

OPINION 6
CAPFS AND THE ENEMY WITHIN

WORLD 8
MYANMAR GUERRILLAS CAPTURE GOVT BASE

AVENUES 10
MAKE A CAREER IN MICROBIOLOGY

DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

*Late City Vol. 31 Issue 115
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY APRIL 28, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



NAGELSMAN IS BAYERN'S NEW COACH
12 SPORT

2L die of Covid, and counting

India 3rd in global death tally after US and Brazil

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
India touched the grim milestone of 2 lakh Covid-19 deaths on Tuesday as the country also logged in another single-day high of new cases with several States making new daily peaks.

India reported a record 3,285 deaths and 3,62,757 new cases during the last 24 hours on Tuesday night with Maharashtra topping the tally on both counts. The State reported 66,358 new cases and record 895 deaths.

Maharashtra also led the death tally across the country with 66,179 fatalities, followed by Delhi (15,009) Karnataka (14,807), Tamil Nadu (13,728), Uttar Pradesh (11,678), and West Bengal (11,082).

In terms of a total number of cases Kerala occupies the second spot behind Maharashtra with 14,60,365 cases, but it is way below in the fatality tally. It's obvious that the small State has done something out of the way to control the death rate.

India is placed third in the global death tally behind the USA (5.9 lakh deaths) and Brazil (3.92 lakh deaths).

A day after a noticeable reduction in the number of Covid-19 triggered deaths, Maharashtra was in for a shock on Tuesday, an all-time high of 895 people succumbed to the pandemic while 66,536 people



Funeral pyres lined up as deaths due to Covid continue at Ghazipur crematorium ground in New Delhi on Tuesday

PTI

tested positive in various parts of the State.

As the daily deaths rose from 532 on Monday to 895 on Tuesday and infections from 48,700 to 66,538, the total deaths in Maharashtra climbed from 65,284 to 66,179. Similarly, with 66,536 fresh infections, the total number of cases rose from 43,43,727 to 44,10,085.

As 67,752 patients were discharged from hospitals across the State after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year went up to 36,69,548. The recovery rate in Maharashtra for the first time in several days rose from 82.92 per cent to 83.21 per cent.

Meanwhile, on a day the number of fresh Covid cases came down in Uttar Pradesh, the State recorded a high of 265

deaths with capital Lucknow alone logging 39 deaths, as per official record shared by the health department.

Lucknow registered 4,437 new cases while UP logged 32,993. But the good news is that 30,398 people have recovered from the infection.

Kanpur city reported 15 deaths, Prayagraj (13), Varanasi (13), Ghaziabad also recorded a high of 15 deaths in the last

24 hours. A dozen deaths have been reported from Noida — another high. Jhansi reported eight deaths, Moradabad and Agra 4 each, Ballia reported a high of six cases, Jaunpur 4, Shahjahanpur 4, and Sonbhadra 3.

Kerala has become the epicentre of Covid-19 pandemic according to medical experts in the State. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in his media interaction on Tuesday disclosed that the State has diagnosed 32,819 persons with Covid-19 during the last 24 hours and this is being seen as the highest-ever single-day cases in South India.

With the Department of Health confirmed that the State saw 32 fatalities during the last 24 hours, the death toll in Kerala reached 5,170. Test positivity rate stood at 23.24.

The State wore the look of a ghost city, according to Subramanian Sasidharan, an entrepreneur from

Virudhunagar who has made Kerala his home for the last 40 years. "With ambulances blaring the siren ferrying Covid-19 patients to hospitals and from there to the burial grounds, the State reminds me of scenes directly culled from war movies of the 1960s. This is not the Kerala I grew up with," Sasidharan told *The Pioneer*.

Continued on Page 2

CEOs of 40 US companies create global task force to help India fight Covid-19

Washington: In a show of solidarity, the CEOs of about 40 top American companies have come together to create a first-of-its-kind country-specific global task force to mobilise resources and coordinate efforts to help India fight the battle against Covid-19.

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES: 1,79,88,637 (+3,62,757)

DEATHS: 2,01,165 (+3,285)

RECOVERED: 1,48,07,704 (+2,62,039)

ACTIVE: 29,72,106

MAHARASHTRA: 44,10,085

KERALA: 14,60,365

KARNATAKA: 14,00,775

UTTAR PRADESH: 11,53,097

DELHI: 10,72,065 (+24,149)

PM's aunt, Vajpayee's niece die of Covid-19

Ahmedabad/Raipur: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's aunt Narmadaben Modi, 80, who was undergoing treatment for coronavirus infection died at the civil hospital on Tuesday, the family said.

Meanwhile, former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's niece and former member of Parliament Karuna Shukla died of coronavirus in Raipur, her family members said on Tuesday.

Our role on Covid national policy not meant to supplant HC cases, says SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Terming the massive resurgence of Covid-19 cases a "national crisis", the Supreme Court on Tuesday said it cannot remain a "mute spectator" and made clear that its suo motu proceeding on devising national policy for Covid-19 management is not meant to supplant High Court hearings.

A bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud said the High Courts are in a better position to monitor the pandemic situation within their territorial boundaries and the apex court was playing a complementary role and its "intervention must be understood in the correct perspective" as there are some matters which transcend the regional boundaries.

"We are playing complementary role. If High Courts have any difficulty in dealing with issues due to territorial limitations, we will help," said the bench, also comprising Justices L. Nageswara Rao and S. Ravindra Bhat.

Continued on Page 2

Desi jobs costlier than others

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

India may be the world's biggest centre of vaccine manufacturing, but the prices of Covid-19 vaccines in India is much higher than several other countries, including neighbouring Bangladesh.

UNICEF's Covid-19 vaccine market dashboard reveals that countries such as Mexico, Nepal and Bangladesh procure the vaccine from SII at \$4 per dose, while the price is ranging between \$5.25-\$3.84 for Brazil, Palestine, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia a dose.

The issue was flagged by the Supreme Court on Tuesday. The court asked the Centre to explain the basis and rationale adopted with respect to the pricing of Covid-19 vaccines and other necessary items. The Centre has already asked the vaccine companies to lower the prices. BOX-prices of vaccines in other countries

A three-judge Bench led by Justice DY Chandrachud asked the Government to clarify the "basis and rationale on which Covid-19 vaccines are being priced in the country". The phase 3 vaccination drive is set to begin from May 1 for 18

COUNTRIES	COVID VACCINE	PRICES
India	Covishield	₹400 (\$ 5.36) for State Govt; ₹600 (8.5) for pvt hospitals
	Covaxin	₹600 (\$ 8.5) for State Govt; ₹1,200 (\$16.08) for pvt hospitals
Bangladesh	Covishield	\$4 (340 Bangladeshi Taka)
EU countries	Oxford-AstraZeneca	\$2.15 to \$3.50
USA		\$4
United Kingdom		\$3
Mexico		\$4

years and above. Pune-based SII stated that coming May 1, Covishield will be sold at ₹400 (approximately \$5.5) to State Governments and at ₹600 (₹ 8.4) to private hospitals. Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech has fixed the price of Covaxin at ₹600 (\$ 8.4) per dose for State Governments, and ₹1,200 (\$ 16.08) per dose for private hospitals. Both vaccines are available to the Central Government at ₹150 per dose.

According to British Medical Journal report, the 27-nation EU, with its steep manufacturing costs, is paying just \$2.15-\$3.50 for a shot of the vaccine, the UK is paying

about \$3 per dose and the US at \$4 per dose. The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is much cheaper, although neither the UK nor the US can match the EU's \$2.15 deal: they are expecting to pay about \$3 and \$4, respectively, per dose.

Imported vaccines from Pfizer, Moderna, J&J may also be available in the future. Their price is difficult to estimate as each has separate agreements with various countries. But reported prices range from \$2 to \$35. By June, Russia's Sputnik V will be imported by Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd and sold at an estimated \$10 or ₹750 per dose.

Continued on Page 2

Covid causes ₹5L cr biz loss

Retail suffers ₹3.5L cr, wholesale ₹1.5 L cr

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

A massive loss of about ₹5 lakh crore has been estimated due to the ongoing Covid-19 related restricted business, curfews, partial lockdowns across various States and cities. The retail business has suffered a loss of about ₹3.5 lakh crore, while the wholesale business lost ₹1.5 lakh crore, as accounted by the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT).

The CAIT represents around seven crore traders and about 40,000 trade associations from across the country. The loss figures are based on feedback provided by prominent trade associations from 14 States which include Maharashtra, Delhi, Uttar

Capital to breathe easy with Bangkok, Paris O2



The first Oxygen Express train for Delhi carrying around 70 tonnes of the life-saving gas reaches Delhi Cantt early on Tuesday

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Oxygen Express reaches Delhi

Oxygen from Bangkok and Paris will now save the lives of Delhi citizens.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday said his Government is importing 21 ready-to-use oxygen plants from France. The plants will be installed in different hospitals to ensure steady supply, while 18 oxygen tankers from Thailand will start arriving from Wednesday.

At the same time, the first Oxygen Express train for Delhi carrying around 70 tonnes of the life-saving gas reached the national Capital early on Tuesday. The oxygen will now be distributed by the Delhi Government to various hospitals where patients are gasping for breath in the wake of heavy demand by patients battling the deadly coronavirus.

The city administration has also approached the Centre to allow the use of Indian Air Force planes for airlifting of liquid oxygen gas to ease the transportation keeping in view

time and distance to save the lives of critical Covid patients.

In a close coordination with the Centre, the Delhi Government has worked out a plan to handle the medical oxygen crisis management as the city administration will set up 36 plants in Delhi's hospitals by May 10. The work on seven of them installed by the Centre will be completed on April 30.

SC ALLOWS VEDANTA'S OXYGEN PLANT AT TUTICORIN TO OPERATE IN VIEW OF 'NATIONAL NEED'

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed Vedanta to operate its closed oxygen plant at Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu, saying the order has been passed in view of "national need" for oxygen and there should be no "political bickering" over the generation of the gas by the company as the country is facing a "national crisis".

Amritsar MP suggests PM to accept Pak offer

Chandigarh: Amidst unabated surge in Covid-19 cases, Congress MP from Amritsar Gurjeet Singh Aujla wants to give a breath of fresh air to India's relationship with Pakistan by accepting the neighbouring country's offer for help. He has, among other things, suggested an 'oxygen corridor' with Pakistan on the lines of Kartapur Sahib Corridor via Attari-Wagah route.

EC bans victory shows day after HC rap over public rallies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After allowing "super spreader" rallies and roadshows during the Assembly polls, the Election Commission on Tuesday banned victory processions after the declaration of Assam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, West Bengal and Kerala election results on May 2 to check the spread of coronavirus.

The decision came a day after the poll panel faced flak from the Madras High Court over the violations of Covid-19 protocol during campaigning for the five Assembly elections. The High Court on Monday blamed the commission for the second wave of the pandemic.

The figures have been compiled and estimated after studying the Covid restrictions, customer behaviour and market conditions. The research report of the CAIT said about 80 per cent of the people/consumers across the country have stopped coming to the markets for shopping causing a loss in the business.

CAIT secretary general Praveen Khandalwal said Covid has proved disastrous for commercial and economic activities all over the country which is amply clear from the fact that in the past 25 days, there has been a loss of Rs five lakh crore of business across the country.

Continued on Page 2

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

HC: NEVER ASKED COVID FACILITY AT 5-STAR HOTEL

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Tuesday said it never asked for Covid care facility at a five-star hotel in the national Capital. The court's remark came a day after a Delhi Government order said as many as 100 beds have been booked at Ashoka Hotel to be used as Covid care facility for High Court judges and their families.

AJMER DARGAH TO TURN INTO COVID CENTRE

New Delhi: Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Tuesday approved a proposal to convert an Ajmer Sharif Dargah rest house into a temporary Covid Care Centre.

LANKA CABINET OK'S BAN ON BURQA IN PUBLIC

Colombo: Sri Lankan Cabinet on Tuesday approved a proposal to ban all forms of face coverings in public places, citing a threat to national security.

P8

Sparse crowds at last Shahi Snan

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

The last Shahi Snan of the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar was observed on the occasion of Chaitra Purnima on Tuesday. It was a symbolic affair considering the surge in Covid-19 cases.

Unlike in past Kumbh Melas only about 25,000 devotees and Sadhus from various Akhadas took the holy dip in the river Ganga in entire Kumbh Mela area from Rishikesh to Haridwar. In addition to the traditional Kumbh rituals, the devotees also prayed to the Ganga and their deities for deliverance from Covid.

The general public bathed in the Ganga early in morning after which Har Ki Pauri was vacated for the Shahi Snan of the Akhadas.

The Panchayati Akhada Sri Niranjani and Anand Akhada began the symbolic Shahi Snan.

Continued on Page 2

BCCI assures safe return of foreign players to their countries

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/MELBOURNE

The BCCI stepped in to assuage apprehensions of foreign cricketers, especially Australians, at the IPL as a second wave of Covid-19 infections battered India, prompting the Government Down Under to suspend air travel with the country besides asking players to make their "own arrangements" for return.

The fear of being locked out of their own nation drove the likes of Andrew Tye to take an early flight back to Australia while Kane Richardson and Adam Zampa also exited their franchise Royal Challengers Bangalore's bio-bubble on Monday. A day later, Australia announced that it was suspending air travel to and from India till May 15 amid the swirling Covid-19 cases.

Continued on Page 2

Coronavirus fears to stalk Gadia Lohar tribe!

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Adjacent to a hospital on a busy 201 number road leading to Najafgarh where every now and then screaming ambulances rush in with Covid-19 patients, Gadia Lohar tribe is living a carefree life without registering "a single corona case", let alone a casualty and that too without following any of the corona protocol.

The members are aware of the coronavirus pandemic, but they eat and drink on the pavement without following any Covid-19 protocol like wearing mask, using sanitiser or maintaining "social distancing".

As one visits them, Hansraj, 55, offers space on a cot to sit by his side and "chill outs" on his "hukka". "We are around 150 Gadia Lohars living here. We have no exposure to corona, and our entire community in Delhi has



also not reported this disease," says Hansraj.

All through both phases of the deadly pandemic, life for the community on the pavement has not changed at all.

"Our sarpanch lives in Khayala and each member of the community comes to know if anyone dies or catches ailments as we are quite close-



light chowks in Dwarka which is regularly traversed by people even during the current lockdown and the second and more deadly pandemic wave. The buyers interact with them to purchase iron-molded articles from their shops.

Their womenfolk are also seen washing clothes on the pavement with no trace of a mask. They show no sign of the fear and anxiety that has seized the housing societies bang

opposite them where relatively better nourished and well-cared citizenry lives on.

The tribe members mainly engage in the work of ironworks and have spent their lifetime under the open sky on the pavement.

The deadly virus has not been able to shake their confidence and impact, just like it has failed to break the morale of those living in shanties and slums.

Didn't ask for Covid care in 5-star hotels for judges, staff, families: HC

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Tuesday said it has not made any request for creating Covid-19 facilities for its judges, staff and their families in a five star hotel and an SDM's order saying so was "very misleading".

and Rekha Palli said, "No communication has been made to anyone in this regard". "This is very misleading. The HC has not made any such request for setting up beds in any such five star hotel," the bench said and added that the order passed by the sub-divisional magistrate was wrong as the state cannot create a facility exclusively for a class.

It further said that when the Delhi government was unable to provide oxygen to everybody, it was talking of providing a 100-bed facility for the high court judges. "That is very unfortunate. You (Delhi government) are passing orders left, right and centre without even bothering to do anything about it. You are attaching the facility to a hospital, but there are no doctors, no nurses, no staff, no ward boys, no oxygen, no equipment, no ventilators, no medicines, nothing."

"But you have done your job on paper. What were you trying to convey? What is the projection? The projection is that we have taken up these (petitions on lack of oxygen, medicines, etc.) matters first to benefit ourselves or that you have done it to appease us," the bench said. Senior advocate Rahul Mehra, appearing for the Delhi government, attempted to blame the media for the situation saying that "media was

playing a mischievous game" by projecting the SDM's order in a certain manner. "Media's perception cannot be controlled," Mehra said. However, the bench did not buy that line of argument and said, "Media is not wrong in pointing it out, because this order is wrong. Your order says it is at the request of the high court. Can anyone imagine that we as an institution can say that you create a special facility for us. Is this not discriminatory? Especially when people

are struggling to find beds." "You cannot create a facility exclusively for a class. Therefore, this order is wrong," the court added and directed the Delhi government to "take corrective steps immediately" and "withdraw the order", failing which the court shall quash it. Delhi government additional standing counsel Santosh K Tripathi assured the bench that the order would be withdrawn forthwith. The bench also issued

notice to the Delhi government seeking its stand on the matter which the court has registered as public interest litigation. In an order issued by the sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) of Chanakyapuri on April 25, it was stated that the COVID facility at Ashoka Hotel will be associated with Primus Hospital. The court said it only had a meeting to discuss the situation in the subordinate judiciary where judges had to hold court in person and many of

them, including their families, were infected by COVID-19. "We lost two judicial officers to COVID-19," the bench said and added that in such a situation it only wanted that if these judicial officers wanted admission in a hospital then some facility should be available to them. "That has been translated into this kind of order. As if we wanted a facility for ourselves. Where is the question of our having a 100-bed facility," the court said. PTI

'3 Idiots' scene comes alive at medical college in Palamu

Ailing man taken out on scooter from MMCH emergency ward

MD FAIYAZ AHMAD DALTONGANJ

Ever wondered the '3 Idiots' scene where Rancho and Pia took Raju's ailing father on a scooter inside the hospital becoming a reality. Well, a similar yet unique incident took place at the Medinirai Medical College and Hospital in Daltonganj on Monday night. A 45 years old Covid negative, but post Covid pneumonia patient, Ram Prasad, was taken off the emergency ward of the Medinirai Medical College and Hospital in Daltonganj on Monday evening about 170 kilometers away from Ranchi by a scooter. Two young men, kin of the patient, made him sit in the middle as pillion rider and rode away without causing any problem to anyone in the ward, while the admitted patients just saw this 'operation scooter' with a sense of disbelief. The incident has sparked a

great bewilderment here with questions being raised like there is no wheel chair, stretcher or any trolley for such patient of the emergency ward here in the medical college and hospital in Daltonganj. However, there is no one to answer these questions. The medical superintendent of the hospital Dr K N Singh didn't take the calls of The Pioneer on Tuesday. Civil Surgeon in-charge, Palamu, Anil Kr Srivastav said the episode is of the hospital and the man to comment on this is none but the medical superintendent K N Singh. However a well-known physician Dr R K Ranjan posted MMCH in Daltonganj said the patient was in the emergency ward and was a Covid negative patient but had post Covid pneumonia. Ranjan said, "Two youths came on a scooter near the emergency ward on Monday evening and then took away their patient for

treatment of him in some other hospital. Where is the harm if one takes away one's patient from here to other place?" He said, "To me the family of the post Covid pneumonia patient did the right thing. Everyone has a right to have the best of the treatment. The doctor said that had there been wheel chair, stretcher or the trolley he does not see any one would have climbed the ramp with a scooter to reach the emergency ward. Sources said there is a well-built ramp in the medical college hospital in Daltonganj that takes patients on the wheel chair, stretcher and trolley right up-to their beds. Deputy Commissioner, Palamu, Shashi Ranjan, said he would look into this episode. He said the family members should have found out the stretcher boy or the trolley man instead of taking down the scooter right near the emergency ward. The youths, who rode the scooter for the patient, could not be traced as sources said that they might have gone underground fearing administrative action against them.

Develop O2 corridor with Pak: Amritsar MP writes to PM

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Amidst unabated surge in Covid-19 cases, Congress MP from Amritsar Gurjeet Singh Aujla wants to give a breath of fresh air to India's relationship with Pakistan by accepting the neighbouring country's offer for help. He has, among other things, suggested an 'oxygen corridor' with Pakistan on the lines of Kartarpur Sahib Corridor via Attari-Wagah route. Aujla's suggestion, urging the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to allow getting oxygen from Pakistan for Punjab's border districts, comes at a time when the entire country, including Punjab, is gasping for oxygen. In fact, Punjab, a day before, registered the highest number of Covid deaths in a day this year.

Making an appeal, Aujla underlined that it takes 10 hours for a truck to reach Amritsar from Panipat and Lahore is merely 30 km away... "So if Pakistan is ready to supply oxygen to us, the Central Government should give its nod as it would save many lives," he said in a letter written to the Prime Minister. Aujla, who shared the letter on the Twitter, tweeted, "Requested @PMOIndia Sh @narendramodi to accept all the medical help offered by other countries & also create an 'oxygen corridor' at Attari Wagah border port to facilitate entire border region of Punjab. Expecting from @drharshvardhan & @DrSJaishankar to take up this matter". Maintaining that he was

aware of the political and diplomatic state of affairs, Aujla stated that at the times of such pandemics and calamities, "all the nations must join hands and share resources to defeat this common enemy". "...you gifted the world with 'Kartarpur Sahib Corridor on 550th birth anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dec Sahib; and developing an oxygen corridor would be a great gift to humanity on the occasion of 400th birth anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib," he added. Only a day before, Punjab Congress president Sunil Jakhra accused the Central Government of "discriminating" against Punjab in the allocation of Oxygen for COVID-19 patients, while making it clear that the Centre would be responsible

for deaths due to oxygen shortage in Punjab. Notably, Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on April 24 had stated that his country was willing to help India in the wake of a massive surge in COVID-19 cases in the country. "We express our support to the people of India in the wake of the current wave of COVID-19 infections that has hit our region hard. On behalf of the people of Pakistan, I extend our heartfelt sympathies to the affected families in #India," Qureshi had tweeted. WHAT THE LETTER SAYS In his letter, Aujla pointed that Punjab's hospitals are facing "alarmingly high shortage of liquid oxygen, ventilators, Si PAPS, oxygenators, PPEs etc" due

to spike in Covid-19 cases. "In response to this emergency, our neighbouring countries have offered help which should be welcomed with open arms. The Government of Pakistan and Edhi Foundation has offered to provide relief support to India to help us fight this deadly wave of COVID-19," Aujla has written in the letter. Representing the holy city of Amritsar — located on the international border, Aujla highlighted that Amritsar is around 350 kms from Panipat (nearest oxygen plant) and just 50 kms from Lahore, Pakistan. "The daily requirement of oxygen in government and private hospitals in Amritsar is around 30 tons whereas allocated quota for Punjab is just too less and that too is in feeble supply," hesaid.

Maha hospitals to use oxygen as per SOPs: Health Minister

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Given the shortage of medical oxygen in the State, the Maharashtra Government on Tuesday decided to utilise the life-saving gas to treat the needy Covid-19 patients henceforth strictly on the basis of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) prepared by it for the purpose. In one of the series of tweets put out by him, Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said: "We have prepared SOPs for use of medical Oxygen to treat Covid patients. We have told the hospitals across the state to utilise medical oxygen strictly on the basis of SOPs".

"Currently, we use 1515 tonnes of medical Oxygen. Given the shortage of supply, we have asked the hospitals to make optimum use of medical Oxygen. We have circulated SOPs among the hospitals in the state," the Health Minister said. Tope also announced that the state government had decided to replicate the "Nandurbar pattern", a method used in Nandurbar district of north Maharashtra, in hospitals across the state. "Under this pattern, there is a nurse for every 50 patients on Oxygen support. This method is useful to keep a track of medical Oxygen by 50 patients under each nurse," the minister said.

Delhi to...

"Linde has come forward with 58 MT of medical oxygen to Delhi," Hemant Soren, Jharkhand, Chief Minister's Office confirmed. The Delhi Government is trying to convert ordinary beds into an ICU bed. The main Ramlila Maidan in front of LNJ hospital is also being converted into an ICU bed centre with a capacity of 500 beds, and 200 ICU beds are being readied at Radha Soami Satsang Beas. "These 1,200 ICU beds will be ready by 10 May," Kejriwal said. Kejriwal claimed that the situation has seen improvement this week and the number of SOS messages received from hospitals has reduced due to the hard work and coordination between the Central and State Govts.. "We are trying our level best to increase the amount of oxygen available in Delhi. It has been noted that the oxygen allotted to us by the Central Government is also not reaching us in its entirety. A major issue facing us today in the supply of oxygen is the shortage in the number of tankers," Kejriwal asserted. Earlier, informing the arrival of the Oxygen Express Railway Minister Piyush Goyal tweeted: "Oxygen Express has reached Delhi from Raigarh, Chhattisgarh with Oxygen for patients in the Capital. Indian Railways is leaving no stone unturned in our collective fight against Covid-19."

EC bans...

From Page 1 "In view of the surge in Covid-19 cases throughout the country, the commission has decided to make more stringent provision to be followed during the process of counting, in addition to exiting broad guidelines dated 21st August, 2020," the EC said in a letter to the Chief Electoral Officers of all States. It said no victory processions would be allowed after the counting of votes and only a maximum of two people would be allowed to accompany the winning candidate or their authorised representative to receive the certificate of election from the returning officer. BJP president JP Nadra welcomed the Election Commission's order. "I welcome the decision of the ECI banning celebrations and processions of electoral victories. I have directed all State units of BJP to strictly adhere to this decision. All karykarts of BJP are using their energies to help the ones in need in this hour of crisis," Nadra said in a tweet. In a letter signed by Sumit Mukherjee, the senior public relations secretary to the Election Commission of India, the EC said that it had issued broad guidelines on August 21 last year to conduct elections during Covid-19, after receiving suggestions from national and State-based political parties. The guidelines for political parties conducting election campaigns and public meetings had also been reviewed based on suggestions received from various chief electoral officers of states and union territories, the letter read. The Covid-19 related provisions for counting of votes on May 2 are to be in accordance with the broad guidelines dated August 21, 2020.

Our role on...

From Page 1 These observations assume significance as some lawyers had criticized the apex court last Thursday for taking suo motu cognizance of the pandemic's resurgence and issues by saying that high courts be allowed to continue with hearings. A day later on April 23, a bench headed by the then CJ J S A Bobde, who has retired, took a very strong exception to "unfair" criticism by some lawyers for "something which was not part of its order" in the suo motu case related to framing of national policy on the Covid-19 pandemic and said "this is how institution is being destroyed". The bench on Tuesday also took note of the submissions of lawyers including senior advocate Vikas Singh on differential pricing of Covid-19 vaccines and asked the Centre to apprise it of the "rationale and basis" behind such pricing. On Government's decision to vaccinate all citizens above 18 years, the court sought replies from States by Thursday as to how they intend to cope with the surge in vaccine

demand and the infrastructure required for that. The bench also asked the Centre to apprise the top court of the modalities on distribution of oxygen as well as the vaccines to states and the monitoring mechanism. In the hearing, conducted via video conferencing, the top court also appointed senior counsel Jaideep Gupta and Meenakshi Arora as amicus curiae to assist it in the Covid-19 management case as Harish Salve had sought recusal following some controversial remarks by some lawyers. Last Thursday, the bench took note of the pandemic situation due to sudden surge in Covid-19 cases as also in mortality and said it expected the Centre to come out with a "national plan" to deal with distribution of essential services and supplies, including oxygen and drugs. Observing that oxygen to patients infected with the virus is said to be an "essential part" of treatment, the top court had said it seemed that a certain amount of "panic" has been generated due to which people have approached several high courts seeking relief. amidst full protection as per Covid SOP, it would still be difficult as each shop needs manpower and these poor people who are generally migrants seem to have already left for their native places," Khandelwal said. The national traders association claimed to start an online survey across the country from Wednesday to be continued till April 19 in which opinion of traders and common people will be obtained on the current status of corona and available medical facilities; and whether traders further need lockdown or what can be the other alternatives in lieu of lockdown.

Sparse crowds at last Shahi Snan

From Page 1 It was followed by the Juna Akhada, Sri Agni and Ahwahan Akhadas along with some members of the Kinnar Akhada. The Akhil Bharatiya Akhada Parishad (ABAP) national general secretary Mahant Hari Giri was also seen exhorting all to observe the Covid guidelines. Sadhus of the Sri Mahanirvani, Sri Shambhu Panchayati Atal Akhadas, the Akhil Bharatiya Sri Panch Nirmohi Ani Akhada, Akhil Bharatiya Sri Panch Digambar Ani, Sri Nirvani Ani, Sri Panchayati Bada Udasin, Sri Panchayati Naya Udasin and lastly the Sri Nirmal Panchayati Akhada took holy dips in the Ganga. Considering the alarming surge in Covid-19 cases across the nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had earlier urged members of the religious fraternity to keep the remaining part of the Kumbh Mela symbolic.

2L die of...

From Page 1 Chennai registered 4640 new patients while neighbouring Chengalpattu district came second with 1,181 cases. The Oxygen controversy has subsided for the time being with the Supreme Court showing green light for reviving the production of medical grade oxygen from the Thoothukudi unit of the Sterlite Industries. The plant has a capacity to produce 1000 tonne oxygen per day. Twenty-five more patients succumbed to Covid-19 while 3164 fresh cases of Coronavirus were recorded, taking the tally of active positive cases to 22283 in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday. According to the media bulletin, "Out of 25 deaths, 15 were reported from Jammu and 10 from Kashmir division. Out of 3164 fresh cases, 1030 were reported from Jammu and 2134 from Kashmir division". Srinagar district recorded the highest tally of 1144 patients in one single day while Jammu district stood at number two with 489 fresh cases of coronavirus. CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu Government in a late evening release said that 15,830 new persons were diagnosed with Covid-19 on Tuesday. The pandemic claimed 77 lives during the last 24 hours and this took the death toll in the State to 13,728 till date. As on Tuesday evening the State had 1,0,8855 persons who were tested positive for the pandemic. There has been no respite in the number of persons being tested (RT-PCR) as 1,21, 549 persons were tested on Tuesday.

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, रायगढ़ (छत्तीसगढ़) Phone No.: 07762-222911, Fax No.: 07762-222923 Email :- nraigarh@ymail.com website - www.naigarhnamraigarh.com

कार्यालय कार्यपालक अभियंता लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड कबीरधाम (छ.ग.) ई प्रोक्यूरमेंट निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

BCCI assures... From Page 1 The BCCI wrote to the foreign players telling them that their safe return home will be its responsibility once the tournament ends on May 30. "We understand that many of you are apprehensive about how you will get back home once the tournament concludes... We want to apprise you that you have nothing to worry about," BCCI COO Hemang Amin said in a letter addressed to the players. "The BCCI will do everything to ensure that you reach your respective destinations seamlessly. The BCCI is monitoring the situation very closely and is working with the government authorities to make arrangements to get you home once the tournament concludes. "Be rest assured that the tournament is not over for

Covid causes... From Page 1 The losses in Delhi markets account for Rs 15,000 crores in retail trade and a business loss of about Rs 10,000 crore in the wholesale trade during the last 20 days. "It has been seen that due to acute surge of Covid and this time being more critical, both the businessmen and consumers are avoiding the physical markets. The same lot for their needs are using the e-commerce platforms, the business of which has certainly grown. Even if the traders decide to continue the business

From Page 1 The surge in the number of Covid-19 cases comes a day after Chief Minister told the people that the medical fraternity has come across new variants of the pandemic, which he described as the British and South African variants. "These genetically modified varieties of Covid viruses are lethal than the ones which we are familiar with and in days to come we will see a tsunami of Covid in Kerala," Vijayan had told Monday evening.

Desi jobs costlier ...

From Page 1 The Johnson & Johnson vaccine, expected to announce phase III results imminently, is also much cheaper, costing the EU \$8.50, with each dose going twice as far as the other brands, since it is a single shot vaccine. The Congress termed the new policy as "discriminatory and insensitive", and accused the Government of allowing vaccine makers to profiteer. Echoing the concerns expressed by some state governments over the differential pricing announced by the Serum Institute of India (SII) for its vaccine Wednesday, Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Thursday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking how the Government could permit such "brazen profiteering" from people's misery. She also asked the Prime Minister to re-examine the new vaccination policy saying it "implies that the Government of India has abdicated its responsibility to provide free vaccination for citizens between the age group of 18 to 45 years." Objecting to the differential pricing model, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had said this was not the time for profiteering, and appealed to manufacturers to bring down the price to Rs 150 per dose. The Kerala Government also questioned the pricing policy of the Government. PUBLIC NOTICE I, on behalf and upon instructions of my client Shreyas Joshi inform the general public at large that Shreyas Joshi d/o Late Shri Prem Kumar Sharma has separated from her husband Shri Vimal Joshi, ceasing all matrimonial relationship. That she has no communication with her husband whatsoever, and anyone dealing with him will be doing at his/her own risk, cost and consequences. My client shall not be responsible for any of his act. For BLACK COAT CONSULTANTS S. Mani (ADVOCATE)

Covid positive workers to get ₹5K, 10K aid

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government will disburse medical assistance for Covid-19 positive construction workers at the rate of ₹5,000, subject to a maximum of ₹10,000 per family. The process to claim this disbursement is fair and simple, a member of the family would have to produce RT-PCR report, which will then be verified through the ICMR portal, said a Government official on Tuesday.

The city administration has also set up 150 food distribution centres in various schools and construction sites across all the districts.

In furtherance to helping construction workers, Delhi Government has also disbursed ₹5000 to each construction worker as aid during Covid-19

pandemic. A total of 2,10,684 construction workers will receive the cash-transfer as form of aid, out of which 2 lakh have already received aid of Rs. 100 crores and 11,000 workers will be granted the disbursements in the coming days.

Delhi Government's commitment to help construction workers did not go unnoticed even last year, in 2020 during lockdown, when Delhi Government disbursed Rs. 5000 to 55,000 construction workers.

Many new construction workers were added to the Delhi Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board, due to large drives for registration of construction workers.

Currently, there are 1,72,000 workers registered with the Board.

Oxygen Express reaches city with 70 tns O2

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The first Oxygen Express train for Delhi carrying around 70 tonnes of the life-saving gas reached the national Capital on Tuesday early morning. The oxygen will now be disbursed by the Delhi Government to various hospitals where patients are gasping for breath in the wake of heavy demand by patients battling the deadly corona virus.

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal informed the arrival of the Oxygen Train on his twitter. "Oxygen Express has reached Delhi from Raigarh, Chhattisgarh with Oxygen for patients in the Capital. Indian Railways is leaving no stone unturned in our collective fight against Covid-19, & ensuring sufficient availability of life-saving resources across the country," tweeted Goyal.

The Indian railways have chalked out plans to transport medical oxygen from Angul, Kalinganagar, Rourkela and Raigarh to Delhi and NCR region as and when demand by the States including Delhi and adjoining states.

So far, 450 metric tonnes



The first Oxygen Express for Delhi carrying around 70 tonnes of the life-saving gas reaches Delhi Cantt early on Tuesday PTI

have been delivered to Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh & Delhi in six Oxygen Express through 26 tankers covering more than 10,000 km (in empty and loaded conditions), as per Indian railways information.

As per provisional estimates 202 metric tonnes of oxygen has been delivered to Uttar Pradesh, 174 metric

tonnes to Maharashtra and 70 metric tonnes to Delhi. Madhya Pradesh will receive 64 metric tonnes in next 24 hrs.

Currently, another oxygen express is on the run from Bokaro to Bhopal via Jabalpur. This train is carrying 64 metric tonnes of liquid medical oxygen in six tankers, which will replenish oxygen demand

in Madhya Pradesh through the city of Bhopal and Jabalpur. Another empty rake from Lucknow has reached Bokaro, which will bring another set of oxygen tankers replenishing oxygen supply to Uttar Pradesh.

Further, in the the united fight against the Covid, the Ministry of Railways has made

nearly 4000 Covid Care coaches with almost 64000 beds ready for use by States. At present 169 coaches have been handed over to various states for Covid care.

"New demand for Covid coaches has come from Nagpur and Anji.

Besides these new areas of Maharashtra, the updated position of the utility of these coaches positioned at the nine other major stations in the States of Delhi, UP, MP and Maharashtra are as 57 patients are currently utilising the facility, of which 1 patient was shifted while b322 beds are still available in Maharashtra region, which is the worst affected State.

In Delhi, the Railway has catered for 75 Covid Care coaches with a capacity of 1200 beds. 50 coaches are positioned at Shakurbasti and 25 Coaches at Anand Vihar stations.

In UP, though coaches have not yet been requisitioned by State Govt, 10 coaches each are placed at Faizabad, Bhadohi, Varanasi, Bareilly & Nazibabad totalling to a capacity of 800 beds (50 coaches).

AAP Govt didn't let hospitals have O2 plants: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Tuesday questioned the Aam Aadmi Party for the installation of 44 oxygen plants in the city in a month. Accusing the ruling party for spending taxpayers' money terming the said development a propaganda, MP from West Delhi said if people are dying today, it is because of the Kejriwal government. "Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had promised oxygen tankers from abroad but fact is it is not even permitting private hospitals here to have their own oxygen plants installed." He said even the Delhi High Court had termed the state government strategy bad to deal with the current situation and said it seems the entire state government machinery has failed in this regard. One can't function purely on the basis of falsehood and self-publicity and it is time he started doing something in reality on the ground, he said adding the Kejriwal govt has totally collapsed.

Cops exceed their brief for Covid care

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

From arranging oxygen cylinders to providing green corridors and facilitating movement of the same, supplying food to admitting Covid-19 patients to hospitals, the Delhi police have saved hundreds of lives by going beyond the call of their duty.

In the South district, the police cremated a 62-year-old man. Police said her daughter was also admitted in hospital and she was left with no money to perform the last funeral rites of her father.

"On April 26, Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Satyadev took the initiative and helped the family to perform the last funeral rites of the deceased at Sarai Kale Khan Shamsan Ghat," said Chinmoy Biswal, the Public Relation Officer (PRO) of Delhi Police.

Since the last few days, the police have been flooded with requests by city hospitals to arrange oxygen cylinders amid shortage of supply during the ongoing pandemic.

"On April 26, at around 6 AM, information was received regarding shortage of oxygen cylinders in IBS hospital and the available stock would last only for two hours. Around 80 covid patients were under crit-

ical situation in the hospital," said Biswal.

"Immediately, the team of Lajpat Nagar police station arranged 25 D type oxygen cylinders from Palwal in Haryana. Besides it, the regular supply of the oxygen for hospital was on the way from Surajpur, Greater Noida. A green corridor was provided by the police team from Greater Noida to IBS Hospital," said Biswal.

In another instance, the Delhi Police received a call at around 3:07 PM on April 26, regarding a truck carrying 10,000 litres oxygen stuck at Singhu border was received.

"Acting on the call, a police team from Alipur police station cleared the way of the container and then successfully passed the container with safety. The truck was scheduled to arrive at AIIMS," said a senior police official.

Displaying a humane face, a police team of Shahdara helped a 85 year-old senior citizen who had started feeling breathless at around 6 PM on April 24 and his SPO2 level was falling drastically upto 50-55 in oximeter.

"After receiving a distress call Inspector Shivdarshan of Crime Branch, resident of GK 1 Police Housing complex that



his father Jagdish Prasad is not well and he is not able to get him admitted in the hospital. Through ACP, Shahdara call, Shivdarshan's father was attended at Shahdara Quarantine cum Care Centre, an initiative of Delhi Police Commissioner, established in Shahdara district for interim care of Police personnel and their immediate family members affected with Covid 19," said a senior police official.

"He was given Oxygen supply without an iota of delay and his SPO2 level was saturated from 57 to 90 per cent. This

ma for covid patients three times since he became covid positive and recovered in the month of January this year. Till now he has donated blood and platelets to required patients 39 times.

Moreover, he along with his two friends namely Ravinder Dhariwal and Amit Phogat (both are personnel in Delhi Police) has been running a 'Delhi police Blood Donation Group' on whatsapp and Tweeter and serving the needy people continuously. They have proved the Logo 'Dil ki Police, Delhi Police,' said Biswal.

In the east district, on Tuesday liquid oxygen in Metro Hospital remained for one hour when a police team arranged oxygen supply in a short span of time. "A call was also received from Kukreja Hospital that the oxygen is to finish within an hour and 20 patients are on oxygen.

The police team contacted Multan Air Products and the van which was in queue was provided with two cylinders of oxygen.

Then after 3-4 hours again there was a shortage of oxygen at the same hospital. This time two cylinders of oxygen were also arranged for the hospital through HC Suneet Kumar," said police.

"He has donated his plas-

Fighting erupts after Covid patient dies for want of bed in Apollo hosp



Blood stained floor of a ward after violence broke out between doctors, nurses and relatives of a Covid-19 patient who died after not finding a bed, at Apollo Hospital in New Delhi on Tuesday PTI

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The family members of a woman, who allegedly died due to Covid-19 after failing to get a bed at Apollo Hospital in south Delhi, attacked the staff of the private healthcare facility on Tuesday.

However, police said no complaint has been received in this regard so far.

A purported video clip of the incident, which went viral on social media platforms, showed the hospital staff and some people engaged in a

pitched battle, hitting each other with sticks, near the hospital's entry gate.

According to Apollo hospital spokesperson, the hospital received a woman in a critical condition at the emergency in the early hours of Tuesday.

"Immediate medical attention appropriate to her condition was given by a team. Given the paucity of beds, the family was advised to shift the patient to another facility with available beds.

Unfortunately, the patient

died around 8 AM, following which her family members resorted to vandalism, destruction of hospital property and assault on our doctors and staff," said the spokesperson in a statement issued on Tuesday evening.

"While the hospital deeply condoles the death of the patient, it is deeply shocked at the behaviour of the patient's family against doctors and healthcare workers who are providing untiring services amidst the pandemic," said the spokesperson.

Pregnant woman shot dead by her hubby, man held



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 32-year-old man allegedly shot dead his eight-month pregnant wife and injured a person on Tuesday morning in southeast Delhi's Nizamuddin area.

The accused, identified as Waseem, has been nabbed by police. Police said deceased Saina (29) was recently released from jail in a drug case.

According to RP Meena, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southeast district, a police control room (PCR) call was received at 10.42 AM regarding a firing incident at Nizamuddin area following which an Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) was dispatched for the spot.

"Police reached Safdarjung Hospital where two persons were admitted. One of them was identified as Saina who was declared brought dead. Another person Shahadat was injured and is undergoing treatment in the hospital," said the DCP.

"A total of five bullets were fired in which four bullets hit Saina while one hit Shahadat,"

Saina previously got married thrice. Shahdat was known to Saina and used to work with her — Police said

the DCP added. "Saina was released on bail on Saturday in a drugs case on ground of pregnancy as she was eight months pregnant. Saina and Waseem got married last year. When Saina was in jail, Waseem developed relationship with her real sister Rehana," said the DCP.

"He did not meet her after she was released. Their relation became strange and they started quarrelling over the issue. On Tuesday morning, Waseem killed her. He has been apprehended and the weapon of offence is also recovered. The role of Rehana is also being probed in this incident," said the DCP.

Saina previously got married thrice. Shahdat was known to Saina and used to work with her, police said. There is no criminal background of Waseem. He works as a financier, police added.

3 held for hoarding, supplying oxygen and nitrogen cylinders

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested three men for allegedly hoarding and supplying oxygen and nitrogen cylinders and flow meters at a very high price from south Delhi.

The accused have been identified as Mohit (23), a resident of Jharoda Kalan, Sumit Saini (33), a resident of Gurugram, and Ansar Ahmed (41), a resident of Shaheen Bagh, Okhla.

According to Atul Kumar Thakur, the Deputy Commissioner of Police



(DCP), South district, on Monday, police got a tip-off that one person was coming near Ghitorni metro station for selling the oxygen cylinders at high rates.

"Thereafter, a trap was laid near main road Ghitorni metro station and one car, driven by Mohit, was checked. When

police checked the vehicle, they found two oxygen cylinders," said the DCP.

"The accused person disclosed that he used to sell the big oxygen cylinder at Rs 50,000 and the small one at Rs 30,000. He also disclosed that Saini and Ahmed used to supply him the oxygen cylinders," said the DCP.

"Later, police nabbed his associates Saini and Ahmed with four more oxygen cylinders, five nitrogen cylinders and several flow meters from Mahipal Farms, Aaya Nagar," the DCP said.



New crematorium ground under construction at a park near Sarai Kale Khan, in New Delhi on Tuesday Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer Photo

Undertrial prisoner dies of Covid-19

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 43-year-old Covid-19 positive undertrial prisoner of the Delhi Prisons department died on Tuesday in a hospital in western part of the national Capital.

According to the prison officials, under trial prisoner Mohammad Anish, inmate of central jail number 4, Tihar, was detected Covid-19 positive on Monday. He was having mild symptoms and was shifted to central jail hospital, CJ-3. "On Tuesday morning, his condition deteriorated and he was referred to Deen Dayal Upadhyay hospital in emergency. Later, he died in the hospital in the afternoon," said Sandeep Goel, the Director General (DG) of prison.

Anish had been lodged in jail since December 17, 2019 in a case under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, the officials said. According to data shared by the prisons department, 267 fresh cases of coronavirus have been reported among the inmates since March 2021. Of them, 22 have recovered and there are 245 active cases. Similarly, 92 staff members have tested positive for the virus since March 2021.

One has recovered and 91 active cases are still there, the data said. This is the third death since last year. Two COVID-19 positive inmates of Mandoli Jail died on June 15 and July 4, 2020. Both were senior citizens.

MCG sets up call centre to deal with liquid medical oxygen supply in Gurugram



PARVESH SHARMA ■ GRUGRAM

Amid shortage of liquid medical oxygen supply in Gurugram, the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) has set up a call centre to handle liquid medical oxygen supply operation in the district.

For this, the civic authority has set up a dedicated call centre which will work round the clock and a team has also been formed to monitor the oxygen situation in the city.

In this regard, MCG Commissioner Vinay Pratap Singh, held a meeting with officials on Tuesday and gave necessary guidelines for oxygen supply operation.

"Haryana government has been allocated liquid medical oxygen to Gurugram at the rate of 35 metric tonnes per day. Of this, 20 MT will be allocated by Inox Company from Bhiwadi Rajasthan and 15 MT of Air Liquid Company from Panipat," Singh said.

He said that 20 metric tonnes of liquid medical oxygen coming from Inox Bhiwadi would be sent daily from its own tankers by the company. It

will be distributed to hospitals in Gurugram that have their own oxygen tanks. These include Medanta, Fortis, Artemis, Max, Park, Metro and other hospitals. If there is a shortage of company vehicles in its supply, then other vehicles will also be pressed for this. He informed that the allocation of these hospitals has also been fixed.

Singh said that the administration itself will bring 15 metric tonnes of liquid medical oxygen allocated from the Air Liquid Company.

"These tankers will carry oxygen from Panipat to three gas refilling stations in Gurugram. These include Star Gases and Maxcare at Manesar and GK Industries' gas refilling stations at Sector-16.

These refilling stations will distribute oxygen via cylinders to hospitals that do not have oxygen tankers. People can also avail oxygen cylinder from these stations," the commissioner said.

The commissioner said that the supply and distribution of liquid medical oxygen will be done on time, so that there is no untoward incident.

Army chief visits posts along LAC



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Army Chief General M M Naravane on Tuesday reviewed the operational preparedness of the front-line troops in the Siachen glacier and Eastern Ladakh. During his visit there, he also went to some forward posts.

His visit came weeks after the Corps Commanders of India and China held the 11th round of talks on April nine to defuse tension at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh.

Both the commanders reiterated their commitment to continue the process of dialogue to find ways to ensure withdrawal of troops from the stand-off sites.

India has all along maintained that disengagement from all the face-off sites will pave the way for peace and tranquility at the border. However, China has so far dilly dallied to agree to this proposal. It has resulted in both the sides still engaged in a face-off situation at the Hot Springs, Gogra and Dapsang valley in Eastern Ladakh for the last ten months.



The Chinese reluctance to pull back from these points comes after both the armies completed a peaceful and successful withdrawal of troops from the southern and northern banks of the Pangong Tso (lake) in Ladakh in February.

Incidentally, the fist stand-off started from the Pangong Tso in May last year when patrols of the two armies exchanged blows leaving several soldiers on both sides injured. Soon, the LAC witnessed several flash points erupting. The worst incident was in June in the Galwan valley when both the armies fought an ugly brawl leaving 20 Indian soldiers including the commanding officer dead. More than 40 Chinese also

died. Beijing is yet to officially give the number of casualties. As regards the Army Chief's ongoing visit which ends on Wednesday, officials said here on Tuesday he took stock of the situation at the Siachen and Eastern Ladakh with Northern Command chief Lt General YK Joshi and Leh-based 14 Corps chief Lt General PGK Menon. He is heading the Corps Commander level dialogue with the Chinese. Officials said Naravane interacted with the troops and complimented them for their steadfastness and high morale, while being deployed in some of the harshest terrain, altitude and weather conditions. Menon briefed him on the prevailing security situation and operational preparedness in the Corps Zone.

CBI books K'taka ex-Min, others in poll funding case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Tuesday filed a supplementary chargesheet before Special Judge for CBI cases in Bengaluru against former Minister of Karnataka Roshan Baig, his firm Danish Publications, and others including Mohammed Mansoor Khan, CEO & MD of Bangalore-based IMA group and others, for receiving several crores of rupees for funding elections.

The agency filed the supplementary charge sheet before the Special Judge for CBI cases, Bengaluru. It also charge-sheeted other Directors of the IMA group and named Mohd. Mansoor Khan, Nizamuddin. Naveed Ahmed, Ishtiyak Ahmed, and Vaseem besides the firm's IMA Pvt Ltd. and Daanish Publications.

"It was alleged that the accused former Minister received several crores of rupees from IMA funds for election expenditure. It was further alleged that the accused was also utilising the said funds for day-to-day expenditure including salaries of employees of his firm," the CBI said in a statement.

It was further alleged that Baig had spent the funds for various social and cultural activities in his Constituency to



increase his popularity.

The funds of IMA were allegedly unauthorised deposits raised from innocent public to the tune of ₹4,000 crore from around one lakh investors.

The money was allegedly diverted to the former Minister so that the accused firm could continue its illegal activities, it said.

The CBI had registered four cases in connection with IMA scam and earlier filed three charge sheets and a similar number of supplementary charge sheets against 33 accused including IMA Group MD & CEO, its director, several private persons, revenue and police officials.

It was alleged that the said Group had raised unauthorised deposits & cheated the public by failing to repay the principal and as well as the promised returns.

These funds were allegedly also diverted for acquiring properties and paying bribe amounts.

Several properties including moveable and immovable were identified and attached under KPIDFE Act, 2004 by the Competent Authority.

NIA files chargesheet in Shaurya Chakra awardee's murder case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday filed a charge-sheet in the case related to murder of Comrade Balwinder Singh Sandhu, a Shaurya Chakra awardee, by terrorists of proscribed terrorist organisation Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF).

The chargesheet was filed in the NIA Special Court, Mohali, Punjab under various Indian Penal Code sections relating to criminal conspiracy and murder among others besides provisions of the Arms Act and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Those chargesheeted are Sukhraj Singh alias Sukha of Gurdaspur, Punjab, Ravinder Singh alias Ravi Dhillion of Ludhiana, Akashdeep Arora alias Dhaliwal of Ludhiana, Jagroop Singh of Ludhiana, Sukhdeep Singh of Gurdaspur, Gurjit Singh of Gurdaspur, Inderjit Singh of Tarn Taran and Sukhmeet Pal Singh of Gurdaspur, Punjab.

The case relates to killing of Comrade Balwinder Singh, Shaurya Chakra awardee on October 16, 2020, at his residence-cum-school in Bhikhiwind, Tarn Taran, Punjab by two unidentified persons.

A case was registered in this regard as FIR No. 174/2020 dated October 16, 2020 at



Police Station Bhikhiwind, Tarn Taran, Punjab.

The NIA had re-registered the case on January 26 this year.

NIA Investigation has revealed that killing of Comrade Balwinder Singh Sandhu was executed with the intent to strike terror in the minds of people of India and especially those opposed to Khalistani ideology.

"The transnational conspiracy in the instant crime was hatched by Pakistan based self styled chief of KLF Lakhvir Singh Rode and top foreign based KLF terrorists who provided arms/ammunitions and funds to the accused persons," the NIA said.

Further, a well-oiled terrorist-narcotics-criminal nexus wherein narcotic drugs along with weapons were smuggled by Pakistan-based entities from across the International Border in Punjab for generation of funds for executing terrorist acts has also been unearthed it said.

NIA had earlier investigated eight similar incidents of targeted killings/attempted killings by KLF between January 2016 and October 2017, wherein seven persons belonging to spe-

The NIA had re-registered the case on January 26 this year

cific communities were killed. Investigation has established that foreign based KLF leadership had recruited, financed and armed a local gangster Sukhmeet Pal Singh alias Sukh Bikhariwal and tasked him to execute the killings through his associates.

After the reported killing of Harmet Singh, a Pakistan based operational chief of KLF in Pakistan in January 2020, Sukh Bikhariwal was directed by Lakhvir Singh Rode and other KLF operatives through encrypted communication platforms to kill Comrade Balwinder Singh.

The reconnaissance of the target was carried by chargesheeted accused Inderjeet Singh and sharp shooters Gurjit Singh and Sukhdeep Singh were recruited for killing Comrade Sandhu, it said.

The other chargesheeted accused are associates of Sukh Bikhariwal who were instrumental in organizing logistics and shelter to the shooters.

Further investigation against foreign based Khalistani entities including Lakhvir Singh Rode and others continues, it added.

Work closely with States in installation of oxygen plants: Modi to officials



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday evening chaired a meeting with top officials to review the Covid-19 relation situation in the country and directed the officials to work closely with State Governments in the installation of Oxygen plants at the earliest. According to PMO, the meeting monitored the status of oxygen availability, medicines, health infrastructure across the country.

"The Empowered Group working on boosting Oxygen Supply briefed the Prime Minister on the efforts being made to ramp up availability and supply of oxygen in the country. They informed the PM about increasing allocation of Oxygen to States. It was discussed that the production of LMO in the country has increased from 5700 MT/day in August 2020 to the present 8922 MT (on 25th April 2021). The domestic production of LMO is expected to cross 9250

MT/day by the end of April 2021. PM instructed the officials to work closely with state governments to start the PSA Oxygen plants at the earliest. Officers also apprised the PM that they are encouraging states to also set up PSA Oxygen plants," said PMO in a statement.

Prime Minister was also briefed about the functioning of the Oxygen Express Railways Service as well as the domestic sorties & international sorties undertaken by IAF to transport oxygen tankers. PM stressed on the need to ensure that specific guidelines and strategies evolved regarding Covid management needs to be properly implemented by the relevant agencies in the States.

Cabinet Secretary, Home Secretary, Secretary Transport, Secretary I&B, Secretary Pharmaceuticals, Member NITI Aayog, DG ICMR, Secretary Biotechnology & other senior officers were present in the meeting.

EC: State disaster authorities bound to ensure compliance of Covid norms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Tuesday said that the compliance of Covid-19 protocol was the responsibility of the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) (like lockdown, restriction/curtailment on public gatherings, etc.) and its officers notified under the Disaster Management Act, 2005. "At no occasion, the Commission takes over the task of SDMA for enforcement of Covid-19 instructions," it said.

"The enforcement under 2005 Act has to be ensured by the concerned SDMA and notified authorities under the Act. The Commission has always emphasised in its 21.8.2020 and all subsequent instructions that the State authorities shall ensure Covid compliance in the matter of public gatherings etc. for campaign purposes. EC continuously directed the State/District authorities to enforce the extant instructions of the NDMA/SDMA," the poll body said. EC has also cited the orders by two other high courts — Calcutta HC and Madhya Pradesh HC — both of which expressed satisfaction with the steps taken by it on Covid norms.

"Similar appropriate measures have to be adopted at every counting centre and it is only upon maintaining regular sanitization, proper hygienic conditions, mandatory wearing of mask and adherence to the distance norms, should any counting begin or be continued. The State Health Secretary and the Director of Public Health should be consulted by the Election Commission and the Chief Electoral Officer



responsible in the State, to put appropriate measures in place immediately," the EC said that, the statements being attributed to the Hon'ble High Court in certain sections of media do not find mention in the order finally passed.

The poll body said that Tamil Nadu has ordered lockdown restrictions in view of COVID second surge (assessments of this is in the domain of NDMA/SDMA or concerned State Govt only) from 20 April 2021, 16 days after the campaign period was already over in the State.

The poll body said it reiterated its instructions on February 26, 2021 while announcing the poll in five States and UT, including Tamil Nadu, and the campaign ended on April 4.

"Fortunately, the second wave of COVID-19 was yet to be visible fully by that time. Polling was conducted following all prescribed COVID appropriate measures on April 6, 2021, which witnessed good electoral participation with full compliance of norms by all," it said.

The Commission referred to Bihar polls saying, "In 2020, amidst the NDMA/SDMA prescribed lockdown and other

enforcement measures under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, the Commission completed electoral exercise in Bihar. The enforcement under 2005 Act has to be ensured by the concerned SDMA and notified authorities under the Act. The Commission has emphasised in its August 2, 2020 order and all subsequent instructions that the State authorities shall ensure COVID compliance in the matter of public gatherings etc. for campaign purposes. At no occasion, the Commission takes over the task of SDMA for enforcement of COVID-19 instructions."

Lambasting the poll body for failure to maintain Covid protocol during poll campaigns, the Madras high court on Monday said that the EC was responsible for the second wave in the country and that its officials should probably be tried on murder charges for allowing political parties to hold massive rallies without following Covid-19 norms. The poll body has come under criticism for its decision to allow political parties to wilfully flout Covid-19 protocol through huge rallies, with most participants, including the political leaders unmasked.

Staff to be hired to protect veterans from coronavirus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Stepping up efforts to fight the raging corona pandemic, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday approved the temporary hiring of additional contractual staff in 51 high-pressure Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) polyclinics to cater to veterans and their dependents during Covid-19 surge.

These polyclinics are spread all over the country and cater to more than 25 lakh veterans. Giving details of the latest decision, defence ministry officials said here the contractual staff, including one each of Medical Officer, Nursing Assistant, Pharmacist, Driver and Chowkidar for identified ECHS polyclinics, will be hired through Station Headquarters for night duty, beyond normal working hours, for a period of three months.

The high-pressure ECHS polyclinics are in Lucknow, Delhi Cantonment, Bangalore (Urban), Dehradun, Kotputli, Amritsar, Meerut, Chandigarh, Jammu, New Delhi (Lodhi Road), Secunderabad, Agra, Ambala, Greater Noida, Gurdaspur, Pune, Trivandrum, Jalandhar, Kanpur, Gurgaon, Gurgaon (Sohana Rd), Hoshiarpur, Mohali, Chandimandir, Allahabad,

Ghaziabad (Hindon), Pathankot, Jodhpur, Ludhiana, Ropar, Tarantaran/Patti, Kolkata, Danapur (Patna), Khadki (Pune), Palampur, Bareilly, Kolhapur, Yol, South Pune (Lohegaon), Vishakapatnam, Jaipur, Guntur, Barrackpore, Chennai, Gorakhpur, Patiala, Noida, Bhopal, Kochi, Vellore and Ranchi.

The move will ensure the availability of immediate medical attention even during night hours to acute cases in these areas to the veterans and their dependents. The validity of this sanction is up to August 15, 2021.

The latest directive comes a day after the Government recalled all the retired doctors of the armed forces and asked them to serve in the covid facilities near their homes. This decision was taken during a review meeting by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday. Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat briefed him about the preparedness of the armed forces in handling the ongoing corona pandemic.

Meanwhile, the Indian Army said on Tuesday it is taking multiple steps to enhance its medical capacities on account of rise in COVID cases amongst the veterans

and their dependents.

Directorate of Indian Army Veterans in conjunction with ECHS & Headquarters of Area & Sub Area is continuously coordinating support to the Veterans.

Former soldiers affected by COVID are being guided and assisted in getting medical advice and admission in various hospitals. The Base Hospital at Delhi and Service Hospitals at all military stations are working tirelessly to accommodate maximum Veterans and are continuously ramping up their capacities to ensure enhanced availability of beds.

While all efforts are being made to attend to the needs of COVID affected Veterans, the army urged them to stay at home and remain steadfast in dealing with the pandemic by following all safety precautions and COVID protocols.

Colonel Veterans of various stations have been instructed to maintain contact with the Ex-Servicemen Cells over the COVID situation and Emergency numbers have been activated to be manned at each station round the clock. The contact information of all COVID Helplines of the Indian Army is available on www.indianarmyveterans.gov.in.

Railways deploying 31 Covid care coaches in MP, Maha: Min

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The railways is deploying 31 Covid care coaches in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra and these will have facilities like oxygen cylinders for patients, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday.

Madhya Pradesh on Monday reported 12,686 coronavirus cases, taking its tally to over five lakh, while Maharashtra reported 48,700 cases taking the count of infections in the state to 43,43,727.

The minister in a tweet said that at the Tehri station in Indore, 320 beds have been arranged by the Railways in 20 COVID care coaches.

Such coaches are positioned at nine major railway stations in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

In the national capital, the railways has catered to the full demand of the Delhi government's 75 COVID care coaches with a capacity of 1,200 beds, the national transporter said.

While 50 coaches are positioned at Shakur Basti, 25 more have been deployed at Anand Vihar station in Delhi.

In Nandurbar (Maharashtra), 24 isolation coaches with a capacity of 292 beds have been deployed. The utilisation of these facilities in these states, as per latest records, cumulatively registers 98 admissions with 28 subsequent discharges, the railways

Minister said it currently has 4,000 coaches that have been retrofitted as isolation units with a capacity of 64,000 beds and that these were ready to be deployed across states.

These coaches are positioned at nine major railway stations in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

In the national capital, the railways has catered to the full demand of the Delhi government's 75 COVID care coaches with a capacity of 1,200 beds, the national transporter said.



At present, 70 COVID-19 patients are utilising the isolation coaches.

In Uttar Pradesh, though coaches have not yet been requisitioned by the state government, 10 coaches each are placed at Faizabad, Bhadohi, Varanasi, Bareilly and Nazibabad, totalling to a capacity of 800 beds (50 coaches), the railways said.

These coaches modified for coronavirus patients have been divided into eight bays or 'cabins' with each having 16 beds. Every coach has three toilets -- one western and two Indian style -- and a bathroom with hand showers, buckets, mugs and seating arrangement, it said.

Mosquito nets, bio-toilets, power sockets and oxygen cylinders are available in the coaches. Also, space has been created to hold IV-fluid bottles. Extra bottle holders and clamps have been provided to hang them, the railways said.

Medical oxygen in any country cannot be unlimited, augmenting measures being taken: Centre to SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday told the Supreme Court that medical oxygen in any country cannot be unlimited and with the active and constant supervision of the Prime Minister it is augmenting the oxygen supply on a war footing to provide relief to Covid-19 patients.

The Government said oxygen supplies available at any given time in the country are to be distributed to all the states, especially those which are critically burdened with high number of active COVID cases, in a balanced manner.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said the sheer magnitude of this unprecedented surge in COVID-19 cases itself bring with it certain inbuilt limitations in terms of available resources which need to be professionally augmented and utilised.

Further, the centre said to deal with shortage of medical oxygen, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is in the process of commissioning 162 PSA (Pressure Swing Adsorption technology to generate oxygen at local level) plants across the country on a war footing.

In its 200-page affidavit, filed in the suo motu case on distribution of essential supplies and services during Pandemic, the Centre said "any singular/isolated deviation in such plan for a particular State (either under a judicial order or otherwise) without keeping in mind the national availability and ever changing requirements of each State is bound to have a cascading effect on oxygen supply to other States."

The affidavit was taken on record by a bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, I Nageswara Rao and S Ravindra Bhat, which posted the matter for further hearing on Friday.

"It is also pertinent to note that the medical oxygen in any country cannot be unlimited. While the government started all out efforts to augment oxygen resources and procure more and more oxygen from all available sources, these supplies available at any given time in the country are to be distributed to all the states, especially those which are critically burdened with high number of active COVID cases, in a balanced manner," the government said.

It said, "The Central Government, with active and

constant supervision and direct involvement of the Prime Minister and the Home Minister, is augmenting the oxygen supply on a war footing evolving and implementing innovative measures."

The affidavit filed by additional secretary, MHA, said ever since the onset of the current wave of pandemic, there is an unprecedented and rapid rise in the number of active COVID cases in several states across the country with an almost unabated surge in the growth rate of such cases.

"It is submitted that the medical oxygen is a critical component

in the treatment of COVID affected patients, especially in the second wave. The entire available capacity of oxygen in India was utilised for supply for industrial as well as medical purposes in the form of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO)," it said.

It said the "unexpected and exponential" surge in the number of active COVID cases across several States in the second wave has resulted in a scenario wherein there has been an increasing demand for medical oxygen, especially from the States with a high burden of active Covid cases.

Parties in Bengal hail EC for ban on victory rallies

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Bengal political parties have welcomed the Election Commission of India's decision banning victory rallies post May 2 when the poll results would be declared in five States.

State BJP spokesperson, Samik Bhattacharya, on Tuesday said that his party had always followed the EC's guidelines and would "continue to do so" by refraining from taking out any victory rally post May 2.

"We have abided by the EC's guidelines and will continue to do so ... considering the rising cases of corona in Bengal the EC has taken a right decision and the political parties should support that," Bhattacharya said.

The Trinamool Congress on said the other hand said that though the EC announcement required no separate reaction from the party as it had always adhered to the corona protocols.

"This declaration does not require any separate reaction from us because as the ruling party in Bengal we had been responsible enough to take all necessary steps to keep the disease away... in fact our Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee did



a great job educating people about following the social norms which was why Bengal had been able to control the disease ... but it was only the infected people who came to campaign in Bengal from outside the State that things deteriorated," said party MP Sukhendu Sekhar Roy.

Congress MP Adhir Chowdhury said the "decision to ban rallies post May 2 is a welcome move which should have been taken earlier. We welcome the decision and will follow this."

CPI(M) politburo member Md Salim on the other hand said that the EC announcement came only after the horses had bolted. "This decision should have been taken earlier ... it was not taken when Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit

Shah and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee were in the field (doing big rallies) and it was only taken after the Court gave rap on the EC's knuckles ... still we welcome the move and will definitely follow it as we had been doing earlier too."

In view of the rising cases and a day after being severely reprimanded by the Madras High Court the ECI on Tuesday banned all the victory rallies after May 2 with a view to impose social distancing norms considering a steep rise in the number of corona cases all over the country.

Bengal in the meantime has witnessed a 50-fold rise in corona cases since last week of February. Monday saw 15,992 cases in the preceding 24 hours with Kolkata and neighbouring North 24 Parganas recording the maximum number of cases.

265 deaths recorded in UP, highest so far in 1 day, 39 in Lucknow only

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On a day the number of fresh Covid cases came down in Uttar Pradesh, the State recorded a high of 265 deaths in a single day, with State Capital Lucknow alone logging 39 deaths, as per official record shared by the health department.

Lucknow registered 4,437 new cases while UP logged 32,993. But the good news is that 30,398 people have recovered from the infection.

On Monday, 33,574 fresh cases were detected while 26,791 people had recovered after treatment.

Fatalities however continued to remain worrisome. Kanpur city reported 15 deaths, Prayagraj (13), Varanasi (13), Ghaziabad also recorded a high of 15 deaths in the last 24-hours. A dozen deaths have been reported from Noida - another high. Jhansi reported eight deaths, Moradabad and Agra 4 each, Ballia also reported a high of six cases, Jaunpur 4, Shahjahanpur 4 and Sonbhadra 3.

Etawah, Hardoi reported three deaths each, Gonda had a high of six fatalities in the

past 24-hours and Kushinagar reported its highest so far of nine deaths. Five deaths have been reported in Banda and Basti, four in Amethi, Balrampur and Etah. Kasganj reported five deaths.

State Additional Chief Secretary Medical and Health Amit Mohan Prasad said that the total number of active cases in the state now is 3,06,458. Of these 2,52,598 people are in home isolation. The rest is being treated in government and private hospitals.

He said yesterday, 1,84,144 samples were tested in the state. A total of 4,01,41,354 samples have been tested so far. Uttar Pradesh has become the first state to do more than four crore tests.

Prasad said the state government has completed the preparations for a major vaccination campaign for people above 18 years of age from May 1.

By April 29, more than one crore doses will come in the state. He said more than one crore doses have been issued to the government. He said half of the people will be given covaxin and other half covishield.

Kerala tests 32,819 Covid positive cases in 24 hours

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in his media interaction on Tuesday disclosed that the State has diagnosed 32,819 persons with Covid-19 during the last 24 hours and this is being seen as the highest ever single day cases in South India.

With the Department of Health confirming that the State saw 32 fatalities during the last 24 hours, the death toll in Kerala reached 5,170. Test Positivity Rate stood at 23.24.

The State wore the look of a ghost city, according to Subramanian Sasidharan, an entrepreneur from Virudhunagar who has made Kerala his home for the last 40 years. "With ambulances blaring the siren ferrying Covid-19 patients to hospitals and from there to the burial grounds, the State reminds me of scenes directly culled from war movies of the 1960s. This is not the Kerala I grew up with," Sasidharan told The Pioneer.

The surge in the number of Covid-19 cases comes a day after Chief Minister told the people that the medical fraternity have come across new variants of the pandemic, which he described as the British and South African variants. "These genetically modified varieties of Covid viruses



are lethal than the ones which we are familiar with and in days to come we will see a tsunami of Covid in Kerala," Vijayan had told Monday evening.

While 98 health workers were infected with the virus on Tuesday, two para medical staff succumbed to the pandemic. A blame game is on between the Kerala Government and the Centre about the availability of vaccine stock in the State. "Had the Centre listened to my suggestion and released the required quantity of vaccine, the State would not have faced the shortage of vaccine. The Centre is always taunting us when we ask for five million doses of vaccine for the State. They keep on asking why we need this many doses," said Vijayan about the vaccine shortage in the State.

But V Muraliedharan,

Union Minister of State for External Affairs, said that the "mega vaccine centres" launched by the Kerala Government are the epicentres of the pandemic. "The mega vaccine camps in Kerala are the main reason for the spread of the pandemic. The Kerala minister for health K K Shylaja herself is under observation for suspected infection. Nobody knows who is in charge of the health department," said Muraliedharan who is monitoring the situation in the State on a round-the-clock basis.

The union minister alleged that the Covid App set up by the State to facilitate vaccination is not working effectively. "There is a mega scam behind the setting up of this App and it will come out in coming days," said Muraliedharan who said there was a secret deal between the corporate hospitals and the State administration.

On Wednesday, A Vijayaraghavan, the acting secretary of the CPI(M) in Kerala would lead a sit-in demonstration at his home against the Centre's anti-people policies. "All party members and general public should stage the sit-in in their homes itself as a preventive measure and raise anti-Centre slogans which the local leaders would send via WhatsApp," said the acting secretary.

Kerala mulls home delivery as liquor vends are closed

Thiruvananthapuram: When it comes to the needs of the Kerala tipplers, the ruling Left Government appears to have a soft corner. With the second Covid wave hitting the State hard and the sudden decision to close down all liquor vends on Monday till further notice, now Bevco is mulling home delivery of premium brands.

Bevco - the State owned Kerala State Beverage Corporation is the sole wholesaler of beer and liquor in the State.

Top officials of Bevco are now working out on how home delivery can be done and to start with, they are mulling the delivery of only premium brands after collecting service charge.

According to sources, in all likelihood this could well begin very soon. An earlier attempt for home delivery, last year when the country was under lockdown due to arrival of the Covid virus, came under stiff resistance and then came the novel idea of booking one's requirement through an app.

Even though the app had numerous shortcomings, tip-

plers managed and heaved a sigh of relief when the Covid surge came down, bars opened again and now with the second wave peaking, the wheel has turned the full circle and all vends are closed till further notice.

Across the state the number of liquor vends include 301 retail liquor shops belonging to the state-run Bevco and marketed, besides 576 bars and 291 wine and beer shops.

The profile of liquor users in the state in an earlier study reveal that around 32.9 lakh people out of the 3.34 crore population in the state consume liquor, which includes 29.8 lakh men and 3.1 lakh women.

Around five lakh people in Kerala consume liquor on a daily basis. Of this, around 83,851 people including 1,043 women are addicted to alcohol, according to state government statistics.

Incidentally for fund starved Kerala, revenue on liquor and beer is one of the biggest cash cow and in the last fiscal it received over Rs 15,000 crore and hence the state will have to take care of its tipplers.

Covid-hit Karnataka issues guidelines for 14-day lockdown

IANIS ■ BENGALURU

Reeling under the pandemic's second wave, the Karnataka Government on Monday issued stringent guidelines for the 14-day lockdown from Tuesday night to May 12 morning.

"The guidelines, which are meant to break the chain of Covid transmission across the State, will come into effect from 9 pm on April 27 and will be in force till 6 am on May 12," Chief Secretary P Ravi Kumar said in an order.

The decision to impose the lockdown with exemptions for essential services, transport of goods and scheduled travel by train or plane was taken at a state cabinet meeting earlier

in the day.

As announced by Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, movement of people, and public transportation in buses, taxis, autos and metro rail will be banned daily except from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. when markets and shops selling essential needs like milk, groceries, eggs, fish, meat, vegetables and fruits are allowed to function.

Liquor shops or outlets will also remain open from 6-10 a.m. Home delivery of liquor or food parcels will be allowed to minimise movement of individuals outside their homes.

"Schools, colleges, cinema theatres, malls, gyms, hotels, restaurants, bars, pubs, clubs and non-essential shops will remain shut during the lockdown," said the order.

Students appearing for scheduled exams are, however, allowed to travel in their own or private vehicles with their hall ticket as pass to commute. "Citizens taking Covid test or vaccination will also be allowed to travel to the nearest designated centres in their city or town. Emergency travel for health reasons or out of station by train or plane can hire a cab or auto to and from railway station or airport with ticket as pass," said the order.

Banks, ATMs, insurance offices, e-commerce firms, facilities in supply chain of essential goods, cold storage and warehousing are allowed to operate during the fortnight shutdown.

down," said the order.

Students appearing for scheduled exams are, however, allowed to travel in their own or private vehicles with their hall ticket as pass to commute.

"Citizens taking Covid test or vaccination will also be allowed to travel to the nearest designated centres in their city or town. Emergency travel for health reasons or out of station by train or plane can hire a cab or auto to and from railway station or airport with ticket as pass," said the order.

Banks, ATMs, insurance offices, e-commerce firms, facilities in supply chain of essential goods, cold storage and warehousing are allowed to operate during the fortnight shutdown.

TN inches towards 16,000/day mark

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI:

Tamil Nadu Government in a late evening release said that 15,830 new persons were diagnosed with Covid-19 on Tuesday. The pandemic claimed 77 lives during the last 24 hours and this took the death toll in the State to 13,728 till date.

As on Tuesday evening the State had 1,08,855 persons who were tested positive for the pandemic. There has been no respite in the number of persons being tested (RT-PCR) as 1,21,549 persons were tested on Tuesday.

Chennai registered 4640 new patients while neighbouring Chengalpattu district came

second with 1,181 cases. The Oxygen controversy has subsided for the time being with the Supreme Court showing green light for reviving the production of medical grade oxygen from the Thoothukudi unit of the Sterlite Industries. The plant has a capacity to produce 1000 tonne oxygen per day.

Admin focusing on stepping up tourist/pilgrim facilities in J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

While the situation turning alarming with constant rise in the total number of active positive cases and increasing number of deaths due to Covid-19, the UT administration in Jammu and Kashmir is focusing on beefing up tourist/pilgrim facilities.

On Tuesday 25 more patients succumbed to Covid-19 while 3164 fresh cases of Coronavirus were recorded taking the tally of active positive cases to 22283 in J&K.

While the health administrators at the frontline were grappling with the rush of corona positive patients and accommodating them in the health institutions Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan Tuesday went on to inaugurate the Eco Log Huts and Cafeteria at Jammu Tawi Golf Course Sidhra, in presence of Secretary Tourism, Sarmad Hafeez and Director Tourism Jammu Dr Naseem Javaid Chowdhary.

On the other hand, work on the construction of Yatri Niwas for Amarnath pilgrims was going on at Chanderkote in Ramban district. The Shrine Board had directed the Deputy Commissioners to ramp up accommodations and toilet facilities for the pilgrims along the yatra route.



Senior district officers visited the spot to supervise the ongoing work. Interestingly, the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board authorities have temporarily suspended online registration for the yatra beginning June 28.

For the last couple of days the pilgrim/tourist traffic to Jammu and Kashmir has been declining. The UT administration too had closed down famous public parks including Tulip garden in Srinagar for visitors.

According to a statement issued by the Department of Information and Public Relations, "The Eco Huts with an area of 650 sq.ft each and Cafeteria with an area of 6130 sq.ft have been constructed under Prime Minister's Development Package (I) at a cost of 1.85 crore and 127.80 lakhs respectively."

The Advisor was briefed about the facilities available at the huts. He directed the offi-



cers to make all arrangements to put the accommodation to use with all the facilities being provided to the visitors. He further directed that the water, electricity and other facilities should be up to the mark. After attending the briefing the Advisor expressed satisfaction over the construction of huts and said that the eco huts will have a substantial impact on the ground. He also directed the caretakers to plant ornamental plants and flowers.

Maha to decide on free vaccine to all above 18 years today

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

Amid acute anxiety triggered by the intimation received from the Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) that it can supply Covishield vaccines only after May 20, the Maharashtra Government will take a formal decision on the vaccination-related issues, including its proposal to give Covid-19 vaccine free of cost to all those aged and above 18 years, at a State Cabinet meeting scheduled for Wednesday.

With uncertainty staring in the face on whether it will be able to launch vaccination for those above 18 years as scheduled on May 1 in the absence of adequate vaccine stocks, the Maharashtra government will also have to decide on whether it is financially prudent for the state to give free of cost vaccines to all those in the 18-45 years age group.

Though a few of its ministers went to town a day before that the state government would give Covid-19 vaccines free of cost to all those aged and above 18 years, the Udhav Thackeray dispensation is reconsidering whether it can afford to go in for free vaccination for all especially in the light of the fact that SII and government-run Bharat Biotech International Ltd (BBIL) have

hiked the prices of vaccines to be supplied to the state government.

Talking to media persons ahead of Wednesday's Cabinet meeting, Maharashtra's deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar said: "The Centre has announced the launch of third phase of vaccination for the 18-45 years age group from May 1. Currently we are taking stocks of vaccines available in the state and also the price of vaccines if we are to purchase them from the manufacturers and give them free of cost to the targeted age group. On their part, SII and Bharat Biotech have hiked the prices of vaccines. That being the case, we are exploring if it is prudent on our part to give vaccine to all free of cost."

While SII's Covishield has quoted a price of Rs.400 per dose of vaccine to the state, BBIL will sell it for Rs. 600 per dose of vaccine to the states.

"At tomorrow's meeting, we will be discussing on whether to float a global tender to procure vaccines, Remdesivir and medical Oxygen and on whether we can float tender without a permission from the Centre. After the deliberations at tomorrow's Cabinet meeting, the chief minister will take a final decision in the matter," Pawar said.

Tehelka rape: Judgment postponed to May 12

Panaji: The judgment in the rape case filed against former Tehelka editor-in-chief Tarun Tejpal will now be pronounced on May 12, a trial court judge said here on Tuesday.

North Goa District and Sessions Court judge Kshama Joshi announced the adjournment on Tuesday; the day when the Court was originally scheduled to pronounce its final order in the case which was booked against Tejpal in 2013.

"The judge pronounced today that it has been adjourned to the 12th (May)," special public prosecutor Francisco Tavora told reporters here. Tavora said that the Court has not attributed any reason for the delay in pronouncing the judgement.

The former editor-in-chief of the Tehelka investigative magazine was accused by a junior colleague of sexually assaulting her at a five star resort in Goa.

Tejpal has been booked under sections 376 (rape), 341 (wrongful restraint), 342 (wrongful confinement) 354A (sexual harassment) and 354B (criminal assault), of the Indian Penal Code.

IANIS

Assam imposes night curfew to check Covid surge

IANIS ■ GUWAHATI/SHILLONG

To check the rapid surge in the number of Covid-19 cases, the Assam Government on Tuesday enforced a night curfew across the State from 8 pm to 5 am, officials said.

Assam Chief Secretary Jishnu Barua said in his order that the curfew would remain in force till May 1.

"The Covid-19 situation in Assam has been reviewed and it has been observed that there has been a rapid increase in the number of active cases across the State. Therefore, it is felt that night curfew needs to be imposed in all the districts of Assam, except for essential and emergency activities and services," the order said.

Barring emergencies, movement of individuals will not be allowed during the curfew period, it added.

The state government had earlier ordered that all markets, shops, malls and restaurants would down their shutters by 6 p.m., besides making face masks mandatory for everyone.

According to the data released by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare,

Assam reported 3,137 new Covid cases and 15 deaths on Monday, taking the tally of active cases to 17,764.

The state had only 287 active cases on February 26 when the Assam Assembly elections were announced by the Election Commission.

In Assam, as many 2,40,670 people have so far been infected by the contagious virus, while 1,215 persons have fallen prey to the disease.

Assam Health and Education Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the deputy commissioners of 34 districts across the state have been authorised to suspend physical classes for up to Class VIII in districts where Covid-19 cases have crossed the 100-mark on a particular day.

In Meghalaya, the night curfew in East Khasi Hills district, in which capital Shillong falls, has been extended for another week until May 2 and it would be effective from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.

The state government has also announced a series of measures, including banning entry of tourists from other states, to curb the virus spread.

Not immaculate

The Madras HC's chiding of the EC proves that the panel's actions in Bengal were not beyond reproach

The Madras High Court's (HC's) tongue-lashing to the Election Commission (EC) of India is in line with the prevalent widespread criticism of constitutional institutions and the alarming erosion of the value system that guided them. The HC has rightly observed that the EC was singularly responsible for the spread of the COVID-19 scourge in India. Even when the majority of the political parties, health experts and social activists pleaded with the EC to reduce the number of phases of the Assembly polls and enforce strict compliance of COVID-appropriate behaviour during road shows and public rallies, the poll panel looked the other way. The fact that it chose to issue an order to cancel political rallies soon after Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi himself disbanded his rallies has raised eyebrows, and rightly so. Had the PM not cancelled his rallies, what would have the EC done? Incidentally, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had cancelled his poll rallies even before the PM but the EC didn't recognise his gesture. The panel acted only after it was nudged by Modi himself. The EC was quick to penalise political leaders for violating the model code but it took no steps to ensure that tens of thousands of people did not gather at road shows and poll rallies without wearing masks? Did the EC book any political leader for holding such rallies? Did it issue any show-cause notice to any political honcho for ferrying people on trucks to attend those rallies?

The Opposition parties may have their own agenda in trying to vilify the poll panel but the fact remains that many of the EC's actions were both opaque and uncalled for. Can it explain which medical expert did it consult before rejecting the plea to shorten the election duration? Why did it opt for staggered polls, discarding the fear of the scourge? The logic to hold an eight-phase election during the peak of COVID-19's second wave cuts no ice. The poll officials cited the fear of law and order breakdown in West Bengal but wasn't it possible to deploy four times more paramilitary forces, rendering the election a two-phase affair? These are a few tough questions the EC must answer if it wants to safeguard its independent identity which stands highly compromised amid speculation that Satish Chandra, who retired as the CEC just 10 days ago, is likely to be rewarded with a plum Government post. Besides, the panel was seen acting only on the issues raised by a specific political party, ignoring most others' pleas and submissions. Meanwhile, a day after it got a rap on the knuckles by the Madras HC, the EC has stirred and banned all victory processions after the announcement of the poll results. Sadly, however, the damage has been done and thousands of precious lives lost. Now, it's time for the HC to fix the responsibility on the erring EC officials. One hopes and prays that the Supreme Court will also take a strict view of the matter and initiate steps to ensure that the EC is not seen as a puppet of the regime.



Female Naga seers of the Juna Akhara on the occasion of the last Shahi Snan of Kumbh in Haridwar

The pall on IPL

A clutch of players is ditching the tournament over the fright the COVID-19 spurt is causing

The pandemic's second wave has cast a pall upon the Indian Premier League (IPL) as many players, both domestic and foreign, are pulling out of the cash-abundant league. With strict bio-security arrangements and stringent safety measures put in place by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), the players and support staff are obviously feeling fatigued. This apart, the conditions outside in the real world and the concern for their families and friends are also forcing them to opt out.

Ravichandran Ashwin has decided to cut short his season to support his "family and extended family" during these trying times. Then came a Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) Twitter post confirming the departure of two Australian players — leg-spinner Adam Zampa and pacer Kane Richardson. A day earlier, Rajasthan Royals medium-pacer Andrew Tye flew out of Mumbai to Doha on his way back home to Perth. This follows the Australian Government's decision to suspend all flights from India till May 15. While some foreign players and commentators feel "safer in the bubble here", there are others who are not so much worried about the surging cases in India as they are about beating the stringent restriction deadlines back home.

Then, for every Pat Cummins who says that the IPL is providing "few hours of joy and respite to people under lockdown", there is a Tye who feels that it "doesn't feel right to be playing and enjoying when the pandemic is snuffing out lives". The dilemma arose after Cricket Australia contacted its players participating in the IPL to inquire about their health and travel plans. Earlier, England batsman Liam Livingstone had pulled out, citing bubble fatigue. However, if the COVID cases continue to surge, many other players are likely to quit the IPL before the season gets over. Even those who might decide to continue with the tournament inside the safety of the bubble, may feel their performance impacted as it is ultimately the sum total of their physical, mental and emotional well-being. From the point of view of an aficionado, however, if the cricketers continue to withdraw from the IPL one after the other, the fans would get to see less quality action and excitement on the ground and the remaining stretch of the tournament would at best be a pale shadow of itself.

CAPFs and the enemy within

As the Chhattisgarh ambush tragedy proves, the CRPF needs to enhance its counter-insurgency tactics and leadership training



DEEPAK SINHA

On its website, the Central Reserve Police Force prides itself for being the largest Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) in the country and claims to be "the premier central police force for internal security". Given its recent brush with disaster in Chhattisgarh, the latter claim seems a trifle awkward and its top leadership would do well to tone down such self-aggrandisement, focusing instead on enhancing leadership training, professional skills and counter-insurgency tactics.

Indeed, had they done so earlier, the need to mourn the death of Sub-Inspector Deepak Bhardwaj and his 21 colleagues may not have risen at all. The wounded 31 others would not be facing the likelihood of being plagued by the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a universally accepted debilitating mental condition, which incidentally neither the military nor the police hierarchy acknowledges. Most importantly, the Force would have avoided the humiliation of being constrained to negotiate with extremists for the freedom of Commando Rakeshwar Singh Manhas who was taken hostage.

Of course, anyone who has been involved in counter-insurgency operations clearly understands that operating in such an environment is not just physically challenging or mentally demanding, but also fraught with uncertainty. A single error or just plain bad luck can make the difference between winning big or losing it all. On occasions, even the best laid plans have been known to go awry while sometimes, despite poor planning or errors in execution, operations have ended in success. Thus, leaderships tend to take losses in their stride in the understanding that tactical wins and losses are just opposite sides of the same coin, to be treated with equanimity. The ultimate goal of forcing the insurgents to abjure violence with the minimum number of casualties among the Security Forces (SFs) must not be lost



sight of. It is only then that a viable political solution can be negotiated.

For the uninitiated, it may come as somewhat of a surprise that boredom and complacency are the most dangerous and implacable enemy that the SFs confront, not the insurgent; however well-equipped, trained or motivated s/he may be. It is a no-brainer that as a general rule of thumb, the successful units have outstanding leaders always willing to lead from the front. Focused on ensuring that their men are conversant with the enemy and terrain, physically and mentally tough, disciplined and motivated enough to give their all for the team. Along with these building blocks, the key ingredient to success is a good intelligence network, higher commanders with strategic vision and detailed operational planning.

Unfortunately, we saw none of this on display during this rather wretched encounter. It truly takes a very special kind of incompetence for such a large force, reportedly over 2,000-strong, to be ambushed in the manner that they were, unable to retrieve their casualties for over 24-48



ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATIONS CLEARLY UNDERSTANDS THAT OPERATING IN SUCH AN ENVIRONMENT IS NOT JUST PHYSICALLY CHALLENGING OR MENTALLY DEMANDING, BUT ALSO FRAUGHT WITH UNCERTAINTY

hours. Sadly, as we all know, this is not the first time that the CRPF has been at the receiving end. Obviously, it suggests that there are serious systemic deficiencies that, for one reason or the other, have not been corrected.

One of the biggest drawbacks the organisation faces is the transient nature of officers from the Indian Police Service who are deputed. These officers come at the level of the DIG or above in a supervisory role and have little in-depth practical experience or knowledge of the counter-insurgency tactics, environment or of the units that have been placed under their command. Their interest is more to do with their own career progression than anything else. This explains why the so-called "elite" Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (COBRA) units, which are the sword arm of the CRPF's counter-insurgency operations, are supervised by a Sector HQs under an IGP, located within the National Capital Territory, thousands of km from their area of operations.

Even in this ill-fated operation, for example, one telling fact that emerges is that among the 50-odd casualties,

there was only one officer, a wounded Assistant Commandant. This raises a number of questions, the chief one being where were the officers? It does suggest that the sub-units were not led by officers, which would account for the laxity and lack of motivation that clearly comes through.

Obviously, the Government has given in to vested interests and it is unlikely that relevant lessons will ever be learnt from such incidents. We are, therefore, bound to see a repeat of this event in the not-too-distant future. Interestingly, in one of his James Bond novels, Ian Fleming writes: "Once is happenstance. Twice is coincidence. Three times is enemy action." In this context, that this Force was subjected to enemy action is clearly not in doubt but what remains unclear is, are we looking for the enemy in the right place? Maybe, they really need to look inwards.

(The writer is a military veteran, who is a Visiting Fellow with the Observer Research Foundation and Senior Fellow with The Peninsula Foundation, Chennai. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LACK OF SELF-DISCIPLINE CAUSING SPURT

Sir — The second wave of COVID-19 has hit us harder and with greater intensity than the first. There are no immediate solutions in sight for its mitigation. It is a sinking feeling as India nears 2,00,000 COVID deaths. It is now projected by the IIT scientists that the daily new cases will reach 4.4 lakh by May 8 and peak at 38-48 lakh between May 14 and 18. The unprecedented surge with the high positivity rate may be plausibly explained in terms of the coalescence of a number of factors. From their observation of the behaviour of the mutant variants now in circulation, epidemiologists have surmised that they are highly infectious. Still further rigorous investigations are needed to get a grip on the correlation between the new variants and the spread of the earlier variants at a rapid rate.

The lack of self-discipline, as manifested in the lack of adherence to COVID-appropriate behaviour, has in a significant measure led to the staggering spike in infections. People tend to think, albeit without any basis, that they are somehow safe from the virus. The Coronavirus could not have found anything better than election rallies, religious gatherings and cricket matches to reach its destination — the human lungs. The pandemic is ravaging and ripping through the country and causing widespread human suffering. The pandemic-related images are profoundly harrowing, distressing and haunting and are relived in our wakeful hours and dreams. Crematoriums and graveyards indicate that the pandemic's real casualty toll could be far higher than the official figures.

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

INDIA'S VISION FOR AFGHANISTAN

Sir — For the Afghans, the war seems endless. American President Joe Biden announced on April 14 that "it is time to end the forever war in Afghanistan" and that all the US soldiers would leave before September 11 this year. The US Special Forces and the CIA operatives had gone into Afghanistan in October 2001 with the express objective of removing the Taliban

EC got just deserts from HC



It's good that the Madras High Court has come down heavily on the Election Commission (EC) for its failure to stop political parties from violating the COVID protocols during the campaign for Assembly polls in four States and a Union Territory over the last month. Earlier, the Calcutta High Court had censured the EC for not doing enough to ensure that political parties follow the appropriate COVID protocol amid the surging second wave. Over 600 rallies are reported to have been held in West Bengal during the election campaigning recently. Among others, the Prime Minister also didn't care for the situation until it got out of hand,

and dismantling the al-Qaeda. The US was still militarily engaged debating its choices for the past 20 years. It would be a responsible withdrawal if the Taliban was to cut ties with terrorist groups, reduce violence in Afghanistan and engage in meaningful negotiations with the Afghan Government.

The old Doha treatment was a peace deal placed before the world but, for the Taliban, it was a US withdrawal deal. The US was supposed to leave by May 1. India supports an Afghan-led-owned-controlled peace process. India stays because it has a sense of belonging. India was Afghanistan's preferred partner with its economic cooperation programme for the past 20 years. Nearly three-fourth of the Afghan population today is below 30 years, and they are conservative, living in an open society. India's vision for Afghanistan is shared by the large majority of the Afghan people.

TV Jayaprakash | Palakkad

only after which he cancelled his rallies and started holding marathon meetings with the top officials, Chief Ministers and industry giants to review the situation. Tamil Nadu and Kerala are no better and their situation is somewhat similar to Bengal.

People were seen participating in these rallies without masks and social distancing was thrown out of the window. None of the leaders insisted that the people follow the pandemic protocols. Nor did the EC. The political meetings became COVID clusters and hotspots. How and why did the EC allow this to happen is a million-dollar question. Now that the election results are to be announced on May 2, the parties are getting ready to celebrate their victory. Either such celebrations should be totally banned or counting of votes should be postponed. The Government must ensure that all our people get vaccinated soon. The leaders should create awareness among the people on the need for vaccination. This will facilitate India to win the war against the virus.

Sravana Ramachandran | Chennai

INDIA'S VACCINE MAITRI PAYS DIVIDENDS

Sir — With the increase in COVID-19 cases and fatalities, many States are considering lockdowns. While the nation battles the oxygen supply and demand gap, the lockdowns come as another blow to the common man and his livelihood. Though the lockdowns have been imposed in the best interest of citizens — to protect them from the virus, there is a dire need to ramp up medical facilities to meet the urgent needs of all the patients.

It is a matter of appreciation that several countries have promised to support India in such an hour of crisis. The world should otherwise be indebted to India as it took the lead in supplying vaccines through the 'Vaccine Maitri' operation to many countries in a bid to combat COVID-19.

Swati Mandwariya | Neemuch

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

The Government must realise that the battle is against COVID; it is not against the Congress or other political opponents.



Congress leader

— Rahul Gandhi



Australian players in the IPL will have to make their own arrangements to travel back home.

Australian Prime Minister

— Scott Morrison

If you have to be brilliant, you have to approach a new role with a completely new mindset every time.

You need to behave as if you don't know anything. I clean my screen slate every time. I make my job difficult.



Actor

— Anupam Kher



It was very easy to lose coordination after a long break, but the way the team gelled against Olympic champions Argentina recently was a big confidence booster ahead of the Tokyo Olympics.

Indian hockey player

— Mandeep Singh

When the DMK comes back to power in the State, the Sterlite Copper plant will be sealed after the permitted period for oxygen production ends.



DMK president

— MK Stalin



FIRST COLUMN

DUTY AND JUSTICE AT ITS PUREST

We would do well to learn from the great history and traditions of our country



MARKANDEY KATJU

In today's world, when we are surrounded by people who don't do their duty judiciously, we would do well to learn from the great history and traditions of our country. In his book 'History of Bengal' Professor Charles Stewart mentions an interesting case that was brought before Qazi (judge) Sirajuddin, the Qazi-e-Subah of Bengal in 1490, which displays the immense sense of duty that he had and is justice at its purest. One day while the Sultan of Bengal was doing his archery practice, one of his arrows accidentally wounded the son of a widow. The woman rushed to Sirajuddin and demanded justice. Sirajuddin was in a dilemma. He said to himself, "If I summon the sultan to my court, I may be punished by him for impertinence. But if I overlook the sultan's act, I shall one day certainly be summoned before the court of God to answer for my neglect of duty." After much reflection, fear of God prevailed over the fear of the sultan, and the judge ordered one of his officers to go and summon the ruler to his court. On receiving the summons, the sultan instantly rose, and concealing a short sword under his garments, went before Sirajuddin, who, far from rising from his seat and showing the sultan respect, said to him: "You have wounded the son of this poor widow. You must, therefore, immediately pay her adequate compensation, or suffer the sentence of the law."



The sultan made a bow and turning to the widow gave her a sum of money which satisfied her. After doing so he said to Sirajuddin: "Worthy judge, the complainant has forgiven me." The judge then dismissed the case. Sirajuddin then came down from his seat and made obeisance before his sovereign, who, drawing the sword from beneath his garment said: "In obedience to your command I came instantly to your court, but if you had not done your duty I swear that I would have taken off your head. Thanks be to God that I have in my dominion, a judge who acknowledges no authority superior to the law."

The judge then took out a whip which he had concealed under his robes and said to the king: "O Sultan, I also swear by God that if you had not complied with the injunction of the law, this whip would have made your back black and blue. It has been a trial for both of us."

Yet another example of the extreme sense of duty and justice can be found in the 'Rajtarangini (River of Kings)', an epic Sanskrit poem by the Kashmiri poet Kalhan who lived in the 12th century. Kalhan mentions how King Chandrapida who ruled Kashmir, upheld the law and protected a cobbler from his own officials. The king's officials had planned to build a temple of Lord Tribhuvan Swami on a piece of land on a part of which the cobbler's hut was situated. The cobbler refused to demolish his hut despite orders. When the officials complained about the cobbler's obstinacy to the king, instead of ordering removal of the hut, he reprimanded his officials for trying to encroach on the cobbler's land.

The king told them: "Stop the construction, or build the temple elsewhere. Who would tarnish such a pious act (of building a temple) by illegally depriving a man of his land? If we, who are the judges of what is right and wrong, act unlawfully, who would then abide by the law?" Later, overwhelmed by the sense of justice of the king, the cobbler sought an audience with him. When brought before the King he said: "Just as the palace is to your majesty, so is the hut to me. I could not bear its demolition. However, if your majesty asks for it, I shall give it up, seeing your just behaviour." Subsequently the king purchased it after paying a satisfactory price to the poor cobbler, who then told the king: "Yielding to another, however low, adhering to the principles of rajdharma, is the appropriate course for a king." One only wishes that our politicians, officials and the judiciary would learn from our long-standing traditions.

(The writer is a former judge of the Supreme Court of India. The views expressed are personal.)

The MTP Bill is a good move, but miles to go

Due to the exclusion of abortion by choice in the current law, women end up being exposed to unsafe abortions, putting their health and life at risk



SIMI MEHTA NISHI VERMA

Abortion is a highly emotional issue and one that excites many opinions. However, equitable access to safe abortion services is first and foremost a human right. In March, the Parliament passed the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Bill, 2021 to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971. This amendment will help expand access to safe and legal abortion services on therapeutic, eugenic, humanitarian and social grounds. The Bill seeks to strengthen provisions for protecting the dignity and privacy of women who seek the refuge of law when confronted with such a life-altering decision.

These provisions include an increased gestation period of 24 weeks from 20 weeks "for special categories of women" such as survivors of rape or other vulnerable women. However, the opinion of one registered medical practitioner would be required for termination of pregnancy of up to 20 weeks and the opinion of two registered medical practitioners would be necessary in cases that go up to 24 weeks. Sadly, the 24 weeks' gestation rule will not apply for termination of pregnancy in cases of substantial foetal abnormalities. Significantly, the name and other particulars of a woman whose pregnancy has been terminated cannot be revealed, except when authorised by any law.

So the big question is, how would it impact women? We all know that the pandemic-induced lockdowns brought unintended consequences. Projections suggest that due to the inability to access contraceptives, Indian women may have an additional 2.4 million unintended pregnancies. Further, in the near-term due to the COVID-19 necessitated restrictions, close to two million women will be unable to access abortion services. In light of the above worrying trends, the MTP (Amendment) Bill, 2021, provides a more progressive law that would have long-term implications and give bodily autonomy to women. While there are pertinent aspects of the MTP Act, 2021, as a step towards safety and well-being of women and will benefit several women, it must be underscored that availing MTP within a specified age of pregnancy is the absolute right of a woman. Also, no pregnancy must be terminated, except with the consent of the woman.

In a progressive move, the Bill replaces the word "husband" by "partner" and hence acknowledges consensual relationships outside of matrimony. Plus, the details of the woman undergoing abortion cannot be revealed by a registered medical practitioner unless authorised by law. Violation of this would mean imprisonment up to a year, a fine, or both. However, some of the limitations of the Bill include lack of a rights-based approach by making it mandatory for women to justify abortion, riddled with accessibility issues, reproductive rights. The Bill also fails to address most of the problems with the MTP Act. First, it does not allow abortion on request at any point after the pregnancy. It is allowed only under particular situations — such as rape, foetal abnormalities, and risk to physical or mental health of the woman, and not because of her voluntary choice of not having the baby.

Second, it is not clear how the Bill would prevent sex-selection-based abortion. Third, while privacy is ensured for women over 18 years of age, those under 18 are not provided the confidentiality clause and their guardians must be informed.



HISTORICALLY, REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH-RELATED LAWS AND POLICIES IN INDIA HAVE FAILED TO TAKE A WOMEN'S RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH BY UNDERMINING WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE AUTONOMY THROUGH DISCRIMINATORY PROVISIONS SUCH AS THE SPOUSAL CONSENT REQUIREMENT FOR ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

Mehta is CEO and Editorial Director and Verma is Research Programs Assistant at IMPRI. The views expressed are personal.



This may induce youngsters to resort to unsafe methods of abortion. Fourth, it enhances the gestational limit for legal abortion from 20 to 24 weeks only for specific categories of women such as survivors of rape, victims of incest and minors. This may expand third-party authorisation for abortion care due to the above provisions. Lastly, the Bill is silent about sensitisation of the healthcare community and the general public about safe sex and abortion rights, which could go a long way in eliminating the stigma associated with MTP.

The amendment in the Bill continues the legacy of hetero-patriarchal population control, which does not give women control over their own bodies. While it is commendable that the Bill proposed to expand the gestation period from 20 weeks to 24 weeks, this again can be limiting. There are multiple cases of delay in seeking access to pregnancy termination due to several reasons including but not limited to, sexual assault on a minor, delay in recognising the pregnancy, intimate partner violence and difficult family circumstances.

Due to the exclusion of abortion by choice in the current law, these women end up being exposed to unsafe abortions, putting their health and life at risk. However, considering the huge leap on abortion reform, India is standing among nations with a highly progressive law which allows legal abortions on a broad range of therapeutic, humanitarian and social grounds. It is a milestone especially for those who

are vulnerable and victims of rape. The policymakers must consider the current deficiencies and take steps to improve the Bill further, so that it becomes a milestone in comprehensive abortion rights around the world.

Although India was among the first countries in the world to develop legal and policy frameworks guaranteeing access to abortion and contraception, women and girls continue to experience significant barriers to full enjoyment of their reproductive rights, including poor quality of health services and denial of women's and girls' decision-making authority.

Historically, reproductive health-related laws and policies in India have failed to take a women's rights-based approach by undermining women's reproductive autonomy through discriminatory provisions such as the spousal consent requirement for access to reproductive health services.

Although India's National Population Policy guarantees women voluntary access to the full range of contraceptive methods, in practice State Governments continue to introduce schemes promoting female sterilisation, including through targets, leading to coercion, risky substandard sterilisation procedures, and denial of access to non-permanent methods.

Millions women face structural, institutional and cultural barriers to using accredited abortion services — things like stigma, not knowing the law, expense, fears about confidentiality, and lack of access to health-

care institutions. Such barriers disproportionately affect poorer women, who often live in remote, rural areas.

Significantly, women's rights and economic development are highly correlated. Today, the discrepancy between the legal rights of women is much larger in developing countries compared with developed countries. Even western democracies that otherwise seem to be leaders on an international human rights stage have historically struggled with the recognition of women's rights to make autonomous decisions regarding the spacing and number of their children.

Worldwide, abortion is acknowledged as an important aspect of reproductive health of women. At present, 26 countries including Egypt, Angola, Thailand, the Philippines, Madagascar and Iraq do not permit abortion and 39 countries including Brazil, Mexico, Sudan, Indonesia and Sri Lanka permit abortion when the woman's life is at risk. Only some countries like China, Russia, Canada, Australia, and South Africa permit abortion on request mostly up to 12 weeks.

In this backdrop, India will now stand among nations with a highly progressive law which allows legal abortions. This Bill is a milestone which will further empower women. India, certainly elevates its standard at a higher pedestal through this Bill. It is hoped that the country makes proactive laws and implements them vigorously in so far as other areas of rights of women and girls are concerned.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

WE ARE GOING FROM A TIGHT BUBBLE AND GETTING VACCINATED SOON, SO HOPEFULLY THE GOVERNMENT WILL LET US GET HOME ON A PRIVATE CHARTER.

—AUSTRALIAN CRICKETER
CHRIS LYNN



PLAYERS IN THE IPL WILL HAVE TO MAKE THEIR OWN ARRANGEMENTS TO TRAVEL BACK AS THEY HAVE TRAVELLED TO INDIA PRIVATELY.

—AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER
SCOTT MORRISON



India must have protocols to remain on the job

During the last 100 years, the country suffered many epidemics and wars but never closed down its establishments

India must learn to be in a working mode during this second wave of the pandemic and not lock itself down repeatedly. After the severe productivity, jobs and economic losses last year, it should have evolved a protocol to restore normal working conditions. The present wave has come at a time when the International Monetary Fund has predicted a possible 12.5 per cent growth in 2022 for the country. A second erratic closure may throw a spanner in the works.

During the last 100 years the country has suffered many epidemics but never closed down its establishments. During the difficult times, all individuals and organisations came together to strive and restore normalcy. The Surat plague in the mid-1990s was also dealt with like that and the city did not shut its business



SHIVAJI SARKAR

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

activities. Even though nine months have passed after the unlocking process started, most industries, including education, tourism, travel and even Government offices have not gone back to normal.

The direct and indirect job losses are hitting not only the economy but also the social fabric and family lives. Amid the minus 23.9 per cent fall in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the lockdown and speculation by national and international organisations about the country's growth; another bout of closures is hitting economic activities.

The nationwide sudden lockdown on March 25 last year led to 10.9 million jobs being lost and has been termed the worst-ever year for the job market. Though there is no centralised data available for how many jobs were created

during July-December 2020, Human Resource (HR) consultants estimate that one million jobs were added during this period. Now many of these jobs, most of them in the informal sector, are threatened again.

Many companies like Parle Products, Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Ceat and Axis Bank have largely gone back to the Work From Home (WFH) format for corporate employees. Many others like ITC, Samsung, RPG, Dabur, Haier, Vedanta, Vivo and Panasonic have issued new guidelines for the workers.

According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, about 12 million additional people would have got jobs from the beginning of this year — the highest since March 2020 — but the current lockdowns can make many



people lose their jobs again.

Banks are fretting over another spike in defaults and credit quality and the manufacturing activity is at its lowest pace in seven months restricted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The curbs imposed almost all over the country and the beginning of a second wave of exodus of migrant workers back to their home-

towns could dent manufacturing, core sector activities, supply of goods and services and the overall demand, even further.

The Investment Information and Credit Rating Agency says that bad loans of Indian banks could rise to 9.7 per cent in 2021 and 10.2 per cent in 2022 from gross bad loans at 9.6 per cent in March 2020 and 8.3 per cent in December 2020. The December decline is due to the writing off of ₹1.1 lakh crore of such loans.

A nation trying to recover is being hit hard again. The Retailers Association of India estimates businesses will lose about \$5 billion in Maharashtra alone, this month. It says that Maharashtra accounts for 10 per cent of \$85 billion of India's annual retail sales. It says that sales of automobiles,

consumer durables, smartphones and apparels, which have just started recovering, will be adversely affected. Even partial lockdowns in different parts hit sales.

The WFH, occasionally for maximum worker utilisation, cannot be a permanent mode. The online mode is not feasible in a poor country like India with a critical cash flow in rural areas as it increases hardship. It is devastating the education sector, largely private as income-deprived parents are unable to pay the tuition fees, leading to closure of several lakh budget schools in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and many other States. They can neither afford the increasing data costs nor do they have connectivity nor even smart phones or laptops.

The new generation feels not only deprived but also dis-

criminated against, leading to a severe social divide. In Bihar, the budget school owners are up in arms against the irrational lockdowns.

The situation remains alarming as the factory activity grew at its weakest in March 2021. A Reuters survey says that Asia's third-largest economy, despite some recent improvements, is heading for the biggest risk to the outlook.

The country cannot relax fiscal deficit norms as suggested by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The rising Government debts may have many dangers. India needs to change its policies as it cannot force repeated closures of social and economic activities. A protocol must be devised so that it continues its normal work as it does during the war time. Diseases surge and go but a nation has to move without closing down for a day.

Myanmar guerrillas capture Govt base

Airstrikes follow

AP ■ BANGKOK

Ethnic Karen guerrillas said they captured a Myanmar Army base on Tuesday near the border with Thailand, representing a morale-boosting action for those opposing the military's takeover of the country's civilian government in February.

Myanmar's military staged airstrikes several hours later on villages in territory controlled by the Karen forces, said a guerrilla spokesman, a senior Thai official and a relief worker. A spokesman for the Karen National Union, the minority's main political group seeking greater autonomy from Myanmar's central government, said its armed wing attacked the base at 5 a.m. and burned it down just after dawn.

Casualty figures were not yet known, the KNU's head of foreign affairs, Padoh Saw Taw Nee, said in a text message. There was no immediate comment from Myanmar's military government. The KNU, which controls territory in eastern Myanmar near the Thai border,



An anti-coup protester splashes red paint on student uniforms after they hanged them outside a school during a demonstration against the re-opening of the school by the junta government at Yangon, Myanmar on Tuesday

is a close ally of the resistance movement against the military takeover that ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. Its armed wing is called the Karen National Liberation Army. Video shot from the Thai side of the border showed flames rising from the government position on the banks of

the Salween River, amid the sound of heavy gunfire. The river marks the border with Thailand. A report by the Karen Information Center, an online news site, quoted an unnamed villager on the Thai side of the river saying he saw seven government soldiers trying to flee

the camp, which is opposite Thailand's Mae Sam Laep village. Padoh Man Man of the KNU's 5th Brigade, which launched the morning's attack, said Myanmar's military carried out airstrikes in the early afternoon, but he did not know how many casualties there

were. He described the air raids to The Associated Press as a "heinous war crime" and called for the international community to pressure the junta to stop them.

Sithichai Jindaluang, the governor of Thailand's Mae Hong Son province, confirmed at a news conference that Karen guerrillas had overrun the Myanmar base and said a woman on Thai soil was wounded by a stray bullet during the morning's fighting. He said about 450 villagers have been evacuated from Mae Sam Lap for their own safety.

Sithichai also said a Myanmar military aircraft later bombed a Karen village.

Dave Eubank of the Free Burma Rangers, a humanitarian aid group with extensive experience in the area, said he could confirm that there had been airstrikes on Karen villages in two townships in Papun district. He said Myanmar's army was also staging ground attacks in the area. Neither he nor the governor had casualty figures available.

Fighting between the KNU's armed wing and Myanmar's military has been intense since February. Government airstrikes began on March 27.

Lanka Cabinet OK's proposal to ban burqa in public places

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Cabinet on Tuesday approved a controversial proposal to ban all forms of face coverings in public places, citing a threat to national security.

The move came weeks after Minister of Public Security Sarath Weerasekera signed a note in March, seeking the approval of the Cabinet to ban burqas -- outer garments that cover the body and face worn by some Muslim women.

The Cabinet has decided to ban all forms of face coverings in public places, Cabinet spokesperson and information minister Keheliya Rambukwella told reporters here, without specifying burqas.

He said the decision was taken two years after a wave of coordinated terror attacks on hotels and churches on Easter Sunday. "All forms of face covers are a threat to national security," he said.

However, wearing face masks to combat Covid-19 is allowed. The covering of the full face will automatically include burqa and niqab.



The proposal now must be approved by Parliament to become a law.

Last month, Pakistan's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Ambassador Saad Khattak had criticised the proposal to ban the wearing of burqas in the country, saying such "divisive steps" in the name of security will not hurt the sentiments of Muslims but also strengthen wider apprehensions about the fundamental human rights of minorities in the island nation. Meanwhile, Weerasekera in a Facebook post wrote that

the Cabinet has approved the proposal to ban all face coverings, including the burqa.

"I requested approval to draft a law for the covering of full-face adhering to the quarantine law which means there will be no prohibition to wear face masks to prevent the Covid-19 virus," he was quoted as saying by the Daily Mirror news website.

The Buddhist-majority nation in 2019 had temporarily banned wearing of burqas under emergency regulations following the Easter Sunday attacks in which nine suicide bombers belonging to the local Islamist extremist group National Thawheed Jamaat (NTJ) carried out a series of blasts that tore through three churches and as many luxury hotels, killing 270 people, including 11 Indians, and injuring over 500.

Muslims make up about 9 per cent of the 22 million people in Sri Lanka, where Buddhists account for more than 70 per cent of the population. Ethnic minority Tamils, who are mainly Hindus, comprise about 12 per cent, while Christians account for over 7 per cent of the population.

GLOBE TROTTER

GREEK LAWMAKER HELD AHEAD OF EXTRADITION
Brussels: Belgian authorities on Tuesday took a Greek far-right member of the European Parliament into custody ahead of his likely extradition to Greece to serve a 13-year prison sentence for being a leading member of a criminal organisation.

EXPLOSIVE-LADEN 'DRONE' BOAT TARGETS SAUDI PORT
Dubai: A remotely piloted boat packed with explosives targeted the Saudi port of Yanbu in the Red Sea on Tuesday, the kingdom said, with the blast sending black smoke into the sky off the coast. Saudi Arabia claimed to have intercepted and destroyed the attack boat. However, private security firms suggested commercial traffic near the port may have been hit in the assault.

HARRY AND MEGHAN TO LEAD 'VAX LIVE' CONCERT
London: Prince Harry and Meghan will serve as the campaign chairs of Global Citizen's effort to deliver COVID-19 vaccines to medical workers in the world's poorest countries. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex will appear at "Vax Live: The Concert to Reunite the World," to be taped Sunday at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles and air on ABC, CBS, FOX, YouTube and iHeartMedia broadcast radio stations on May 8. Global Citizen, the anti-poverty nonprofit, announced on Tuesday. Harry and Meghan are also leading an effort to raise money for the vaccine-sharing program COVAX, which hopes to produce \$19 billion to pay for the vaccines for medical workers. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris will also appear during the broadcast.

In fight against virus, Biden looks for path back to normal

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden spent his first 100 days in office encouraging Americans to mask up and stay home to slow the spread of the coronavirus. His task for the next 100 days will be to lay out the path back to normal.

When he entered office, Biden moved swiftly to overcome vaccine supply issues and more than tripled the country's ability to administer them. But ending the coronavirus pandemic, the central challenge of his presidency, will require more than putting shots into arms -- a task now growing more difficult as demand surges -- but also a robust plan to help the nation emerge from a year of isolation, disruption and confusion.

If Biden launched the nation onto a war footing against a virus that infected nearly 200,000 Americans in January and killed about 3,000 of them per day, the next months will be tantamount to winning the peace. Already, deaths are down to fewer than 700 per day and average daily cases are below 60,000. US officials insist there is a long way to go before the country can be fully at ease, but the



progress is marked.

Going forward, success will mean finishing the nation's herculean vaccination campaign -- to date 43% of Americans have received at least one shot -- overcoming lagging demand and communicating in clear terms what activities can be safely resumed by those who are vaccinated. Key milestones include Biden's July Fourth pledge that Americans can safely gather with friends and family, and the start of the new school year, when the president hopes to have all schools open safely.

The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention was expected to unveil new guidance on outdoor mask-wearing for unvaccinated people on Tuesday, ahead of a planned speech by Biden later in the day on the state of the pandemic response.

'India was there for us and we will be there for them': Prez Biden on Covid crisis

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

India helped the people of America in their hour of need and the US will provide full support in providing emergency assistance and resources in India's fight against Covid-19, President Joe Biden asserted after his phone call with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The two leaders spoke on Monday as the Biden administration, which was criticised by many for its slow reaction to the massive medical crisis in India, swung into action to provide assistance to India in its fight against the surge in Covid-19 cases.

The urgent help announced by the White House ranged from oxygen supplies, raw materials for Covid-19 vaccines, critical life-saving drugs to PPEs.

"India was there for us, and we will be there for them," Biden said in a tweet soon after his phone call with Modi.

This was the second telephonic conversation between the two leaders after Biden was sworn in as the 46th president of the United States on January 20.

"Today, I spoke with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and pledged America's full support to provide emergency assistance and resources in the fight against Covid-19," Biden said.

Iran nuclear talks resume in Vienna amid new complications

AP ■ BERLIN

World powers resumed high-level talks in Vienna on Tuesday focused on bringing the United States back into the nuclear deal with Iran, in their first session since comments surfaced from the Iranian foreign minister alleging that Russia once tried to scupper the pact.

The Russian Foreign Ministry has not responded to requests for comment on the remarks from Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, made in a seven-hour interview with a think tank associated with the Iranian presidency that leaked over the weekend.

Ahead of the main talks, Russia's top representative Mikhail Ulyanov said he'd met on the side together with officials from Iran and China, but did not mention anything about Zarif's comments.

"We compared notes and exchanged views on the way ahead towards full restoration of the nuclear deal," he tweeted. "It was a very fruitful meeting."

Following the main meeting with his counterparts from China, Germany, France, and Britain -- the other parties to the deal, known as the Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA -- Ulyanov tweeted that they were "guided by the unity of purpose."

"Which is full restoration of the nuclear deal in its original form," he wrote. "It was decided to expedite the process." China's delegate Wang Qun told reporters on his way out of the talks that discussions would continue on Wednesday.

The U.S. is not at the table because it unilaterally pulled out of the deal in 2018 under then-President Donald Trump, who restored and augmented American sanctions in a campaign of "maximum pressure" to try and force Iran into renegotiating the pact with more concessions. President Joe Biden wants to rejoin the deal, however, and there is a U.S. Delegation in Vienna taking part in indirect talks with Iran, with diplomats from the other world powers acting as go-betweens.

The deal promises Iran economic incentives in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program. The reimposition of American sanctions has left the country's economy reeling, and Tehran has reacted by steadily increasing its violations of the restrictions of the deal.

Iran wants nationals freed from US jails amid talks

AP ■ TEHRAN

Tehran: Iran said on Tuesday it was seeking the release of all Iranian prisoners held in the US amid talks in Vienna meant to bring Tehran and Washington back into the nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

Cabinet spokesman Ali Rabiee also hinted that another exchange of prisoners between Iran and America was possible, saying that "the idea of a swap of prisoners has always been on the agenda" and adding they should be released because of "humane concerns."

Rabiee did not offer details on how many Iranians are held in the U.S. And claimed that releasing their names could harm them. However, he said, "their number is bigger than that of American prisoners in Iran."

In 2019, a prisoner exchange saw Iran free a Chinese-American scholar from Princeton who had been held for three years on widely criticized espionage charges. At the time, Tehran said American authorities were holding about 20 Iranian nationals in jail.

Iran has at times expressed readiness for prisoner swaps with the US. When they do take place, the exchanges are seen as rare diplomatic breakthroughs between Tehran and Washington. AP

Two Spanish citizens dead after attack in Burkina Faso

AP ■ OUAGADOUGOU (BURKINA FASO)

Two Spanish citizens have been killed in an ambush in eastern Burkina Faso, the Spanish government said on Tuesday. The Spanish journalists and an Irish citizen went missing during an attack by gunmen Monday near a national park, said Arancha González Laya, Spain's Foreign Affairs Minister in a Press conference.

The two Spaniards are from northern Spain and were working on a documentary on how Burkina Faso's authorities were tackling poaching and on the communities of people living in the park. At the time of the attack, they were traveling with an anti-poaching patrol with about 40 people, she said. "It is a dangerous area where terrorists, bandits, and jihadists usually operate," said González Laya.

The Irish government said it was "aware of the reports and is liaising closely with international partners regarding the situation on the ground."

An audio message heard by The Associated Press that purports to be from jihadist group known as JNIM that is linked to al-Qaida praised the attack claimed responsibility for the attack.

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that a boy (depicted in the photo), **Named:** Anwar Shekh S/o Rashid Ahmed R/o U-108, Gali No. 4, Vijay Nagar, Narela, Delhi has been missing since 05.04.2021 from his house. In this regard a case vide DD No. 81A dated 05.04.2021 has been lodged at Police Station Narela, Delhi. His physical description is as under-

Age: 20 Years, **Height:** 5'5", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Blue colour checkdhar shirt and blue colour jeans and sports shoes in feet. Any person having any information/Clue about this missing boy, may inform SHO, Narela, Delhi at E-mail id -- cic@cbi.gov.in or Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

SHO P.S. Narela, Delhi
Outer North Distt., Delhi
Ph. No. 011-24368638, 24368641
Ph. No. 011-27280435, 27282350

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that one boy namely **Ravinder, S/o Daya Ram, R/o Flat No. D-880, Gate No. 4, Block-11, Lal Flat, Sec.-3, DSIIDC, Bawana, Delhi Age:** 18 years, **Height:** 5', **Complexion:** Fair, **Face:** Round, **Built:** Medium, **Clothes:** Unknown, has been missing from the area of P.S. Bawana since 02.04.2021. In this regard a DD No. 103-A, dated 02.04.2021 has been registered at P.S. Bawana, Delhi.

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

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-24368639
Ph. No.: 011-24368638, 24368641
P.S. Bawana, Delhi
DP/976/ON/2021 Ph. No.: 011-27751949, 27756090

Russian court restricts Navalny's anti-corruption foundation

PTI ■ MOSCOW

Moscow: A court in Moscow ruled on Tuesday to restrict the activities of an organisation founded by imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny pending a decision on whether it should be outlawed as an extremist group.

The Moscow City Court's ruling on Navalny's Foundation for Fighting Corruption came amid a sweeping crackdown on Russian President Vladimir Putin most prominent critic, his allies and his political infrastructure. AP

Queen resumes royal duties virtually after mourning period for husband

PTI ■ LONDON

Britain's Queen Elizabeth II on Tuesday resumed royal duties following a mourning period for her late husband, Prince Philip, who passed away earlier this month.

The 95-year-old monarch was photographed while conducted virtual "audiences" with the ambassadors of Latvia and Ivory Coast, who were at Buckingham Palace in London while she was at Windsor Castle in Berkshire, south-east England. AP

These formal audiences involve the presentation of credentials before new diplomats take over official duties as ambassador.

Ivita Burmestre, the ambassador from Latvia, presented her Letters of Credence to the Queen, as did Sara Affoue Amani, the Ivory Coast ambassador. The photographs showed the Queen dressed in a pale blue floral dress and no longer wearing black, after two weeks of royal court mourning ended last Friday.

While in mourning, the

Queen has continued to carry out duties including four days after Prince Philip's death on April 9 during an audience and investiture with Earl Peel, who was relinquishing his role as Lord Chamberlain, and a day later she welcomed her new Lord Chamberlain, Baron Andrew Parker.

But her latest virtual engagement is the first formal resumption of duties since the late Duke of Edinburgh's royal ceremonial funeral at St. George's Chapel in Windsor Castle on April 17.

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General Public is hereby informed that one girl namely **Teena D/o Vishwanath R/o H.No. D-6, Block-13, Lal Flat Sec-3, Bawana, Delhi** has been missing since 01.04.2021. In this regard a case vide DD No. 66A Dated 04.04.2021 has been registered at P.S. Bawana, Delhi. The description of missing girl is as under

Name: Teena, **Father's Name:** Vishwanath, **Age:** 20 years, **Height:** 5'1", **Face:** Long, **Built:** Medium, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Wearing:** Mehru Colour Kurta, Salwar and Red Colour Chunny **ID Mark:** Cut Mark on the left Hand If anyone having any clue/information, kindly inform the undersigned.

SHO P.S., Bawana, Delhi
Ph.: 011-27751949
27756090

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that one female namely **Rekha, W/o Pardeep, R/o L-169, JJ Colony, Shakurpur, Delhi, Age:** 25 years, **Height:** 5'2", **Complexion:** Fair, wearing Yellow colour Suit & Salwar and Blue colour Jutti, has been missing along with her Son Priyanshu, Age: 2 years, from her house since 09.11.2020 at 03:00 PM. In this regard a DD No. 99A, dated 09.11.2020 has been registered at P.S. Subhash Place, Delhi.

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

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-24368639
Ph. No.: 011-24368638, 24368641
P.S. Subhash Place, Delhi
DP/499/NW/2020 Ph. No.: 011-27356336, 27353014

CANCELLATION OF TRAIN

It is notified for the information of passengers that due to poor patronization, Railways have decided to cancel the following special train service till further notification :-

Train No. & Name	Cancellation Date w.e.f.
02414 Hazrat Nizamuddin - Madgaon AC Special Express	30.04.2021 to till further advise
02413 Madgaon - Hazrat Nizamuddin AC Special Express	02.05.2021 to till further advise

Note: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including social distancing, sanitization etc. may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

For any kind information passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

RailMadad Helpline No. 139
Visit RailMadad website : www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in & download Railmadad app.

Please join us on 
NORTHERN RAILWAY
Visit us at: www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

926/21

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that one Mr. Rajinder is the owner of plot of land Area Measuring 38-19 Sq. Yds., Part of Khata no. 1807, Mustafin, 17 Killa No. 16/2/73 old khassa no. 17/16. Situated in Waka Mouja Sarana (Dabua Colony), Tehsil Ballabhgarh Distt. Gurgaon, having acquired the same vide Sale Deed dated 26/3/21 (Doc. No. 5568), whereas she has lost the previous title deed i.e. Relinquishment Deed dated 10/5/10 (Doc. No. 2177). Now she is in process to sell off to my client Priya Goyal. All persons having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement, or otherwise whatsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.

Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)
Shop No. 5 & 6, P.N.E. CSC, Mayapuri (Vihar-I), Delhi-91, Mob. 9810663351

Lockdowns pull down biz activity to 76%: Report

UNLIKELY TO IMPACT GDP

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Business activity has fallen by a fourth of the pre-Covid levels due to lockdowns imposed by states to contain the spread of the second wave of Covid-19, Japanese brokerage Nomura said on Tuesday.

However, it said the falling activity levels will have a muted economic impact and maintained its growth estimates for the year, saying the lockdowns present "downside risks".

As of April 25, the Nomura India Business Resumption Index (NIBRI) registered its steepest weekly fall in over a year of 8.5 percentage points to 75.9, which is 24 percentage points below pre-pandemic normal, the brokerage said in a statement.

It noted that as lockdowns take effect, mobility has experienced a significant hit and there are signs of the economic pain spreading to the wider economy in facets such as power demand, GST e-way bills, railway freight.

However, the impact still appears small compared to the first wave and other indicators like labour force participation rate have remained resilient. But with more states extending restrictions, sequential momentum is likely to remain weak over the next month, hurting GDP growth in April-June period.

"There are reasons to expect a muted economic impact. The experience from other countries suggests a lower correlation between falling mobility and growth. Parts of the economy like manufacturing, agriculture, or work-from-home and online based services should be resilient," it said, maintaining its 11.5 per cent

growth forecast for 2021.

The brokerage said as the pace of vaccination picks up, which it expects from June, there should be another return of pent-up demand, in addition to other tailwinds like strong global growth, lagged impact of easy financial conditions, and front-loaded fiscal spending.

The ongoing second wave should remain a short-term negative economic shock which is likely to be localised to the June quarter and the medium-term growth outlook remains stable, it said.

The sharp slowdown in ultra-high frequency indicators since April and extended restrictions does suggest downside risk to its GDP growth projection of 11.5 per cent in 2021 as against a contraction of 6.9 per cent experienced in 2020. "We are currently experiencing the peak economic impact of the second wave as states continue to tighten and extend restrictions," it said.

Institutional investments in realty up 21 pc in Jan-Mar; inflow may be hit in Jun quarter: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Institutional investments in real estate rose 21 per cent in January-March period of this year at USD 922 million but inflow of funds may be impacted in this quarter due to spurt in cases of COVID-19 infections, according to JLL.

Recently, Knight Frank India came out with a report mentioning that private equity investment in real estate jumped over 16-fold in January-March 2021 to USD 3.24 billion as several deals spilled over from the last year.

According to property consultant JLL India, institutional flow of funds includes investments by family offices, foreign corporate groups, foreign banks, proprietary books, pension funds, private equity, real estate fund-cum-developers, foreign funded NBFCs and sovereign wealth funds. It also includes anchor investors in REITs.

"Institutional investments continued the momentum during the first quarter (January-March) of 2021, registering 21 per cent growth in volumes at USD 922 million, indicating sustained investor interest in India's real estate market," JLL said in a statement.

The consultant attributed the rise in institutional investments to increased activity from funds and closed development stage deals.

"However, the pandemic surge during the second half of March 2021 is expected to delay the investment pipeline in the second quarter," it cautioned.

Among asset classes, institutional investments in residential segments fell to USD 58 million in January-March 2021 from USD 74 million in the year ago period.

But, the inflow of funds in office market grew to USD 864 million from USD 505 million.

RBI issues guidelines for appointment of statutory auditors of banks, NBFCs

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India on Tuesday issued guidelines for appointment of statutory auditors of banks and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs), including housing finance companies.

"Guidelines for Appointment of Statutory Central Auditors (SCAs)/ Statutory Auditors (SAs) of Commercial Banks (excluding RRBs), UCBS and NBFCs (including HFCs) will be applicable for financial year 2021-22 and onwards.

However, non-deposit taking NBFCs with asset size below Rs 1,000 crore have the option to continue with their extant procedure.

The guidelines provide necessary instructions for appointment of SCAs/SAs, the number of auditors, their eligibility criteria, tenure and rotation, etc. While ensuring the independence of auditors, the Reserve Bank said.

As the guidelines are being implemented for the first time for Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs) and NBFCs from 2021-22, "they shall have the flexibility to adopt these guidelines from the second half of FY 2021-22, in order to ensure that there is no disruption".

Banks and UCBS will be required to take prior approval of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for appointment/re-appointment of SCAs/SAs, on an annual basis, the guidelines said.

For entities with an asset size of Rs 15,000 crore and above as at the end of previous year, statutory audit should be conducted under joint audit of a minimum of two audit firms. All other entities should appoint a minimum of one audit firm for conducting statutory audit, joint auditors of the entity do not have any common partners and they are not under the same network of audit firms.

Telcos gross revenue rises by 12.27%: Trai

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom operators recorded 12.27 per cent rise in their total revenue at ₹71,588 crore in the quarter ended December 31, 2020 on a year-on-year basis, according to data published by sector regulator Trai on Tuesday.

The gross revenue of the telecom service providers was ₹63,764 crore in the same quarter a year ago.

The adjusted gross revenue of the service providers, on which the Government levies licence fees and other charges.

Also increased by 16.5 per cent on year-on-year basis to ₹47,623 crore during the reported quarter from ₹40,877 crore in the corresponding period of 2019-20.

The licence fee collection of the Government increased by 16.49 per cent to ₹3,809 crore from ₹3,270 crore on a year-on-year basis.

GST return verification through OTP allowed

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has provided relief to GST taxpayers from a physical visit to tax office for verification of digital signature required on return forms.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs has allowed taxpayers to file return forms GSTR-1 and GSTR-3B through an electronic verification code (EVC) that would be a kind of one time password (OTP). This would eliminate the need to verify the returns through digital signature by visitation to GST offices.

According to the CBIC notification, EVC facility to authenticate returns filed under the two forms will be available to taxpayers during the period from April 27 to May 31.

Markets maintain momentum for second day; RIL, banks rally

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Sensex and Nifty defied gravity for the second straight session on Tuesday following brisk buying in market heavyweight Reliance Industries as well as banking and finance counters.

Shrugging off the Covid-19 crisis, the 30-share BSE Sensex opened in the green and gained further momentum during the session. It finally finished at 48,944.14, up 557.63 points or 1.15 per cent.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty surged 168.05 points or 1.16 per cent to end at 14,653.05.

L&T topped the Sensex gainers' chart, climbing 3.33 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, Reliance Industries, IndusInd Bank, SBI, HDFC Bank and Bharti Airtel.

On the other hand, Maruti

Suzuki was the biggest loser, shedding 1.24 per cent, after the country's largest carmaker reported a 6.14 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 1,241.1 crore for the March quarter.

NTPC, Kotak Bank, Nestle India, M&M, Dr Reddy's and Axis Bank were the other laggards, shedding up to 0.54 per cent.

Persistent strength in US markets has rubbed off on Indian stocks, with dip in treasury yields ahead of FOMC decision also helping the overall risk appetite, said Anand James, Chief Market Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

Banks have been quite upbeat lately and extended gains by over 1 per cent post noon, but it was metals that shone with over 2.5 per cent gains.

Rupee extends gains for 2nd day, rises by 7 paise to 74.66 vs dollar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mumbai: The rupee appreciated by 7 paise to close at 74.66 against the US dollar in its second day of gains on Tuesday on dollar selling by exporters and a rally in Indian equities.

The local unit continued to rise against the dollar on upbeat risk sentiments even as investors were cautious ahead of the US Federal Reserve's meeting ending on Wednesday.

At the interbank forex market, the rupee opened strong at 74.65 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.51 and a low of 74.73.

Over 12.7 lakh PACL investors get their money back: Sebi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

More than 12.7 lakh PACL investors with claims of up to Rs 10,000 have received over Rs 438 crore in refunds, markets regulator Sebi said on Tuesday.

The regulator had found that PACL Ltd, which had raised money from the public in the name of agriculture and real estate businesses, collected more than Rs 60,000 crore through illegal collective investment schemes (CISs) over 18 years.

A panel headed by retired Justice RM Lodha had initiated the process of refunds in phases for investors, who had invested in PACL.

"As on March 31, 2021, the committee has successfully

effected refunds in respect of 12,70,849 eligible applications (with claims up to Rs 10,000) aggregating to Rs 438.34 crore," Sebi said in a statement.

The committee, in February 2019, had asked PACL investors to submit online applications for refund.

The panel has been processing applications received from investors in a phased manner, slab wise, and currently, applications with claim amount up to Rs 10,000 have been processed and payments have been made in respect of eligible claim applications.

The payments are processed after verification of documents uploaded by the investors along with their applications and payment amount calculated accordingly.

BRIEFS

FORMER POWERGRID CMD SK CHATURVEDI PASSES AWAY

Gurugram: SK Chaturvedi former Chairman and Managing Director of Maharashtra entity, PowerGrid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) passed away on April 24. Chaturvedi was one of the founding members of POWERGRID who played a pivotal role in formulation of HR policies and procedures of the Company. His contribution in growth of POWERGRID to a Maharashtra PSU is highly valued by all the employees and stakeholders of POWERGRID.

He served as CMD POWERGRID from August 2008 to August 2011. Under his leadership, POWERGRID scaled many new heights including successful launch of PPO. He also served as Director (Personnel) of National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) and had also worked with Steel Authority of India (SAIL) and National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) in various capacities. He also headed the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC) for Goa & Union Territories in the capacity of Chairman. A postgraduate in Human Resource from University of Lucknow, he was known as a seasoned HR professional and leader who upheld professional integrity in all matters.



SPORTS NUTRITION BRAND MYPROTEIN'S NEW PRODUCTS

New Delhi: Leading sports nutrition brand Myprotein has introduced four delectable health products: Goeyo filled cookie, sugar-free sauce, 6-layered protein bar with each bar featuring six layers of taste and texture to provide a hit of protein, carbohydrates, and fibre, and the impact whey protein in localised masala chai flavour. According to the company, these products have been launched keeping in mind Indian palate and seasonal delight.

SBI central board to consider raising USD 2 billion via bonds

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) on Tuesday said a committee of its central board will consider raising up to USD 2 billion (around Rs 14,942 crore) through bonds in this fiscal year.

The Executive Committee of the Central Board is scheduled to have a meeting on April 28, 2021, the bank said in a BSE

filing.

The committee will examine "the status and decide on long term fund raising in single / multiple tranches up to USD 2 billion through a public offer and/or private placement of senior unsecured notes in US Dollar or any other convertible currency during FY 2021-22", the filing said.

SBI shares were trading up by 2.51 per cent at Rs 353 on BSE in pre-close session.

Close contest between Jio, Airtel; any unanimous tariff hike unlikely in FY22: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio are neck and neck in terms of active mobile subscriptions, and hence the industry is unlikely to see any unanimous tariff hikes in 2021-22, a report said on Tuesday.

Domestic credit rating agency Crisil's research wing pointed out that there is a close

contest between the top two telcos, when one goes by active subscriber base with Jio's share at 33.7 per cent and Airtel's at 33.6 per cent.

"The active subscriber market share data indicates the top two players are neck and neck, with neither ready to bite the bullet and raise tariffs," it said.

Coal India arms considering installing oxygen plants to tide over shortage crisis

New Delhi: State-owned CIL on Tuesday said that three of its subsidiaries are considering installing oxygen generation plants to tide over the shortage of the life saving gas. The statement comes at a time when the country is facing oxygen shortage amid the resurgence of Covid-19. The PSU further said that it is on high alert to guard its employees by ramping up the medical infrastructure and

availability of oxygen cylinders across its subsidiaries to combat the rise of Covid-19.

In what could be the highest mobilisation beds by a corporate entity in the country, the maharatna coal miner has set up around 2,000 beds which include ICU, isolation and COVID care beds with oxygen support (up to April 25), Coal India Ltd (CIL) said in a statement.

PUBLIC NOTICE

To Whomsoever It may concern this is to inform the General Public that following share certificate of M/s. GRAUER & WEL (INDIA) LTD. having its registered office at Grawell House, Akurdi Road, Kanonvali (East), Mumbai - 400101 registered in the name of the name of the following Shareholders have been lost by them.

Sr. No.	Name of the Shareholder/s	Folio No.	Certificate No./s	Distinctive Number/s	No of Shares
1.	Bhagwandas J. Makhijani	BB000038	252	1179031 - 1180000	970

Any person who has any claim in respect of the said share certificate/s should lodge such claim with the company or its Registrar and Transfer Agents Link Intime India Private Limited 247 Park, C-51, 1st Floor, L.S. Marg, Virohl (W), Mumbai-400083 within 15 days of publication of this notice after which no claim will be entertained and the Company shall proceed to issue Duplicate Share Certificate/s

Date: 28.04.2021
Place: Delhi
Sd/-
Prakash Makhijani

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED GIRL



General public is hereby informed that this girl namely Neha D/o Chotu Ahmad R/o H.No. 35, Hastals Vihar, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi Age : 16 years, Height: 152 cm., Face : Round, Complexion : Wheatish, wearing blue colour lower, light violet (firozi) colour top and white colour shoes in feet, has been missing/ kidnapped since 23.03.2021. In this regard a FIR No. 167/21 dated 24.03.2021 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Uttam Nagar, New Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing/kidnapped girl may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> Ph: 011-24368639, 24368638, 24368641

SHO : P.S. Uttam Nagar, New Delhi Ph. : 011-25377600, 25377425

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED GIRL



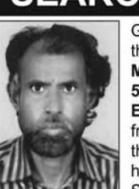
General public is hereby informed that this girl namely Khushbu D/o Umesh Dass R/o H.No. D-32, Hastals Vihar, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi Age : 15 years, Height: 4', Face : Round, Complexion : Wheatish, wearing red colour frock, red colour pajami and hawai chappal in feet, has been missing/ kidnapped since 15.02.2021. In this regard a FIR No. 162/21 dated 21.03.2021 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Uttam Nagar, New Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing/kidnapped girl may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> Ph: 011-24368639, 24368638, 24368641

SHO : P.S. Uttam Nagar, New Delhi Ph. : 011-25377600, 25377425

SEARCH FOR MISSING



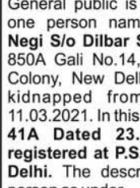
General public is hereby informed that this person (depicted in the photo) namely: Meraj Khan S/o Ayub Khan R/o H.No. 5D/42, Dharampuri Vishnu Garden Extn., Khyala, Delhi has been missing from above address since 28.12.2020. In this regard DD No. 105A Dated 16.03.2021 has been lodged at PS Khyala, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the person but no clue has come to light so far.

His physical description is as under:-
Sex: Male, Age: 46 years, Height: 5'5" ft., Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Long, Built: Medium, Wearing: White Pant & Shirt and Slippers in feet.

Any person is having information or clue about this missing/ kidnapped person may kindly inform to the following:- SHO P.S. Khyala, Delhi Ph: 011-28335686, 28335696

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in Ph: 011-24368638/24368641 Fax No.: 011-24368639

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General public is hereby informed that one person namely Narender Singh Negi S/o Dilbar Singh Negi R/o RZH-850A Gali No.14, Raj Nagar-II, Palam Colony, New Delhi has been missing/ kidnapped from his house since 11.03.2021. In this regard, a case DD No. 41A Dated 23.03.2021 has been registered at P.S. Palam Village, New Delhi. The description of the missing person as under.

Age: about 34 Years, Complexion: Fair, Height: 5' 4", Face: Round, Hair & Eyes: Black, Wearing: Blue colour Jeans & T-shirt and Black colour shoes in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out him but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing/kidnapped person then please inform P.S. Palam Village, New Delhi at following Tel No./e-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in and Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 Fax No. 011-24368639

Sd/- S.H.O. PS: Palam Village, New Delhi Ph: 011-25365979, 25365981

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General Public is hereby informed that one boy namely Subham Dubey S/o Sh. Akhilesh Dubey, R/o H.No. D-32, Prem Nagar, New Delhi has been missing since 13.03.2021 from the area of P.S. Patel Nagar New Delhi. In this regard a case vides FIR No. 73/21 dated 17.03.2021 has been registered at PS. Patel Nagar, New Delhi. The description of missing boy is as under:

Name : Subham Dubey, Father's Name : ShAkhilesh Dubey, Age : 16 yrs., Built: Medium, Height : 5'3", Face : Round, Complexion : Shallow, Wearing : Black Colour T-Shirt and Blue colour Jeans Pant and Red & White Colour Shoes in feet. If anyone having any clue/information, kindly inform the undersigned.

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in> E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in Ph: 011-24368639, 24368641

SHO P.S., Patel Nagar, New Delhi Ph : 011-23874034 25872637, 8750870434

SEARCH FOR MISSING PERSON



General public is hereby informed that this person namely: Zakir Hussain, S/o Habib Ahmad, R/O C-43/9, Durga Mandir Faiz Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi, Age: 45 Years, Height: 5'4", Face: Long, Built: Medium, Complexion : Wheatish, Wearing: Purple Color Checkered Shirt, Grey color Pant & Black Slippers in Feet, has been missing since 05.04.2021 at about 9:00 am from the area of Police Post New Sabzi Mandi, Azadpur, P. S. Mahendra Park, Delhi.

In this regard a DD No. 112A, dated 09.04.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Mahendra Park, New Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this person kindly inform to the following.

E-Mail: cic@cbi.gov.in Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> Ph: 011-24368639

SHO P.S. Mahendra Park, Delhi Ph. 011-27632501, 27632502

RESTORATION OF SPECIAL TRAIN

For the convenience of passengers, Railways have decided to restore the Special train no. 05483/05484 Alipur Daur Jn. - Delhi Jn. - Alipur Daur Jn. as per details given below :-

05483/05484 Alipur Daur Jn. - Delhi Jn. - Alipur Daur Jn. Express Special Train (Bi-Weekly)

Train No. 05483	STATIONS	Train No. 05484	
Arr.	Dep.	Arr.	Dep.
--	10:30	20:40	--
21:45	--	--	07:35
	Alipur Daur Jn.	Delhi Jn.	

Days of Run: 05483 Ex Alipur Daur Jn. from 01.05.2021 on Tuesday & Saturday and 05484 Ex Delhi Jn. from 03.05.2021 on Monday & Thursday to till further advice.

Accommodation: AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Reserved 2nd seating

Stoppages: Hasimara, Dalgao, Binnaguri, New Mal Jn., Siliguri Jn., Bagdogra, Thakurganj, Aluabari Road, Kishanganj, Dalkolha, Barsoi Jn., Azamnagar Road, Labha, Kathar Jn., Semapur, Karagola Road, Kursela, Naugachia, Thana Bihpur Jn., Narayanpur, Pasraha, Mahesh Khunt, Mansi Jn., Khagaria Jn., Sahibpur Kamal Jn., Lakshminia, Begu Sarai, Barauni Jn., Mokameh Jn., Bakhtiyarpur Jn., Patna Jn., Danapur, Ara, Buxar, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Mirzapur, Vindhyachal, Prayagraj Jn., Bharwari, Fatehpur, Kanpur Central, Rura, Phaphund, Etawah, Firozabad, Tundla Jn., Aligarh Jn., Khurja Jn., Ghaziabad and Delhi Shadara stations

Note: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table and Stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

RailMadad Helpline No. 139

Visit RailMadad website:- www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in

Download RailMadad app.

Please join us on

NORTHERN RAILWAY Always at your service Visit us at : www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

Serving Customers with a Smile



CAREER UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

Microbiologists have enormous career opportunities. PROF MIKE WILLIAMSON tells you how students can make it a lucrative career option

Microbiology is the study of microbes — organisms that are too small to see without a microscope. Normally these are single celled organisms, and include bacteria, archaea, viruses, yeasts, and algae. Our ability to understand and manipulate microbes is growing exponentially. For example, gene sequencing technology is opening up new opportunities all the time.

MICROBIOLOGY AND HEALTH

Microbiology is big news at the moment, and microbiologists are much in demand for healthcare. Over the last year, Governments have woken up to the idea that we know very little about viruses, and that viruses have an enormous economic impact on us all. Many scientists have been warning that influenza could produce a worse pandemic than COVID-19, and that we need better basic science as well as better practical mea-

asures for protection and defence against viruses. Both of these come from microbiology. Antibiotic resistance in bacteria is continually growing in importance. The World Health Organisation has declared antimicrobial resistance to be one of the top 10 global public health threats to humanity. Imagine not wanting to risk going into a hospital for fear of catching an infection there: this could be a reality very soon unless we can come up with better ways of killing bacteria, and of handling antibiotics in a way that does not allow bacteria to develop resistance. The bacteria that live in our gut have a critical importance on our health. There are many opportunities for microbiologists here: understanding the microbial communities and how they are perturbed by antibiotics; developing probiotic and prebiotic foods; and new approaches to a range of diseases including obesity, dia-

betes and rheumatoid arthritis. Microbes are important not just for human health. They are also critical in animal health, and in the growth and health of plants.

Most microbiologists study microbiology at university, or related areas such as biochemistry. You can study basic science: biochemical pathways, microbial growth and cell division, and virology

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Many microbes are beneficial. We use microbes to produce drugs, nutrients, and essential chemicals, such as feedstuffs for cosmetics and textiles. Microbes are used to make cheese, yoghurt, bread, beer, and many processed foods. Increasingly, scientists are able to manipulate genes and biochemical pathways in microbes, which allows us to convert microbes into factories for the production of a wide range of chemicals. This constitutes biotechnology. Biotechnology is increasingly being seen as the 21st century industrial revolution. It will be essential for producing enough food to feed the planet; for reducing plastic waste, and for creating environmentally friendly and

recyclable materials. A successful biotechnology industry needs to bring together skills in microbiology, fermentation, engineering, and downstream processing — an exciting young interdisciplinary industry. Microbes are the most versatile organisms on earth. They can grow at extreme pH values, at high temperatures, and high salinities. They can survive high pressures, and transport through space. We are learning how to use them to clean up pollution, combat climate change, and generate energy from waste.

CAREERS

Microbiologists have enormous career opportunities. Most microbiologists study microbiology at university, or related areas such as biochemistry. You can study basic science: biochemical pathways, microbial growth and cell division, and virology. Or you can come at it from a more applied direction: recognising infec-

tions bacteria in a more medically focussed degree, or chemical engineering and fermentation technology. After a university degree, some students will go on to specialised Masters courses, for example in antimicrobial resistance or biotechnology. Others will go straight into careers, where you are typically working as part of an interdisciplinary team, with targets as different as medical care, agriculture, bioremediation, biotechnology, and global warming.

The pharmaceutical industry in India is growing rapidly, and has enormous international potential. Microbiologists are increasingly in demand to advise policy makers, for example about public health, or the use of antibiotics in agriculture. And also of course to explain policy to the general public.

The writer is Head of the Department of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology at the University of Sheffield, UK

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.
— Mark Twain

Faculty Development Programme

The Mass Communication School of GGSIP University has organised a two-week Online Faculty Development Programme/Research Methodology Workshop on the theme "Developing Academic Leaders for Future: The Way Forward" from April 15 to April 27, 2021. The workshop is sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) and Ministry of Education, GOI with other eminent speakers from various knowledge partners from Philippines, Malaysia, Slovakia, and London, USA & others among the organisers.

In the valedictory session of the virtual programme on Tuesday, Prof Micheal Prieler of Hallym University, South Korea debated various techniques for writing and publishing an academic journal article successfully. During the various sessions held across the workshop, speakers held a discussion on several topics like Dr Mausumi Bhattacharya of Visva Bharti University, West Bengal illuminated the relevance of sources & techniques in research & data collection, whereas Prof Annetta Caplanova of University of Economics, Slovakia emphasized on "Achieving better policy outcomes through behavioral policy".

The Faculty Development Programme was inaugurated by Ambassador Akhilesh Mishra (IFS), OSD (Development Partnership Administration), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. The ceremony was graced by Padma Shri Prof (Dr) Mahesh Verma, Vice Chancellor, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi.

Study MCA at JKLU

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With a motive to prepare its student for future industries, leading educational institute JK Lakshmi Pat University, Jaipur has introduced the MCA programme under the wings of the Institute of Engineering & Technology. The institute is offering MCA in the field of Full Stack Development, Cloud Computing & Cyber Security and Data Analytics. The two-year multidisciplinary programme focuses on providing a sound theoretical background as well as good practical exposure to the students in the relevant areas.

MCA graduates have great opportunities in Government and Private jobs, for the various positions of Web Developer, Web Designer, Network Administrator, System Manager, Cloud Architect, Business Analyst, Computer Programmer, Software Developer, Software Tester, etc. depending on the skills one acquires during the learning process.

The programme is designed by the pool of experienced faculty hailing from both education and industry background including Dr Sanjay Goel — Director, Institute of Engineering & Technology, JKLU; Dr Sonal Jain- Professor, Department of Computer Science Engineering, JKLU.

The programme will coach the students in Management also along with new-age technology training. It will be a hands-on programme for students to learn and apply their knowledge in live projects, internships, research-driven projects along with getting an opportunity to study at globally reputed institutions in the US and UK.

For a more sustainable future

At present, B schools and applicants are viewing online learning as an integral part of each course and learning measure, says PC CHHABRA



COVID-19's impact on higher education, particularly B schools is evident and can be seen encompassing all academic processes coming to almost a halt midway. The effect of the corona crisis on the future of Management education can be found in two viewpoints, one — how B schools are going to cope up with the evolving circumstances, and two — how students need to get ready and choose the correct B school for a successful profession in the 'new normal'.

Prior to the invasion of COVID-19, the business college community was experiencing continued gaps in their basic financial model. This condition was being driven, to some extent, by the decline in demand for MBA graduates. Numerous B-schools immediately responded to COVID-19 by expanding their online presence as a measure and potentially a long-term solution for their ongoing difficulties.

An imperative shift towards technology
The pandemic has increased the utilisation of the Learning

Management System (LMS) to contact a lot more audience and take into account a variety of exercises. This incorporates workshops, work from home certifications, mock meetings and guest lectures. This methodology goes inseparably with the vision of expanding the employability of MBA graduates, as the agreement sets in that learning in a virtual mode is industry-prepared expertise that students need to have. Because of this proactive methodology, the teachers and students at these B schools are as of now are comfortable with the online interface and thus, make a conscious move.

Earlier, one might have profited from an online course, but it was looked at as a mere substitute for a full-time course. Presently, B schools and applicants are viewing online learning as an integral part of each course and learning measure. Universities understand the power of innovation in terms of welcoming a variety of guest faculties to address the undergrads from any place. A benefit of online learning

is that it tends to be utilised to incorporate simulations that empower critical thinking, and with online chat rooms, students can work together and help peer students. This is a chance for B schools to analyse which courses require the simultaneous presence of staff and members to address questions, mentor and react to logical issues that should be done in a face-to-face setting. The emergency is a chance for business colleges to unload various components of learning and to endeavour to change some of it into online meetings that empower modification and paced out learning.

Mergers and acquisitions
Mergers and acquisitions (M&A), which were experiencing an uptick in higher education, acted as a catalyst to creating strategic partnerships. Historically, M&A was seen by most educators with absolute hatred. However, given the new dynamics, M&A give a vehicle to maintaining economic viability for establishments facing financial challenges via economies of scale, degree, and fit.

The invasion of COVID-19 has made already marginal schools much weaker to the M&A interaction. One of the vital pieces in the M&A cycle, is to recognise business colleges or elements that are in a state of financial misery or facing different challenges. Strangely, Online Program Managers (OPMs) could fill in as an outsider intermediary for various B-schools under their umbrella and could offer integrated type of assistance during the M&A transitional cycle.

Alas, these actions may not be a complete answer to the problem. To remain competitive in an always crowded field, some business colleges are offering online programmes at costs 50 per cent of their comparable traditional programmes. Moreover, to help facilitate the transition to distance learning many B-schools have reached out to the prospering online programme managers (OPMs) community. The best will emerge out of this crisis, is every body's hope.

The writer is Executive Director, Sanskriti University

Top skill enhancement courses

Companies of all sizes have a hard time keeping up with the pace of technological advancements. As we are aware that latest technology creates great business opportunities, however, it also widens the skill gaps, specifically in industries like healthcare, IT, construction & real estate, and manufacturing, marketing etc. where skilled workers are much sought after.

This is where the need for re-skilling and upskilling comes in. Enhancing your skills refers to learning new skills and improving one's core competencies. In today's era especially during pandemic, the fear of losing their current jobs or even getting a new job is a task. Companies require employees who have all the relevant skills and are, thus, investing heavily in upskilling and re-skilling so that they become more productive according to the industry standards.

Here is this list of India's Top five institutes offering diverse, comprehensive and advanced online courses that can definitely help learners get the right skill set as per industry-demand and land with their dream job.

IntelliPaaS's Business Intelligence Architect Master's Course in Collaboration with Microsoft: This is one of the top Business Intelligence masters programs that will let people gain proficiency in Business Intelligence. It is designed by industry experts to master skills in Informatica, Tableau, MSBI, Power BI, MS SQL, Data warehousing, Azure Data Factory, SQL DBA with lifetime 24*7 support. This program includes 9+ courses, 150 hours of instructor-led training, 32+ industry-

specific projects, and 300 hours of project work and assignments. Learners will receive a course completion certificate from Microsoft. The best part of this course is that learners have lifetime access to attend multiple batches and keep themselves abreast with technology updates.]

Eduureka's Big Data Architect Masters programme: The Big Data Architect Masters Program from Eduureka makes one proficient in tools and systems used by Big Data experts. This Masters in Big data includes training on Hadoop and Spark stack, Cassandra, Talend and Apache Kafka messaging system. The curriculum has been determined by extensive research on 5000+ job descriptions across the globe. This program includes 9 courses and 200+ hours of Interactive learning. They also have "The capstone project" which provides everyone with a business case which needs to be solved by applying all the skills you've learned in the courses of the master's programme.

Simplilearn's Machine Learning Certification Course: This Machine Learning course offers an in-depth overview of Machine Learning topics including working with real-time data, developing algorithms using supervised & unsupervised learning, regression, classification, and time series modeling. They teach how to use Python in this Machine Learning certification training to draw predictions from data. They help in gaining expertise with 25+ hands on exercise, and provide dedicated monitoring sessions from industry experts.

Upgrad's Digital Marketing and Communication Course partnered with MICA: The Digital Marketing and communication course offers specialisation in social media, content marketing, branding, marketing analysis and public relations.

Course includes fortnightly coaching by industry mentors, 15 case studies and live projects, video library with 38 tools, Mock interviews by hiring managers, personalised resume feedback and provides certifications from MICA and Facebook.

Top skills one will learn from this course are SEO, SEM, Social Media and Content Marketing, Branding, Marketing Analytics.

Great Learning's Stanford advanced Cyber Security Programme: This Cyber Security course will navigate people through the foundations and skills necessary to build a successful Cyber Security career.

In addition to security objectives basics like confidentiality, integrity, non-repudiation and authentication we also get to exploit the vulnerabilities. By using secure systems, and design methodology, one will also learn about primary security breaches that occurred over the years and the building of countermeasures for the same.

To master this course, one needs to be clear with Cyber Security. It is a 6 months course which covers the basics at the beginning of this course. The module of the Cyber Security course includes topics on Motivation, Security Design, Introduction to Cryptography, along with interviews of experts in the field.

Free online course on Python

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hex N Bit, an edtech company offering one-stop solutions to the students and professionals in industry-connect skill development courses has recently launched a free online course on Python. The online course aims to increase the knowledge of python, guided in a structured way. It is a free entry-level course that is dedicated to Python. The duration of the course is 150 minutes

which includes self-paced eLearning videos, code, project & quiz. Upon completion of the course, the company would also provide a recognised certificate on the basis of the criteria of scoring 80 per cent in the assignment. Speaking on this occasion, Abhishek Gupta, CEO & Founder, Hex N Bit said: "As Learning Programming will be common shortly, candidates developing their skills with a good product will have a boost for entering the practical world."

Fellowship programme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As American India Foundation (AIF) marks its 20th Anniversary, co-founder and AIF Board co-chair, Lata Krishnan, a philanthropist, a technology entrepreneur and a startup investor and her husband Ajay Shah, announced a \$5 million gift to the fellowship programme in a fire-side chat with Mastercard Executive Chairman, Ajay Banga.

AIF welcomes its first applicants to the Banyan Impact Fellowship. The application portal will remain open until May 17, 2021. To apply or to know more, visit: <https://aif.org/fellowship/>.

At the cusp of the programme's third decade, AIF is seizing the moment to rebrand the programme to reflect the organisational mission and values moving into the next decade of action.



Communication design industry is expected to grow at 5%. If one is motivated and passionate about creatively solving problems, there are lucrative options in this sector, says DR JITIN CHADHA

Design your success

The communication design is expressing information strategically through visual (images, text, audio and video) design. It significantly impacts the effectiveness, aesthetic, and economic viability of information. The changing work landscape, digitisation, adoption of VR and AR technologies, investments in big data analytics and provision of online design services are significantly influencing the design services market. Simultaneously, the following statistics clearly indicate the expanding scope of opportunities for communication designers in India. The graphics industry was expected to grow up to ₹188.32 billion by 2020. As per the Bureau of Labour Statistics, five per cent of growth can be expected by 2026. The media and entertainment industry has the potential to reach \$100 billion by 2030 as per the report from the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF). A KPMG report mentions that the gaming industry is estimated to reach ₹118.8 billion by 2023. The e-commerce market is

projected to grow to \$ 200 billion by 2026 which in turn means that the packaging market is forecasted to reach \$ 975.4 million by 2025 as reported by IBEF. India's continued growth in digital infrastructure is estimated to result in 907 million Internet users by 2023 and 829 million mobile users by 2027. According to Gartner, 100 million consumers will shop in augmented reality by 2020. The digital advertising industry is projected to go up to ₹539 billion by 2024. From print and publishing, layout and cover design, packaging and product design graphics, POP graphics to visual identity design, digital design, videography, branding languages, colour grading, e-catalogue design, advertising design, UX/UI, web design and app design communication designers can specialise in any area to build credibility and create a valuable and marketable career. To allow for one's designs to resonate with the targeted audience, specialisations can be streamlined by identifying one's niche, a distinct segment of the

To allow for one's designs to resonate with the targeted audience, specialisations can be streamlined by identifying one's niche, a distinct segment of the market for which a person is best fitted.

market for which a person is best fitted. Along with that one needs the ability to visualise with clarity, observational skills, technical understanding, creative thought process and the proficiency to use storytelling as a key component in creating memorable user experiences. Business models are changing and digital disruptions have made it vital for most businesses to pivot to a direct to consumer model. Advertising and PR firms are offering digital campaigns taking advantage of the increasing digitalisation and advances in social media, search engine marketing, content marketing and e-commerce technology. With increasing Internet penetration and smartphone users, online content marketing campaigns are more impactful and cost effective now. With the rise of voice assistants it's evident that voice is driving the trend of designing without interface. The pandemic encouraged small and medium scale enterprises to re-brand to be competitive. Such increase in demand also means that one can start-up their own branding and

communications design firm as an entrepreneur. **The entrepreneurial journey:** The critical factor today is that industries are thinking about design differently even though the design practice remains the same across industries. To become an entrepreneur it's important to: **What is your niche?** Are you able to pair up your training with knowledge of illustration, photography, motion design and interaction design? Does your portfolio consistently show your best work? Does it show engagement? Does it document your thinking process and visualisation of ideas? Are you routinely learning, reading voraciously and building your craft? What do you have to offer? Why will they hire you? An entrepreneur's identity centres around pushing one's limit, challenging oneself to believe, think and dream big, finding like-minded people, and asking for help before taking the leap of faith to accomplish career goals. The writer is Director, Indian Institute of Art and Design

How to choose right law firm

There are several areas of practice that freshers can choose from in law. In order to make a successful future in this field, it is important to choose the correct firm, says ANJALI JAIN

The pandemic which the world is facing right now, has affected almost every industry including the legal one too. India features a pool of around 1.4 million enrolled advocates across the country. A report prepared by the Bar Council of India analyses the impact, the trend the entry of foreign firms would wear the legal sector. Taking this under consideration it seems that the approaching times there shall be plethora of options within the legal arena for the freshers in every area of practice. At an equivalent time once the foreign firms pave their way in India there shall be sudden surge in competition which can significantly impact the new entrants also. The mindset doesn't vary much when it comes to choosing the right law firm. Everyone would always have an unsaid wish to study/work with the industry leader, but then, it is easier said than done.



Anjali Jain
Partner, Areness

What also makes life more difficult for law graduates in choosing a career is the availability of countless career options now. Even if they opt to choose to join a law firm, it isn't easy since, there are hundreds of different niche practice areas besides the traditional general practice. Though it is highly cliched that internships merely add to the resume of a candidate, however, a law student has good eight-10 opportunities in his five years law to have a first hand experience and cursory knowledge of any specific field of law which may guide him in the long run in pinpointing his chosen area of practice. One can easily find at least five-seven internships mentioned in any CV of a law graduate these days. What the candidate has learnt and the exposure during the internship will always depend from firm to firm as well as the zeal to learn of the law student. Though placements in law firms take through all industry practices, however, still reference model does play a predominant role in placement of law graduates, especially the zero-two PQE ones. If learning is the priority which all veterans would always recommend, it

is better to go for a tier III firm or individual practitioners since the exposure would be much more compared to the tier I and II firms where prudence demands that considering the huge stakes of clients, inexperienced advocates cannot be assigned tasks of high responsibility. But then, in case one is looks at numbers, undoubtedly, tier I and II firms will compensate a fresh law graduate equivalent at times to those in other sectors such as IT or Business Management, especially, if one is from a top ranked law college. Another determining factor is the specialisation of a law firm or a specific team or a partner in a law firm and if a law student has made up his mind to work in a specific field only, he should prefer such boutique/niche law firm or practitioner only. Similarly, working hours, work environment, growth in seniority can also be determining factors. Nevertheless, though it typically depends on individual priorities such as family/ financial/territorial circumstances, but still choosing the right place to work for a law student can at times be a very tough call.

The Gi Group India launched All in the Mind: The state of mental health in Corporate India, a study highlighting the role of the workplace in causing, furthering and perpetuating mental illness. The study is triangulation between employer, employees and experts' views on mental health in India Inc and was extended to the Automobile, BFSI, Consumer Durables, E-Commerce, FMCG, Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals, IT/TeS and Retail firms to help give a multi-sector and deeper understanding about the role mental wellness plays in an organisation/employee's performance. Comprising inputs from the three, employee, employer and the human resource department, the study shares a

bird's eye view into the state of mental well-being of India's corporate segment and shares critical analogies that can help reduce stresses in general, thus creating a happier and more motivated workforce. Marcos Segador Arrebola, Managing Director, Gi Group said: "It is clear that the pandemic has increased the recognition as well as receptivity of mental health issues in our country specifically in the corporate sector. Being one of the world's largest staffing group and an integral part of corporate India, we believe that shining light on a nebulous, but critical problem must concern us beyond business as usual. Through the study we have set out to give shape to the seemingly amorphous entity."

MINDIT

The study has been done keeping the employee, employer and the human resource department in consideration and has inputs from experts from the fields of psychology and emotional wellness. Key findings from the report are below: **Employers and employees contradict each other on factors of influence.** 77% of the employers point to long, erratic, always on work hours, as the top factor, and play down the role of leadership. And 79% of the employees put the role of leadership right on top of the factors **The top concerns that lead to mental health issues, as perceived by employers are Work-life balance (49% of all employers), Work related stress (42%) and Anxiety over career growth (34%)** **COVID-19 was a mixed bag for issues concerning mental wellness.** However, only a small proportion of employers were more in control of their mental health. 29% of the employees surveyed suffered due to erratic work schedules and 21% suffered due to reduced salaries **Employers understand the fallout of**

mental health issues on the functioning of their organizations in varying ways. A big majority (70%) of all employers believe that mental health has a serious (45%) or significant (25%) impact on organizational performance or organizational growth. 30% believe that there is insignificant or negligible impact on either performance or growth. **Only 14% of the employers surveyed were found to have policies and mechanisms receptive to mental wellness cases.** 54% of the respondents have not put formal policies and mechanisms in place and deal with mental wellness concerns in their informal ways. **A large proportion of the employers**

surveyed (82%) are sensitizing their organizations to be receptive to mental health concerns. 63% are opening up multiple channels for people to speak up, and 51% encourage healthy interpersonal equations between people **IT/TeS (64%) and BFSI (57%) are among the top sectors on awareness levels on mental health, with FMCG (50%) and Automobile (53%) industry faring at the bottom end.** **On the cities with high awareness on the topic, Southern capitals- Chennai (63%) and Bengaluru (57%) score better than the rest. Delhi-NCR (50%) is at the bottom of the list when it comes to awareness on Mental Health.**



The RWTH Aachen University invites applications for its High Potential Students Grant to enable highly qualified students to complete their master's degree programme in Germany. **Eligibility:** The applicants must not be receiving any other financial assistance from elsewhere or must not be engaged in any other programme. **Supporting documents:** Regular application for the Master's degree program submitted through the RWTHonline application portal; a certificate stating that the applicant is among the best 10% bachelor degree holders of their batch or if not applicable a cumulative grade point average of 1.7 or higher is required (converted to the German grading system); letter of intent for the opportunity (500 words). **Admission requirements:** Must hold a bachelor's degree with excellent results. **Language requirement:** The applicants must submit the following English language proficiency test scores: TOEFL PBT – 550, TOEFL IBT – 90, IELTS – 5.5, DSH Certificate – Stage 2, Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) – Pass, German Language Diploma – Present, TestDaF – Level 4, First Certificate in English – Grade B. **How to apply:** The applicants are required to apply on the

- SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT (AC) AT EVELYN LEARNING SYSTEMS**
Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹18,000-₹20,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/8389502
Deadline: May 7, 2021
- ANCHORING/VIDEO AT THRECO RECYCLING**
Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹10,000-₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/8389503
Deadline: May 7, 2021
- DEVOPS MANAGEMENT AT SIRPI PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**
Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/8389504
Deadline: May 7, 2021
- MOBILE APP DEVELOPMENT AT KEYWORKS SOLUTIONS**
Location: Chennai, Hyderabad, Vishakhapatnam, Bengaluru
Stipend: ₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/8389511
Deadline: May 7, 2021
- TEACHING AT IOTA LEARNING**
Location: Chennai, Delhi, Mysuru, Pune, Bengaluru, Mumbai
Stipend: ₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/8389515
Deadline: May 7, 2021
- SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AT SAROJ AGRO INDUSTRIES**
Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹6,000-₹8,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/8389509
Deadline: May 7, 2021
- VIDEO MAKING/EDITING AT RIZZLE**
Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/8389507
Deadline: May 7, 2021

IN BRIEF

- INDUSTRY-ORIENTED COURSE IN FINANCE**
The SVKM's NMIMS Deemed to be University, an educational institution with a legacy of 40 years, opens admissions for MSc Finance, at the Anil Surendra Modi School of Commerce (ASMSOC), Mumbai. The two-year programme draws on the school's strength, in terms of imparting high-quality finance-related education while also facilitating valuable industry exposure for students. Applicants must be graduates in any stream from a recognised university and must have cleared their graduation in the first attempt with a minimum aggregate of 60%. They must have taken Mathematics or Statistics in Class XII, or equivalent level, and during graduation. Selected candidates will be called for a written test, followed by a personal interview. Speaking about the programme, Dr Ramesh Bhat, VC, NMIMS, said: "MSc Finance is meant for students aspiring to top-level positions in leading financial institutions in India and abroad. Students with Math can use qualification as a springboard for a highly rewarding career in this fast-paced industry." To apply, visit https://nmims.secure.force.com/ASMSOC_MSCF_Login.
- LOAN FOR STUDY ABROAD**
To broaden the scope of international education for Indian students, Prodigy Finance is offering loans for PG programmes abroad. It has joined forces with six universities in the US and the UK. With this collaboration, students can now have a wider choice of universities to choose from and make informed decisions to have a brighter tomorrow.
- GREEN VOLUNTEER REVOLUTION**
The Internshala has launched The Green Volunteer Revolution on the occasion of Earth Day. The initiative offers 11,000-plus volunteering internships for students with organisations including Earth Day Network India, Team Everest, Stone Soup, Bhumi, and Adore Earth. The interested students can apply to the opportunities by April 30, 2021. All the students who want to make a difference by working on environmental issues and make our Earth a better place are eligible to apply to the opportunities. To apply to the opportunities, please visit: <http://bit.ly/EarthWarrior>.

BE A CATALYST TO CHANGE

We have to think about sustainable development and chemists have to play a major role in this," said Prof Lakshmi Kantam, the Dr BP Godrej Distinguished Professor of Green Chemistry, Department of Chemical Engineering, Institute of Chemical Technology, Mumbai. Speaking at the ninth edition of University Distinguished Lecture Series at SRM University, Andhra Pradesh, Prof Lakshmi Kantam Manneppalli, elaborated on Design and Development of Homogeneous/Heterogeneous Catalysts for Sustainable Chemical Industry. Prof D Narayana Rao, Pro Vice-Chancellor inaugurated the lecture series with a welcome speech. Also present were Prof VS Rao, Vice-Chancellor SRMAP and Dr S Mannath, Department of Chemistry. Prof D Narayana Rao expressed that "Industrial collaboration is very much necessary in the context of self-reliant India (Atma Nirbhar Bharat)". In her presentation Prof Lakshmi Kantam said: "Global and Indian chemical industry estimate 5.1 trillion and 108.4 billion USD in 2021. Catalysis is a highly demanded technology for sustainable society and drives innovation in many other fields. Achieving the high catalytic selectivity is the aim of catalysis science in 21st century." She also stated: "The catalysis of organic reactions by homogeneous and heterogeneous catalysts remains a diversified field of scientific inquiry. It attracts a large group of scientists with specialties spanning synthetic organic chemistry, inorganic chemistry, surface science, material science, reaction engi-



Prof Lakshmi Kantam

neering and computational modeling". An overview of the work on the design and development of catalysts for sustainable, economical process and technologies for the chemical industry was introduced. Noted personality in the field of Chemical Sciences and Engineering, Prof Kantam holds esteemed titles of FNA, FTWAS, FNASc, FRSC. Her fields of expertise are Catalysis, Materials and Process Chemistry. She has served as the Director of CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology, Hyderabad and is a Non-Executive Independent Director of Godavari Bio Refineries Ltd, Indo Amines Ltd, Vinati Organics Ltd and several others.

GAME 2021

WE ARE GOING TO DO OUR BEST TO TRY AND PLAY A BRAND OF CRICKET THAT GIVES THOSE PEOPLE BACK HOME SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO, EVEN IF IT IS JUST FOR A 3-4 HOUR PERIOD
— BRENDON MCCULLUM

TODAY VS

LIVE FROM 7:30PM IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK



AB DELIVERS

South African's 42-ball unbeaten 75, Siraj's final over heroics help RCB retake top spot with 1-run win over Delhi

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD
Royal Challengers Bangalore rode on an AB de Villiers special and a solid final over from Mohammad Siraj to inflict a one-run defeat on Delhi Capitals here on Tuesday.

The ever-reliable de Villiers scored an unbeaten 42-ball 75 to power RCB to 171 for five before their bowlers, led by Harshal Patel (2/37), Mohammed Siraj (1/44) Kyle Jamieson (1/32), restricted Delhi to 170 for four.

Needing 14 off the final over, Delhi fell agonisingly short as Rishabh Pant's back-to-back fours off the remaining two balls did not prove to be enough.

Shimron Hetmyer (53 not out off 25) displayed some sensational hitting while batting alongside Pant (58 not out off 48) but they could not take their team over the line.

The victory propelled RCB to the top of the table while the Capitals slipped to the third spot.

Chasing 172, the Capitals were reduced to 28 for two in 3.3 overs as all-rounder Kyle Jamieson and Siraj sent Shikhar Dhawan (6) and Steve Smith (4) packing respectively.

Just when it looked young Prithvi Shaw (21) and Pant, who survived a leg before scare on 9, were navigating their way, Patel, the tournament's leading wicket-taker, struck, getting rid of the former with the Capitals managing 43/2 in the first six overs.

As boundaries dried up, Pant and new-batsman Marcus Stoinis (22) kept the scoreboard ticking by taking singles and doubles on offer.

With the required run rate increasing both batsmen indulged



RCB batsman Ab de Villiers plays a shot during his unbeaten 75 run innings | IPL20.com

in shot making. Stoinis took on Washington Sundar in the 12th over, hitting two fours while Pant smashed Patel for back-to-back boundaries in the next over.

However, an edge resulted in the Australian all-rounder walking back to the dug out as wickets continued to tumble at regular intervals.

The big-hitting Hetmyer joined his skipper in the middle. The West Indian was dropped on 15 by Devdutt Padikkal.

With the Capitals needing 46 of the last three overs. The Men in blue plundered 21 runs that included three massive sixes by Hetmyer

in the 18th over bowled by Jamieson but it wasn't meant to be.

Earlier, Delhi bowlers — Ishant Sharma (1/26), Axar Patel (1/33), Kagiso Rabada (1/38), Amit Mishra (1/27), Avesh Khan (1/24) — who all picked one wicket apiece, put up a collective effort to restrict RCB.

De Villiers, who hit three fours and five sixes, was the top scorer for RCB.

The veteran South African hit 22 runs off the last over bowled by Stoinis (0/23) that included three sixes.

Rajat Patidar (31) and Glenn Maxwell (25 off 20 balls) also provided valuable contributions.

SCOREBOARD	
ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE	
Virat Kohli b Avesh	12
Devidutt Padikkal b Ishant	17
Rajat Patidar c Smith b Axar	31
Glenn Maxwell c Smith b A Mishra	25
Ab de Villiers not out	75
Washington Sundar c and b Rabada	6
Daniel Sams not out	3
Extras (b 0, lb 0, w 2, nb 0, p 0)	2
Did not bat: Kyle Jamieson, Harshal Patel, Yuzvendra Chahal, Mohammed Siraj	
Total (5 wks, 20 Overs)	171
Fall of wickets: 30-1 (Virat Kohli, 3.6), 30-2 (Devidutt Padikkal, 4.1), 60-3 (Glenn Maxwell, 8.3), 114-4 (Rajat Patidar, 14.5), 139-5 (Sundar, 17.6)	
Bowling	
Ishant Sharma	4-1-26-1
Kagiso Rabada	4-0-38-1
Avesh Khan	4-0-24-1
Amit Mishra	3-0-27-1
Axar Patel	4-0-33-1
Marcus Stoinis	1-0-23-0
DELHI CAPITALS	
Prithvi Shaw c de Villiers b Harshal	21
Shikhar Dhawan c Chahal b Jamieson	6
Steve Smith c de Villiers b Siraj	4
Rishabh Pant not out	58
Marcus Stoinis c de Villiers b Harshal	22
Shimron Hetmyer not out	53
Extras (b 0, lb 4, w 2, nb 0, p 0)	6
Did not bat: Axar Patel, Amit Mishra, Kagiso Rabada, Ishant Sharma, Avesh Khan	
Total (4 wks, 20 Overs)	170
Fall of wickets: 23-1 (Shikhar Dhawan, 2.3), 28-2 (Steven Smith, 3.3), 47-3 (Prithvi Shaw, 7.2), 92-4 (Marcus Stoinis, 12.4)	
Bowling	
Daniel Sams	2-0-15-0
Mohammed Siraj	4-0-44-1
Kyle Jamieson	4-0-32-1
Washington Sundar	4-0-28-0
Harshal Patel	4-0-37-2
Yuzvendra Chahal	2-0-10-0

BCCI assure safe return to foreign players



Australian pacer Kane Richardson | @RCBTweets

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/MELBOURNE

The BCCI stepped in to assuage apprehensions of foreign cricketers, especially Australians, at the IPL as a second wave of Covid-19 infections battered India, prompting the Government Down Under to suspend air travel with the country besides asking players to make their "own arrangements" for return.

The fear of being locked out of their own nation drove the likes of Andrew Tye to take an early flight back to Australia while Kane Richardson and Adam Zampa also exited their franchise Royal Challengers Bangalore's bio-bubble on Monday.

A day later, Australia announced that it is suspending air travel to and from India till May 15 amid the swirling Covid-19 cases. The BCCI wrote to the foreign players telling them that their safe return home will be its responsibility once the tournament ends on May 30.

"We understand that many of you are apprehensive about how you will get back home once the tournament concludes... We want to apprise you that you have nothing to worry about," BCCI COO Hemang Amin said in a letter addressed to the players.

"The BCCI will do everything to ensure that you reach your respective destinations seamlessly. The BCCI is monitoring the situation very closely and is working with the Government authorities to make arrangements to get you home once the tournament concludes.

"Be rest assured that the tournament is not over for BCCI till each one of you has reached your home, safe and sound," he added.

Mumbai Indians' Australian batsman Chris Lynn hoped that Cricket Australia would arrange a chartered flight for those who have stayed back after CA checked on their travel plans.

"I texted back that as Cricket Australia make 10 per cent of every IPL contract was there a chance we could spend that money this year on a charter flight once the tournament is over?" Lynn told *News Corp* media.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison ruled out any Government assistance and said that those in the IPL will have to make their own arrangements for return.

"They have travelled there privately. This wasn't part of an Australian tour. They're under their own resources and they'll be using those resources too, I'm sure, to see them return to Australia in accordance with their own arrangements," Morrison was quoted as saying by *The Guardian*.

The Covid-19 carnage across India has shaken the country to its core with over 3 lakh fresh daily cases and more than 2,000 daily deaths. Add to this, a crumbling health infrastructure that is also battling a shortage of oxygen and some crucial medicines.

The crisis outside the IPL's bio-bubble has led to some talk about whether it is appropriate for the league to go on and whether its organisers and participating players should be doing more to express empathy.

Amin lauded the players for carrying on and giving some joy amid the gloom.

"When you all walk out onto the field, you are bringing hope to millions of people who have tuned in," he said.

"While you are professionals and will play to win, this time you are also playing for something much more important," he added.

boundarymeter

4s	608
6s	269

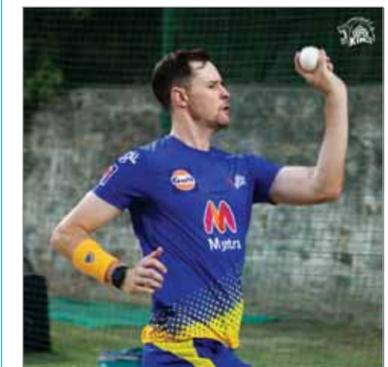
PLAYER	RUNS
1. Shikhar Dhawan (DC)	265
2. KL Rahul (PBKS)	240
3. Glenn Maxwell (RCB)	223

PLAYER	WKTS
1. Harshal Patel (RCB)	17
2. Avesh Khan (DC)	12
3. Rahul Chahar (MI)	9

MOST SIXES	
1. Jonny Bairstow (SRH)	14
2. KL Rahul (PBKS)	11
3. Glenn Maxwell (RCB)	10

SUMMER SLAM

MOTION PICTURE



Chennai Super Kings pacer Jason Behrendorff bowls in nets during team's training session in Delhi | @chennaiIPL

NATARAJAN UNDERWENT SURGERY

India and SRH pacer T Natarajan on Tuesday underwent a surgery to treat a knee injury that had ruled him out of IPL-14. He thanked the BCCI and medical team for looking after him. "Today, I underwent knee surgery — and am grateful for the expertise, attention and kindness of the medical team, surgeons, doctors, nurses and staff. I'm grateful to @bcci and to all that have wished well for me," Natarajan tweeted.

BINGA DONATES BITCOIN

Inspired by his countryman Pat Cummins' gesture, former Australian pacer Brett Lee on Tuesday decided to donate one bitcoin (approximately ₹40 lakh) to help India in its fight against the raging Covid-19 pandemic. "It saddens me deeply to see people suffering due to the ongoing pandemic. I feel privileged to be in a position of making a difference and with that in mind, I'd like to donate 1 BTC (Bitcoin) to Crypto Relief to help with the purchase of oxygen supplies for the hospitals across India," Lee said. On Tuesday evening, one bitcoin was trading at over ₹40 lakh.

KUGGELEIJN ROPED IN BY RCB

New Zealand pacer Scott Kuggeleijn was announced as a replacement for Kane Richardson in the RCB squad for the remainder of IPL-14. Kuggeleijn, who has been part of the IPL bubble as a reserve for Mumbai Indians, moved to RCB as a replacement for Richardson.

POINTS TABLE

	P	W	L	NRR	PTS	
1	RCB	6	5	1	+0.089	10
2	CSK	5	4	1	+1.612	8
3	DC	6	4	2	+0.269	8
4	MI	5	2	3	-0.032	4
5	KKR	6	2	4	-0.305	4
6	PBKS	6	2	4	-0.608	4
7	RR	5	2	3	-0.681	4
8	SRH	5	1	4	-0.180	2

In form Chennai face inconsistent Sunrisers

KEY PLAYERS

RAVINDRA JADEJA
Fresh from his 3D heroics against RCB, Jadeja will look to make vital contributions for his side again

KANE WILLIAMSON
The Kiwi captain couldn't help his side win against DC, but his return in playing XI is a big boost for SRH

VENUE: ARUN JAITLEY STADIUM, DELHI

HEAD TO HEAD

Matches	14
Chennai Super Kings	10
Sunrisers Hyderabad	04

LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

- Sunrisers Hyderabad defeated Chennai Super Kings by 7 runs in Dubai
- Chennai Super Kings beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by 20 runs in Dubai

199

David Warner with 199 sixes in 147 innings of as many matches, needs just one six to become the eighth batsman to complete a double century of sixes in IPL

1

Suresh Raina with 499 fours in 193 innings of 198 matches, needs just one four to become fourth batsman to complete 500 fours in IPL history

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Operating like a well-oiled unit, Chennai Super Kings will start as overwhelming favourites when they clash with struggling Sunrisers Hyderabad here at Feroz Shah Kotla on Wednesday.

The MS Dhoni-led CSK have bounced back in style after losing the opening match. They are on a roll with four straight wins and will hope that the new venue — Feroze Shah Kotla ground — also favours them.

The three-time champions had an underwhelming 2020 season but the team, packed with seasoned players, is now displaying the efficiency it is known for.

All-rounder Ravindra Jadeja has been the driving force behind CSK's impressive run so far.

His blistering assault on Harshal Patel in the final over shut out RCB on Sunday. He has been among the wickets with his accurate left-arm spin apart from effecting stunning run-outs.

Openers — Faf du Plessis and Ruturaj Gaikwad — have found form while Suresh Raina and Ambati Rayudu are due for big knocks.

The CSK batters are aware of the Rashid Khan threat but the rest of the SRH attack doesn't inspire much confidence.

Hyderabad rely heavily on their foreign recruits, led by skipper David Warner, opener Jonny Bairstow, Kiwi great Kane Williamson and Rashid, which is a cause for concern.

Their biggest weakness is a fragile batting order and over-reliance on the top order.

The inability of the team's Indian middle-order to step up has cost SRH more often than not and the think-tank needs to get the



Felt most vulnerable in this IPL bubble: Zampa

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Australian leg-spinner Adam Zampa on Tuesday said he decided to quit the IPL midway as it was the "most vulnerable" bio-bubble he has been a part of and the tournament should have been held in UAE, like last year.

Speaking to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Zampa said he felt a lot safer in the UAE where the IPL was held last year. "We've been in a few (bubbles) now, and I feel like this is probably the most vulnerable. I just feel like because it's India, we're always being told about the hygiene over here and being extra careful... I just felt like it was the most vulnerable.

"The IPL that was held in Dubai six months ago didn't feel that way at all. I felt like that was extremely safe. Personally, I feel like that would have been a better option originally for this IPL, but obviously, there's a lot of political stuff that goes into it.

"Obviously there's the T20 World Cup that's meant to be happening here later this year. That's probably going to be the next discussion in the cricket world. Six months is a long time," said the leg-spinner.

shortpasses

CORREA KEEPS LAZIO IN HUNT
ROME: Joaquin Correa ensured Lazio kept their hopes of Champions League qualification alive with a double in a 3-0 win over AC Milan while Napoli jumped up to third thanks to a 2-0 triumph at Torino.

MBAPPÉ FIT TO FACE MAN CITY
PARIS: Kylian Mbappé has shaken off a minor thigh injury and is fit to play against Manchester City in the Champions League semifinals on Wednesday.

LEICESTER FIGHTBACK
LEICESTER: Kelechi Iheanacho extended his career-best scoring form with a blistering winning goal as Leicester rallied to beat Crystal Palace 2-1 in the Premier League and establish a seven-point cushion in the top four.

WOMEN'S RELAY TEAM PULL OUT
NEW DELHI: In a major setback to India's Olympic preparation, women's 4x400m relay team has pulled out of next month's World Relays in Poland, AFI source said on Tuesday.

WIMBLEDON SCRAP DAY OF REST
LONDON: Wimbledon organisers announced that the traditional day of rest in the middle of the tournament would be scrapped from 2022 as they fine-tune plans for this year's event.

BHAKER RECEIVES 1ST DOSE
NEW DELHI: Shooter Manu Bhaker on Tuesday received her first dose of Covid-19 vaccine at a Government hospital in Jhajjar. Agencies

Bayern appoint Nagelsmann to replace Flick

AFP ■ MUNICH

Julian Nagelsmann will take over as Bayern Munich coach from next season to replace Hansi Flick, the reigning German champions announced on Tuesday.

Nagelsmann, who is just 33, will move from RB Leipzig on a five-year contract after Flick, whose relationship with the club's powerful sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic has deteriorated over transfer policy, asked to be released from his contract.

"I am convinced that Bayern's sporting future will be a very successful one with Julian Nagelsmann," Oliver Kahn, the club's former goalkeeper who will succeed Karl-Heinz Rummenigge as Bayern chairman next year, told the club's website.

Nagelsmann has never hidden his desire to coach Bayern, especially as he comes from the Bavaria region.

Last season, he led



Leipzig to the semi-finals of the Champions League as well as third place in the Bundesliga, and this season his side has replaced Borussia Dortmund as Bayern's main title challengers. Flick took over as Bayern coach in late 2019, succeeding the sacked Niko Kovac. He won the Bundesliga and German Cup last season and added the Champions League, as Bayern beat Paris Saint-Germain in the final at

table for me. The emotions, the wins, the titles, but also the day-to-day work on the pitch have been a lot of fun for me, it's been an amazing time."

Nagelsmann spent time on the books at Bayern's neighbours 1860 Munich, before his playing career was cut short by a knee injury at the age of just 20.

He moved into coaching and became the youngest permanent head coach in Bundesliga history when appointed by Hoffenheim in February 2016 at the age of 28.

He steered the small club from south-western Germany to safety in that season before successive top-four finishes in the next two campaigns.

His star has continued to rise at Leipzig where a young side has established itself as a leading force in the Bundesliga and in Europe — they again reached the Champions League knockout stage this season, losing to Liverpool in the last 16.

OTHER SPORT