in comparison to the older generation because they have the wish to learn new things, and they are prepared to make all efforts and sacrifice to effect a social change.



though, in reality, it is merely a burden on their minds and so they will love to retain it rather than throw away the whole lot of it. In these shackles of gold, they will see gold, artificial though it be, and not shackles, and, if they agree to free themselves from these chains, they will have to exert themselves a lot to break these off them. They may find that they lack the strength and the persistence. However, there may be many old men and women who have young minds who can do all this. So, it would be the responsibility of all but of the youth in particular to liberate the planet of its slavery to the negativities of many kinds as they have comparatively fresh mind and less mental fatigue and less conditioning.

Presently, it is thought that the youth indulge in acts of indiscipline, violence, destruction of property and disobedience to their parents and teachers and are taking drugs. This common image of them, which belongs to the old world order, will now have to be totally erased by bringing up the new image. They are very energetic, self-controlled, disciplined, physically well-built, constructive and peaceful, and men and women of strong character, who do not swerve from their path of righteousness due to either allurements of money or to threats by those who are in power and who, instead, march steadfastly towards their noble goal of service in all humility.

The responsibility of youth is now to have the awareness that the nation has high hopes in them and they are not to belie those hopes. These youngsters have far too long been used in warfare, as brute force or for demonstrations, strikes and such other acts of disharmony by various vested interests. But now they should not allow themselves to be used for acts of violence, rifts and hatred. Rather, they must work towards creating harmony and peace for the betterment of society.

Speaking of youth of the world in general, it could be said that up till now, they have been totally or mainly depended on what the old people decided for them. It is the adults who have been formulating the plans, deciding the policies and setting the goals for the future of the youth and all others, and the youth have been merely implementing them or been making efforts to fulfill those goals. Hence, they were nowhere involved in the process of deciding their future. They had very little say in setting even the goals for themselves, for it was thought that the youth were yet immature and inexperienced and, therefore, could not decide for themselves so as to realise their own vision. But now the situation has changed because the knowledge and the practices, which are being revealed, are totally new. So new beginnings have to be made. What is old has to be shed off because, otherwise, it will not allow a totally new set up to take place. Hence, a new world or a society is to be built up with no sign left behind of the old world, which has the stink of castism, the slush of communalism, the muck of racism, the darkness of materialism, the false pride of wavering wealth or empty scholasticism, the crookedness of mind, utter selfishness in behaviour, the hypocrisy in manners and the fits of violence in thoughts, speech or actions and many kinds of syndromes that signify moral turpitude and spiritual bankruptcy.

Perhaps, the aged would find it more difficult because, in the first instance, what they have learnt at great costs and pains to themselves will appear valuable to them even

Last year, when the entire country was locked down to contain the first wave of the novel COVID-19 virus, a survey by the Menstrual Health Alliance India (MHAI) had revealed that women's and girls' access to menstrual hygiene products and toilets for managing menstruation was severely challenged. In a patriarchal society like ours, where it is difficult to discuss Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) openly under normal circumstances, it becomes even more difficult during times of crisis. Owing to several myths and taboos associated with this natural, biological process of women's bodies, it has become even more important that the silence be broken around menstrual hygiene and its management that impacts girls' education, health and well-being.

In the last several years, menstrual health has certainly gained widespread attention in India. With initiatives like *Kishori Shakti Yojana* and Menstrual Hygiene Scheme (MHS), the government has concentrated its efforts on promoting menstrual hygiene and access to sanitary napkins among adolescent girls. Yet, a 2014-report by non-profit organisation Dasra titled 'Spot On!' reported how around 23 million girls in India drop out of school every year due to lack of MHM facilities, including the accessibility to sanitary napkins and awareness. It further suggested that the girls, who don't drop out, miss up to five days of school every month.

Taking notice of the situation, sanitary napkins were exempted from Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2018. According to a report by national daily, the same year, the Union Government had issued directions to install sanitary napkin vending units in educational institutes across the country to stop girls from dropping out. Undoubtedly, installation of sanitary napkin vending machines in educational institutes is an exemplary step, but in the context of the challenges shared above, is it

Remove the stain

It is imperative for society to outgrow the social taboos around menstruation and make it normal rather than a matter of shame, says SAUMYA JYOTSNA



enough? Owing to a blanket of silence and taboo that surrounds menstruation more specifically in rural India, such initiatives get plagued resulting in poor implementation. Impact of which is borne by girls who have to cross several hurdles to secure their education in the first place.

Muzaffarpur, a well-known district of North Bihar, also declared a smart city, is one such region that is facing poor implementation of such initiatives. Considering the challenges faced by school and college going girls, the need of the hour is to make sanitary pads and other hygiene management products easily available and accessible across the city. The education institutes, however, with no such facilities, should be the priority. Although the union government is planning to install sanitary napkin vending machines in schools and colleges,

using which girls can acquire pads at a very low price (₹5), the awareness among school and college going girls regarding the existence of such a machine would be a big hindrance.

Mahant Darshan Das Mahila College (MDDM) is an only-women institute in Mithanpura in Muzaffarpur. Despite being one of the oldest and famous women colleges in North Bihar, the premises of this institute lack facilities of MHM for its students. The students, on the other hand, lack awareness towards the menstrual cycle and its management.

As part of Student Union initiatives, a pad vending machine was installed in the college a few years ago but no awareness campaign was run for the same. A very small proportion of girls were aware of this machine. According to Supriya, the Student Union Representative, "The pad vending machine was installed around

two years ago, but it turned out to be of no use. While some girl students acted as miscreants, the carelessness of administration was also responsible as the machine was left unattended. The principal and other college officials who should be responsible for providing and maintaining such facilities were themselves unaware of the existence of the machine."

Misery of the MDDM college is shared by Chapman Girls Government School located at a short distance from MDDM. The girls at this school had started benefiting from the pad vending machine but the convenience was short-lived. The negligence of the school administration and lack of maintenance of the machine has rendered it useless. The lack of awareness of the long-term impact of unavailability of MHM products on lives of girls is considered to be one of the major reasons behind this callousness of the administration.

There, however, a few institutes who are trying to break this uncomfortable silence around MHM. In such institutes, vending machines have not only been installed but they are being maintained and managed properly.

Sunshine Preparatory/High School, a private institute in Sherpur on the outskirts of Muzaffarpur city, is one such example. Here, girls have easy access to sanitary pads and other facilities required for proper hygiene management. Another institute making an effort in this direction is the newly constructed Government High school in Musahari block. Here, girl students

are being educated about the entire process of menstrual cycle and its hygiene management using a handbook called *Paheli Ki Saheli*. This school is also diligently following the State Government's directive to provide monetary support to girl students to buy pads on their own. This reflects how these government initiatives are being implemented in some of these institutes without any hiccups.

Talking about periods as a biological process, Dr Kalpana Singh, a senior gynecologist from Patna, shared that every month a female body undergoes hormonal changes. "The hormones cause the lining of the uterus to build up. If there is no fertilised egg, the lining breaks down and blood gets discharged from the uterus. The process, repeated every 28-days, is known as menstruation cycle. Every girl should be prepared to accept these changes in her body and should be educated about this process before they attain puberty," shared Dr Kalpana.

She also stressed on the need of educating families about menstrual cycle as this will make life easier for adolescent girls. She also stressed upon the harm caused by unsafe practices like use of dirty clothes, not washing hands using soap after changing cloth/pad, unavailability of toilet etc. All these unsafe and unhygienic practices can lead to serious reproductive issues among girls and women. She recommended that pads should be changed from time to time in order to maintain cleanliness and hygiene.

On one hand, films are made on menstruation, netizens take up the 'Red Dot' challenge and on the other, it is sad to catch sight of girls facing trouble in receiving education due to taboos and shame associated with periods. It is imperative for society to outgrow the social taboos around menstruation and make it normal rather than a matter of shame.

—Charkha Features

“ **Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard.** —Tim Notke ”

PREGNANCY RAISED DEPRESSION IN PANDEMIC

Pregnant and postpartum women reported high levels of depression, anxiety, loneliness and post-traumatic stress during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a worldwide survey. Such high levels of distress may have potential implications for women and for foetal and child health and development, said researchers from Harvard University's TH Chan School of Public Health in the US.

"We expected to see an increase in the proportion of pregnant and postpartum women reporting mental health distress, as they are likely to be worried or have questions about their babies' health and development, in addition to their own or their family's health," said Karestan Koenen, Professor of psychiatric epidemiology at the varsity.

"However, the number of women who had significantly elevated symptoms was much larger than what had previously been published during the pandemic," Koenen added.



JUNK FOODS MAY DAMAGE YOUR BONES

Does your kid love to eat ultra-processed junk foods like packaged chips, soups, hot dogs and fries? Besides the increasing risk of obesity, eating junk foods can also affect your bones, warn researchers. A team of researchers from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel proved the linkages between ultra-processed foods and reduced bone quality, unveiling the damage of these foods particularly for younger children in their developing years in a rodent-study.

The findings showed that the rodents experienced moderate damage to their bone density, albeit there were fewer indications of cartilage buildup in their growth plates. "Our conclusion was that even in reduced amounts, the ultra-processed foods can have a definite negative impact on skeletal growth," said Efrat Monsonego-Ornan, Professor at the varsity.



REGULAR EXERCISE CAN BEAT COVID

Regular exercise or a 30-minute brisk walk while following the social distancing norms can improve your chances of beating COVID-19, reveals a significant study that analysed 48,440 adults who were COVID positive. On the other hand, patients who were consistently inactive had 1.73 times greater chances of ICU admission, while the risk for death was 2.49 times greater.

Other than being over the age of 60 or having a history of organ transplant, being consistently inactive conferred the highest risk for death from COVID-19. Even patients who were inconsistently active had lower chances for severe COVID-19, suggesting any amount of physical activity has benefit, revealed the findings published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine. "This is a wake-up call for the importance of healthy lifestyles and especially physical activity," said Robert E Sallis, physician at the Kaiser Permanente Fontana Medical Centre in the US.



PEOPLE TRUST COMPUTERS MORE THAN HUMANS

Despite increasing concern over the intrusion of algorithms in daily life, a new research shows that people are more likely to rely on algorithms than humans, especially if a task becomes too challenging.

From choosing the next song on your playlist to choosing the right size pants, people are relying more on the advice of algorithms to help make everyday decisions and streamline their lives. "Algorithms are able to do a huge number of tasks and the number of tasks that they are able to do is expanding practically every day," said researcher Eric Bogert from the University of Georgia.

"It seems like there's a bias towards leaning more heavily on algorithms as a task gets harder and that effect is stronger than the bias towards relying on advice from other people," Bogert added.



PETS EASED KID'S LONELINESS IN LOCKDOWN

Family pets help children better manage feelings of stress and loneliness, which have been greatly exacerbated by virtual schooling as a result of the pandemic, shows a new survey.

According to UNICEF, at least one in seven children — or 332 million globally — has lived under nationwide stay-at-home policies for at least nine months since the start of the pandemic, putting their mental health and well-being at risk. The Mars Petcare survey of parents reveals that more than eight in 10 parents found that their family pet helped their child feel less lonely during lockdown, with more than three-quarters feeling that day-to-day interactions with their cat or dog reduced their child's stress and anxiety. Parents agreed their pet supported their child during the unprecedented break from in-person schooling by improving their mood, providing companionship and giving much-needed emotional support.



GAME 2021

IT WAS A GOOD WICKET BUT I FELT THE SPINNERS HAD SOMETHING UP THEIR SLEEVES AND THAT EXTRA FEW RUNS JADEJA MADE HELPED. 165 WOULD HAVE BEEN PAR
— MS DHONI



TODAY VS LIVE FROM 7:30PM IST STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

MIRACLE MAN

boundarymeter

4s 561

6s 246

Jadeja first hits Purple Cap holder Harshal for 37 runs in the final over of CSK innings and then takes 3 wickets & run out Christian to snap RCB's winning run

SCOREBOARD

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

Rituraj Gaikwad c Jamieson b Chahal	33
Faf du Plessis c Christian b Harshal	50
Suresh Raina c Padikkal b Harshal	24
Ambati Rayudu c Jamieson b Harshal	14
Ravindra Jadeja not out	62
MS Dhoni not out	2
Extras (b 0, lb 1, w 3, nb 2, p 0)	6
Total (4 wks, 20 Overs)	191

Bowling

Mohammed Siraj	4-0-32-0
Kyle Jamieson	3-0-31-0
Yuzvendra Chahal	3-0-24-1
Navdeep Saini	2-0-27-0
Harshal Patel	4-0-51-3
Daniel Christian	2-0-12-0
Washington Sundar	2-0-13-0

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE

Virat Kohli c Dhoni b S Curran	8
Devdutt Padikkal c Raina b Thakur	34
Washington Sundar c Gaikwad b Jadeja	7
Glenn Maxwell b Jadeja	22
Ab de Villiers b Jadeja	4
Daniel Christian run out (Jadeja)	1
Kyle Jamieson run out (Tahir)	16
Harshal Patel b Tahir	0
Navdeep Saini c Raina b Tahir	2
Yuzvendra Chahal not out	8
Mohammed Siraj not out	12
Extras (b 0, lb 3, w 5, nb 0, p 0)	8
Total (9 wks, 20 Overs)	122

Bowling

Deepak Chahar	2-0-25-0
Sam Curran	4-0-35-1
Shardul Thakur	4-0-11-1
Ravindra Jadeja	4-1-13-3
Imran Tahir	4-0-16-2
Dwayne Bravo	2-0-19-0



Chennai Super Kings all rounder Ravindra Jadeja celebrates after he completes his fifty against Royal Challengers Bangalore

quoteunquote

JADDU IS SOMEBODY WHO CAN CHANGE THE GAME ON HIS OWN. IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, WE'VE SEEN SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN BATTING AND IT'S WORTH IT TO GIVE HIM THAT EXTRA BIT OF TIME, EXTRA DELIVERIES
MS Dhoni, CSK captain

HIS (JADEJA) ABILITY HAS BEEN THERE FOR EVERYONE TO SEE. I AM VERY HAPPY TO SEE HIM PERFORM WITH THE BAT, BALL AND ON THE FIELD
Virat Kohli, RCB captain

After a cracking start that saw them cross 50 in five overs, RCB were stopped at 122 for nine in 20 overs. The immensely-talented Devdutt Padikkal top-scored with

a blazing 34 off just 15 balls. Veteran South African leg-spinner Imran Tahir (2/16) picked up two wickets for CSK while giving away very few runs.

Jadeja began the final over of CSK innings by clobbering four consecutive sixes off Harshal Patel before adding another off the fifth ball.

He smashed the last ball over square leg for four as Harshal, who had figures of 3 for 14 going into the final over, finished with 4-0-51-3.

Jadeja, batting at No 5, was yet to open his account when he was dropped by Dan Christian off Washington Sundar.

Playing for RCB, Chris Gayle had also scored 37 runs, against Kochi Tuskers Kerala in the 2011 edition, the bowler being Prasanth Parameswaran on that occasion.

The left-handed Jadeja made full use of the reprieve to ruin what was turning out to be an excellent outing for purple cap holder Harshal, Patel, with his brutal last over onslaught.

With CSK placed at 154/4 when Harshal was handed the ball, Jadeja hit the first four balls for towering sixes and followed them with another maximum and a boundary in the seven-ball final over.

His assault came after the RCB bowlers — Patel and Mohd Siraj (0/32) — had kept CSK in check.

Earlier, a second straight half-century for Faf du Plessis (50 off 41 balls) propelled CSK before Harshal delivered a double blow for RCB in the 14th over, getting rid of Suresh Raina (24) and the former South African captain off successive deliveries.

Raina belted three sixes during his 18-ball knock which gave CSK the move-on after the openers had set up a good platform with a 74-run partnership.

Ambati Rayudu, who came in at No 4, hit a huge six in his 14 and looked good for more before he holed out off Harshal's bowling a few deliveries after appearing to have hurt himself while stretching to get back to the crease.

DC win Super over thriller

Williamson's fighting 66 goes in vain as SRH suffer 4th defeat



Delhi Capitals opener Prithvi Shaw raises his bat after fifty

Khan in the seventh over. Young Virat Singh took some time to find his feet against superior Capitals' spin trio of R Ashwin, Axar Patel and Amit Mishra, which meant that the responsibility to find quick runs was on the Kiwi batsman.

Virat (4 off 14) consumed too many balls and was eventually dismissed by Khan. It brought Kedar Jadhav (9) to the crease but he too did not last long. He was stumped off Mishra. It was the middle-order that faltered again with SRH's chances of play-off qualification evaporating with each passing game.

SRH needed 50 runs from the final five overs with Williamson holding the innings together.

Earlier, skipper Rishabh Pant (37) and Steve Smith (34 not out) raised a 58-run stand for the fourth wicket to ensure a fighting total for DC after electing to bat.

Shaw began with a hat-trick of fours off pacer Khaleel Ahmed. Those were breathtaking strokes, straight out of text book.

His six off pacer Siddarth Kaul over long on and the ramp shot over short third-man off the same bowler bore testimony to his supreme touch.

Rashid provided his side with first breakthrough when he found stumps of Dhawan, ending DC's 81-run opening stand.

Shaw's splendid knock ended in a run out after a mix-up with skipper Pant.

Pant and former Australia captain Steve Smith were now two new batsmen at the crease. They kept the scoreboard moving.

The duo managed to get a few boundaries but SRH bowlers largely controlled the proceedings.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The irrepressible Ravindra Jadeja blasted an IPL record-equalling 37 runs in one over and then grabbed three big wickets in an outstanding all-round display as Chennai

Super Kings crushed Royal Challengers Bangalore by 69 runs at Wankhede Stadium on Sunday. Jadeja pummeled 62 off 28 balls and lifted CSK to 191 for four after skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni opted to bat in a

top-of-the-table clash. Then, with his slow-left arm spin bowling, the star all-rounder picked up the important wickets of AB de Villiers and Glenn Maxwell to derail RCB's run chase on a sluggish Wankhede pitch.

Time running out for KKR

KEY PLAYERS

CHRIS GAYLE
Universe Boss returned to form against MI in the last game and this is a big boost for PBKS

SHUBMAN GILL
The talented youngster is going through a rough patch and would like to get some runs under his belt

VENUE: NARENDRA MODI STADIUM, AHMEDABAD

HEAD TO HEAD

Matches	27
Punjab Kings	09
Kolkata Knight Riders	18

LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

Kolkata Knight Riders beat Punjab Kings (KXIP) by two runs in Abu Dhabi

Punjab Kings (KXIP) beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 8 wickets in Sharjah

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Their three-match losing streak finally over, Punjab Kings would seek to build a winning momentum when they face the struggling Kolkata Knight Riders here on Monday.

Punjab made a winning start but then slumped to three straight losses before producing a clinical show to beat defending champions Mumbai by nine wickets on Friday, and they would look to notch up another triumph against KKR which have suffered four defeats on the trot.

Captain KL Rahul has been one of the few consistent performers in the formidable-looking Punjab batting unit and he once again led by example against MI with an unbeaten 60, his third fifty in five games.

Mayank Agarwal has been the other main performer and the return to form of Universe Boss Chris Gayle against MI with a 43 not out should be good news for Punjab.

But Deepak Hooda, who has not done much after one impressive innings, will have to step up if Punjab want to perform consistently.

The place of Nicholas Pooran, who has scored 0, 0, 9, 0, in the playing XI is expected to be under review though his turn did not come in the last match.

The Punjab bowlers, who have been pedestrian in earlier matches, came good in their last match with the talented Ravi Bishnoi (2/21) and senior India pacer Mohammed Shami (2/21) leading the charge.

Young Arshdeep Singh has been a consistent bowler with six wickets from five matches.

On the other hand, KKR, led by England's World Cup winning skipper Eoin Morgan, continued to slide after losing to Rajasthan Royals by six wickets in their last match.

Their batting unit need a complete turnaround in form if KKR has to snap their losing streak.

The top-five batsmen continued to struggle with only Nitish Rana — two half centuries — and Dinesh Karthik doing anything of worth.

Pacer Pat Cummins played an incredible innings — 66 not out — for a losing cause against Chennai Super Kings but KKR would like their specialist bats-

43

Eoin Morgan with 6957 runs at an average of 27.07 in 300 innings of 317 matches, needs 43 runs to become the fourth Englishman and 23rd batsman overall to complete 7000 runs in T20s

700

Chris Gayle scored 700 runs at an average of 46.66 in 18 innings of as many matches for Royal Challengers Bangalore and Punjab Kings against Kolkata Knight Riders in IPL

men to deliver consistently instead of relying on the lower order. Gill and Morgan have been in woeful form and they desperately need big scores to make themselves count. Gill has scored just 80 runs from his five innings. Morgan is even worse with just 45 from five innings. Sunil Narine has been used to boost to KKR innings on two occasions but the West Indian has not delivered till now with scores of 4 and 6. In the bowling department, Russell, Varun Chakravarty and Prasad Krishna have been doing reasonably well with 7, 6 and 5 wickets respectively. Cummins has been underwhelming performance so far with four wickets from five matches.

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Sunrisers Hyderabad's inept middle-order show foiled their splendid bowling effort as they slumped to yet another defeat in IPL, losing Sunday's contest against Delhi Capitals via Super Over. Hyderabad spinners Rashid Khan and Jagadeesha Suchith's tight spells had restricted the Capitals to 159 for four despite a quick 81-run stand between openers Prithvi Shaw (53) and Shikhar Dhawan (28). However, Hyderabad's over-reliance on their top-order batsmen meant that once skipper David Warner (6) and Jonny Bairstow (38) were dismissed, New Zealand captain Kane Williamson was left to anchor the sinking ship. With Capitals packed with

proven performers, it was not possible for Williamson (66 not out) to do the job without support from other end. His fighting knock was not enough to take the side home.

However, timely hits from Suchith (15 off 6) helped SRH tie the scores and take it to the Super Over.

SRH managed just one boundary, setting an easy eight-run target for Capitals who knocked off the required runs despite Rashid Khan's brilliance.

At the start of the chase after Warner's run out, it was other opener Bairstow, who kept the run-rate under control with his power hitting while Williamson was his usual assuring self.

Bairstow was dismissed immediately after hitting a gigantic six of pacer Avesh

shortpasses

MAN UTD HELD BY LEEDS
LEEDS: Manchester United drew 0-0 with Leeds on Sunday to stay on track for a second-place finish in the Premier League after Burnley took a giant step towards survival as Chris Wood scored a first-half hat-trick to help them beat Wolves 4-0.

WOMEN'S RECURVE TEAM WIN GOLD
GUATEMALA CITY: Deepika Kumari shot a perfect 10 in the final arrow as India scripted a stunning turnaround to defeat a fancied Mexico and grab a Gold medal in the Archery World Cup Stage 1. Also Atanu Das and Ankita bagged a mixed pair Bronze.

BARCA BEAT VILLARREAL
MADRID: Barca took over as Atletico Madrid's chief challengers for the title on Sunday as Antoine Griezmann scored a quick-fire double in a 2-1 win away at Villarreal in La Liga.

LEIPZIG KEEP BAYERN WAITING
LEIPZIG: Second-placed RB Leipzig made Bayern Munich wait to be crowned Bundesliga champions as Emil Forsberg netted a second-half penalty in a 2-0 home win on Sunday against 10-man Stuttgart.

MAN CITY WIN LEAGUE CUP
LONDON: Manchester City claimed a fourth consecutive League Cup on Sunday with a dominant display to beat Tottenham 1-0 in front of 8,000 fans at Wembley. Aymeric Laporte's header eight minutes from time finally won the game for Pep's team. Agencies



Inter on brink of Scudetto

AFP ■ MILAN

Mattéo Darmian scored the only goal to push Inter Milan to the brink of the Serie A title with a 1-0 win over Hellas Verona on Sunday with coach Antonio Conte hailing the victory as worth "nine points". Achraf Hakimi sent the ball through for Darmian to grab the winner after 76 minutes in the San Siro as Inter open up a 13-point lead on AC Milan who travel to Lazio on Monday. "Today's victory is not worth only three points, not even six. It is worth nine," said Conte.

"The ball begins to weigh, we are feeling the pressure. "This win is worth 95% of the Scudetto. We haven't won it yet but we are close." Juventus are equal on points with AC Milan in third place, with Atalanta a further point behind before hosting Bologna. With five games left to play, Inter could claim their first Serie A title since 2010 as early as next weekend. In Florence, second-half substitute Alvaro Morata scored immediately after coming off the bench to rescue a point for Juventus.

POINTS TABLE

	P	W	L	NRR	PTS	
1	CSK	5	4	1	+1.612	8
2	DC	5	4	1	+0.334	8
3	RCB	5	4	1	+0.096	8
4	MI	5	2	3	-0.032	4
5	PBKS	5	2	3	-0.428	4
6	RR	5	2	3	-0.681	4
7	SRH	5	1	4	-0.180	2
8	KKR	5	1	4	-0.675	2



Barty wins Stuttgart title

Stuttgart: World number one Ashleigh Barty earned her third WTA title this year by defeating Aryna Sabalenka in the final of Stuttgart's clay-court tournament on Sunday. After winning in Miami and a pre-Australian Open event in Melbourne on hard court, Barty added the Stuttgart title, her first tournament on clay this season, as the 2019 French Open winner gears up for Roland Garros next month. A day after her 25th birthday, the Australian rallied from losing the first set to claim a 3-6, 6-0, 6-3 over Sabalenka, who needed a medical time-out after the second set for a leg injury. Despite playing the third with her right leg strapped, Sabalenka even broke Barty at 3-1 in the decider, but the 22-year-old ultimately failed to add Stuttgart to January's triumph in Abu Dhabi. AFP