OPINION 6

INDIA'S FLAMING

FORESTS PLAY HAVOC

MYANMAR COUP FOES TOUT

MINORITY-BACKED SHADOW GOVT

SPORT 12

STOKES OUT

FOR 12 WEEKS

DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

*Late City Vol. 10 Issue 103 *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

SAFETY OVER **COMFORT:** SUNNY LEONE 10 VIVACITY



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4L daily Covid cases by Apr end likely Covid spreads

At current rate, deaths could go up to 200/day; Delhi sees record 20k cases in 24 hrs

With the current rate of the daily surge, India's Covid-19 cases could reach anywhere between 3.5 and 4 lakh by the end of April. Going by the current death rate of around 0.5 per cent, India could see a daily fatality of around 175 to 200 per day by month-end. On Friday, India recorded over 2.08 lakh new cases and 1,124 deaths, compared to 2.17 lakh cases and 1,185 deaths the previous day.

cases and 1,185 deaths the previous day.

The country's average daily. Covid-19 growth during the last two weeks is around 5.2 to 6 per cent, or 12,000 to 15,000 a day. Even in the case of a highly optimistic scenario where the cases stabilise around an average of 10,000 per day, the country total should go easily past 3.5 lakh in the remaining two weeks of this month.

The most worrying part is

The most worrying part is the fact that the number of new cases is rising alarmingly in States other than Maharashtra

States other than Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, which bore the brunt of the onset of the second wave of the Covid-19. On Friday, Maharashtra recorded it single-day high of 63,729 cases and 398 deaths. Delhi also recorded its single

Haryana shuts schools till Apr 30

SCHOOIS IIII APT 3U
Chandigarh: The Haryana
Government on Friday
announced consolidated
guidelines to contain the
spread of Covid-19, ordering
closure of schools, colleges
and coaching institutes till
April 30 and capping number of attendees at gatherings
and passengers in vehicles.

CAPSULE

CBI EX-DIRECTOR RANJIT SINHA DIES FROM COVID

Former CBI director Ranjit Sinha died on Friday morning in what is believed to be a Covid-19



INDIA-NEPAL ISSUES'
Kathmandu: There is no issue
between Nepal and India that
cannot be resolved through
dialogue, Nepalese Foreign
Minister Pradeep Gyawali said
on Friday, underlining that the
two countries are "friends and
not competitors".

w Delhi: The Delhi Traffic Police has suspended the process to collect dues for



day of 19,486 cases and a record 141 deaths. Chhattisgarh has seen an alarming 131 per cent raise in the number of fresh cases dur-ing the last one weeks.

BSY +ve for 2nd time in 8 months; Javadekar too **Covid** positive

Bengaluru/New Delhi:
Karnataka Chief Minister BS
Yediyurappa on Friday tested
positive for Covid-19 for the
second time in eight months,
and has been shifted to a private hospital. Union Minister
Prakash Javadekar too tested
positive for coronavirus.

CICSE defers Class X, XII **Board exams**

PTI NEW DELHI

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) on Friday deferred the board exams for Classes 10 and 12 in view of a rise in Covid-19 cases across the country. In light of the nationwide surge in comparints cases, the

cases across the country.

In light of the nationwide surge in coronavirus cases, the Class 10 and 12 exams which were to be held from May 4 have been deferred, CISCE's chief executive and secretary Gerry Arathoon said.

"We will closely monitor the situation and review it in the first week of June to take a final decision on conduct of examination," he said. "While class 12 exams will be conducted at a later stage, Class 10 students will get an option to either appear in offline exams later or get evaluated on basis of fair and unbiased criteria to be developed by board," Arathoon added.

Arathoon added.

Earlier 13 week, the Central Class 12 board students will get an option to either addition (CISE) had carriedled its Class 10 board exams and deferred the Class 12 board exams. Several State boards have postponed or cancelled their exams too.

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES: 1,44,96,651 (+2,08,725) DEATHS: 1,75,459 (+1,124) RECOVERED. 1.26.50.298 (+1.06.248)

KERALA: 12,07,333 TAMIL NADU: 9.71.384

ACTIVE: 16,63,789

KARNATAKA: 11,24,509 DELHI: 8,03,623 (+19,486)

stated that ₹1,000 fine will be charged for not wearing masks and ₹10,000 fine for second time violation. The Sunday curfew will continue till May 15. In the review meeting, the CM ordered closure of markets, offices and other business establishments on Sunday so as to allow santitisation of the markets across the State. There will be a weekly closure in all rural and urban areas of the State on Sunday. Only santitisation and emergency services will operate during this period. Necessary aware-MAHARASHTRA: 37,03,584

on all UP dists till May 15 ₹1.000 fine for no mask; markets to be sanitised on Sundays PNS I LUCKNOW

Sunday curfew imposed

A view of the iconic building of Lucknow. Imambada, ASI protected monuments remained shut for visitors in view of the rising Covid-19 cases in the country, in Lucknow on Friday

ness works should also be done in this regard. He hint-ed that even public transport and commutation won't be allowed.

allowed
"A 1,000-bed Covid hospital will be established in Lucknow. The venue of the Defence Expo in Vrindavan Colony has been chosen for setting up of this makeshift hospital," the Chief Minister said during a review meeting with divisional commissioners, district exposurements of the control of the cont

11 officers).
Yogi also ordered closure of OPDs in all Government hospitals in the State to control crowds. He also announced that it is compulsory for everyone to wear a mask. "A fine of ₹1,000 would be imposed for the first time caught without a mask is cond time, a penally of ₹10,000 would be imposed, "he added.

mainly via air: Lancet study

PMS MEW DELHI

The SARS-COV-2 virus that causes Covid-19 is predominantly transmitted through air, according to a new assessment carried in the medical journal Lancet which said it found little to no evidence that the virus spreads easily via large droplets, which fall quickly through the air and contaminate surfaces.

The study added that public health measures that fail to treat the virus as predominantly airborne leave people unprotected and allow the virus to spread. The study observation is significant for India where mass gatherings and election railles continue unabated even as overall Covid-19 cases are breaking records daily.

A multi-research team from the UK, the US and Canada warned that public

from the UK, the US and Canada warned that public health measures that fail to treat the virus as predomi-nantly airborne leave people unprotected and allow the virus to spread. Silent (asymptomatic or presymptomatic) transmis-sion of SARS-CoV-2 from people who are not coughing or sneezing accounts for at least 40 per cent of all trans-



mission. This silent transmission is This silent transmission is a key way Covid-19 has spread around the world, "supporting a predominantly airborne mode of transmission," as per the assessment.

By contrast, the researchers found little to no evidence that the virus spreads easily via large droplets, which fall quickly through the air and contaminate surfaces.

"The evidence supporting airborne transmission is over-airborne transmission is over-

"The evidence supporting airborne transmission is over-whelming, and evidence sup-porting large droplet trans-mission is almost non-exis-tent," said Jose-Luis Jimenez, a chemist at the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES) and the University of Colorado Boulder.

Covaxin production to double by June, 7 fold by July-Aug

PNS B NEW DELHI

The current production
capacity of Bharat Biotech
indigenously developed
Covaxin vaccine will be doubled by May-June 2021 and
then increased nearly 6-7 fold
by July-August 2021, the
Government said on Friday.
The Union Ministry of
Science and Technology issued
a statement in this regard, saying "the current production
capacity of indigenously develpoped Covaxin vaccine will be
doubled by May-June 2021
and then increased nearly 6-7
fold by July-August 2021
that is increasing the production from 1 crore vaccine doses
in April 2021 to 6-7 crore vacin April 2021 to 6-7 crore vaction from 1 crore vaccine doses in April 2021 to 6-7 crore vaccine dose by July-August. It is expected to reach nearly 10 crore doses per month by September this year".

September this year".

It said the Government will provide financial support as a grant to vaccine manufacturing facilities for enhanced production capacities.

Recently, inter-ministerial teams visited the sites of two



As corona surge continues, Muttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has ordered "Sunday curfew" across the State and also ordered setting up of 1,000-bed Covid hospitals in Lucknow to meet the demand of shortage of beds.

The State Government also stated that ₹1,000 fine will be

main vaccine manufacturers in India to get their inputs on how production can be ramped up. There have been extensive reviews and feasibility studies

production can be ramped up. There have been extensive reviews and feasibility studies on the plans being discussed with vaccine manufacturers.

"As a part of this augmentation plan, capacities of bharat Biotech Limited, Hyderabad as well as other public sector manufacturers are being upgraded with required infrastructure and technology. Financial support is being provided as a grant from the Government to the tune of appx 765 cr to Bharat Biotech's new Bangalore facility which is being repurposed to increase the capacity of vaccine production," the statement added.

Ensure sufficient oxygen for emergency care: PM

Modi calls for increase in manufacturing

PNS NEW DELHI

PNS NEW DELHI

As the second wave of Cond-19 variant has led to a rapid rise in nositive cases acroes the country and brought health facilities made increasing pressure. Prime Ministery undertook a "comprehensive" reduction and a "comprehensive" reduction and a "comprehensive" reduction and a "comprehensive" reduction and the proposition of the proposition of the prime with the multiplication of coronavirus case arter it had largely ebbed out by the start of this year.

According to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Moditook a comprehensive review to ensure adequate medical grade oxygen supply in the country. Inputs from Ministries like health, steel, road transpike health, seel, road transpike health, see

Internal Trade were also shared with the PM during the review, said the statement of the PMO. The PM stressed that it is important to ensure synergy across Ministries and State Governments, the PMO said. He also took a detailed review of the current situation of oxygen supply and projected use in the coming 15 days across 12 high-burden States — Maharashtra, Madhya

Need more research to determine spread of 'double mutant' coronavirus: Scientists

New Delhi: A global mutation

Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tami Nadu, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.

The PMO said an overview of the district-level situation in these States was presented to the PM.

He was informed that the Centre and States are in regu-lar contact and estimates for projected demand has been shared with states as of April 20, April 25 and April 30, it said.

The PMO said, accord-

said. The PMO said, accordingly, 4,880 MT, 5,619 MT and 6,593 MT have been allocated to these 12 States for medical oxygen as on April 20, April 25 and April 30, respectively.

tracker on Friday suggested the "double mutant" coronavirus, first identified in Maharashtra, has a cumulative

prevalence of 10 per cent in India, a finding that some sci-entists here said is based on insufficient data and needs more research.

EC cuts Bengal campaign time by 3 hrs at night over Covid rise

Against the backdrop of rishing Covid-19 cases and the heavy political rhetoric in poll-bound areas, the Election Commission (EC) on Friday extended the 'silence' period from 48 hours to 72 hours in each of the remaining three of the eight phases of the West Bengal polls to be Hold on April 22, 26, and 29.

The commission has curtailed the timing of campaigning up to 7pm from 10 pm. It has banned rallies, public meetings, nukkad sabha, and street play from 7 pm to 10 am beginning Friday. "Commission curtails the timing of the campaign up to 7pm. The silence period has been extended from 48 hours to 72 hours in each of the remaining three phases in Vest Bengal. These orders have come into effect immediately," the EC said in a letter to the president, general secretary and chairman of the national and state-level political parties.

Monsoon normal this UK Home Dept year, predicts IMD

Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, eastern UP, Assam may not get sufficient rainfall

Parring Odisha, Bihar, north-Chhattisgarh, eastern Uttar Pradesh, Meghalaya and Assam, India will probably experience normal monsoon rainfall this year as La Nina or El Nino weather conditions, which impact rain patterns, are likely to be absent.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday predicted overall "normal" monsoon rainfall at 98 per



cent of the Long Period Average (LPA), which has a model error of plus and minus 5 per cent during the June-September period across the country. The LPA of the mon-soon is 88 centimetres. Rainfall between 96-104 per cent of the LPA is consid-ered normal. The IMD said the probability of the 2021

monsoon being "normal" was 40% while there was 21% chance of it being "above nor-mal".

chance of it being "above normal".

While releasing the first Long Range Forecast for the four-month rainfall period from June to September, M Rajeevan, secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, said, quantitatively, the monson seasonal rainfall is likely to be 98% of the LPA with a model error of 4+-5 per cent.

"It is really good news for the country and will help India have a good agriculture output," he said.

The news augurs well for an economy battered due to the coronavirus pandemic. Large parts of the country rely on the four-month rainfall season for agriculture and also for filling reservoirs.

clears Niray Modi's extradition to India

The Home Department of the United Kingdom has cleared the extradition of fugitive diamantaire Nirav Modi, wanted in India connection with a case involving over ₹13,000-crore credit fraud involving Punjab National Bank (PNB).

invoiving Funjab Nationai Bank (PNB). However, Westminster's court has granted Nirav a window of appeal in the High Court and has up to 14 days to make that application after the Home Secretary cleared the extradition. Nirav had allegedly perpetrated the fraud in the PNB in collusion with his uncle Mehul Choksi. On February 25, a Westminster Magistrates Court allowed his extradition.



The findings of the court were sent to the UK Home Department headed by British Home Secretary Priti which cleared the extradition, officials said, according to news agency PTI.

The UK'S Westminster Magistrates' Court ruled that the diamond merchant and prime accused in the PNB credit fraud case, Niraw Modi, has a case to answer before Indian courts.

Indian courts.

Dust storm, drizzle cool Delhi but pollute its air

Astrong dust storm barrelled through the National
capital on Friday, affecting visibility and air quality, while
cloudy weather and light rain
brought the mercury down
slightly, the India
Meteorological Department
(IMD) said.

"A dust storm hit Delhi
around 4 pm under the influence of a Western Disturbance
ence of a Western Disturbance
affecting the hills. The maximum wind speed was around
70 kilometres per hour," an
IMD official said.
Visibility at Palam dropped
from 3,000 metres to 500
metres due to the dust storm.
At Safdarjung, it was reduced
from 2,200 metres to 1,500
metres. Delhi's air quality index
(AQI) also deteriorated to 252



at 6 pm from 238 at 4 pm. An AQI between 201 and 300 is considered "poor",
Very light rain has been recorded in some areas of the city, bringing down mercury.

Clesius for the next five to six city, bringing down mercury. Celsius for the next On Thursday, the city had days, the IMD said.

Weekend lockdown announced in Chandigarh

With the number of Covid-19 cases showing a surge, the Chandigarh administra-tion on Friday announced a weekend lockdown in the Union Territory till 5 am on Monday. Announcing the fresh restriction in an official state-ment here, the administration

ment here, the administration urged residents to stay indoors. Essential activities and services and home delivery of food are exempted from the purview of the lockdown. The decision was taken at a high-level meeting here chaired by Punjab Governor V P Singh Badnore, who is also the Administration of the union territory. The administration also announced other restrictions, which will be in place till April 30.

tions, which will be in place till April 30.
While all gymnasiums and spas in the union territory will remain closed, cinema hals can run with 50 per cent capacity, it said. All government offices will function with 50 per cent staff strength, and the general public will be allowed to meet officers only with prior appointment. The administration also barned on all social. appointment. The administra-tion also banned on all social, cultural, political and religious

The existing limit on gatherings in permitted functions will be reduced to 100 for outdoor events and 50 for indoor ones. Buses will run but with 50 per cent capacity only.

Museums, libraries, coaching
institutions etc., will remain
closed.

The statement clarified that

Closed.

The statement clarified that candidates venturing out to sit in examinations and those deputed in exam duties will be allowed to travel on production of admit or identity cards. Visitors will be screened at the airport, railway station, ISBT etc., it said. Home delivery of food will be allowed.

All vaccination and testing centres, dispensaries and other medical facilities will remain open during the lockdown and people going there will not be stopped. Inter-state travellers will be allowed on all days, including the lockdown period, the administration said.

The high-levd meeting was attended by Mano) Parida, Adviser to the Administrator, and Mandip Singh Brar, Deputy Commissioner, Chandigarh, and Director, PGIMER, among others.

Badnore expressed serious concerns about the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the city and also the high fatality

rate. The union territory reported 412 cases of the coronavirus on Thursday and a record .

Badnore directed all the Badnore directed all the three government medical institutes here to ramp up their facilities so as to accommodate the increasing number of coro-navirus patients. All COVID-19-related

All COVID-19-related deaths must be specifically audited, he said, adding that the sector 48 hospital should be made fully operational, so that it can function as a dedicated COVID-19 hospital, he directed.

Badnore also directed all Badnore also directed all hospitals to store enough oxygen and vaccines. All COVID-19 patients currently under home-quarantine must be regularly contacted and provided necessary assistance, he said. The UT administrator said all shops must get their staff testded and display sign boards stating that their premises are coronavirus-free.

Action will be taken against hoppers going to the markets

Action will be taken against shoppers going to the markets without masks and also against shopkeepers attending them, he said. Badnore also said that mobile teams should be sent to temples, gurdwaras, mosques and other crowded places during festivals so that visitors can

CATEGORIES EXEMPTED DURING WEEKEND LOCKDOWN

- order/emergency and municipal services and duties, media persons with accreditation and government machinery tasked with Covid-19 related duties.
- Essential commodity shops and vendors dealing with food, groceries, fruits, vegetable, dairy and milk booths, medical equipment have been allowed to open for home delivery only.
- Manufacturing units of essential commodities shall be allowed to remain open
- There shall be no curbs on inter-state and intra-state movement of essential and non-essential goods.

481 COVID CASES IN CHANDIGARH, HIGHEST SINGLE DAY SURGE The Union Territory Chandigarh on Friday report-ed 481 fresh Covid-19 cases, the highest single-day figure since global pandemic struck.

■ All vehicles and persons in bonafide transit (inter-state, intra-state) shall be allowed t pass, but only after due verification of point of origin and destination.

- Hospitals, chemist shops, and ATMs shall be allowed to remain open 24x7
- Pregnant women and patients allowed for getting medical health services.
- During weekend lockdown, restaurants and hotels can remain open only for home delivery till 9.30 pm.
- All marriage functions which have been permitted shall be allowed subject to the limit of 100 people outdoor or 50 indoor or 50 percent of the total capacity whichever is less.

With this, the case count has reached 32,878, a medical bulletin said. Last year, on September 13, Chandigarh logged 449 cases. As many as 428 patients were discharged after they recovered from the infection, taking the number of cured persons to 29,047. So 355,840 samples have been taken for testing.

Capt Amarinder showcases Punjab as safest place to do business

NO LOCKOUTS AND STRIKES DURING LAST 30 YEARS

PNS CHANDIGARH

PNS TCHANDIGARH

Reiterating Punjab
Government's firm commitment in facilitating investments from Japan through
Invest Punjab, the Chief
Minister Capt Amarinder
Singh on Friday highlighted his
vision of having a "Little Japan"
in Punjab that builds upon the
current thriving presence of
more than 100 Japanese business establishments in the State.
Capt Amarinder, in his
virtual address to the "NDO-JAPAN"
in Investment
Opportunities in the State of
Punjab organized by the Japan
Daek at Invest Punjab has
placed at Invest Punjab and the
Japan business having with the Japan
Daek at Invest Punjab in the State of
India, Tokyo, pointed out that
Punjab is the safest place to do
business having witnessed no
Jocatos and strikes in last 30
years

Structure Punjab has been

years. "Invest Punjab has been



rated as the 'top performing'
State IPA by Government of
India and a dedicated Japan
Desk has been formed at Invest
Punjab for facilitating Japanese
investors willing to invest inthe
State and would be the 'match
making' platform for Japanese
and Punjab based companies',
asserted Capt Amarinder.

Inviting the Japanese
Enterprises to Punjab, the Clife
Minister highlighted the
Opportunities or investment or
collaboration with Punjab
ased companies in multiple
sectors such as agri and food
processing, technical textiles,
engineering, pharma and medcial devices, skill development.

The Chief Minister also
highlighted the availability
of 1,000 acres of Jand near
Rajpura for the development of
dedicated Japanese Industrial
Township in the State.

Puniab releases ₹151 cr pending to arhtiyas

PNS CHANDIGARH

PNS TO CHANDIGARH

Punjab Finance Department
on Friday released the pending arrears, amounting to
'151.4s crore to the arhityas
(commission agents). The
amount, released on the directions of the CM Capt
Amarinder Singh — was paid
out of the state exchequer as the
Food Corporation of India
(FCI) has withheld the amount.
"The FCI was supposed to
pay the arrears to about 5,000
arhityas but due to delay on its
part, the Punjab Government
released the same from the
state exchequer to ensure
smooth and hassle free wheat

smooth and hassle free wheat procurement during ongoing Rabi Marketing Season," said a spokesperson of the Chief Minister Office. It may be recalled that before the commencement of

before the commencement of wheat procurement, the arhityas had requested the Chief Minister to settle their arrears immediately on which Capt Amarinder had directed the Finance Department to release the due payment without wait-ing for the payment by FCI.

COVID SURGE -

Harvana CM appeals to farmers to end agitation, announces mega vaccine drive

A mid rapid spurt in the Cases of Covid-19 across the country and state, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Friday once again urged the farmers to end their agitation against the three central farm laws during the ongoing crisis.

trail farm laws during the ongoing "Its everyone's democratrail farm laws during the ongoing "Its everyone's democratic right to protest but it sake
our collective responsibility to
protect ourselves, family memtraines from this round parademic that has become a global threat to unmality.
Therefore, farmers on moral
and ethical grounds should
and this agitation to prevent the
spread of COVID-19" the
Chief Minister said while giving his message during the
"Haryana Ki Baet programme.
His message came on the
day when the state reported 20
fatalities and 6277 fresh cases, the highest single-day spike
ever since the COVID-19 pandemic began

ever since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

He said that wherever people gather in large numbers, there is a chance of spread of



the virus. So the farmers should end their protest and can again hold the agitation whenever the situation normalizes, he added.

situation normalizes, he added.
Khattar said last year, the
highest 3104 cases were reported in a single day in the state
but in the second wave, more
than 5000 cases are now registered on a daily basis. Last year,
the districts in NCR like
Grugram, Baridabad, Sonepat
were badly affected, but now a
sudden spike is also recorded
in Panchkula, Ambala,
Kurukshetra among other districts.

Some restrictions have been put on public gatherings and night curfew has been

imposed to contain the spread of the virus. A cabinet meeting has been convened on April 22 ened on April 22

of the virus. A cabinet meeting has been convened on April 22 to review the situation and more decisions are likely to be taken to deal with the second wave of COVID-19, he said.

Khattar said that from April 20 onwards, another massive vaccination campaign will begin in the state for people above 45 years of age.

On the arrangements made in hospitals to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, he said that adequate numbers of oxygen cylinders, ICU beds, venitators, masks and PPE kits etc are being made available in all the hospitals across the state.

Haryana deputes 12 IAS officers to monitor Covid situation in 12 districts

Haryana Government has deputed 12 IAS officers in various districts to review and various districts to review and monitor the Covid-19 pre-paredness in addition to their present duties with immediate

effect.
Sanjeev Kaushal has been deputed in Faridabad, Alok Nigam in Panchkula district, Devender Singh in Karnal, TC Gupta in Gurugram, Amit Jha in Sonipat, SN Roy in Ambala, Dr Mahavir Singh in Jhajjar, Anurag Rastog in Hisiar, Vineet Garg in Sirsa, G Anupama in Kurukshetra, Apoorva Kumar Singh in Panipat and Rakesh Gupta has been deputed in Rohtak. These districts are witnessing a huge spike in COVID cases on a daily basis.
An official spokesman said that these officers will monitor and focus on active involvement of District ct. Sanjeev Kaushal has been

and focus on active involve-ment of District Administration in fight against COVID-19 pandemic, promo-tion of COVID-19 testing and vaccination among general public through various gov-ernment, non-government, religious and other organiza-tions, addition of more prisite hospitals for COVID-19 treat-

ment, wherever required, increase contact tracing of active positive cases (up to 30 contacts to be traced and tested within 72 hours viz-a-viz each COVID positive case), and proper marking of microcontainment zones by district authorities.

They will review the availability of adequate healthcare infrastructure to tackle COVID-19 situation, such as isolation beds, oxygen support beds, ICU beds, ventilators, drugs and consumables

isolation beds, oxygen support beds, ICU beds, ventilators, drugs and consumables (masks, PPE kits, sanitizers, etc.) oxygen reserve, etc. in both government as well as private health facilities in their respective districts, the spokesman said.

They will review arrangements for strict monitoring of COVID-19 appropriate behaviour, such as social distancing, wearing face masks, hand hygiene, etc., at all public places and ensuring strict implementation of orders regarding restrictions on social gatherings, especially in banque thalls during marriages or other family functions as well, he added.

Haryana closes all educational institutions till April 30

PNS CHANDIGARH

Due to a surge in Covid-19 Cases, Haryana Government on Friday ordered closure of all schools,

ordered closure of all schools, colleges, coaching institu-tions, ITIs, libraries and train-ing institutes whether gov-ernment or private in the state till April 30.

The order was issued by the Financial Commissional Chief Secretary Revenue & Disaster Management Department, Haryana on Friday, Instructions were also issued to the Deputy Commissioners

Instructions were also issued to the Deputy Commissioners to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Earlier, the schools upto class VIII were closed in the state. As per directions issued by the Haryana Directorate of School Education, all the teachers will continue to come teachers will continue to co to the schools as before so t



the exam results can be prepared and released on April 30 and the new academic session 2021-22 can be started from May 1.

In its order to DCs, the State Government said, "All government meetings should be encouraged through video conferencing with officers to discourage official visits in the offices of Secretariats at State and District level." The State Government has also directed the District

ly take steps for establishment

ly take steps for establishment of micro containment zones. The State Government had imposed night curfew prohibiting movement of individuals for all non essential activities between 10 pm to 5 am in Haryana MANDIS AND PROCUREMENT CENTRES CLOSED FOR 2 DAYS

Mandis and procurement centres in Haryana will remain closed on April 17 and April 18. An official spokesperson said that farmers are requested not to bring their produce to the mandis on both these days as wheat will not be procured in the state on April 17 and April 18. Only the work of lifting wheat procured in the past will be done in the mandis. From April 19 onwards, wheat procurement will continue smoothly in the state as before.

Mohali Admn asks seven pvt hosps to | Navjot Sidhu launches yet reserve 50% beds for Covid patients

Mohali District
MAdministration on Friday
ordered the seven private hospitals — including Max Superspecialty, Fortis Healthcare,
SGHS Sohana, Ivy Hospital —

SGHS Sóhana, hy Hospital—to set aside at least 50 per cent of their total bed capacity as isolation beds and wards for Covid care.

The other hospitals include Indus Hospital, Grecian Superspecialty, and Mayo Superspecialty hospitals.

These private hospitals are already providing quality tertiary care (Level 2 and Levet 3) for Covid patients in the district.

3) for Lowin pane....
trict.
"The district possesses
minimal public health infrastructure, given that the district
hospital is under re-construc-

tion as a medical college—which will take time. Most of the ICU beds or ventilators (L2/L3—that is tertiary care) are in the private sector, said Mohali Deputy Commissioner Girish Dayalan in an order.

The hospitals have also been asked to put certain ambulances exclusively attending to COVID-19 patients or suspected cases.

ing to COVID-19 patients or suspected cases.

Mohali Civil Surgeon shald decide on the exact number of beds and ambulances based on overall capacity of the hospital, read the order.

The Deputy Commissioner also made it clear that the private hospitals in the district shall not refuse admission or treatment to natients of

treatment to patients of COVID-19 referred by the Civil Surgeon, Mohali. The hospitals shall ensure that staff

PGIMER Director urges Punjab, Haryana,

doctors, nurses, and paramedics — are all available on duty and no one shall refuse.

medics—are air avalance on duty and no one shall refuse treatment.

At the same time, the Deputy Commissioner has reassured the public that there was no reason to panic as there are sufficient COVID care beds in Mohali.

"Formal orders have been issued so that as a cautionary measure at least 50 percent beds are reserved for COVID patients in private hospitals. Seven hospitals which have been assessed by experts to have provided quality COVID care in the past have been directed for compliance," he said, while making it clear that the Hospital management would be held personally responsible for compliance of these directions.

another attack on his own Govt

Yet to be rehabilitated, the cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu on Friday launched yet another scathing attack against his own party's government from the political pavilion he was relegated to after he resigned from Punjab Cabinet berth nearly two years

к. Sidhu, the former Minister,

Cabinet bertin nearly two years back. Sidhu, the former Minister, blamed the Congress-Ied Punjab Government for betraying the people who voted it to power on the promises that it would punish those gullty of sacrilege and drug menace. Mincing no words, Sidhu went on to question the constitution of the special investigation teams by the Government as none of them have yielded any result in the State. "In Punjab, the SIT means SIT-down. No SIT has yielded any result so far," he said, while addressing the media in his and the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh's home town, Patiala. The assertions came two days after Sidhu had chosen the "sensitive" Bargari issue to hit at his own Government and its legal team by claiming that the case was not properly defended and "weak lawyers" were hired. In fact, Sidhu visited Kotkapura — the epicentre of the sacrilege incidents and subsequent protests — on Baisakhi following which he shared his views on Twitter.

Reiterating his demand, Sidhu on Friday demanded that the Punjab Police constituted a SIT probe into the 2015



firings at people protesting in Kotakpura and Behbal Kalan against sacrilegious incidents should be made public.

should be made public.

"The government was formed on the promise of punishing the guilty of sacrilege and those involved in the drug

ishing the guilty of sacrilege and those involved in the drug cases, but it failed on both fronts. The public feels cheated as the government didn't keep its promise," said Sidhu, who questioned why the action was not taken against the guilty. That was not all! Sidhu went on to raise questions on the working of the Capt Amarinder Singh Government, while blaming the "botchedup" investigations since 2015 for the delay in justice for the victims.

up" investigations since 2015 for the delay in justice for the victims.

"Why has the government failed to name and nail the guilty? On whose directions did the policemen open fire on protesters? Why are their names not mentioned in the FIR? It's evident from the Justice Ranjit Singh Commission report that the Cheir Minister had spoken to the then police chief at midnight, hours before the firing on protesting Sikhs was undertaken. The report was babled in the House, debated and a resolution was passed to unish the guilty, but no concrete action has been taken.

Who is responsible?" he said,

whio is responsion: It is said, asking the government to make the report of the probe public.

Therefore is sacrilege and firing on Sikhs besides the drugs problem of Punjah, but wily has the government failed to act? He asked, adding that the Public is surgery with the government failed to act? He asked, adding that the public is surgery with the government failed to government failed to govern the surgery with the government failed to govern the surgery with the government failed to govern the surgery with the government failed failed to govern the surgery with the Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal at 2.30 am then it's dear evidence that they were in cahoots?

Underlining that sacrilege was the "most important issue for me," Sidhu made it clear that the would not sit until the guilty are punished. Also raising the drugs issue, Sidhu sought to also make the report on drug cases compiled by the head of the Government-condrugs that they will be supported to the Government on drug cases compiled by the head of the Government for the Government by the court for taking action. The file has been sent to the Government through the Advocate-General oact against the guilty. Why has no action been taken so far?" he asked.

Sidhu said that in case the Government does not believe the STF report, "it should probe the statements of drug lord lagdish Bhola and others, who are on record to say that they were only pawns. Why are the big names involved in the drug racket not been exposed?"

Doctors must help in war-like situation: DC

Deputy Commissioner Ranchi, Chhavi Ranjar today said that due to the rising infection of the corona, there is infection of the corona, there is a war-like situation and this is not the time to run back but to fight back firmly. 'In such a situation, cooperation from all the doctors is required. There is an appeal to all doctors to try to give their best from their level, especially in Covid Hospital, deputed doctors should apply extra effort," he said while holding a meeting with deputed doctors at District Covid Hospital.

Deput Development

spital.

Deputy Development
Ranchi, Sub-Deputy Development Commissioner Ranchi, Sub-Divisional Officer Ranchi Sadar, deputed doctors and other con-cerned officials were present in the meeting held at Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Auditorium in Morhabadi.

the meeting held at Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Auditorium in Morhabadi.

During the meeting, the DC said that action will be taken if the doctors deputed in the district Covid Hospital Sadar are absent without official permission. A case will be registered for negligence in duty during the pandemic and the license of the concerned doctor can also be canceled. He said that the district administration should not be compelled to take action.

Arrangements made for the corona infected patients at Sadar Hospital Ranchi are constantly being monitored by the DC. Notices have been sent to several doctors who are absent on duty during the inspection. These will be dealt with under DDMA.

Meanwhile, the DC and Deputy Development

eanwhile, the DC and

Commissioner Ranchi Vishal Sagar reached Jagarnath Hospital on Friday. They took stock of the arrangement of beds etc for the treatment of corona infected patients. The DC also reviewed the emergency, general ward and other arrangements in the hospital.

The DC and DDC discussed with the hospital management and doctors to increase the beds in the hospital for the treatment of corona infected patients. After discussion, it was decided that the number of Covid beds in the hospital will be increased.

During the discussion, the district administration was made aware of the problems faced by the hospital management regardight expension of the district administration was made that there will be no problem in oxygen supply, the facility will be provided by the district administration.

Sagar said that the number

oxygen steply, use actinity win op-provided by the district admin-istration.

Sagar said that the number of Covid beds in the hospital will be increased in 1 to 2 days, cur-rently 10 Covid patients are being treated in the hospital.

rentiy 10 Covid patients are being treated in the hospital. After increasing the beds, more patients will be treated in the hospital. He said that the number of beds will be increased keeping in view the capacity of the hospital.

Meanwhile, audio messages of instructions to follow the Covid-19 protocol are being run continuously at the Khadgadha bus stand. Today under the leadership of DTO Praween Prakash, slogan stickers were installed in all buses, termps and e-rickshaws with no Mask No Entry, no mask, no entry, no mask or no travel etc.

HP to increase beds, manpower pied by patients from Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. PGIMER has 300 Covid beds

A nticipating a surge in the number of Covid-19 cases after confirmation of UK corona variant in Chandigarh, the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) Director Dr Jagat Ram on Friday (PGIMER) Director Dr Jagat Ram on Friday urged the authorities concerned of neighbouring States-Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir to increase beds and man-power in their hospitals.

"There is a rapid surge of Covid-19 cases in the second wave of the pandemic. The peak of this virus is expected in mid May or early June'; he told The Pioneer.

The director said that above 70 per cent of total covid beds in the Covid Block of PGIMER are full and about 69 per cent of these are occu-

Himachal Pradesh, PGIMER has 300 Covid beeds and 222 Covid patients have been admitted in Nehru Extension Block, out of which 82 belong to Punjab, 67 to Chandigarh, 41 to Haryana, 22 to Himachal Pradesh and 10 from other States. After confirmation of the UK corona variant in Chandigarh, Punjab and other neighbouring States, it has been anticipated a surge in the number of Covid-19 cases in the region. Dr Jagat Ram said that the Covid-19 cases surging at a rate much faster in the second wave than the first wave in the region. At PGIMER 3,492 covid samples tested, out of which 52 were found positive. The positivity rate was 15.8 per cent. Only, patients having moderate and severe symptoms of Covid-19 are admitted at Covid hospital in PGIMER, he added.

the pioneer

Chhattisgarh launches virtual war on Covid-19

centers. According to informa-tion from the Health Department, the percentage of RTPCR investigation in total

The Chhattisgarh govern-ment is working on a war footing to check the further spread of Covid-19 and to iden-

spread of Covid-19 and to fact.
tify and treat patients.
Currently, more than 47,000 Currently, more than 47,000 people are being tested for corona daily. The number of tests per day was 30,000 in March. In January, the average daily testing was 22,761. The state's daily tests per 10 lakh population are 1,620 while

lakh population are 1,620 the national average is 1,018, an official communication said on official communication friday.

In Chhattisgarh, TrueNat testing facilities are available in



31 government and five private labs. RTPCR test is conducted in seven government and five private labs.

private labs. The rapid antigen test is

Covid investigations has increased by 14 percent as compared to October 2020.

Four new government RTPCR labs are being set up. In each district, the testing capacity of TrueNat Lab is being

each district, the testing-ty of TrueNat Lab is being increased by providing addi-tional machines. At present there are 118,656 active cases of Covid in the state. Most patients are in Raipur, Durg, Rajnandgaon, Balodabazar, Bilaspur, Mahasamund, Korba and districts.

Bemetara districts.
So far, 486,244 cases of corona have been identified, out of which 362,301 patients are now healthy. The rest are under

Hospitals and 137 Covid Care Centers have been set up in the state. Dedicated Covid Hospitals have come up in every district.

Hospitals have come up in every district.

Considering the situation, continuous work is on to increase the number of beds with medical facility and oxygen. Fourteen new oxygen generation plants have been set up in the state.

Home isolation has been provided to more than 2.5 lakh people in the state, out of which 90 percent have become healthy. Currently, an average of 2.13 lakh men and women are being vaccinated every day.

Remdesivir not a remedy for Covid-19: Doctor

STAFF REPORTER

A leading doctor in Chhattisgarh on Friday urged people not to panic over the non-availability of Remdesivir injection, saying although a few have benefitted there is no guarantee that it helps beat Covid-19. In a statement, Dr

it helps beat Covid-19.
In a statement, Dr
O.P. Sundarani of Dr
Bhimrao Ambedkar
Memorial Hospital here
said not every Covid
patient needed the injection.
It has been found that
even after taking a shot,
patients have died.
Although the injection was found effective to
a few patients, it was not

tion was found effective to a few patients, it was not found effective in the case of many, the doctor said. Meanwhile, the state's Covid caseload rose to



over 5 lakhs on Thursday. With 135 more deaths, the death toll mounted to 5,442. Chhattisgarh has witnessed over 10,000 daily cases in the last 10 days. The number of active cases crossed the

are Raipur and Durg. The total count of infection in Raipur has spiked the one lakh mark.

Now lockdown in Dantewada



STAFF REPORTER

A mid a sharp rise in corona cases and fatalities, a lock-down was declared on Friday in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district. It will begin at 6 am on April 18 and end at the midnight of April 27.

The district's boundary will be sealed and only essential services will be allowed during the lockdown, Collector Deepak Soni said in an order.

Soni said in an order.

Medical shops and petro
pumps will function with condi-

tional restrictions and only movement of medical emergencies will be allowed.

Petrol pumps will be open only for ambulances, ATM vans, medical whiches, media personnel and press related vehicles as well as vehicles from other states.

Mik parlours will operate between 6 and 8 am and 5 to 6.30 pm. Newspaper delivery will be allowed during the same time, the orders said.

time, the orders said.

All shops, vegetable vends, provision stores, liquor shops, commercial and departmental

zones, temples and tourism sites will be shut.

All Central, state government, semi government and private offices as well as banks will be closed. Telecom, sanitization, water supply, maintenance and health departments will work.

Dantewada is among 22 districts where lockdown has been imposed amid a surge in Covid-19 cases and fatalities in the state.

On Thursday, 15,256 people On Thursday, 15,256 people detected Corona positive in Chhattisgarh and 105 patients died.

Jai Stambh Chowk, Raipur's busiest road in normal days, wears a deserted look on Friday as the state government has impo to contain unprecedented surge in Covid cases.

Centre lauds C'garh students' innovative ideas

STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR



for Senuing 55,505 | Information of the Country of the Country of the Country in the Country in the Country in the number of nominations. Despite the Covid-19 crisis, Chhattisgarh ranked third in the country in the number of nominations. In an appreciation letter to the Principal Secretary (School Education). Dr Alok Shukla, the Secretary in the Ministry of Science and Technology, Ashutosh Sharma, said 3,391 nominations have been selected for MANAK awards of Rs 10,000 to each student. The Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) scheme is one of the flagship programmes of the Department of Science & Technology (DST). The awards aim to motivate students in the are ormure of 10-15 and studying in Classes 6 to 10. The objective Technology (DST). The awards aim to motivate students in the age group of 10-15 and studying in Classes 6 to 10. The objective is to target one million original ideas and innovations rooted in science and societal applications to foster a culture of creativity and innovative thinking.

Spat between Baghel, **Raman over pandemic**

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Friday made a scathing attack on his

scathing attack on his predecessor Raman Singh and alleged that he and the BJP are spreading lies over the grim Covid-19 pandemic in the state.

The war of words erupted between Baghel and Raman Singh after the latter accused the Chief Minister of failing to take steps to battle Covid and instead being bogged down by the



who were seen consuming alcohol in a government rest house in Bastar. Countering it, Baghel said it was untrue that the

condition of the pandemic was uncontrollable in the state.

"Raman must cite fig-

"Raman must cite fig-ures and then say any-thing about the condition of the pandemic in the state", he said, adding that the situation in Chhattisgarh was much

better that many of the BJP-ruled states. Baghel advised Raman Singh not to do politics at a time when the infection has taken alarming proportions.

proportions.

He said all possible steps were been taken to contain the virus. The state is far ahead in tresting and the vaccination drive in the entire country.

Baghel also mocked at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to observe a "Tika Utsay" and said the words bed even will like the composition of the containing the containing

people had stopped listening to Modi and the 'Utsav' was a complete failure.

Partial relief in lockdown in Korea

STAFF REPORTER KOREA

The administration in Chhattisgarh's Korea district on Friday granted conditional permission for businesses and shops to reopen in a departure from the earlier strict lockdown announced to bat-

Korea is among 21 districts in the state where lockdown has been imposed amid a surge in Corona cases and deaths.

The Korea lockdown was imposed from April

11 and will end on April 19.

Government fair price shops, vegetable vends, fruit shops, grocers, ration shops, flour mills and milk parlors can now open from 6.00 am to 10.00 am, an official communication said.

Post offices and banks will open from 10.00 am to 2.00 pm but only four persons can enter at any given time.

COVID-19: FEAR OF CATCHING % OF PEOPLE IN ASIAN COUNTRIES WHO SAY THEY ARE "VERY" OR "SOMEWHAT" SCARED THAT THEY WILL CONTRACT COVID-19 53% 85%

No shortage of oxygen for patients: Govt

STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government said orsygen to treat patients suffering from corona infection and other serious diseases and denied that this had led to deaths.

As on April 15, 386.92 tonnes of oxygen are being produced and only 110.30 tonnes of oxygen are needed per day for 5,898 patients on oxygen is continuously supplied to government and private hospitals in the state Cowid-19 patients are dying due to severe infection, the release said. Depending as "absolutely misleading" reports in a section of the media that lack of oxygen was responsible for the fatalities. The Health Department said that oxygen consumption has increased in the state since March 14 due to a steady rise in the number of patients on oxygen support. As of March 14, only 197 patients on oxygen support. As of March 14, only 197 patients on oxygen support required 3.68 tonnes of oxygen. This soared to 110.30 tonnes as on April 15.

Tamboli named nodal officer

Hamboli named nodal officer
The Chhattisgarh government on Friday
Tappointed IAS officer Dr Tamboli Ayyaj
Fakir Bhai as the nodal officer to coordinate
the supply of oxygen cylinders for Covid-19
patients Dr Tamboli, apart from his present
charge, will coordinate the supply of oxygen
cylinders to smoothen their delivery to corona patients across the state, an official press
release said. At present, he is the
Commissioner in the Chhattisgarh Housing
Board as well as CEO of the Raipur
Development Authority and CEO of Atal
Nagar Development Authority.

Govt seeks 285 ventilators

The Chattisgarh government has told the Centre to provide 285 ventilators at the earliest in view of the Covid-19 pandemic in the state, it was announced on Friday.

On April 12, the Addittional Chief Secretary (Health), Renu G. Pillay, wrote to the Secretary of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare making the demand, a press release said. Pillay said Chhattisgarh got 230 ventilators from the Centre last year. The state is taking appropriate steps for the convenience of oxygen supported beds and Intensive Care Units in all districts.

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Former CBI chief Ranjit Sinha dies of Covid-19



Former CBI Director Ranjit Sinha died here on Friday morning reportedly due to Covid-19.

morning reportedly due to Covid-19. Sinha, 68, was confirmed positive for novel coronavirus infection on Thursday night and succumbed to the disease early on Friday, officials said. An IPS officer of the 1974-batch (Bihar cadre), Sinha took over as the Director of CBI on December 3, 2012 and retired on December 2, 2014. He was the 26th Director of CBI after its formation in 1963. Prior to joining as Director, CBI, Sinha was Director General of ITBP. He had earlier theld several important positives.

er held several important posi-tions in CBI including the posiin several important posi-tions in CB1 including the post of Joint Director and DIG. Sinha served as Superintendent of Police of Madhubani, Saharsa and Railway (Patna). He had also served as DIG. Magadh Range, Gaya. He had served in CRPF as Inspector General (Operations) at Srinagar, IG (Personnel) at Directorate General and ADG in ITBR.

Sinha, a Post Graduate in Sinha, a Post Graduate in Science from Patna University, had an M.Phil from IIPA, New Delhi and a Diploma in HR Management from Wollongong University, Australia. He was decorated with the Police Medal for Meritorious Service in 1991 Ensure smooth passage to vehicles carrying oxygen: Centre tells States

Aayog, Dr. Balram Bhargava, DG ICMR, Dr (Prof) Sunil Kumar, DGHS were also pre-sent along with Chief Secretaries, DGs of State Police and Health Secretaries of both

and Health Secretaries of Doin States.
"Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh along with Maharashtra are the only three States in the country which have more than one lakh active cases. Both Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh are reporting very

Centre takes stock of Covid status in UP, Chhattisgarh

PNS III NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday directed the States to ensure uninterrupted movement of medical oxygen carrying vehicles along their borders, and said they must not impose any curb on production and supply of the essential public health commodity anywhere. Union Home Secretary Ajay health commodity anywhere. Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla's communication to chief secretaries of all States and Union Territories came in the wake of reports of shortage of the medical oxygen for Covid-19 patients in different parts of the country in the last few days.

The Home Secretary along with his Health counterpart Rajesh Bhushan chaired high-level meetings to review status

Ragesh Bhushan chaired high-level meetings to review status of Covid-19 in Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh and the public health measures taken for containment and manage-ment of Covid-19 by the State health authorities. Dr V K Paul, Member (Health), NITI

and the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service in 1997. In-charge Director, CBI, Praveen Sinha, in his condo-lence message said, 'Our heart-felt condolences are with the bereaved family in this hour of intense grief. May his soul rest in peace".

Incidentally, it was during Sinha's tenure at the CBI during which the agency earned the sobriquet of 'caged parrot' from the Supreme Court.

The scathing remarks by Justice RM Lodha were a result of Sinha's nine-page affladwit to the Supreme Court giving details of his meetings with the

Pradesh are reporting very high number of daily new Covid-19 cases and high deaths caused by Covid-19. Chhattisgarh has reported nearly 6.2% increase in week-ly new Covid cases based on

then Law Minister Ashwani Kumar and other senior offi-cers during which changes were made in the coal scam probe report submitted to the apex court. "Whatever the Supreme Court says is correct," was his response to the reporters after the controversy.

7 day moving average. In last two weeks, the State has seen almost 131% increase in week-ly new cases. 22 districts in Chhattisgarh have crossed their reported highest cases in the last 30 days; Raipur, Durg. Rajnandgaon and Bilaspur are the most affected districts. In contrast to the week 17th-27rd March 2021, in the week of 7th-15thApril 2021, RT-PCR tests have decreased to 28% (from 34%) while the Antigen Tests have increased to 62% (from 53%).

"Uttar Pradesh has reported a growth rate of 19,25% in daily new cases. 46 districts in Uttar Pradesh have crossed their reported highest cases in

the last 30 days; Lucknow, Kanpur, Varanasi and Prayagraj are the most affect-districts. In contrast to the week 17th-23rd March 2021, in the week of 7th-13th April 2021, RT-PCR tests have decreased to 46% (from 48%) while Antigen tests have increased to 53% (from 51%), said the Home Ministry in a statement.

increased to 53% (from 51%)," said the Home Ministry in a statement.

The Home Secretary emphasised that medical oxygen is an essential public health commodity and any impediment in its supply in the country may critically impact the management of patients suffering from COVID-19 disease in other parts of the country. Therefore, you are requested to ensure that no such restriction is imposed on the movement of medical oxygen between the states and UTs, and transport authorities shall be instructed to accordingly allow free inter-state movement of oxygen carrying vehicles; the letter said.

Bhalla told the states that no curb shall be imposed on oxygen manufacturers and suppliers to limit the oxygen supplies only to the hospitals of the state in which they are located and there shall be free movement of oxygen carrying vehicles into the cities, without any restriction of timings, while also enabling inter-city

any restriction of timings, while also enabling inter-city supply without restriction.

Towards the fag end of his tenure, another controversy stuck him. A purported visitors' diary with names of persons under the CBI scanner in coal and 2G scam surfaced in 2014. It showed that these people were allegedly frequenting his residence.

India may witness 2,320 Covid deaths per day by June: Study

India may witness 1,750
Icoronavirus-related deaths
per day, surging to around
2,320 daily by the first week
of June while in financial
terms, the country may need
to expend over \$7.8 billion on
healthcare usage because of
infections by September 2021,
according to a report of the
Lancet Covid-19 Commission
by India Task Force members.
The report, titled

by India Task Force members.
The report, titled "Managing India's second COVID-19 wave: Urgent steps", underlines the key elements of the second COVID-19 wave. It also suggests measures like ramping up vaccine production, vaccination to the needy, quarantine and ban on assembly of groups of over 10 that should be taken to help mitigate the spread of infection.

As per the preliminary

infection.

As per the preliminary review of the report, "while the pandemic has spread, the geographic contours of the second wave closely mirror those of the first wave, though those of the first wave, though with a deeper penetration into tier-2 and tier-3 cities.³ The study also indicates that the second wave has been more geographically bundled so far.

so far.

The tally of districts constituting the top 50% of the cases has fallen from over 40

ed the then CBI chief to recuse himself from the 2G scam probe on PIL alleging that Sinha met the accused at his

at the time of the first peak to less than 20 presently, it said pointing out that at the time of the first surge of the novel coronavirus cases during August-September 2020, the count of districts contributing to 75% of the total COVID-19 cases was 60-100, whereas it has been approx. 20-40 dis-tricts during the second wave. It took 40 days to go from 10K-80K in COVID-19 sec-ond wave

10K-80K in COVID⁵19 second wave

The second wave is unlike
the first in two significant
ways. Firstly, the rate of
increase in fresh coronavirus
cases is substantially higher.
Secondly, more coronavirus
cases are asymptomatic or
mildly symptomatic, causing
relatively low rates of hospitalisation and mortality.

The overall Case Fatality
Ratio (CFR) since the outset
of the coronavirus pandemic

of the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020 has been

The CFR among Covid-19 patients who have contracted the infection since the beginning of 2021 is considerably less at 0.87%.

ning of 2021 is considerably less at 0.87%.

The report also recommended solutions such as vaccination including all adults, comprising those below 45, with severe comordidities into the priority group, enhancing jab production, widening jab baset including Prizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson besides addressing vaccine hesitancy.

The report also doesn't propose a blanket national or state lockdown. Indicating that economic closures are most disruptive to the poorest sections of society, it proposes a middle-ground approach in India, comprising phased, localised closures or curbs.

into allegations. Taking note of Sharma's report, the CBI regis-tered an FIR against Sinha

Rahul takes potshots at Centre's 'Tughlagi' 'ring-a-bell' strategy

With the menace of Covid-19 getting scarier by the day, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Friday said the Centre's strategy to fight the pandemic consisted of imposing a "Tughlaqi lockdown, ringing bells and singing praises to the Lord. Rahul said one year later the contravenormines to later, the country continues to suffer and infrastructure have crumbled while the Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) continues to turn away from his responsibilities his responsibilities

The Congress-led Opposition has been criticising the Government over its handling of the pandemic and the vaccination drive, while the Centre has maintained that its timely steps have been instrumental in fighting Covid-19. "The Central government's Covid-19 strategy — Stage 1- Impose a Tughhaqi lockdown, Stage 2-Ring bells, Stage 3-Sing praises to the Lord," Rahul tweeted.

Later, on Instagram, the Gandhi scion posted a video from his remarks to the media

क २९४/वि मा /२०२१



providing time for ramping up health infrastructure and contrasted it with a video report of how there is a massive shortage of resources to fight the pandemic currently. "One year later, our people continue to suffer, our infrastructure continues to turn be and our Prime Minister continues to turn wawa from bis responsibili-

crumble and our Prime Minister continues to turn away from his responsibilities, he said in his post.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra appealed to the people to follow COVID-appropriate behaviour such as wearing masks and taking other precautions. "We have to win this battle together with caution and compassion," she said in a tweet in Hindi.

The grand old party in the past also has compared some of the government's decisions to those taken by Delhi Sultanate ruler Muhammad bin Tughlaq, to allege that they were arbitrary and not well though out.

Amid Covid surge, security forces witness 5-fold jump in cases in last 10 days

AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI

Paramilitary forces have almost witnessed five-fold increase in active Covid-19 cases in the last 10 days. On April 5, jawans who had test-ed positive for the virus in Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) were 522 while now the tally goes up to 2,915. Apart from this, the total infected jawans who were test-ed positive in last 24 hours have also increased more than five times.

witnessing four to five cases per day in first week of April has seen massive spike.

seen massive spike.
On April 5, 97 jawans had been tested positive for the virus. The total active cases in CRPF has almost doubled.

ITBP spruces up its facilities to defend personnel against Covid

PNS/AGENCIES III NEW DELHI

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI

The Indo-Tibetan Border
Police (TIBP) has "activated" all its hospitals and operationalised a Covid care centre
in Delhi for serving and retired
personnel of the force in view
of the spurt in coronavirus
infections across the country.
TIBP director general S S
Deswal issued a message in this
regard to around 90,000 personnel and an estimated 20,000
retired and dependents of the
force that was raised in 1962
after the Chinese aggression.
"All our hospitals have
been activated to treat our
'Himveers' (braves of the
mountains) and their families.
Our doctors are highly motiretail and compited to the

mountains) and their families. Our doctors are highly motivated and committed to take care of you. A helpline is being started in this regard. COVID care centre has been made functional at Chhawla (south-west Delhi) campus and it is fully equipped, a statement issued by the force quoting the DG said.

"We are always concerned and committed to take care of our veterans and their fami-

our veterans and their fami-lies. These facilities are avail-able to our veterans also," it added.

added.

Deswal said it was again

"challenging times for the
country in view of the second



The ITBP is primarily tasked to guard the 3.488-km-long Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China apart from rendering a variety of duties in the internal security domain of the country

assault by COVID-19."

"Most of you have been vaccinated as per priority given to us by the government. We are warriors, and will fight it out by following the

COVID-19 safety protocols," the message said. The ITBP chief asked the personnel not to take any chances. "Himveers have to save

other citizens also by rendering all help. Be a sincere follower of COVID-19 safety-protocol Protect yourself, amilies, and near and dear ones," the message said.

The ITBP is primarily tasked to guard the 3488-rinlong Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China apart from rendering a variety of duties in the internal security domain of the country.

As per official data pub-

the country.

As per official data published on April 14, various central armed police forces (CAPFs) are also witnessing a jump in coronavirus infections as the country is witnessing a surge in recent times.

India firms up its stakes in Af New Delhi: Two days after US media queries on the US

New Delhi: Two days after US
Pressident Joe Biden
announced withdrawal of
American troops from
Afghanistan, India on Friday
said any political settlement in
the war-ravaged country must
be inclusive and should preserve the socio-economic and
political gains of the past 19
years.

years.
The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said it has noted the decision of the US

Affairs (MEA) said it has noted the decision of the US to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan and to end its military operations there. "India remains engaged with the Afghan stakeholders and also our regional and international partners regarding next steps," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said.

He said India is "deeply concerned" about the increase in violence and targeted killings in Afghanistan and that it has called for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire.

"We are closely following the ongoing intra-Afghan peace process. Afghan people have seen more than four decades of war and unrest and deserve long-lasting peace and development," the spokesperson said.

Bagchi was responding to

incura queries on the Us announcement, and affighan-lead, Afghan-ban peace process should be Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled. Any political set-lement must be inclusive and should preserve the socio-conomic and political gains of the past 19 years, he said. India supports a united, democratic and sovereign Afghanistan. We are deeply concerned about the increase in violence and targeted killings in Afghanistan. India has called for an immediate and comprehensive casefire, Bagchi adde.

The MEA spokesperson said India has participated in the Doha conference, the Geneva conference and the Heart of Asia conference in bushambe on the Afghan peace process.

"India remains engaged with the Afghan stakeholders and also our regional and international partners regarding next steps," he said.

In a major announcement, President Joe Biden on Wednesday said US troops will be withdrawn from Afghanistan beginning May I and the process will be completed by September 11.

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, भोपाल

विद्युत शाखा

--:: संसोधन पत्र ::--

भोपाल दिनांक 16.04.202

वसून शाखा द्वारा दिनांक 15.04.2021 के निविदा कं. 293/विसून शाखा/2021 (नि.क. 44/021/022) से जारी निविद विष्कुत शांखा द्वारा हरनाक 15.04.2021 का नावाद्य के 295/विष्कृत शांखा/2021 (1-10. 44/021/022) के सार्वाद के स् भीपाल किसे के केवियत ने केवियत ने आमारा परिस्थितियों के दृष्टिगत ऑक्सीवान सरलाई निर्वाध करा से लगाए रखने के लिए पं खुस्तीलाल आयुर्वेदिक चिकित्सालय, भीपाल के हुं 1300 LPM के ऑक्सीवान प्लांट स्थापित एवं सरलाई करने के लिए निविद्या आमंत्रित को जाती हैं। इच्छुक निविद्यालती दिल्लीक 22.04.2021 को सार्य 05.00 को तक अपनी निविद्याओंगर इस कार्यालय को ई-मेल आई.बी. commoffice@bmconline.goxin पर प्रेमित कर सकते हैं। निवाद 22.04.2021 को सार्यकाल 05.30 वर्ष के आई.एस.बी.टी. सिवा निपम की विद्युत शाखा में ड्वीली जायेगी। 20 दिन में प्लांट स्थापित न होने पर निविद्य जूनवता मानी जायेगी। निविद्य के विरुद्ध प्रमुखन प्लांट स्थापन करने के उपरांत किया जायेगा

व	ते निम्नानुस	ार पड़ा जाये।				
Serial No.	Online Tender No.	Name of Work	Portable Amount (in Rs.)	EMD (in Rs.)	Tender Cost (in Rs.)	Completion Period (in months)
01.	2021_UAD _140005_1	Supply Delivery, Installation, Testing & Commissioning with 5 year CMC of 1300 LPM PSA (PRESSURE SWING ADSCRPTION) Oxygen Generator Plant at Pt. Khushilal Ayurvedic Hospital Bhopal	1,30,00,000/-	1,30,000/-	12,500/-	1 Month

- यस व शत :-निर्मिदा प्रथम की निर्भारित राशि एवं भरोहर राशि एवं अन्य आवश्यक स्टतावेब ऑनलाईन प्रस्तुत करने होंगे अन समस्त विस्तृत जानकारी www.mplenders.gov.in पर देखी जा सकती है। अकेशबोर निर्मिद्ध प्रश्न क्या करने को सम्मयतीर्थ दिनोक 16.04.2021 स्वर्थ 6 को से 24.04.2021 सार्थ 65.30 वर्ष तक है अकेशबोर प्रिक्रित के म्हण्यम से टिकोट 60.4.2021 स्वर्थ 5 अबे अवेश्वरताख क्यांत्वय में नियमनुस्पर निवाद खोली जाकेगी किसी भी निर्मिद्ध को स्वीकार अथमा अस्वीकार करने का अधिकार विभाग के पास सुरक्षित होगा।

अधीक्षण यंत्री (वि.)

SC's directive for speedy disposal of cheque bounce cases

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday came out with a slew of directions to ensure speedy disposal of cheque bounce cases and asked the Centre to amend laws to ensure clubbing of trials in cases which are lodged within one year against a person relating to the same transaction.

same transaction.

The apex court directed all the high courts across the country to issue guidelines for trial courts to deal with cheque

trial courts to deal with cheque bounce cases. A five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde fur-ther said that the evidence in cheque dishonour cases can now be tendered by filing affi-davits and there would be no need to examine witnesses physically. The bench, also compris-ing Justices I. Nageswara Rao,

BR Gavai, A S Bopanna and S Ravindra Bhat, asked the Centre to make "suitable amendments" in the Negotiable Instruments Act to ensure that trials in cheque bounce cases lodged in 12 months against a person can be clubbed together into one consolidated case. It reiterated the earlier decision and held that trial courts have no "inherent power" to reconsider their decisions to summon persons to face trials in the cheque bounce cases.

The apex court said the issues which have not been dealt by it would be considered by a committee headed by Justice R C Chavan, former judge of the Bombay High Court.

On March 10, the top court

to submit a report in three months specifying the steps to be taken for early disposal of cheque bounce cases across the country.

It said a three-judge bench would now take up the suo motu matter on ensuring early disposal of cheque bounce cases after eight weeks. It had earlier termed the pendency of over 35 lakhs cheque bounce cases as grotesque" and suggested to the Centre to come up with a law to create additional courts for a particular period of time to deal with such cases.

On Marcch 5 last year, the

such cases.

On March 5 last year, the top court had registered a suo motu case and decided to evolve a "concerted" and "coordinated" mechanism for expeditious disposal of such cases.

PNS

SC appoints special public prosecutors for multi-crore coal scam

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has appointed former Additional Solicitor General Maninder Singh and advocate Rajesh Batra as special public prosecutors (SPPs) for trial of

ragism barra as spectra puonprosecutors (SPPs) for trial of
multi-crore coal scam cases
filed by the Enforcement
Directorate.
Senior advocate R S
Cheema, who was appointed
SPP in 2014 by the top court,
has sought permission to be
relieved of the responsibility
citing his age and shortage of
law officers assisting him.

A bench headed by Chief
Justice S A Bobde said that
though there was no consensus
on the names of individuals,
the counsel appearing on all
sides unanimously agreed that
the apex court should appoint

a seasoned trial court lawyer of impeccable integrity and a designated senior advocate to guide him and conduct the proceedings. "Taking into account the above said criteria, we hereby appoint (i) Shri Maninder Singh, Senior Advocate and former Additional solicitor General of India; and (ii) Shri Rajesh Batra, Advocate as

General of India; and (ii) Shri Rajesh Batra, Advocate as Special Public Prosecutors in the place of R S Cheema. "R S Cheema, may get relieved upon the newly appointed Prosecutors taking charge. This Court records appreciation for the services rendered by R S Cheema," said the bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian. PNS



BJP says Mamata planned riots over firing, releases audio tape

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Even as Mamata Banerjee contin-fued to attack Prime Minister Narendra Modi for importing coro-na in Bengal in his bid to win elec-tions, the BJP on Friday released an the bengan in solt of win elections, the BJP on Friday released an audio-tape showing a conversation between the State Chief Minister and Cooch Behar district Trinamou Congress president Pratha Pratim Roy where she was allegedly instructing him to make preparations for taking out a rally with the corpse of people killed in Sitalkuchi police firing last Saturday.

This JBP leadership claimed was planned by the Chief Minister to stoke communal riots in order to polarise the Muslim voters. A timely banning of politicians — including the Chief Minister — by the Election Commission of India from entering Cooch Behar till last Tuesday however till folded her "criminal designs to fan riots in order

to win elections." BJP leader Amit Malavya said.

to win elections." BJP leader Amit Malayns asid.

Four persons were killed when the CJP opened freed after an alleged crowd of 300-350 men tried to attack the booth number 126 during the fourth phase of polling.

In the purported audio tape featuring Banerjee and Roy who is also the TMC candidate from Sitallauchi the Chief Minister also directed him to make arrangements for lodging an FIR against those who opened fire and implicating in that document the district SP and the local Circle inspector, the BJP leader said adding Roy was asked get the FIR drawn by professional so as to frame not only the central forces but also the district SP and the local Circle inspector. At a time when she should have stood with the law-enforcing agencies the Chief Minister was seen standing by the law-breakers, Malavya said. "Imagine had this rally been allowed to take place

what would have been the situation of Bengal what kind of communal disturbance it would have ignited," he said. "This betrays the criminal mind-set of the Chief Minister who has no

set of the Chief Minister who has no problem with playing politics with the death of people... she was try-ing to reap political dividends with dead bodies; Malavya said adding how Banerjee had been trying to instigate people saying the BJP would invoke National Population Begister to victimize its concentra-

would invoke National Population Register to victimize its opponents in the name of pushing out alleged infiltrators.

"There is no plans of brining NPR now and neither there is any proposal of raising detention camps," Malayva said claiming how the Chief Minister has been spreading false stories in the election rallies to create a mass panic and reap polit-ical dividends. "This she is doing as a last resort because she knows that she is going out of power."

Clubbing last 3 phase polls into 1 against democratic spirits: BJP

Fifth phase of

polling today

NS ■ KOLKATA

Opposing Bengal Chief Minister
Mamata Banerjee's suggestions that
the 8-phase elections be effectively
reduced to six places so say, the BJP
reduced to six places so
gainst democratic spirit putting the votsays and six places so should be so
so should be so should be so
so should

agains undidates into a position or us-advantage.

Bengal goes to the fifth phase of polling on April 17 that is Saturday. Senior BPl eader and its candidate from Tarakeshwar seat in Hooghly Swapan Dasgupta, said after emerging from the all-party meeting called by the Election Commission of India "we have said our party will abide by all protocols put in place by the Election Commission, and urged that no steps be taken that displace by the Election Commission, and urged that no steps be taken that dis-criminates those voting in the next phas-es from those who have already exer-cised their franchise. We have not said anything about clubbing (of phases)... we feel that the elections will be held in

Raiya Sabha election: CPM fields John Brittas

John Brittas, the ideological consultant to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan , has been nominated as the CPP(M) representative to the Rajya Sabha from Kerala. Brittas, who is presently the managing director and chief executive officer of the CPI(M)-owned Kairali TV. channel was one of the close advisors to Pinarayi Vijayan along with Raman Srivastava, the former director general of Kerala Police.

Kerala Police.

The CPI(M) has also nominated V Sivadasan, a former president of the party's student wing SFI as its second nominee. Based on the strength of the party in the current legislature, the CPI(M) can win two seats out of the three at stake. The Muslim Legane has nominated out of the three at stake. The Muslim League has nominated NRI businessman P V Abdul Wahab as its candidate for the April 30 election. The names of Brittas and Shivadasn were announced after

the State Committee of the party met on Friday at the imposing AKG Centre at Thiruvananthapuram. A release issued by the party head quarters after the meeting claimed that the CPI(M)-led LDF would win 80 to 100 seats in the just concluded assembly election to Kerala. "Kerala will see for the first time the demolition of the anti-government feeing and the anti-government feeing and the ruling party coming back to power with more seats," said the release.

power with more seats," said the release.

The nomination of Brittas is being seen as the CPI(M)/s move to cobble up a grand alliance before the 2024 Lok Sabha election which the party hopes to win comfortably based on the recent farm agitation and other people movements headed by the party. "Brittas enjoys considerable clout with many opposition politicians in New Delhi, his second home turf from where he controlled Deshabhimani, the CPI(M)/s official mouth piece.

BMC to use 175 Jaslok Hospital beds for Covid patients, 52 for non-Covid critical patients

Taking cognisance of the fact that as many as 30 critical patients were as an another 22 critical patients were being treated for cardiac/nephro ailments, the Brihannumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Friday made some changes in its earlier decision to convert Mumbai's famed Jaslok Hospital in south Mumbai into a dedicated Covid-19 hospital.

A day after it announced its deci-

riospital in South annuncal nito a ueticated Covid-19 hospital.

A day after it announced its decision to convert Jaslok Hospital into a dedicated Covid-19 hospital, the BMC amended its earlier move and decided not to convert the private medical facility into a fully dedicated Covid-19 hospital, saying that it did "not want to risk the lives of these 52 critical non-COVID patients, presently admitted in Jaslok hospital."

In a revised order issued on Friday, the BMC said that it had conveyed its Thursday's decision to the

Friday, the BMC said that it had conveyed its Thursday's decision to the Jaslok Hospital management. "However, it has been brought to the notice of MCGM by the said management that presently 30 critical patients undergoing cancer treatment and another 22 critical patients undergoing cardia/engenbr, treatment are and another 22 critical patients under-going cardiac/nephro treatment are already admitted in the hospital and considering their medical condition, shifting them to other hospital at this juncture may prove fatal," Mumbai Municipal Commissioner I S Chahal

said in his revised order.

"Hence, it is imperative on part of MCGM not to risk the lives of these 52 critical non-COVID patients, presently admitted in Jaslok hospital. Presently, 227 activated beds exist in Jaslok hospital," Chahal said.

Making amendments in his earlier order, Chahal said "Of the total 227 beds in Jaslok Hospital, 175 beds will function as COVID beds. Of these 175 Covid beds, 29 will be ICU beds"

Chahal said that the remaining 52 beds catering to above mentioned critical control of the con

Chahal said that the remaining 52 beds catering to above mentioned crit-ical patients shall continue to be non-COVID beds. "Rest of the conditions in our earlier will remain unchanged," he said. In effect, the BMC will utilise 175 out of 227 beds to treat Covid-10

175 out of 227 beds to treat worker patients.

Meanwhile, the BMC has instructed the hospital amangement to discharge all the non-cancer and cardiachephro patients undergoing treatment in speciality wards, to shift all such patients requiring non-Cowid tertiary care to nearby tertiary hospitals in 48 hours and to discharge all patients admitted for elective treatments by postponing their surgeries.

s. The BMC has also asked the The BMC has also asked the Jaslok Hospital management to aug-ment suspected/holding area for sus-pected Covid-19 cases, if required and follow all protocols and guidelines laid down for dedicated Covid hospitals as earlier.

NCB busts gang cultivating cannabis in Thane flat

In a major breakthrough in a sensational case involving inter-national ramifications, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has smashed a gang engaged in the cultivation of cannabis inside a two bed room-Hall-Kitchen (BHK) flat at Dombivli in neigh-

has smashed a gang engaged in the cultivation of cannabis inside a two bed room-Hall-Kitche (BHK) flat at Dombivli in neighboring Thane district.

Announcing the busting of the cannabis growing gang that would purchase seeds from Netherland and sell the drugs in cash and crypto currencies like Bitcoins, NCBs zonal director Sameer Wankhede said here on Friday: "This is indeed a big case. We are investigating the entire network that was involved in cultivation of Cannabis by hydroponic technique".

Hydroponics is an effective method for growing plants that places the plants in a water solution that's rich in nutrients. Instead of using soil to grow the plants, the roots of the plants come into direct contact with the nutrient-rich solution.

Acting on intelligence inputs, the NCB carried out the raids at a 2 BHK flat at Dombivil's Palava City, where the investigators found Cannabis being cultivated.

The NCB identified the two arrested persons as Javed Jahangir Sheikh and Arshad Khatri. "We are trying to find out their antecedents and links," Wankhede said.

"During our raids, we found that Cannabis was being cultivated there through Hydroponic techniques. From the site we have recovered cultivation setup. PH regulators, plant nutrients, clay pebbles, water pumps, air circulation systems, "Wankbed said.

The cannabis cultivation was being done clandestinely in

said.

The cannabis cultivation was being done clandestinely in the flat owned by one Rehan Khan who is away in Saudi Arabia. Khan is suspected to be financing the illegal cannabis cultivation, While nArshad is an expert in hydroponic cultivation, Livation, and the said is a considerable of the said was do manage distribution of harvest.

"The two were procuring seeds from Amsterdam in the Netherlands through the dark web. The yield was sold to mediums size peddlers of Mumbai and Pune at the rate of 2,500 per gram for retail," Wankhede said.

PNS ■ KOLKATA Considering the firing deaths in the forurth phase of Assembly elections in Bengal last Saturday the Election Commission of India have made massive arrangements for the fifth phase which would be held on Saturday. More than a crore voters of 45 Assembly constituencies would exercise their franchise deciding the fate of 342 candidates on when 45 seats would go to polls in the fifth phase. According to sources the ECI would deploy about 853 companies of central forces to ensure free and fair voting. Voting will be held at 15,789 polling stations in 16 seats in North 24 Parganas, eight each in Bardhaman East and Nadia, seven in Japaiguri, five in Darjeeling and one in Kalimpong district. Aligarh cops start jail bharo movement

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

A ligarh Police has started "Jail Bharo Andolan" with Operation Prahar to crack down on criminals. Along with this, two other special operations have also been conducted, in which more than one thousand criminals have been arrested within 15 days. On an average, 50 people are being interrogated every day.

people are being interrogated every day. The 'ail Bharo Andolan' was started by the new SSP Kalanidhi Naithani SSP took over the district on 27 March. Three days later, on March 30, Operation Awara started, It was a screw up on those who drink on the road. Under this catch was been taken against 987 people. After this, the operation, unarmed in the district started on April 2. It tightened up those people who are illegally possessing weapons. So far, reports have been sent to the DM to suspend the actual license of 120 people in this operation. After this, Operation Prahar was started from 10 April. Under this, the wanted and the warrants were attacked. In five days, 177 miscreants have been arrested in the 10 days before April 10, about a hundred criminals were caught.

Tamil Nadu's knitwear sector hit hard amid Covid surge

When Europe gets cold Tamil Nadu sneezes. The adage has been proved again as countries like Germany, France and Britain announced lock down due to Covid-19 pandemic leaving nearly one thousand knitwear units in Tirupur gasping for breath.

Despite the Centrés announcement sebut writing final packages.

ing for breath.

Despite the Centre's announcements about various financial packages as apart of the Atmanibhar schemes for the resuscitation of the gloomy industrial sector in the State, the Knitwear exporters are yet to come out of the abysts to which they have fallen since the breaking out of the pandemic all over the world. The textile materials manufactured in Tirupur stand out in the global market because of quality and craftmanship. But that has not been successful in reviving the cash liquidity faced by the European end users of Tirupur's knitwear products, according to Raja M Shanmugham, president, Tirupur Exporters' Association (TEA).

Shanmugham, a real Raja of the knitwear industry, says the fortunes of the industry could be turned for the better by a few measures which could be ordered by Nirmala Sitraman, the country's finance minister. The second lockdown promulgated in major countries like Germany, France and UK from November, has

lead us, mainly MSMEs into a liquid-ity crisis. In addition to this we are fac-ing another shock in the form of ever increasing price of yarn, our important raw material due to business dynam-

increasing price of yam, our important move material due to business dynamics. These factors have reoded the competitiveness of the knitwear industry, Shanmugham, known for his fighting spirits, told The Pioneer with a printing the printing that the certainty written all over his fact.

He said measures like Interest Equalisation Scheme which was amounced for a brief period of two years would help in soothing the pain being suffered by the industry. "This will help us to tide over the financial crunch we are facing due to lock down and high yarn prices and also in sustaining the global competitiveness of Brand Trupur," said the TEA president. The TEA in a memorandum to the minister has pointed out that the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Export Products (RODTEP) announced in January 2021 to replace the ROSCT. (Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies) has not been operationalised which has put the exporters and MSMEs between deep sea and devil.

nd devil. The MSMEs are not receiving the reimbursement of the embedded taxes including electricity tax, Mandi tax, GST on petro-products. The non-disbursement of RODTEP is causing severe liquidity crisis," said the TEA plea.

Maha logs 63,729 new cases

TN RAGHUNATHA III MUMBAI

Maharashtra breached another grim Covid-19 landmark on Friday, as it recorded a staggering 63,729 infections thus crossing a total of 37 lakh infections, even as alarming 398 more people succumbed to the pandemic in various parts of the state.

of 37 lakh infections, even as alarming 398 more people succumbed to the pandemic in various parts of the state.

A day after the pandemic claimed 349 lives and left 61,695 more infected in the state, the daily tally of infections rose by 2034 while the daily Covid-19 went up 49.

With 63729 fresh cases, the total infections climbed from 36.39,855 to 36,03,584. Similarly, with 398 new deaths, the total Covid-19 toll rose from 59,153 to 59,551.

As 45,335 patients were discharged from the hospitals ancest he state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals with the second week of March last year went up to 39,04,391. The recovery rate in the state for the first time in several days dropped from 81.3 per cent to 81.12 per cent.

The number of "active cases" total cases in the state rose from 6,20,060 to 6,38,034. The thatlity rate in the state dropped from 1.63 per cent to 1.61 per cent.

With 53 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai rose from 12,197 to 12,250, while the infected cases went up by 880 xi0 triggers a jump in the infections from 5,53,404 to 5,62,207.

While Pune accounted for a maximum 1,16,665 "active cases" in the state, Aumbai stood second with 84,378 active cases, followed

1,16,665 "active cases" in the state, Mumbai stood second with 84,378 active cases, followed

by Thane (84038), Nagpur (71539), Nashik (49,925), Aurangabad (13,630), Ahmednagar (18,049), Nanded (13,134), Bhandara (13987), Jalgaon (11,570), Latur (14033), Solapur (11051), Satara (10551), Parbhani (10,336), Beed (7922), Nandurbar (7330), Chandrapur (10,144) and

3 MVA Mins indicate fresh curbs

Mumbai: With the continued surge in the Covid-19 Government would enforce more stringent restrictions to break the chain of fast spreading infortiers.

Interctions. Talking separately to media persons, State Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil, public health and family welfare minister Rajesh Tope and relief and rehabilitation minister Vijaly Walethwar said that the state government was looking at ways to make the Covid-19 protocols more stringent in view of the increasing number of infections and deaths across the state. "If people do not cooperate with the government in implementing the Covid-19 norms, we may have to strengthen the restrictions," Walse-Pail said. Wadethwar said that to save the lives of people the government might have to announce new curbs. The state may announce curbs on supply of fuel (petrol and diesels). people are still using local

(petrol and diesel)...people are still using local trains even though they are not in essential services," he said.

10,031 new cases in Kerala. 8.449 in TN

KOCHI/CHENNAI: Kerala, on KOCHI/CHENNAI: Kerala, once claimed as inaccessible to the pan-demic by political masters, tested 10,031 new Covid-19 patients in the 12 hours that ended at 6 PM on Friday. The State also registered 21 deaths and a Test Positivity Ratio of 14.8 which has accorded the sta-tus of Covid-19 epicenter to Kerala, according to a Department of Health physician in Ernakulam. Situation is alarming in neigh-poring Tamil Nadu which diag-nosed 8,449 new cases and record-d 33 deaths by Friday evening. The figures in both the States are like-ly to see a surge for the next like-

figures in both the States are like-yto see a surge for the next few weeks, according to doctors in the Government doctors. V P Joy, chief secretary of Kerala, made it clear that the impact of the restric-tions amounced on Thursday would be known only after ten days. Though the Kerala Government had declared that more than 2.5 lakh persons would be tested on Friday and Saturday, as part of its test, track and isolate mission, the State has tested only

mission, the State has tested only 67,000 persons till Friday 5 pm.

Be transparent, honest on Covid situation: Gui HC to Govt

Gandhinagar: The Guiarat Gandinagar: The Gujarat High Court, in its order on the suo moto PIL it filed regarding the current upsurge in the Covid situation, has asked the State Government to reach to the public in an honest and transparent manner so as to tackle the crisis the state is fac-

A division bench of Chief Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Plantgav D. Karia, which had held a hearing on the Cowid stution with Advocate General Kamal Trivedi appearing on behalf of the state government, was dissatisfied with the "rosy picture" painted by the government as the prevailing situation was opposite its claims. The high court, in its order, ordered the state government to increase the existing RT-PCR testing facilities and ensure the reduction of time to get the reports. It also ordered that accurate reporting of the RT-

accurate reporting of the RT-PCR results to be made public.

"The state should not feel shy of publishing the correct data."

data."
Regarding the public perception about remdesivir injections being a miracle drug and Trivedi's explanation that the drug was over-prescribed, the court ordered that remdesivir's drug was over-prescribed, the court ordered that remdessivir's administration and its dependency should be explained and communicated to the public through various print, electronic and social media, so that the deficit and misuse by black marketeers stop.

The court also ordered the state government control the online portal providing details of availability of beds etc, and that instead of the data being updated twice a day, the data and the display of availability of beds should be made real time. The government was also told to report to the court about the status of availability of oxygen in the state with regards to the demand.

The court order also advised the state government to make efforts to find out the actual number of Covid cases so as to remove the general per-ception in the public that state provided data was not accurate.

provided data was not accurate.

"Make necessary arrangements to be made by the
responsible officer with regard
to the number of positive
patients, the number of deaths
due to Covid, the number of
deaths due to Covid with comorbidity, to restore faith and
trust in the public," the court
said.

The state should come up
publicly in a transparent and

"The state should come up publicly in a transparent and fair manner with regards to availability and modalities of the required amenities, medical and related infrastructure for treatment of the patients, who require facilities of Covid-19 hospitalisation, with oxygen, ventilators, medicines etc.
"In order to achieve the objectives of removing the

public perception and restoring the faith, the state needs to have honest and transparent dialogue with the public which should be communicated with all, through print, electronic and social media," it added.

The state has nothing to gain by hiding the real picture and hence, suppression and concealment of accurate data would generate more serious problems, including fear, loss of trust, panic in the public. Coming out in a transparent and honest manner will also create awareness about the grave situation prevailing in the current times, to persuade the public to strictly abide by the Standard Operating Protocol regarding Covid."

The court, noting the request from the Indian Medical Association's Gujarat branch wishing to participate, said that it was free to do so as it scheduled the next hearing for April 20.

Released by Maoists, CRPF commando gets heroic welcome on return

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

CRPF CoBRA Commando Rakeshwar A CRPF CoBRA Commando Rakeshwar ASingh Manhas, abducted and later released by the Maoists in Bijapur area of Chhattiggarh last week, received a hero's welcome on his arrival here in Jammu on Friday.

**Accompanied by social workers who

Friday.

Accompanied by social workers who played a key role towards ensuring his safe release from the custody of Maoists on April 8, Manhas landed at Jammu airport where his five year daughter received him along with her mother and cheerful relatives amid patriotic chants hailing 'Mother India'.

From the airport Manhas was escort-n a cavalcade to a famous resort where From the airport Mainias was escus-ed in a cavalcade to a famous resort where he was accorded a red carpet welcome too. He was warmly hugged by his family mem-bers and close friends at the main entrance of the resort. His mother and Wife along with hundreds of close relatives and well



wishers garlanded him and performed spe-cial prayers before escorting him inside the

hall.

"I am very happy today. I hugged my father and kissed him when he took me in his arms after landing at the Jammu airport", the five year old daughter told reporters wearing a big smile on her face.

Meenu Chib, wife of Rakeshwar Singh Manhas was jubilant after meeting her husband. "I am very happy. All our prayers were answered and every one in the government at all levels played their role at the centre and state level to ensure safe release

of my husband". "I also thank CRPF officials and the entire media fraternity for all their support and help' she added.
Rakeshwar Singh in his brief interaction told large gathering of reporters, "I am feeling happy in the company of my family'. He said all the jawans who were part of the operation in Bijapur fought brave-ly before attaining martyrdom. He said, "when i was in their captivity i had no clue what was happening as i had no tools of communication available with me". He once again thanked all those social activists and local media persons from Chhattisgarh who ensured his safe return.
Uncle of Rakeshwar Singh Manhas, on behalf of the family made a brief statement thanking all those involved and responsible for ensuring safe return of the CRPF commando. The family also paid rich tributes in the memory of CRPF jawans martyred in the Maoist attack in Bijapur area of Chhattisgarh.



Visitors stand outside the closed gate of Victoria Memorial, amid rise in coronavirus cases across the country, in Kolkata on Friday

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- PAPER WITH PASSION

Bumpy road ahead

To avoid having a comatose economy now, we must bear the cross of our earlier negligence

ndia is hunkering down again to battle the second and more virulent wave of the Coronavirus outbreak. It would have been much better for us had we sincerely stuck to the COVID-19 protocols when the numbers were down and, who knows, we might have been rid of this pesky virus by now! While the average citizen decided that it was "okay" to return to the crowded restaurants, malls, airports and bus and railway stations without masks or social distancing, our short-sighted politicos postponed the all-important Board exams but considered it imperative to hold political rallies and road shows brimming with nonchalant people ahead of the Assembly elections, because their future depended on it. The religious leaders found it exigent



for us to wash away our sins by bathing in the mil-lions in the holy Ganga. Now, here's the result of our collective endeavours: The Coronavirus cases across the country hit a record 2,17,353 fresh infections in the last 24 hours, the eighth record daily increase in the last nine days. In the same period, 1,185 people lost their lives due to the viral disease. The numbers coming out of the Health Ministry say that India registered a steady increase in the number of active Corona cases for the 36th day in a row. Now, we are scrambling to control the damage. The Home Ministry has asked its officers up

age. The Interest ministry has asked to siniters up to the level of Under-Secretary to avail the WFH option while the Deputy Secretary and above-ranking officials have been asked to attend office regularly with the option to stagger timings between 9 AM and 10 AM.

Various States, including the Capital, have also come up with local-level restrictions from the option to the company properties of the company o

 ranging from shutting of malls, gyms, swimming pools and auditoriums. prohibiting dining at restaurants, besides imposing a weekend lockdown and night curfew. The Government has assured the citizenry that the "test, trace, treat" and vaccination drive will continue unabated and that the national drug controller will take just three days to process applications of the foreign-made vaccines once they've been approved for emergency use in India. One can only hope that this time around, been approved in energeticly seal initials. The foreign the fact with the Government grits its teeth and stands by the Prime Minister's words that "we must learn to live with the virus". No matter how many restrictions are placed on recreation and how many weekends are spent imprisoned indoors, the nation's economy must not be shut down again. The first wave gave us many lessons on how identify the product of the product o to identify hotspots, impose local lockdowns and create containment zones in order to keep the wheels of the industry churning. We have to ensure that our march towards a self-reliant, New India continues; our ailing economy that was just beginning to revive cannot be delivered another body blow in the form of a hard lockdown. Else, we risk having a comatose economy in our hands. So, the nation would do well to gird up its loins and prepare for a bumpy road ahead, but the wheels of the economy cannot stop, no matter what.



Smoke billows from a forest fire at the Ketli area in Shimla

Good omen

It's time for the CJI's wish for a woman judge to head the nation's top court to come true

hief Justice of India SA Bobde deserves nothing less than the nation's applause and compliments for recently stating unequivocally that the time has come when a woman should head the top court. Hinting that the apex court was already moving along the right path on the issue, he underscored that there was "no need



for a change of attitude" of the Collegium to ensure greater representation of women in the judiciary. Hearing a plea by a women lawyers' body seeking consideration of the "meritorious" lot among them for appointment as judges in the High Courts, a Bench comprising Chief Justice Bobde and Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Surya Kant said: "Why only higher judiciary? We think the time has come when a woman should be the Chief Justice of India." At this juncshould be the chief Joseph of the Joseph of

11, and the Delhi and Bombay High Courts have eight women judges each.
Interestingly, while the Supreme Court's emphasis on gender issues is to be lauded, it would truly have credibility and value if its own actions were consistent on this subject. Consider this: There is only one female judge among the 34 positions that currently constitute the Supreme Court. With Justice Indu Malhotra's retirement last month, the Collegium is considering a few women judges for elevation. The nation's top court has had only eight women judges since it came into existence on January 26, 1950. The first one, Fathirma Beevi, made it to the elite club only as late as in October 1989. Not a single woman judge has figured in the list of 48 CJIs since its inception. It would perhaps not be out of the context here to mention that the Supreme Court had recently pointed to the delay in giving women permanent commission in the military, blaming it on the "systemic bias" within the Ministry of Defence. While there certainly seems to be some truth in what it said, it is a complicated issue, especially the impact of women in combat roles. That said, in either case, there's no denying that women are up to performing any professional job with panache while balancing with finesse their roles as mother, daughter, sister, wife and homemaker.

India's flaming forests play havoc

Explored in



Natural causes and human intervention are to blame for the rising number of conflagrations not only in India, but the world over

he surge of forest fires in Uttarakhand once again underlines the phenomenon in India. There has been a series of these this year in Himachal Pradesh, the Nagaland-Manipur border, oddisha, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. According to the India State of Forest Report 2019 (ISFR) — the latest in the line of such reports — released by the Forest Survey of India (FSI). Dehradun, over 30,000 forest fires were reported in the country in 2019. The report identified nearly 21.67 per cent (7,12.249 sq km) of the country's land area as forested. Another 2.89 per cent (95,027 sq km) was under tree cover.

The report identified 2,77,758 forest fire points across the country, and stated that about 21.40 per cent of India's forests are prone to fires. Of this 3.89 ner cent

try, and slated that about 21.40 per cent of India's forests are prone to fires. Of this, 3.89 per cent belonged to the category of extremely fire-prone, 6.01 per cent very highly fire-prone. G.01 per cent very highly fire-prone and Tripura and Tripura and Tripura are "extremely prone" to conflagrations. According to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) annual report for 2020-21, the States with large forest areas and falling under the "very highly fire-prone" category — including Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland Uttar Pradesh — were turning into "extremely fire-prone" hotspots; so were regions like western Maharashtra, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh areas for the western Maharashtra, so were regions like western Maharashtra, so were recommended to the pradesh and areas of Telanusmend Andhra Pradesh Chhattisgarh and areas of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh,

Telangama and Andhra Pradesh, along with central Odisha. Areas under the "highly prone" and "moderately prone" categories make up about 26.2, per cent of the total forest cover — a staggering 1,72,374 sq km.

A State prone to forest fires is suffered at least 540 of these from 2016 to 2020. Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh are witness to the most frequent forest fires annually. According to the National Forest Inventory under the MoEFCC, the fires severely affect almost 10

per cent of the country's forest area while mildly affecting about 54 per cent, which makes about two-third of India's forests vulnerable to fires.

forests vulnerable to fires.

The question is: Why is it so? Lightining is the most important natural cause. Another is the spontaneous combustion of dried-up leaves and sticks. The one that has been an increasingly potent factor, and is set to become even more so, is global warming. It dries up the leaves and shrubbery on the ground, making them highly inflammable. It also dries up the soil. Thus, the lack of soil moisture as a result or rainfall deficiency during of rainfall deficiency during monsoons — less than 18 per cent and 20 per cent in 2019 cent and 20 per cent in 2019 and 2020, respectively — has been an important factor in this year's Uttarakhand fires. In fact, it has been a cause not only in many other parts of India but the entire world — the blazes bedevilling Australia, California in the US and the Amazon rainforests in Brazil are examples. Human activity, however, is responsible for the overwhelming majority of forest fires the world over. In India, these blazes are mainly caused

these blazes are mainly caused by the slash-and-burn method by the slash-and-burn means of shifting agriculture, known



FOREST FIRES ARE AS OLD AS FORESTS AND WILL **CONTINUE TO** OCCUR AS LONG AS FORESTS EXIST. ONE, HOWEVER, CAN LIMIT THEIR INCIDENCE AND ADVERSE **CONSEQUENCES BY** FIRMLY DEALING WITH THE TIMBER. **BUILDER AND** MINING MAFIA, AND THE POACHERS

as ihum in Arunachal Pradesh

as jlum in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura and Assam, Meneri it is practised over about 15,000 sq km of forest land. The blazes are also set off to clear the ground for mining, timber felling and the construction of human settlements and industrial units, besides warding off the wild animals. People burn dry leaves and shrubbery on forest grounds, believing that it would lead to the sprouting of new and healthier grass. Poachers light fires on three sides to corner fleeting wild animals in one area as their concentrated presence helps killing. People visiting forests are often careless and leave behind lighted butts of cigarettes or bidis, besides inflammable material.

Things are made worse by the fact that it is difficult by the fact that it is difficult to extinguish forest fires. The absence of roads prevents fire tenders from reaching the sites and high winds carry the sparks to new areas. Helicopters are pressed into service — as in Uttarakhand recently where two Indian Air Force helicopters, each with a 5,000-litre water tank, were deployed. There are, however, limits to the number of helicopters that can be used and the availability of large lakes or rivers from which these can draw water.

lakes or rivers from which these can draw water. Forest fires wreak havoc in India every year. They destroy forests, cause pollution, turn streams dry or adversely affect their water quality, damage soil autrients and increase the risk of soil erosion. They kill wildlife and insects, including endangered species, and destroy their habitats, damage national parks and sanctuaries, driving the wild animals like tigers, leopards and elphants towards human settlements, thus aggravating the human-animal conflict. And, of course, they kill humans and destroy their property.

The question is: What is to be done? Forest fires are as old as forests and will continue to

as forests and will continue to occur as long as forests exist. occur as long as forests exist. One, however, can limit their incidence by firmly dealing with the timber, builder and mining mafia, and the poachers, and simultaneously enlightening people not to carelessly leave incendiary material in forests. The Central and State Governments will have to this end. The consequences of not doing so will be severe. (The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal.)

expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NEGLIGENCE RESPONSIBLE FOR SITUATION

NEALBENCE RESPONSIBLE FOR SITUATION
Sir — Instead of getting stunned by the rising number of COVID cases in the country, we must admit the fact that we are not moving towards a second wave but are actually in its grip. As the demand for Remdesivir surges, the Centre has fast-tracked applications from companies to manufacture the critical anti-viral drug in order to ensure its smooth availability. Night curfews and partial lockdowns are being imposed in many parts of the country as a measure to control the deadly virus. Amid the rising cases, the Centre has announced the cancellation of the CBSE Board exams for Class 10 and has deferred Class 12 exams.

for Class 10 and has deferred Class 12 exams.

On the other hand, lakhs of devotees have been taking a holy dip in the Ganga on the occasion of the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar, flouting the COVID norms. It is however ironic that while the Government has no compunction about cancelling the Board examinations, elections in the country are continuing as if nothing has happened. These fears have been magnified all the more with the dismal disregard shown by various State Governments to clamping down on mass public events and gatherings. While a proactive approach to control and manage the crowds when it comes to stonevalling the widely contagious virus, is a remedy to the problem, the complete disregard shown towards the basic safety precautions is indeed perplexing! precautions is indeed perplexing!
Pachu Menon | Goa

TROOP WITHDRAWAL WILL CREATE VACUUM INOUP WINDIAWAK WILL CREATE VACCOUN SIT— THE US decision to withdraw troops from Afghanistan is not good at the pre-sent moment as the situation on the ground is far from satisfactory. The Taliban is still controlling parts of Afghanistan and there is considerable influence of Pakistan and support from China, too. The chances of disintegration of Afghanistan are quite of disintegration of Afghanistan are quite high. The withdrawal of the US troops might create a vacuum which, if acquired by the disruptive forces, will push the country into turmoil. President Joe Biden has said the US troops will be withdrawn from

Politicisation of vaccines



Politics over the anti-Coronavirus vaccine started the day Prime Minister Narendra Moid announced free jabs to the people of Bihar in the run-up to the Assembly elections in October-November last year. The vaccine policy suffered from the play of politics and one-upmanship. Besides, appalling naiveness in assessing the demand during the action wave different wave different wave for afforcing the control wave different parts for afforcing the control of ond wave, differing norms for affording authorisation for use, inertia in augmenting inhouse capacity, exports as a policy and imports in fetters together impacted the availability of vaccines in the country. After the

Afghanistan beginning May 1 and the process will be completed by September 11. For his part, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said he spoke to Biden and that his country respects the US decision.

Maybe the US troops might be shifted to some other regions of the world. The US is also facing domestic problems and is ravaged by the COVID pandemic. Washington needs a war to run its economy. The weapons industry needs insecurity among the countries to sell weapons and make profits. In my opinion, the US troops will be shifted to another war. Let's wait and watch till the withdrawal in September.

Sumil Pradhan | Odisha

BAN SUPER-SPREADER EVENTS Sir — It refers to the editorial 'Matters of faith' (April 16). At a time when the Government has done away with bridging trials for foreign-made vaccines for

authorisation of the Oxford-assisted Covishield authorisation of the Oxford-assisted Covishield and the Indigenously-developed Covaxin for emergency use, the authorities soft-pedalled on giving authorisation and import/production licence(s) to other popular vaccine candidates in the world. According to the Lancet, Russia's vaccine Sputnik V had the efficacy of 91.6 per cent. While the chronic shortage was being flet, the Government allowed the exports to showcase India as a powerhouse of vaccines. To draw an analogy, the US has accumulated stocks which could vaccinate its entire population.

In fact, the possibility of a furious second

population.
In fact, the possibility of a furious second wave was overlooked. India's daily COVID count has crossed 2 lakh now. This surger must be viewed against the overloaded hospitals, shortage in oxygen supply, inadequacy in life-saving ventilators and shortfalls in vaccines and medicines. There is an urgent need to reassess the situation carefully and honestly to mount a multipronged action to crush the climbing curve and aument treatment facilities. curve and augment treatment facilities.

Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

COVID-19 to facilitate acceleration in vaccination, it should seriously think about banning religious events like the Kumbh Mela which has become a super-spreader. In just five days, 1,701 people have tested positive for COVID-19 in the Kumbh Mela area. The Uttarakhand Police was unable to impose the standard operating procedures (SOPs) on the seers of akhadas and the ash-smeared ascetics crowding the Har Ki Pauri on the two shahi snans because of time constraints. Now Niranjani Akhada, one of the 13 akhadas of seers participating in the Kumbh, has decided to return from the event in the wake of the deteriorating COVID-19 situation. But it is too late rating COVID-19 situation. But it is too late as the damage has already been done.

Bal Govind | Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

Being a tourist State, if we impose night curfew, it will create a spin-off effect. People should remain alert. We have issued an advisory. We are continuing





If we were to lift the border have to become used to dealing with 1,000 cases or more a week.

I would love to sing in films that I am going to be a part of, as well as for others, as a playback singer.







He is not the MS Dhoni which he used to be probably four or five years back, where he could just come in and start taking on the bowlers from the word go.

There is no shortage of Remdesivir drug but if anyone is trying to misuse the pandemic situation by black-marketing, then

all those will be punished severely Karnataka Home Ministe www.dailypioneer.com

FIRST COLUMN

THE NEW REALTY FOR INDIANS

People are acquiring slices of rent-yielding properties in a way that is comparable to investing in a firm's stocks



SONAM CHANDWANI

pall of gloom over the real estate industry on account of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light several unconvention-al methods being applied to keep the dreams of property buy-alive, while developers strive to stay afloat. A growing number of Indians are acquiring slices of rent-yielding residential and commercial properties in a way that is comparable to investing in the stocks of a company. Fractional real estate, as the concept is known, allows investors to buy, say, one per cent of a vacation home for a mini-mum amount and use it whenever they want, while earning rental income, too. While weekend properties are neither essential nor urgent the outbreak has changed this perception. Such a realty ownership concept has arisen predominantly from the Work-From-Home (WFH) culture and the work-vacation culture, attracting NRIs and domestic buyers alike. Such a property acts like an asset, attracting a plethora of investors, in the end becoming a potential Special Purpose Vehicle-related investment. From the taxation standpoint, the fractional own-ership of a property opens up such owners to a plethora of taxable liabilities, when comparing the yearly taxation related costs of such interests, prospective buyers or their counsel/advisors need to be sure of the usage arrangement, location, ownership size, basic amenities and other items.



A unicorn investment refers to a startup avenue/venture, occupying less than \$1 billion of the industry share. Considering the fact that this sort of timeshare arrangement is a novel arena of investment for Indians, the value of such investment could possibly render the whole idea as a potential cash cow for real estate developor a dapting to such forms of investment. With the pandemic hav-ing rendered the traditional and conventional real estate an under-yield-ing area of investment in the markets currently, fractional ownership might just pave way for a steady boom in the real estate sector. While fractional ownership may appear to be an inexpensive mode of invest-ment to potential investors, it has its pros and cons. Procedures involv-ing the investment in such ventures could involve detailed due gences and legal red-tapism. Not paying attention to such procedures could end up putting stressed properties in the hands of lesser advised

Moreover, expenses considering maintenance and management of the property and any such costs could essentially tip the scales against the owners should they not be able to actually utilise the property within their arrangements. Having said that, the benefits accru-ing out of part ownership of vacation properties, while not account-ing monumentally in financial terms, are manifold where it comes to utilisation. Such a property allows the investors to change their workunusation. Such a properly allows let investors to change their work-space surroundings and choose rather inexpensive modes of vaca-tion and even earn some money out of renting it out to other vaca-tioners. Though fractional ownership could lead to a real estate invest-ment boom the sector so gravely yearns for, the legal procedures involved might turn off a certain class of investors. Moreover, a relatively-new arena of investment always ends up taking a lot more time in yielding benefits, even if the time-value of money is rather unaccountable, since the property provides more leisurely than com-mercial benefits. Timeshare investments, while popular in the West, are considered to be a nascent area of investment, particularly while fractional ownership is considered. However, given the correct legal framework and taxation incentives, the current status of such investment could be elevated to providing the work-vacation culture the stability that the recent short-lived boom is testament to.

(The writer is Managing Partner KS Legal and Associates. The sexpressed are personal.)

Time to turn Nocebo to Placebo in India



We must widely propagate the positives of getting inoculated, underplay the negatives and whole-heartedly support the Govt's initiatives towards massive vaccination drives

The pandemic and its prevalence have taught us many lessons in perseverance and patience. We have raced from one decision to the next, hoping that the latest one will make everything normal again. While the scientists have been working relentlessly to understand the virus and come up with increasingly promising vaccine candidates, the virus has been playing truant and evolving in new forms to ditch human efforts and survive as more observed within the baselone of the news engineering the production of the contract of the

with increasingly promising vaccine candidates, the virus has been playing truant and evolving in new forms to ditch human efforts and survive as more robust variants. In the wake of the ever-changing variants, efficacy statistics and reported side effects, the so-called ultimate solution to end the pandemic, the anti-Corona vaccine, doesn't appear to be so attractive anymore. People are hesitant to take the shot, confirming the 'Nocebo Effect' to the perceived solution of the pandemic that doesn't seem to be getting anywhere close to its end. The hesitancy is spread across the globe. Some think they will never get the disease while others believe the virus is on its way out. Social media has been most instrumental in spreading the hesitancy due to varied opinions of people who have wide social media presence and have contributed to turning the solution from placebo to nocebo.

Understanding and addressing vaccine hesitancy has become very important in the drive towards normalising life, avoiding deaths and allowing the economy to run to its full capacity. These were the very reasons why a COVID-19 vaccine was needed in the first place. What made the long wait for a solution turn into vaccine hesitancy needs serious thought. As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), waccine hesitancy is the delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines despite their availability. Medical practitioners and scientists have been making all out efforts to discuss and address the common causes of concern. Fear and hesitancy comform the unknown, hence the awareness needs to rise. This has led to a negative mindset against the vaccine. The hesitancy has also been triggered by the side effects reported in some cases as a result of administering the vaccine. The hesitancy has also been traggered by the side effects reported in some cases as a result of administering the vaccine. The hesitancy to as a side effect of the AstraZenca pha and discontinuation of the vaccine thereafter in at least a dozen that the safety measures and discontinu

uation of the vaccine thereafter in at least a dozen European countries before resuming them again, doubts have grown more than ever. The latest news that Demark has totally stopped the use of the AstraZeneca jab in its inoculation drive is not help-ing the cause and instilling confidence in people. While Governments across the globe have rolled out the vaccine and invited people to get vaccinat-ed at the earliest, the vaccination centres report a different story. Dealing with vaccine hesitancy has become the next big challenge, even in a country like India, which is now the second-most badly hit nation in the world after the U.S. In order to build trust and confidence in the jab, a multi-pronged strategy is required with transpar-

a multi-pronged strategy is required with transpar-ent communication as the key. With the second wave already in full swing and numerous variants of the original virus here, the danger is far from over. Herd immunity, as it was being perceived, is nowhere in sight as there are people who have reported a sec-ond infection. The diversity of the disease is unfath-



WHILE THE RUSSIAN VACCINE SPUTNIK V HAS BEEN GIVEN THE GO AHEAD AND WILL STEED AND WILL SHOW THE ALL SHOWN ATTER SHORT TRIALS HERE, THE CENTRE IS ALSO LOOKING AT FAST APPROVALS FOR VACCINES FROM OTHER NATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN THAT HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY THE WHO FOR EMERGENCY USE. IT IS ONLY A AND THE SHORTAGE
WILL BE A THING
OF THE PAST. BUT
THE BIG QUESTION
IS WILL VACCINE
HESITANCY, TOO, BE GONE SOON?



Attitudes towards the COVID19 vaccines have changed overtime
and varied greatly. The theory of
developing antibodies on being
infected has also led to a decrease in
he relevance of the vaccine. Infected
individuals feel they have developed antibodies and are immunised
against the disease, so they do not
need a shot. However, the protective
abilities of antibodies in sero-surveys
is unknown and their effectiveness in
preventing reinfection is still to be
studied. The belief that the vaccine
is rushed and has not been tested
properly is another setback.

That some of the scientists have
been supporting this belief has also
given boost to hesitancy. It is also
assumed that the efficacy of the vaccine is being underplayed so that
people do not become lax in observacine is being underplayed so that
people do not become lax in observaing COVID-apropriate behaviour.
Another view being expressed is that
the immunity after vaccination lasts
for only six months, which wrongly
implies that the shot is not effective.
People also think that if the survival
and recovery rate is 99.6 per cent,
why even bother getting a jab.

All these supposed opinions and
views have stopped people from geting vaccinated. Giving compensation for getting vaccinated has always
backfired as people think that they
are being paid because there is
something to hide. The only groups
that have justifiable concerns are the
elderly, people with co-morbidities,
pregnant women and those with high Attitudes towards the COVID-

elderly, people with co-morbidities, pregnant women and those with high allergic reactions to vaccines. Also,

there is no vaccine to protect our children, as of now. Though getting vaccinated is a personal choice, the most successful inoculation drives have been built on knowledge exchange, accessibility and successful stories of those getting vaccinated.

Sherita Hill Golden, vice-president, chief diversity officer and a Professor of Medicine at Johns Hopkins Medicine talks of 12 things you need to know in the wake of the current vaccine hesitancy. The facts and insights into making a personal choice to get inoculated include the following: Getting vaccinated can protect you from getting COVID as your body will be ready to fight the Coronavirus if you are exposed to it; your body will be ready to fight the Coronavirus if you are exposed to it, the people of colour are especially vulnerable to severe COVID-19 and its risk factors; getting inoculated helps others in the community, more so when people have chronic medical conditions; more vaccinations mean a chance to return to normal after having to experience closures, cancellations and postponements; though the vaccine development was fast, no steps were skipped while testing for safety and efficacy diversity in vaccine testing helped assess safety and effectiveness; side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine are sparse and temporary, mainly limited to a sore arm, mild fever or body aches; it is possible to get the shot ed to a sore arm, mild fever or body aches; it is possible to get the shot despite allergies except if you have severe allergic reactions to vaccines; the vaccine is safe for breastfeeding mothers, though pregnant women

should discuss it with their doctors as the vaccine have not been tested in pregnant women; the jab can give you extra protection, if you already had COVID-19, waiting too long allows the virus to spread in the community, hence, time is of the essence for the vaccine; the pandemic can only be shortened if the vaccine is well-received.

Hence, people have been advised to do their own research from reliable sources and take an informed decision regarding getting vaccinated. Where the issue of the shortage of the vaccine in the country is conshould discuss it with their doctors

of the vaccine in the country is cor cerned, the Government is doing all it can to ensure that the needs of the it can to ensure that the needs of the people are met at the earliest. When the Russian vaccine Sputnik VI has been given the go ahead and will hit the market soon after short trials here, the Centre is also looking at fast approvals for vaccines from other nations that have been approved by the WHO for emergency use. It is only a matter of time and the short-age will be a thing of the past. But the big question is will vaccine hesitanty, too, be gone soon?

It is time to put resolve into widely propagating the positives of getting vaccinated, underplaying the sparse negatives and whole-heartedly supporting the Government's initiatives towards massive vaccination drust so that the pandemic situation can be

towards massive vaccination drives so that the pandemic situation can be controlled, the economic downturn can be lifted and normalcy restored. Its time we turned this nocebo to a placebo and support humanity.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

IF CENTRAL ARMED FORCES ARE ATTACKED THEN SHOTS SHOULD BE FIRED. IT DOES NOT MATTER WHO DIES OR LIVES.

RAHUL SINHA

The writer is Registrar IIT Delhi.





HE HAS UNMASKED THE TRUE FACE OF THE BJP. PEOPLE WILL GIVE THEM A REFITTING REPLY. —TMC SPOKESPERSON

The Maha Kumbh of COVID and environmental risks

The Govt is not ignorant of the health costs of these events during the ongoing second wave of the outbreak but populist measures are the top priority during elections

The Kumbh Mela was first mentioned in the accounts of Hiuen Tsang, the famous Chinese traveller who visited India in the seventh century. The grand event, with a 2,000-year-old history, commenced this year in January and will continue till the end of August 1 and yan actalists, year in January and will continue till the end of April. Currently, at over two lakh new cases, India accounts for one in six of all new COVID infections globally. But these rather grim facts did not deter nearly 13.5 lakh devotees, including the members of the 13 Akharas from taking the holy dip or the Shahi Shan on April 13.

The consequences of the ongoing Maha Kumbh upon public health have been devastating, to say the least. In the last 24 hours, Haridwarh has reported over 1,000 fresh Corona positive cases. With



KOTA SRIRAJ

The writer is an nvironmental journa The views expresse are personal.

25 special trains to ferry the pilgrims across the country, the Maha Kumbh is all set to become a "Maha COVID-19 super-spreader." The situation looks hopeless unless either the event is immediately terminated or social distancing norms are strictly adhered to. But nothing significant seems to have been done by the Government regarding it.

Health risks aside, the Kumbh Mela is also not something that is known for environment friendliness. The Maha Kumbh is held at four locations — Nashik, Haridwar, Prayagraj and Ujjain — on a rotational basis after an interval of 12 years.

While the Kumbh is held the Kumbh is

While the Kumbh, in general, is celebrated four times over the course of 12 years, with the site of the observance rotating between

four pilgrimage places on the four sacred rivers, name-ly, at Haridwar on the Ganga, at Ujjain on the Shipra, at Nashik on the Godavari and at Prayagraj at the conflu-ence of the Ganga, the Jamuna, and the mythical Sarasvati. The Nashik Kumbh Mela

Sarasvatt.

The Nashik Kumbh Mela held in 2015 resulted in 2015 resulted in 205,000 tonnes of solid waste and faecal sludge that crept into the groundwater table from 33,000 hastily set-up mobile toiles without any effective waste disposal mechanism. It took an international outcry triggered by media coverage and the eventual intervention of the Bombay High Court to clean up the Nashik Kumbh Mela mess and rescue the environment. The event also caused ment. The event also caused a spike in river pollution making it unfit for bathing and other purposes. The



maximum permissible Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BCD) for safe bathing is 3.0 milligrams (mg) per litre but it ranged between 3.4-8.5 m per litre during the event. Meanwhile bacterial coliform ranged between 3,500 and 39,000 Most Probable Number (MPN) per 100 ml while the permissible limit is 500 MNP per 100 ml for human

bathing. The Maha Kumbh at Haridwar, too, is no different either in terms of the colos-sal health risk it poses or the ecological collateral damage it brinos

ecological collateral damage it brings.

In the run-up to the Haridwar Maha Kumbh, the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has been working tirelessly to prevent ecological damage and as a part of its efforts, the NMCG has diverted one of the biggest local sewage drains—the Kassawan nullah — to a sewage treatment plant. But it should have been done a year ago. This nullah has emptied its effluents into the Ganga for years.

A recent study by the Doon University on the pollution levels in the Ganga for state the from Rishikesh to Haridwar the river was high on pollutants due to the pilgrim

bathing load and urban waste effluent flow. The study also revealed that the overall concentration of Polypropylene Copolymer (PPCP), a form of plastic pollutant in the Ganga was found to be up to 1,104.84 ananograms per litre. Further, the presence of chemicals was also found to be high in the river water samples. The election season, too, symbolised by huge political rallies, coupled with unrestrained religious gatherings are in total defiance of COVID-appropriate behaviour and protocol. Surely the Government is not ignorant of the health costs of these unabated events during the ongoing second wave of the Coronavirus pandemic, but populist measures and appreasement tactics are the top priorities during elections and they seem to score over top priorities during elections and they seem to score over

environmental and health

concerns.

This is not surprising, but what is unfortunately startling is the inaction on the behalf of the judiciary which could have taken a *suo motu* initiative to shorten the dura-tion of the Kumbh Mela, tion of the Kumbh Mela, thereby, saving lives and the environment. In the absence of this, the Non-Government Organisations working in the field of environment protection and other individuals could have filed a Public Interest Litigation to this effect, but unfortunately, that also did not happen yet.

It is a classic case of who will bell the cat? Sadly, the

reluctance of people to take on what is obviously a com-munally-sensitive issue will cost the environment and the health and economy of the country dearly. Where are the true nationalists now?

Myanmar coup foes tout minority-backed shadow Govt



Police security forces stand by inside a police vehicle and on the sidewalk of Hledan Road in Kamayut township in Yangon,

AP WANGON

Opponents of Myanmar's ruling junta went on the political offensive on Friday, declaring they have formed an interim national unity Government with members of Aung San Suu Kyi's ousted Cabinet and major ethnic minority groups.

The move comes on the eve of a diplomatic initiative to solve Myanmar's crisis by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which is expected to hold a summit next week.

A violent crackdown by the junta has failed to stem Opposition to the coup, and as the Army has spread the fight oe thinc minorities in border areas, some ASEAN members believe the crisis threatens regional stability.

Opponents of the coup have been seeking an alliance with them immority groups as a way of strengthening their resistance. The minorities for decades have kept up on-again, off-again armed struggles for



A woman lights a candle while others flash the three-fingered sign of resistance during a candlelight vigil to remember those who died in the military junta's violent response to anti-coup demonstrations in Yangon, Myanmar on Friday AP

ater autonomy in the bor-

While it was not clear if the While it was not clear if the minority political organisa-tions had formally joined an alliance, the appointment of prominent personalities from their ranks showed a commitment to a joint struggle against the military, which is certain to boost morale to the anti-coup

US says Russia

cause.
Security forces have killed at least 726 protesters and bystanders since the Feb. I military takeover, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, which moriors casualties and arrests. The protests and the killings have been continuing on a daily basis.

upgrade from what had been called the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, which was formed shortly after the coup by elect-ed lawmakers who were barred by the army from taking their

is. The CRPH sought inter-

seats.
The CRPH sought international recognition as Myanmar's sole legitimate government body, but won only popular support from those opposed to military rule.
The junta declared the CRPH an illegal organisation, and issued arrest warrants for its leading members.
A video posted Friday on social media showed veteran activist Min Ko Naing announcing the formation of the new body. He was a leader of the failed 1988 uprising against a previous military dictatorship and is one of the country's most respected political figures aside from Suu Kyi. He went quickly underground after the country and

apparently has been active in political organizing against the joints since them.
"Please support the National Unity Government for the future of our citizens and our younger generation," the people are the decision makers and the people will fight the final battle. Victory is coming, We must win our revolution."

More details were provided in a statement on social media by Dr. Sasa, a physician and philamthropist who though in hiding has been the online public face of the CRPH.

"Today, at the end of Myammar's new year, we are proud to announce the formation of a new National Unity Government and the dawn of a new era for the people of Myammar's said Sasa.

"For the first time in our history, Myanmar has a unity government that will reflect one of our nation's greatest strengths — the diversity of our people."

AFTER SLAPPING SANCTIONS

Joe Biden proposes strategic stability dialogue with Russia

Hours after expelling 10 Russian diplomats in connection with interference in last year's US presidential elections, President Joe Biden has proposed a strategic stability dialogue with Moscow, as officials of the two countries discussed the possibility of a summit meeting in Europe this summer.

The US on Thursday announced the expulsion of 10 Russian diplomats and slapped

Russian diplomats and slapped sanctions on over 30 individu-als and key financial institu-tions as it held Kremlin accountable for interference

ais and key innancia institu-tions as it held Kremlin accountable for interference in last year's presidential elec-tion and the hacking of American federal agencies. Hours after signing the executive order imposing sanc-tions on its erstwhile cold war-tival, Biden told reporters at the White House that during a tele-phonic conversation with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, he had proposed that they meet in person this sum-mer in Europe for a summit to address a range of issues facing both the countries.



"Our teams are discussing possibility right now. And nat summit were to occur, and I believe it will, the United States and Russia could launch a strategic stability dialogue to pursue cooperation in arms control and security," Biden

control and security. Biden said.

"We can address critical global challenges that require Russia and the United States to work together, including reining in nuclear threats from Iran and North Korea, ending this pandemic globally, and meeting the existential crisis of climate change," he said.

During the phone call, Biden said he expressed concern on Russia's military build up on the Ukraine border and in Crimea.

Russia to expel 10 US diplomats in response to Washington interests in Russia, it wouldn't immediately move to do that. Russia has denied interfer-ing in the 2020 U.S. Presidential election and involvement in the SolarWind hack of federal

Moscow: Russia on Friday responded in kind to a barrage of new US sanctions, saying it would expel 10 US diplomats and take other retaliatory moves in a tense showdown with Washington.
Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov also said Moscow will add eight US officials to its sanctions list and move to restrict and stop the activities of US nongovernment organizations from interfering in Russia's politics.

He said the Kremlin suggested that US. Ambassador John Sullivan follow the example of his Russian counterpart

join Sullivan follow the exam-ple of his Russian counterpart and head home for consulta-tions. Russia will also move to deny the U.S. Embassy the possibility to hire personnel from Russia and third countries

from Russia and third countries as support staff.

The moves follow the sanctions on Russia announced this week by the Biden administration. While the U.S. Wields the power to cripple the Russian economy, Moscow lacks levers to respond in kind, although it potentially could hurt American interests in many other ways around the globe.

Lavrov noted that while Russia could take 'painful measures' against American business

was given Trump campaign polling data in 2016

SolarWind hack of federal agencies — the activities punished by the latest U.S. Sanctions. The Russian Foreign Ministry warned of an "inevitable" retaliation, charging that "Washington should realize that it will have to pay a price for the degradation of bilateral ties."

The U.S. On Thursday ordered 10 Russian diplomats expelled, targeted dozens of companies and people, and imposed new curbs on Russia's ability to borrow money. companies and people, and imposed new curbs on Russia's ability to borrow money. Pundits had predicted that while Moscow would respond in kind to the expulsions, it would refrain from any other significant moves to avoid a further escalation.

Russia's economic potential and its global reach are limited compared with the Soviet Union that competed with the U.S for international influence during the Cold War. Still, Russia's nuclear arsenal and its leverage in many parts of the world make it a power that Washington needs to reckon with.

Pak suspends services of social media platforms

PTI I I SLAMABAD

Pakistan on Friday temporarily suspended the services of social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp to stop their use to organise demonstrations following violent protests by a radical religious group that has now been banned by the Government.

The Government banned Thereek: 1-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) on Thursday following three days of violent protest by it to force the government to expel the French ambassador over a blasphemous caricature published in France last year.

The TLP had launched the country-wide protest on Monday after the arrest of its chief Saad Hussian Rizvi.

The TLP supporters clashed with the law enforcement agencies in several towns and cities earlier this week.

cashed with the law enforce-ment agencies in several towns and cities earlier this week, leaving seven persons dead and over 300 policemen injured.

injured.

To stop the protests after Friday prayers, the Interior Ministry directed the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) to suspend social media services for four hours from 11



Hong Kong democracy

leaders given jail terms

cation that "complete access to social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube And Telegram) may be blocked". The reason for the sus-pension of the services was not stated by the PTA but official sources said that it was feared that protesters could use social that protesters could use social media to organise demonstra-

tions.

Suspension of internet and mobile phone services is a common practice in Pakistan to forestall protests and acts of

But this time only social media has been particularly targeted as the TLP was report-edly using it effectively against the government action. On Thursday, Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed

Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed warned the TLP against using YouTube to upload propagan-da videos. The TLP came to prominence in November 2017 when it staged a sit-in at the Faizabad interchange near Islamabad and cut off the cap-ital from the old international

US to continue to push Pak on backing diplomatic efforts to ensure peace in Af: Burns

The US will continue to push Pakistan hard on supporting the diplomatic efforts to ensure peace in Alghanistan as it has an interest over the longer term in avoiding insecurity and instability in the war-torn neighbouring country that can spill over and affect its own interest. CAD Director William Burns has said. Burns was responding to a question from Congressman Adam Schiff, who is the Chairman of the powerful House Intelligence Committee. "Our withdrawal from Afghanistan, what impact do you think that will have on the Pakistani relationship with the Taliban, the Pakistani intelligence, ISI

relationship with the Haqqani net-work or others? How do you see that changing without a US military pres-ence there?" Schiff asked during the meeting on Thursday. "Pakistan today is playing a con-structive role in support of the diplo-matic efforts, at least that the United States and other countries are making

matic efforts, at least that the United States and other countries are making to try to bridge what is, at the moment, a pretty severe gap between the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban, Burns responded.

The CIA Director told lawmakers that Pakistan has an interest over the longer term in avoiding the kind of insecurity and instability in Afghanistan that can spill over and affect its own interest.

Superintending Engl

China poses single biggest geopolitical test for US in 21st century: CIA Director

China poses the single biggest geopolitical test for the US in the 21st century, CIA Director William Burns has said, stressing that this threat is more serious than those from Russia during

serious than those from Russia during the Cold War.

Burns made the remarks to mem-bers of the House Select Committee on Intelligence during a Congressional hearing on worldwide threats on

hearing on worldwide threats on Thursday.
"I think China poses the single biggest geopolitical test for the United States as far out into the 21st century as I can see," Burns said.

"What distinguishes that challenge from an increasingly adversarial Chinese Communist Party from, for example, the challenge we faced with the Soviet Union during the Cold War, is that this challenge unfolds across a whole range of areas from military to ideological in terms of our values eronomic and espec-

of areas from military to ideological in terms of our values, economic and especially at its core competition and technology as well," Burns said.

The US and China are at odds over a range of issues from trade to human rights in Tibet, Hong Kong and China's western Xinjiang region, as well as over Taiwan, Beijing's assertiveness in the South China Sea and the coronavirus pandemic.

Beijing says US 'too negative' toward China

AP ■ BEIJING

A top Chinese diplomat said AFriday that US policy toward China is "too negative" and that cooperation could be critically important as the Biden administration focuses on combatting Covid-19 and promoting

The US appears to be high lighting confrontation and playing down cooperation, Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng said in a wide-rang-ing interview with The Associated Press.

amid crackdown AP ■ HONG KONG

A Hong Kong court on Friday sentenced five leading pro-democracy advocates, including media tycono limmy. Lai, to up to 18 months in prison for organsing and participating in a massive march during 2019 anti-government protests that triggered an overwhelming crackdown from Beijing.

Beijing.

A total of nine advocates A total or mine advocates were given jail terms, but four of them, including 82-year-old lawyer and former law-maker Martin Lee, had their sentences suspended after their age and accom-plishments were taken into

ing and participating in a massive protest in August 2019, where an estimated 1.7 million people marched in opposition to a bill that would have allowed suspects to be extradited to mainland China. The march was not authorized by the police

march was not authorized by the police.

Their convictions and sen-tencing are another blow to the city's flagging democracy movement, which is facing an unprecedented crackdown by Beijing and Hong Kong author-ties. The sentences were swift-ly met with international crit-icism.

The court suspended the 11-month prison sentence of Lee, who is known for his advocacy for human rights and democracy, for two years because of his age.

Office of the Superintending Engineer, Construction Circle, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Kathgodam, Haldwani. E-Tendering/Tender Notice

L	etter No. 1197 / 613 / 88		Date: 15.04.2021		
N	ame of Work :- Pipe Line & All Ot	her Work	70.00		
-	Name of Scheme	Estimated cost	Period of completion of wor		
1	Dhoomkhera GOV W/S Scheme	Rs. 80.96 Lakh	06 months		
2	Pipaliya GOV W/S Scheme	Rs. 86.82 Lakh	06 months		
3	Kumrah GOV W/S Scheme	Rs. 80.38 Lakh	06 months		
-	Key Dates-				
4	Date of Online Publication		17.04.2021 at 17:00 hrs.		
5	Document Download : Start Date		18.04.2021 at 10:00 hrs.		
6	Document download : End Date		01.05.2021 at 17:00 hrs		
7	Pre Bid Meeting		22.04.2021 at 14:00 hrs.		
8	Bid Submission : Start Date		18.04.2021 at 10:00 hrs.		
9	Bid Submission : End Date		01.05.2021 at 17:00 hrs.		
10	Offline Submission of Document (Cost of bidding document, Bid Security, Original Affidavits & all the Supporting Documents in support of qualification)		02.05.2021 upto 17:00 hrs.		
11	Date of Technical Bid Opening		03.05.2021 at 11:00 hrs		
12	Date of Financial Bid Opening		To be announced Later		

Iran starts enriching uranium to 60%, its highest level ever

AP ■ DUBAI

AP III DUBAI

Iran began enriching uranium
Friday to its highest level ever, edging closer to weapons-grade levels to pressure talks in Vienna aimed at restoring its nuclear deal with world powers after an attack on its main atomic site.

A top official said only a few grams an hour of uranium gas would be enriched up to 60 per cent purity — triple the level it once did but at rate far slower than what Tehran could produce. International inspectors already said Iran planned to do so above-ground at its Natanz nuclear site, not deep within its underground halls hardened to withstand airstrike, not deep within its underground halls hardened to withstand airstrike, site levels in the since we have a site of the site of



back into the agreement and lift the crushing economic sanctions it faces. However, its scope also provides Iran with a way to quickly de-secalate if it chose.

The announcement also marks a significant escalation after the attack that damaged centrifuges at Natanz, an attack this past weekend suspected of having been carried out by Israel. While Israel has yet to claim it, it comes amid a long-running shadow war between the two

Mideast rivals.

Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf,
Iran's parliament speaker, announced
the move in a Twitter post later
acknowledged by Iranian state tele-

the move in a symbol post acknowledged by Iranian state television.

"The young and God-believing Iranian scientists managed to achieve a 60 per cent enriched uranium product," Qalibaf said. "I congratuate the brave nation of Islamic Iran on this success. The Iranian nation willpower is miraculous and can defuse any conspiration of Iranian nation." You will be a control of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iranian action. The country's civil of the Atomic Energy organization of Iranian action of the Atomic Energy organization of Iranian action of the Atomic Energy organization of Irania action of the Atomic Energy organization of Iranian action

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is here by informed that this girl (depicted in the photo) namely: Siddiga Parveen Dio Md. Istiyak Rio H.No. G-140, Tagore Gali, 'Jagatpuri, Delhi-51, has been missing/lednapped from her shop at A-1101*, Gali No. 9, Jagatpuri, Delhi-51 since of the period of the peri

 Website: http://cbl.nic.in
 PS
 Jagat Pur, Delhi

 E-mail: clc@cbl.gov.in
 Ph. No.: 011-2420362, 22420364,

 Tel. No.: 011-24366638/24368641
 Mob: 7065036023



Residential realty get \$234 mn PE investments in Jan-March

Amid revival in housing demand, the residential segment witnessed private equity (PE) investments worth \$234 million in Q1 2021 which was nillion in Q1 2021 which was edd per cent of that wit-nessed during the entire 2020, said a Knight Frank India report.

nessed during the entire 2020, said a Knight Frank India report.

It noted that in terms of the number of deals, the investment activity touched 100 per cent of 2020 levels and 39 per cent of 2019 levels in the first three months of 2021.

The report titled 'Investments in Real Estate - Trends in PE Investment (Q1 2021 update)' said that Indian real estate attracted private equity (debt and equity) investments (S3.24 billion) across 19 deals in Q1 2021 (January - March) period.

In the first quarter of 2021, the investment in the sector has grown by 16 times compared to

grown by 16 times compared to \$199 million in Q1 2020. The investments in Q1 2021 in value terms were 80 per

cent of that witnessed in full year 2020 and 48 per cent of full year 2019.The strong full year 2019. The strong momentum in Q1 2021 was predominantly driven by two major factors, spillover of certain deals from 2020 and the rise in investor confidence due to the drop in Covid-19 infection.

to the drop in Covid-19 infections during early parts of Q1 2021, which had created some ripples of positivity in the economy, it said.

The sustainability of this momentum in investor's sentiments will therefore depend on how soon the second wave of infection subsides and also the pace of vaccination, as per the Knight Frank India.

Out of the total PE investments in real estate, the office

Out of the total PE invest-ments in real estate, the office segment attracted 71 per cent share, followed by retail at 15 per cent, residential and ware-housing with 7 per cent each respectively. Shishir Baijal, Chairman

and Managing Director, Knight Frank India said: "The deal street market of Indian real estate witnessed an impressive

.. During the holiday-trun-

or in our value and volume of private equity investments in the first quarter of 2021, when compared to the entire year of 2020."

He said that office assets continue to be the preferred segment attracting over 70 per cent of PE investments Q1 cent of PE investments QI 2021 as the segment moves towards maturity which includes sustained demand, stability in rental income and change in ownership profile over long -term. Investors are expecting demand to recuper-ate faster as the pace of vacci-nation increases.

ate faster as the pace of vaccination increases.

"While Q1 2021 has been an encouraging quarter for PE investments, however, the upward trajectory can be impacted by the rising second wave of Covid-19 infections in India which started in the month of April 2021. The sustainability of revival in investor sentiments will therefore depend on how soon the second wave of infection subsides and the pace of vaccination," Baijal said.

Forex reserves surge by USD **BRIEFS**

A fter declining for two con-secutive quarters, the country's foreign exchange (forex) reserves surged by USA 4.34 billion to USD 581.21 bil-lion in the week ended April 9, according to the latest RBI data.

according to the latest RBI data.

In the previous week ended April 2, the reserves had dipped by USD 2.42 billion to USD 576.28 billion. It had dropped by USD 2.42 billion to USD 579.28 billion in the week ended March 26, 2021.

The reserves had touched a lifetime high of USD 590.18 billion in the week ended March 2021.

In the reporting week ended January 29, 2021.

In the reporting week ended April 9, 2021, the increase in forex reserves was on account of a rise in foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves.

FCA rose USD 3.02 billion

reserves.
FCA rose USD 3.02 billion
to USD 539.45 billion, the
Reserve Bank of India's (RBI)
weekly data showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation or depreciation of non-US units like euro, pound and Yen held in the forex reserves.

The gold reserves increased by USD 1.30 billion to USD 3.32 billion in the reporting week, the RBI data showed.

The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) rose USD 6 million to USD 1.49 billion in the reporting week.
The country's reserve position with the IMF rose USD 24

million to USD 4.95 billi

Jet fuel price cut by 1 pc

4.34 bn to USD 581.21 bn

Jet fuel price on Friday was Jet fuel price on Friday was Cut by 1 per cent, the sec-ond reduction in rates this month following softening international crude oil prices. Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was reduced by RS 568.88 per klolitre, or 0,9 Sper cent, to Rs 57,805.28 per kl in the national capital, according to a price notifi-cation of state-owned fuel retailers. This is the second reduction in rates this month.

Earlier, prices were cut by 3 per cent on April 1. These price cuts were the first in six months. Meanwhile, petrol and diesel prices remained unchanged after the fourth reduction in three weeks on Thursdav.

reduction in tirree weeks on Thursday. Petrol price on Thursday was cut by 16 paise per litre and diesel by 14 paise. Petrol now costs Rs 90.40 per litre in Delhi, while a litre of diesel comes for Rs 80.73.

'NO MASK, NO METRO': KOLKATA METRO CAMPAIGN

Kolkata: Metro Railway authorities have taken up "No Mask, No Metro' campaign since the resumption of Metro' campaign since the resumption of Metro in mortal situation, regular announcements are better gmade and banners and posters are on display all Metro stations in order to make Metro commuters aware about COVID Appropriate Behavior.

CLW CELEBRATES AMBEDKAR BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

CHITTARANAN: The 130th birth arriver inersary of Bharit Ratins Dr birth Brain and the Chitage and the Chitage

NORTHERN RAILWAY LAUNCHES COVID AWARENESS

NUTITIETH NALIWAY LAUNCHES COVID AWARENESS
The fight against COVID-19 continues globally, and to overcome the problem, people's adherence to preventive measures is essential. Shri Ashutosh Gangal, General Manager Northern Rallway informed that to create awareness among the passengers to prevent spread of diseases, Railway Protection Force has launched awareness campaign at all major stations of Delhi area it; at IA-Wu Delhi, Delhi Jn., Hazrat Nizamuddin and Anand Vihar Terminal Railway station.

Passengers are below informed frougeth through accessments. Passengers are being informed frequently through anno

AZAADI KA AMRUT MAHOTSAV: BOATING AT MANSAR

A CARAU AN AMINU I MIANU SAV. 'DUALING A II MIANDAN As a part of "Azada ka Amrut Mahotsav" celebrations marking the 75th Anniversary of India's Independence, Directorate of Tourism Jammu under the directions of Horn Die LG Jak UT and advisor to Horbite LG and also under the overall supervision of secretary tourism organised boating at Mansar lake on 14th April 2021 Tourists enjoyed paddle boating in the serene waters of Mansa lake amidst picturesque nature with Indian flags in hand and chanting of slogans of "vande mataram", "Bharat Mata ki Jai".

CHAITRA NAVRATRA BEING CELEBRATED IN JAMMU

CHAITRA NAVRAITA BEING CELEBRATED IN JAMMUI
The Directorate of Tourism Jammui in collaboration with the District
Administration Reasi and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Katra
is organising the Chaitra Navartar Festival at Fountain Chowk Katra
till April 21. DDC Chairman Reasi Saraf Singh Nag along with
District Development Commissioner Ajay Kumar Sharma performed
the first Hawan popola at the venue on April 21. The Directorate of
Tourism Jammu is organizing the Chaitra Navartar Festival for the
first time in Katra and all the COVID related SDPs shall be followed
as per the directions laid down by the government.

DESI DESIGNER BRAND BOOSTS MAKE IN INDIA

With a view to going "vocal for local" to augment "Make in India campaign in Which is usually match by high-priced tollowing brands, Scram Kidswar launched a desi affordable designer dress boraud silven. We recognised the gap in the Indian market for good quality, trenk, We recognised the gap in the Indian market for good quality, trenk, We recognised the gap in the Indian market for good quality, trenk, we consider the silven which is locally made and has a social consideration. We write the other three the silven with the silven with the silven which is dealing and meter of Manoj Jain.

slim gains; close lower for the week Cement, ONGC, M&M, Sun Pharma, HCL Tech, Tech Mahindra and Nestle India. On the other hand, ICICI

Benchmarks eke out

The Sensex and Nifty ticked higher for the third session Thigher for the third session on the trot on Friday but could not wipe off weekly losses amid a resurgence in Covid-19 cases. A strong recovery in the rupee, which zoomed 58 paise, and a bullish trend in global equities supported the bourses on Friday, traders said.

After a choppy session, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed 28.35 points or 0.06 per cent higher at 48,832.03.

Similarly, the broader NSE

higher at 48,832.03. *
Similarly, the broader NSE
Nifty rose 36.40 points or 0.25
per cent to 14,617.85.
Asian Paints was the top
performer among the Sensex
components, spurting 3.07 per
cent, followed by UltraTech

Rupee spurts by 58 paise to over 1-week high on easing US yields

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Bank, L&T, Bajaj Finance, TCS, SBI, Infosys and Reliance Industries were among the losers, declining up to 1.55 per cent.

The rupee on Friday soared by 58 paise to end more than one-week high of 74.35 against the US dollar on easing US bond yields and positive domestic equities.

A weak dollar overseas and foreign fund inflows also supported the rupee. At the local unit opened at 74.76 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.28 and a low of 74.76. It finally ended at 74.35 against the American currency, registering its best single-day gain of 59 paise in more than a month. On Thursday, the rupee had settled at 74.93 against the American currency. During the holiday-trun-cated week, the Sensex sank 759.29 points or 1.53 per cent, while the Nifty tumbled 217 points or 1.46 per cent. A continued surge in sec-ond wave of COVID-19 cases in the country, which already crossed 2 lakh daily cases, has certainly posed a risk to sus-tainability of rebound of earn-ings momentum, said Binod

'Govt should regulate cryptocurrencies, not ban them'

ANS IN NEW DELHI

As government plans to
Acome up with a
Cryptocurrency Bill, sector
stakeholders have said that the
government should regulate
the cryptocurrency ecosystem,
rather than banning them.
Experts are of the view that
India should formulate regulations in the lines of the development countries which regullate these currencies including
the US, UK, Japan, Australia
among others.
Nischal Shetty, Founder &
CEO, WazirX said: "India's
crypto policy should be geared
towards fostering innovation,
and customer safety. We should
be able to prevent bad activities
to the provent bad activities
but keep the door to innovation
open by allowing everything
else to be built."

He said that so far there is no single regulator in a position to regulate the entire crypto sector.

to regulate the entire crypto sector.

"It's like trying to regulate the Internet with one regulator. We can start breaking down crypto based on its classification as currency, asset, utility, security, and let regulators handle the respective crypto. Eventually, it will become necessary to have a dedicated crypto markets regulator," Shetty said.

He also recommended that he government should ensure that all crypto businesses catering to Indian customers are registered in India and follow KYC and AML policies. "There should also be guidelines for crypto businesses to ensure safety of customer funds," the WazirX CEO said.

Dev Sharma, Regional Manager (Central Asia) for Paxful also said that at a foun-dational level, India should regulate so that all companies have to implement KYC and have to implement KYC and AML processes to protect consumers. There is nothing about cryptocurrencies that make them more appealing to 'bad actors' than flat currencies. So, cryptocurrencies need to be regulated in similar ways," he said.

In addition, it would be great to see India develop measures to

measures to promote inno-vation in the

sector for example with incubators and start-up funds.

Office of the Executive Engineer, Construction Division,
Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Khatima
Pilibhit Road, Near Allahabad Bank, Khatima (U.S. Nagar) E-mail: eecdhatima@gmail.com

E-Tendering/Tender Notice

Letter No. 726/Nivida/38 Date : 16.04.2021

Name of Work :- Over Head Tank, Pump House with attendant Roon
Boundary Wall and all other Works. Estimated cost | Period of compl

1	Dhumkhera GOV W/S Scheme Rs. 41.50		06 months		
2	Pipaliya GOV W/S Scheme Rs. 34.7		06 months		
3	Kumrah GOVW/S Scheme Rs. 36.2		06 months		
K	ey Dates-	101			
4	Date of Online Publication	17.04	.2021 at 17:00 hrs.		
5	Document download : Start Date		18.04.2021 at 10:00 hrs.		
6	Document download : End Date		01.05.2021 at 17:00 hrs.		
7	Pre Bid Meeting		22.04.2021 at 14:00 hrs.		
8	Bid Submission : Start Date		18.04.2021 at 10:00 hrs.		
9	Bid Submission : End Date		01.05.2021 at 17:00 hrs.		
10	Offline submission of documents (Cost of		02.05.2021 upto 17:00 hrs		

bidding document, Bid Security, Original Affidavits & all the Supporting Documents in support of qualification). 11 Date of Technical & Financial Bid Opening 03.05.2021 at 11:00 hrs.

vehicie No-DLBCAK6823, Make and Model FORD FIGO 1.4 EXI, Manu Yr.2015 Vehicle No-D. LZA7554, Make and Model-YYUNDAI XCENT BASE 1.2, Manu Yr.2010 Vehicle No-Unregister, Make and Model-MARUTI ERTIGA, Menu Yr.2013 Vehicle No-UP IGD 1415, Make and Model-CHEVROLET ENJOY, Manu Yr. 2015

Vehicle No-UP14FT7814, Make and Model-CHEVROLET SAIL UVA LT, Manu Yr-2016 Vehicle No-UP14DD5260, Make and Model-MARUTI WAGON R, Manu Yr-2017 Vehicle No-UP14ET7203, Make and Model-CHEVROLET ENJOY LT, Manu Yr-2015

SALE NOTICE
will be sold through auction on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and
covery of dues as per court orders, in the following cases:-

Executive Engineer

35000

18000

5400

12000

100000 10000 14400

81000 8100

fel- 120000

NTPC to raise ₹3.996 cr via bonds next week

New Delhi:State-owned power giant NTPC will raise Rs 3,996 forre through issuance of non-convertible bonds on Tuesday, "NTPC has decided to issue unsecured non-convertible bonds in the nature of debentures of Rs 3,996 crore on 20 April, 2021, through private placement at a coupon of 6.87 per cent per annum with a door-to-door maturity of 15 years 1 day on 21 April, 2036," a BSE filing said.

The proceeds will be utilized for funding capital expen-

The proceeds will be uti-lized for funding capital expen-diture, refinancing of existing loans and other general cor-porate purposes, it said. *PTI*

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE:
PUBLIC NOTICE:
PUBLIC is hereby informed that Sirrt. Satia
Devi has claimed to be the owner of Plot in
no. K-100. Area Measuring 75 seg ydrs.
Mussil No. 68, Killa No. 4, Village Haristal
Devi has common Nagar. New Devis
Devi Abodu Utan Nagar. New Devis
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Japottachnot Ber Magnari

IndiGo waives change fees on domestic bookings

ings momentum, said Bir Modi, Head-Strategy Reliance Securities.

A irline major IndiGo
Mwaiwed-off change
fees on new bookings
made from April 17, 2021
till April 30, 2021.
Besides, the airline
announced that passengers can now do unlimited changes for new bookings made till April 30,
2021 on regular fares under this
offer.

"This offer is in line with
our philosophy of providing

"This offer is in line with our philosophy of providing our customers a hassle-free experience, and giving them much needed flexibility, espe-cially in these times," said



Sanjay Kumar, Chief Strategy & Revenue Officer, IndiGo. Other airlines are expect-ed to announce similar relief measures as the resurgence of Covid and imposition of local lockdowns has started to ham-per air passenger traffic.

Coal India incorporates two wholly-owned arms

WIIII)-OWIEED AITHS

New Delhi:State-owned CIL
on Friday announced incorporation of two wholly-owned
arms. The two subsidiaries are
CIL Solar PV Ltd and CIL
Navikarniya Urja Ltd, Coal
India Ltd (CIL) said in a filing
to BSE CIL Solar PV Limited
has been incorporated for manufacturing in solar value chain
(Ingot-wafer-Cell Module) and
CIL Navikarniya Urja Limited
for renewable energy, the filing
said.

SII CEO urges US to lift raw material export ban to ramp up vaccine production

Mumbai:Serum Institute of India (SII) CEO Adar Poonawalla on Friday said the US needs to lift its embargo on raw material exports to help ramp up vaccine production.

up vaccine production.

SII is currently manufacturing anti-coronavirus vaccine Covishield, developed by Astrazeneca and Oxford University. The vaccine is not only being used in India, but exported to a number of countries. Poonawalla had earlier admitted that SII has been facing problems in sending out required number of batches of vaccines due to the bureaucratic and government-related hurdles.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that the accused person (1) Narender Singh Sio Kripal Singh (2) Ritu Singh Wio Narender Singh, Both Rio Baijeet Nagar, Patel Nagar, Delhi and (3) Kripal Singh Sio Ram Singh H.No. A-940, 4th Floor, Baba Farid Puri, West Patel Nagar, Delhi have committed (to ris suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 54314, ut 4.98A.40634 PIC, PS Krishna Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused person (1) Narender Singh (2) Ritu Singh and (3) Kripal Singh cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused (1) Narender Singh (2) Ritu Singh and (3) Kripal Singh, have absconded for is concealing themselves to avoid the service of said warrant).

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

Singh, nave ausward.

He service of said warran!,

Proclamation is hereby made that the said (1) Narender Singh

(2) Ritu Singh and (3) Kripal Singh of case FiR No. 54314,

uls 498.4406.24 PC, PS Krishna Nagar, Delhi are required to

helicher this court to answer the said complaint.

Referent the court to answer the said complaint.

(SEE SECTION 82 Cr.Pc.)

DP/431/SHD/2021

SEARCH FOR MISSING BOY



General public is hereby informed that one boy namely Gurdeep Singh, S/o Gurcharn Singh, R/o B-3, Gurudwara, Raghubir Nagar, Delhi. Height 5', Shallow Complexion, Round face, Normal Built wearing blue pant, chocklate Shirt and sport shoes in feel has been missing since 07.04,2021 from

n this regard a case DD No. 75-A Dt. 07.04.2021 has be odged at PS Khyala, New Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing boy but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this missing boy may kindly inform to the following.

PS Khyala, New Delhi. Ph.: 8700684171, 9582084096

APPL, 292/3/2020
ICICI Bank Limited vs Mohammad Arif, Case No-CSSCJ:1871/19
ICICI Bank Limited vs Vijay Gupta, Case No-Suit No. 1088/2018 Vehicle No-UP14DD2489, Make and Model-WAGON R LXI CNG, Manu Yr-2017 Vehicle No-HR29AM0548, Make and Model-WAGON R LXI CNG, Manu Yr-2016 NOTION NO. 1088/2018 WIGON R LDIC WIGON R LDIC WIGON R LDIC CONTROL R LDIC MINE R LDIC MIN

The under mentioned Ass "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" for

ICICI Bank Limited vs Shishir Dutt Sharma, Case No-Suit No. 1967/17 ICICI Bank Limited vs Sanjay Kumar Pandit, Case No-Suit No. 9331/8 ICICI Bank Limited vs Kuhvinder Singh, Case No-FAO 213/2015 ICICI Bank Limited vs Mehkar Singh, Case No-FAO 213/2016 & CM APPL 27986/2007/M(M) 548/2020 & CM APPL

Case No-Cemin 900/22000 & CM APPL 30859/2020 ICICI Bank Limited vs Jitendra Chaturvedi, Case No-CM (M) 22/2020 ICICI Bank Limited vs Mohd Asif, Casi No-CM(M) 178/2021

No-CM(M) 178/2021 ICICI Bank Limited vs Archana Raj Case No-CM(M) 573/2020 & CM APPL 29273/2020

Sukhrall, Gurugram – 122022. Contact Person – Rajeev Ranjan (8584874809): Jitendra Kumar (7304914763) EMD: DD/PO of EMD amount to be made in favour of ICICI Bank Limited, payab And auction of following vehicles will be done at another yard i.e Shriram Aut Manivari Road Narela. New Joelh

Case Details	Asset Details	Reserve Price	EMD
ICICI Bank Limited vs Rahul Yadav, Case No-CM (M) 222/2020	Vehicle No-UP14ET0642, Make and Model- TATA ACE, Manu Yr-2014	70000	7000

uuction Date : 22.04.2021; from 11 am to 1 PM fenue: AN Motors, Ranukta. Agra (UP) contact Person – Rajeev Ranjan (8584874809)/Jite ndra Kumar (7304914763)

erms of Sale
he particulars of the said asset specified herein above have been stated to the best of the nowledge of the undersigned, who shall however not be responsible for any error, misstalent misself of the property of the said asset and other relevant details perfain ubmitting the bids. All bidders are required to to one at site with original DDIPO of EMD am riginal KPC protos to particulate in the auction.

original KYC proofs to participate in the auction. Successfully approved bidder shall have to deposit sale amount (Excluding EMD amount) within 5 days from the auction date by the way of pay order/ demand draffRTGSNEFT. In case if you fail to make the remaining situation date by the way of pay corder/ demand draffRTGSNEFT. In case if you fail to make the remaining situation of the situation of

days to Vikas Shokeen, Advocate, AB-8, Manwali Nagar, Detri - 110087. Thereafter any kind of claim will not be WESTERN RAILWAY CORRIGENOUM TO E-AUCTION SALE PROGRAM e-Auction Sale Notification No.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

minutes seated tenders from intere manay of tender is given below:

to: 01/EE(Gen)/Khodri/2021-22: Replacement/ Re over, pipeline, different gate valves with civil works, ad cost: Rs. 910000/-GST extra validability of bid document on website: 16.04.3034 vebsite: 16.04.2021, 17:00 hrs

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECT

Published in accordance with Regulation 364 (1) of the insolvency an (insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulation in modification to the Form G policitished on March 31, 2021 in in Mumbul, Ahrmednagar, Sharib, and Sharibi, and Pushari (Marmba 124 Minerbaga, Shrid, Nashik, Tan Pornoce (English and Hinsi) (Delhi 121 Kopangaon Ahrmednagar, Shrid, Nashik, Tan Pornoce (English and Hinsi), (Delhi 121 Kopangaon Ahrmednagar, Tollways (Phase I) Philade Limited, it a sin the laint dain for sudmission of Expression of Interest has been in pril 15, 302 1th April 22 2241. The revenue for medicine are motionic of Corno-Gupladed on the verbale for individual residency and ed Corno-Gupladed on the verbale for individual residency.

point of time. 3 RP / COC reserves the right to cancel or modify the process / applicatis without assigning any reason and without any liability whatscever.

4. Detailed invitation for expression of interest specifying criteria, ineligibility communities and expected and code etc. can be requested through remail.

The Princip Agent No. 2001, France: Huminosis Madersa and e-mail to be used for treational, an engineered with the Beneri, correspondence, with the resolution the second of the second of the second sale Limited, C 703, Marathon Innova, refer level West, Marcha-40015. all C udgraf_palwardhange with a control of the second of the princip Limited (80-9-10, 81 Proc. 81 Wing refer level West, Marcha-40015). and the second of second of

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in Fax: 011-23011334 Ph.: 011-23014046 011-23015218 DP/402/WD/2021







SUNNY LEONE

I don't always post workout videos but I thought this was fun. A technique used by fighters who are hit in the head and get dizzy. I'm no fighter but was fun to try this. Thanks Arif. Oh and by the way, it's more difficult to box with a mask on! But safety over comfort at this



GUL PANAG

I think a lot of us are aware of what kind of an existential crisis the environment faces but we have other fires to fight. And even though we may be willing and maybe interested and wanting to do our best to contribute our best to contribute towards conserving the envi-ronment, other emergencies in life take over



SHORTCIRCUITS

I don't want to use any-thing as an excuse to not follow my workout routing It is just a medium to rejuvenate myself. I am very particular about my schedule especially when am in the middle of training for an intense reality



NATASHA RASTOGI

Acting for me will always be a constant journey of learning. To talk about my recent projects, *Pagglait* gave me an opportunity to play a very nuanced character. But I tried to see it as a woman well-being and rigid societal norms that she must follow,

AMY WALSH

l loved Michael Praed, who played Tracy's dad Frank in Emmerdale. He's a ball of crazy energy. Once he came to the garage with me and pumped my tyres up because I was poorly. Michael is such a caring man, and I was devastated when he left the show. But we're still in touch and he's a friend for life



ART CULTURE

Art is inaccessible. It is high brow. It's for the classes. How often have we heard these words thrown around without giving a thought to everyday lived aesthetics? The film, Contemporary Art within the Visual Cultures of Italy & India, looks at chipping away many of these assertions by exploring contemporary art in both countries. The curators of the panoramic project, DAVIDE QUADRIO and MYNA MUKHERJEE, brought National Award-Winning filmmaker ONIR as the Director of Photography to ensure that it could take the viewers on a visual journey that is both layered and simplified. In a discussion with SAIMI SATTAR, the trio talk about the project, its reach and the conversations that it can ignite

☐How was the project conceptu-alised?

alised?

Myna: I had worked with Davide on an exchange programme of ideas and art between Italy and India at the India Art Fair two years back. We enjoyed this cross-cultural exchange tremendously where there were worken artists three al exchange tremendously where there were women artists, three each, from Italy and India. What was surprising was the resonance among them. It was a universal and hybrid moment. While the contours of work were specific to the location, there was a shared universality as somen artists. The moment of an idea. As the resonance was big, we wanted to share it with a wider audi-ence. Things quickly fell in place as Davide was invited as a curator to Aartissima, Italys most pivotal art

ence. Things quickly fell in place as Davide was invited as a curator to Aartissima, Italy's most pivotal art fairs, for India. As a larger arrative formed, we got more ambitious and wanted to communicate the idea behind the curation. We wanted to share this and a film, because of a wider and diverse audience as well as those who are new to art conversation or aren't art enthusiasts but have an inclination towards it, was considered the best way to do it.

For me, talking about India and its aesthetics can't be separated from the specificity of location. Instead of explaining this to the audience, they get to peek into the aesthetics philosophies, history and the contemporariness of everyday living, landscape, crafts, arts and political situation.

There is poetic resonance in them of the metal to the most of themes.

political situation. There is poetic resonance in both countries in terms of themes, materiality, form and more. There are several intersections in the intellectual thought process, the time, the duration and the way arists work and the way nature interacts. Davide: We were at a stage where we could truly have an exchange. There were questions, about our roles as cultural mitiga-

tors and that of culture in the con-temporary world, especially in the pandemic. Human beings arent' just consumers or survivors but are cultural beings. This isn't just a jour-ney but also critically thinking about the role of culture and art. There's a strong idea of presenting what it means to be in a cross-cul-tural environment and presenting tural environment and presenting your own culture through a contem-porary spectacle. The idea isn't to simplify but to make it more layered.

"How much does the ruling dis-pensation and their outlook affect arts?"

Onir: For independent film-makers, censorship has been there for years and we've negotiated dif-ferent kinds of dos-don'ts. When in years aind we fee negotiated dif-ferent kinds of dos-don'ts. When OTT came, we thought it had more possibilities but now there are new laws. You're always being told to be ensitive about religion and more but somewhere the artiste has dis-appeared in the scheme of things. However, art is a compulsion that doesn't let you stay quiet as is evi-dent from Iranian cinema. It's about finding a new narrative to tell a story. D: I think, radicality is happen golobally. This situation is con-ducive to art and culture not being secondary. There's a strong will to find solutions and ways to do things as well as support creativity in peo-ple.

ple.

M: One of the most interesting things about art, when you're looking at radicality, is the origin of the word. The etymology of radicality is roots. So you're essentially going back to the roots philosophically and symbolically.

I spent 20 years in New York and I spent 20 years in New York and the burden of representation there was very frustrating. For example, if you were a dancer, suddenly every-body would say this is South Asian dance but we know that there are so many dances in India alone. This



means that if you're leading some-one into an exposition of culture, its multiplicity is so enormous, that unless the viewr willingly embraces its complexity, nothing can be understood about culture. Going from Kashmir to Gujarat, there were so many surprising sto-ries and encounters that there's no fixed way to think about them. The documentary looks into the multi-ple truths at this particular moment in time. The wonderful thing is that it looks at both references as well as departures from these historical and material references. It hopes to glimpse at multiplicity in all its glory.

□So, do you think these multiple locations add to the storytelling?

M: Yes, of course. There are similarities and differences between — Gujarat's Maharaja Sayajirao University and Shanti Niketan,

Bengal — the two best-known academic institutions of art. Then there are many smaller ones besides folk and craft traditions, wearing traditions or patterns or references, philosophy, spirulality., there is so much. Even when you're referring to a simple landscape, it is varied across different parts of India.

D: The overlapping of feelings or relationships is communicated by putting together extreme things or differences. This explodes into a menotional reaction rather than a historical or intellectualised analysis. Onir is extractley important in this as the world he owner from and his say the world he owner from and his way of thinking is very different. It's a journey through feelings, ideas, sketches of ideas, doubts and that extually what will make the film very appealing as it's not about a linear idea but a complex journey through references and aesthetics of actual-

ly connecting or disconnecting India and Italy.

So you would say that multiple locations and multiple artists are adding to these voices of diversi-

adding to these voices of diversity?

M and D: Yes sure.
D: This is of course a point of view and a rhetorical decision. It isn't always about absolute. It's about tentatives, absorbing things and getting back. The idea is to bring all those images and edit them to the minimum and maximum possible.

M: The reason for bringing Onir is that we wanted to bring in an outsider who would also see it from the audience's perspective with fresh eyes. So if it made sense to Onir, it would make sense to the audience. He's an outsider to the process while being a part of the audience. He's an outsider to the process while being a part of the

journey.

"Is this an attempt to bridge the gap as art is considered highbrow and inaccessible?

O: When Myna approached me the idea to make it more "accessible" was exciting. This wasn't a technical documentary from the point of view of someone superior talking about things you don't understand but it was the journey of experiencing and understanding the long history of art and contemporary art in the context of nature, culture, tradition and everything else. For me, starting from Kashmir and going to Guijarat changed the way I started seeing form, design and will affect the way I shot films. To make art accessible needs a small step. This journey helped me take that step and I hope that it does so for other people too.

or other people too.

What were the challenges in bringing everything — the journey from Kashmir to Gujarat and the Italian as well as Indian influences — to one platform?

O: For me, the beauty is in finding threads that are diverse while having a commonality because that is what humanity is all about. It is like poetry, where you are using different languages to convey the same emotion. You see nature, tradition, patterns, forms and colours of Kashmir resonate in Gujarat while being different.

Is the focus more on contemporary artists in the documentary?

O: It is contemporary but comes with thousands of years of history. What's beautiful is that we are talk-What's beautiful is that we are talk-ing about the works of contempo-rary artists and showing the milieu that brought about their art. D: What's interesting isn't the conflict between past and present but how the present is coming

from history. When you're talking about how tradition is preserved, you also see professionals who build on that tradition. We're going to alphabets of creativity and showing that art is a discourse and a practise which isn't in conflict but a natural consequence even though it might go against tradition.

ural consequence even though in night go against tradition.

M: I don't think of history as a progression in a linear way but much more as a continuum. Everything in South Asia is elliptical. What's new today is old tomorrow is addenly new. Whether it is sho structed and used by artists on tempura and frescoes. Similarly, while references to metaphor and myths happen in ancient cultures but are also made by very young contemalso made by very young contem-porary artists today.

"What is the audience you are targeting and what should they be looking at? M: We hope that the film serves

M: We hope that the film serves as an entry point for someone who is interested in art but never has had an exposure to different conversations or some of the different thistories of art. At the same time we want artists to find a resonance with other artists either from their part of the world. It isn't a historical text but more of symbols and signs that give an entry point into aesthetics. It's a plural history.

D: We want to have a film that goes beyond the intellectual language that contemporary art had inbull globally and to try to create a narrative that talks to people.

O: It provides an experience to someone navigating art but not so

or in provinces an experience to someone navigating art but not so familiar with it but at the same time it has layers and subtexts woven in silently which will give a much more refined narrative to artists who are refined narrative to artists familiar with the discourse

-IMMERSIVE 30 MINUTES:

A global pandemic and an impend-img lockdown may have yet again impacted the commercial and creative

A king locknown may lavely et agent impacted the commercial and creative aspects of performing arts but Australian-Indian choreographer and educator Ashley Lobo believes an abiding passion for dance can open even invisible doors. The point is to persist, keep learning and find new ways to express oneself. Drawing upon his expertise as a method of the commercial and and particular and the Navdhara India Academy and the Navdhara India Dance Theatre, and having spent over a year balancing the virtual stage and live dance training. Ashley offers tips to aspiring dancers as to loow they can navigate this time yet again with hope, courage and even success.

INCULCATE PASSION

INCULCATE PASSION

"If a dancer has passion, she/he will have the discipline to persevere regardless of the challenges ahead. A pandemic can be emotionally and physically draining on a dancer who is used to synergising and performing with other dancers on stage, in studios and also soaking in the live appreciation of the audience. But passion coupled with adaptability can propel a dancer forward, says he and adds, "The one thing I learnt during the lockdown last year was that we always have enough space and energy to do what we really want. I adapted my passion for dancing to a more constricted space and developed a daily routine that I stuck to. During my online classes, I asked my students to do the same. No matter how overwhelmed you may be feeling, as a dancer when your feet start moving, your mind also moves to happier places."

Dream hard, work harder'

Choreographer and educator ASHLEY LOBO says nothing can stop a dancer who is motivated, disciplined and hungry for success



IDENTIFY A FAVOURITE DANCE STYLE When a dancer is serious about When a dancer is serious about pursuing his or her passion as a vocation and a lifelong career, it is important to identify the style they want to specialise in. Ashley cites the example of many young Indian dancers whose dedication to ballet has won

them scholarships and taken them abroad to master the form. He says, "When you clarify just what creative zone you want to specialise, work or teach in, it distills your choices to the essentials and you are able to find options that are suited to you."

GET THE FUNDAMENTALS OF

THEORY RIGHT

THEORY RIGHT

According to him, to revise, repeat and imbibe the basic theories of a chosen dance form is important. He suggests. Tearn online with a teacher, join an academy remotely if you cannot learn in person and tune your body and mind. Do your own research on how great dancers built their technique, watch acclaimed performances, check what international studios are working on. All this information is out there. Be hungry and relentless. Build your foundation and never stopy working on yourself and your craft.

and your craft."

FOCUS ON THE POSITIVES

It is hard to find motivation in tough times but as Ashley says. "One of my favourite quotes that I use repeatedly to inspire myself and my students is, "My next move must be motivated by dance itself. This is what it is all about. When you let dance lead you to your next step, the future reveals itself and believe ne; it will be beautiful. The world over, dance is getting the respect it deserves through performance-based shows and films. Dancers are beginning to represent India at the global level as performers, teachers and choreographers. And we are all set to make an even bigger splash in the years to come. So dream hard, work harder and you will go places."

Gil Green directs Divine's Rider

Rapper Divine has teamed up with American music video and film director Gil Green for the music video of his new track Rider.

The story of his new track Rider.

The story of pivine's rags-to-riches tale. It is a lowe sage between a deprived dreamer, played by Divine, and an affluent boss woman, played by singer Lisa Mishra.

Green has directed over 200

Green has directed over 200 Green has directed over 200 music videos and has collaborated with the likes of Adam Levine, John Legend, Pitbull, Chris Brown, Akon, Lil Wayne, Kanye West, Nicki Minaj, Drake, DJ Khaled, Camila Cabello, Usher, P-Diddy, J Balvin, 50 Cent, Snoop Dogg and Sean Paul.

"Twant to send a big shout out to Divine and the Gully Gang for collaborating with me on this video. Being a part of Divine's massive influence in India's hijp hop movement is something spe-

massive influence in India's hip pop movement is something spe-cial to me. The art form is truly universal, and Divine continues to push the hip hop boundaries with his music, lyrics, style and presence, 'says Green. The video features Dubai's tourist attractions such as Dubai Opera, Burj Khalifa, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai World Trade Centre to City Walk, Burj al Arab, Madinat Jumeirah, Palm Jumeirah and features the iconic desert safari.

safari.
Divine adds, "Rider is a song that is very close to my heart and I feel blessed to have worked with



a legend like Gil and his entire a legend like Gil and his entire team that fulfilled the vision I had for this music video. Lisa has been an amazing and a fun collabora-tor to work with, easy to see that her voice and personality togeth-er in the video shines right through."

"Last summer, Divine made an Instagram post askine his fans

an Instagram post asking his fans who he should work with on his album. I thought I'd shoot my shot

in the comments and see if 1 got lucky. And just like that, he messaged me that he had an idea and was going to send it over. When 1 got the scratch, his verse and the hook had been written and he left he second half empty for me. I loved the message of the song, about an independent woman who he's so comfortable with, it goes beyond just a relationship," says Lisa. in the comments and see if I got



CONVERSATION

Actor and host VISHAL MALHOTRA tells Ayushi Sharma that the Season 2 of *Imagine That* will educate children and their parents about the concept of upcycling and being friendly towards the environment along with a good dose of laughter



*What made you say yes to Imagine That Season 2? What different in this installment?

As you know, I started my relationship with Disney 25 years ago and ever since then, it has been a very fulfilling experience. We have been looking at ways to collaborate with each other for the longest time. So when the channel was kind enough to offer me this show, I grabbed the opportunity. From the time they have announced our collaboration, I have been overwhelmed with the responses that I have been receiving from the audience. People are extremely nostalgic with my return and they cannot wait for the show. Besides this, the format of the show intrigued me the most. DIY (Do It Yourself) is an integral part of a lot of itself lives. It is entertaining and encourages them to grow mentally. In this concept, I connect the audience to the show; I am the voice of the audience through which I aim to bring a lot of joy, laughter and fou and at the same time make sure that the simplest DIYs to the biggest are amazing.

Now people are well-versed with the DIY culture due to easy access to the internet. What new is in it for kids?

to the internet. What new is in it for kids?

For starters, when you normally watch a DIY, there are only said instructions on how to execute it. Whereas, in this show we have got an entire gameplay around it, which has been filled with fun, laughter, entertainment and of course, learning, Besides that, the kind of DIY we are choosing is focussed on the theme of 'upcycling,' We use old material from the previous DIY by upcycling them for the new ones and like that we make sure we do not waste anything. The show is centred on a lot of social relevance that will educate the children and their parents about the concept of upcycling and being friendly towards the environment along with enjoying a good dose of laughter.

*Why do you think DIY is important? Can we merge the concept with sustainability?

DIYs are extremely important because it encourages a child to



think or motivates them to build new creative things. And this is always something that we should be looking for. This show offers encouragement to the parents and their kids to come together and challenge each other's mind and creativity to build something which is actually going to be useful and is not just a showpiece. Speaking of sustainability — yes! We can merge the concept with DIY. That is exactly what the show is about. The first step to sustainability is no wastage, which is what we absolutely endorse and encourage. We do not waste a single piece of paper, a straw or even a single string. We use every bit again and again and create amazing new things without compromising on the quality of what we are producing.

*How challenging is it to capture

*How challenging is it to capture the attention of the children while hosting such shows?

Any TV show to the audience is extremely difficult to captivate, it is not just with the kids. I have had the fortune of hosting shows for kids for the last 25 years and somehow, I have found a very favourable response from my audience. This is because I do not treat them as kids. I do know my audithem as kids. I do know my audi-ence but I do not treat them on the

basis of the intelligence I think they possess. I, rather, treat them as my friends. I believe this has what resonated with them in a big way. I am confident that the same resonance will come back again be it with the kids or their parents after watching me on the episodes.

me on the episodes.

Given that things are easily accessible today, how do you think the importance of DIY projects can be explained to kids?

Well, that is something we are striving to do but we should not undermine the intelligence of both parents and children. But yes, you are right — everything is easily available and we do bring that up in the show. Certain times on the show I just say, 'Hey, listen, we go in the show. Certain times on the show I just say, 'Hey, listen, we go will be used to give somebody a gift. Why don't we just order it online?' However, we teach and encourage the audience to build a DIY. Punching in your card numbers to order a gift online is incomparable to the wholesome emotion. The gratitude and the sense of achievement you feel after creating something by spending those 15-20 minutes on it. That gift is far more truly yours than any purchased kind. (The show will premiere on Disney Channel at 9.30 am on April 18.)

Ajay, Siddharth to produce Gobar



Actor-producer Ajay Devgr has announced his new pro Actor-producer Ajay Devgn
has announced his new production, a comic drama named
Gobar along with Siddharth Roy
Kapur. The film is to be directed by ad-filmmaker Sabal
Shekhawat, who has also penned
the script along with Sambhit
Mishra. The film's story is about
a veterinary doctor who discovers a tangled web of corruption
in his state hospital.
Ajay feels that people will
loobar is at once unique, relatable
and incredibly funny as well as
gripping and entertaining to

and incredibly funny as well as gripping and entertaining to the point that I'm confident it will compel people to go to the theatres, he says.

"We are very clear about the impact we want to make. We want viewers to laugh, relax, perhaps think a little bit and be entertained. The standard that Siddharth observes in content creation and filmmaking makes this collaboration very exciting for us," the actor-filmmaker adds.

Kapur says that the film

adds.

Agpur says that the film centres around the journey of a common man and comes with a simple message. "Gobar is a story that chronicles the seeningly pointless but ultimately heroic journey of a simple citizen who deals with corruption in a way that will bring on many laughs, much adventure and ultimately a simple message about the power of the common

n," says Kapur. He adds, "What makes the man, says Kapur.

He adds, "What makes the film entertaining and unique is that it is a situational comedy that sheds light on the inner workings of power. To be collaborating with Ajay, someone I have always respected for his creative choices, and his team at Ajay Devgn Films on bringing this film to life is very exciting. Writer-director Shekhavat says that the film has been written keeping in mind true events. "Gobar is a film that will take viewers back to the charming days of the nineties and the

"Gobar is a film that will take viewers back to the charming days of the nineties and the simple life of smalltown living. I wrote this story keeping in mind a few true events that unravelled a gamut of issues, the centre of which is a vet whose low for his cows and animals supersedes everything," says Shekhawat.
"I'm grateful and happy that two esteemed producers like Ajay and Sid showed faith in wy vision and offered a sizable canvas to the storyline, Quality cinema has come from both production houses, and I'm sure that the treatment of my directial will be no different. As a filmmaker, I'm absolutely thrilled!" he says.

Produced under the banners Ajay Devgn Films and Roy Kapur Films, the film will go on loors at the end of the year. The casting of the film is underway.

—WKS

STUDIO C H A T

Into the world

Actor MATTHEW GOODE shares that the second season of A Discovery of Witches is much darker, full of vampires, daemons, witches and forbidden love. By TEAM VIVA



Ashmole 782. Later in the series, we learn this to be 'The Book of Life'. Matthew, who I play, has overheard Diana has the book in her has overneard Diama has the book in her possession, but she doesn't have it as it's disappeared again. There is an attraction between them, but the congregation, made up of witches, vampires and daemons, has set rules that do not allow for species to mix. Matthew and Diana fall for each other and he takes her to his mother's house who hates witches. They realise that in order to escape the clutches of the congregation and figure out how much power Diana may or may not have, they must trave back in time — 1590. At that time, I was in the guise of another Matthew — Matthew Roydon — who was the

head of The School of Night with characters like Walter Rayleigh and Kit Marlowe, both of whom are a big part of season two. □What is it like being back for sea-

□What is it like being back for sea-son two?

The book is great. You pop the first one down and pick up anoth-er. Deb (Deborah) writes fantastical-y good stories. They are dense and there's a lot of material, so you want to mine that as much as possible. assumes the identity of Matthew reassumes the identity of Matthew Roydon. He was Lord Burghley's right-hand and, basically, 007 for the Queen. It's a

much darker season and I think we much darker season and I think we start to see Diama's character become stronger, not only with magic, but in a society that's very patriarchal. It's great getting the old gang back together even though we didn't see a lot of them as they were filming the modern part of the story, lames North has successfully knocked out a 1590s. London town in a place called Plas Machen. Prior to arriving on set, I wondered how they were going to do it, and if it was just going to be a few pots, pans and beggars hanging around some cobbles. What are the challenges that Matthew and Diana face in season

two and how their relationship develops?
In season one, Diana was a bit of a victim of circumstance. In season two, she's a lot smarter and as historian, she thrives going back in time. Diana also steps up in the relationship, looking after Matthew mentally because he starts to lose himself. It becomes a proper marriage based on equality.

□Can you explain how Diana is beginning to harness her magic in this season and what she has to go through?

son two is a journey.

Through the tests they complete in season one, we realise that Diana has all the markers, which is very rare. Most of her magic has been quite fantastical, but she hasn't heen able to control it. We eventually learn that this is because she's speellbound. Season two follows her schooling by great witches and realising that she is a weaver.

is a weaver.

"Who is Kit Marlowe and why is he important to Matthew?

Kit was a famous playwright in real world and is still a famous one in the show. He was accused of being a spy and ends up getting stabbed. In the book, he also works for Lord Burghley and is part of a ring of undercover agents and The School of Night. He is Matthew's greatest and closest friend. It goes pear shape because the Matthew of the past hated witches and so Kit, who is a daemon, is wary when he comes back and declares that he has married one. Because of the ups and downs of their relationship and trust issues, he's a great foil for season two. These themes are very apparent in Elizabethan society, a time of skulduggery, theft, murder and darkness.

□What's it like working with Tom

DWhats it use rotange.

It's always been a pleasure. Tom and I have worked together quite a few times now. He's great and northern and looks at things differently. He gives Kit a real sense of other worldliness that is difficult to put one's finger on, but it really is quite mesmerising.

□Explain Philippe and Matthew's

DExplain Philippe and Matthew's relationship?

The relationship between Philippe and Matthew is a tricky one. It was Ysabeau who sired Matthew many moons ago, but Philippe fathered him in a very masculine way. There's a big secret for the audience in season two around what Matthew's history is with Philippe. To talk about their relationship without mentioning the secret is like a lot of father and son relationships nowadays. You hope there's love there but often that love is unclear. That's what parenting is like, but there is a massive love

between them and it's all very

□Philippe's acceptance of Matthew and Diana's relationship is impor-

and Diana's relationship is impor-tant, what do you think? Philippe's acceptance of Diana is huge as not only is he from 1590, he also hates witches. It's very bemusing for him. After a while, he does start to twig that this is not the time they're from as he does not recognise Matthew as the son he once knew. It's hugely important in the story that he takes to Diana.

□What does the addition of historical characters bring to the show?

They add that extra layer of history, which is rather wonderful. It gives it great historical context. I think the way Barbara (Marten) plays Elizabeth I in this is fantastic. She plays her without vanity and is slightly in love with Matthew. Probably my favourite portrayal of Elizabeth — up there with (Cate) Blanchett.

□What's it been like having Teresa

back?

The show doesn't work without her. Teresa is the shows beating heart. She's my best bud on this and we spend all our time together. If anything happened to her and they said they're going to bring another actor in, it wouldn't work! It's one big travelling caravan of Australian/American love. She came back with the fire to push her character and it's made a big difference.

OSeason one is set in modern day and season two is largely a period piece, what's it like to take the show from one period to another?

Everything takes a fraction longer as inaccuracies are not as forgivable. Any period drama does, bet by the costume or the hair. Working on James North's sets transports you as an actor. If those elements weren't nailed, I wouldn't have been able to slip into character as easily. Apart from that, you're also just trying to get your lines and movement right.

(Season two is streaming on SonyLIV.)

(Season SonyLIV.)

Shahrukh steers PBKS to 106

Deepak Chahar's four-wicket spell dismantle Punjab, which couldn't recover from that

quoteunquote

I THINK IT WAS MORE SEAM THAN SWING AND WE BOWLED IN THE RIGHT AREAS WE GOT SOME TIME TO PREPARE AND THINGS WENT OUR WAY AS WE EXECUTED WELL

Deepak Chahar, CSK pacer

eepak Chahar's superb opening spell stood out as Chennai Super stings restricted Punjab Kings to a below-par 106 for eight here on Friday. Tamil Nadu's power-hitter Maharukh Kham was the only Punjab batsman to make an impression, with a 36-ball 47 (4748, 2K69 before falling to Sam Curran in the final over as CSK was all over their opponent

ball 47 (4X4s, 2X6s) before falling to Sam Curran in the final over as CSK was all over their opponent.

Sam Curran (1/12), Moeen Ali (1/17), Dwayne Bravo (1/10) were the other wicket-takers for CSK.

Aiming to bounce back after being outclassed by Delhi Capitals in their opening match, CSK bowlers justified skipper Mahendra Singh Donis' decision to bowl first by reducing Punjab to 26 for four in the powerplay.

Chahar engineered the Punjab slide in the very first over by sending back Mayank Agarwal (0) with a beauty which nipped away from middle stump to hit the off stump. Chahar kept up the pressure and increased PBK5s woes with his consistency and conceded only two fours in his four-over spell.

In-form Punjab skipper K I Rabul (5) was run-out by a brilliant direct throw from Ravindra Jadeja fielding at short-cover as the batsman tried to scramble for a single.



nai Super Kings pacer Deepak Cha

SCOREBOARD Jhye Richardson b Moeen Murugan Ashwin c du Plessis b DJ Bravo Edras (b 0, lb 0, w 4, nb 0, p 0)

101-8 (Shahrukh Khan, 19.1)

Bowling	
Deepak Chahar	4-1-13-4
Sam Curran	3-0-12-1
Shardul Thakur	4-0-35-0
Ravindra Jadeja	4-0-19-0
Mosen Ali	3-0-17-1
Dwayne Bravo	2-0-10-1

Dhoni plays 200th match for Chennai

Punjab Kings batsman Mandeep Singh's wife Jagdeep and child Rajveer Singh in stands during IPL game be Punjab Kings and Chennai Super Kings in Mumbai

boundarymeter

1. Nitish Rana (KKR)

PLAYER

Sanju Samson (RR)
 Manish Pandey (SRH)

1. Harshal Patel (RCB)

2. Andre Russell (KKR)

MOST SIXES

3. Avesh Khan (DC)

1. Saniu Samson (RR)

3. Deenak Hooda (PBKS)

SUMMER SLAM MOTION PICTURE

2. Nitish Rana (KKR)

230

137

123

99

wkts

45

NORTJE OUT OF QUARANTINE

DO Figure 1. The Control of Priday came out of his hard quarantine that was extended by a couple of days following a false Covid-19 positive report. The Proteas speedster had tested positive for Covid-19 while in quarantine but was retested and came out negative in three RT-PCR results. "It's nice to be out of the room and see everyone at breakfast. Excited to get to training today," Nortje said in a video posted by the franchise.

KANE HOPING TO BE FIT WITHIN A WEEK

Kiwi batsman Kane Williamson, who missed SRH's first two matches due to an elbow nigruy, is recovering well and is expected to attain full match-fitness. "within a week." Kane suffered a small tear in his left elbow tendon and was ruled out of the home series against B'desh in March ahead of IPL. However, he NZ captain on Friday said his "tecovery is going really well".

ISHANT SUFFERING FROM HEEL NIGGLE DC head coach Ricky Ponting has revealed that experienced pacer Ishant Sharma, who missed his team's first two IPL matches, is suffering from a heel niggle. "Coming into the first game, Ishant Sharma obviously had a heel niggle that we have been trying to work through," Ponting said on Thursday night.

STOKES OUT FOR UP TO 12 WEEKS

STORES OUT FUR UP 10 12 WEEKS England all-rounder Ben Stokes will be out of action for "up to 12 weeks" as his fractured left index finger will require surgery that will take place in Leeds on Monday. A repeat X-ray and CT scan revealed that the 29-year-old has a fracture in his left index finger. Stokes, who is currently in Mumbai will fly home on Saturday.

POINTS TABLE NRR W L PTS 2 0 +0.175 . DC +0 195 RR +0.052 KKR +0.000 0

Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni on Friday plaved his 200th match for the Men in Yellow when he took to the fidd against Punjah Kings at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. Dhoni has led the franchise in all but one game (2012 Champions Leagus T20) when he has been part of the XI. Virat Kohli has played 209 T20 matches for RCB.

matches for RCB. matches for RCB.
Dhoni has made 176 appearances
for CSK in the IPL besides having 24
outings for the side in the Champions
League T20 tournament in the past. The



former India captain also represented Rising Pune Supergiant in 30 IPL matches in the 2016-17 seasons. Dhoni, who has led the Super Kings to three IPL titles, is eighth on the all-time IPL batting charts with 4,632 runs (4,058 for CSK) at an average of 40.63 and a strike rate of 13.667. In his 24 CLT20 appearances, Dhoni has amassed 449 runs with one fifty while leading CSK to two titles, in 2010 and 2014. The 39-year-old veteran also holds the record of most sixes among Indians in the IPL with 216 while being the most successful wicketkeeper with 148 dismissals.

give Chahar his second wicket. Nicholas Pooran bagged his second straight duck, pulling a short delivery straight into the hands of Shardul Thakur at long-leg. Deepak Hooda (10), who played a blinder in Punjab's first match against Rajasthan Royals, could not repeat his heroics, lobbing a simple acto be fad up lessis as the team slipped to 26 for five in the seventh over. Shahrukh Khan and Jhye Richardson (15, 22 balls, 2x4s) added 31 runs for the sixth wicket in what was the best partnership of the innings. Murugan Astwin (6) then added 30 runs with his Tamil Nadu teammate Khan to help Punjab's cause in an otherwise nightmare night for them. 'Rahul is MI's wicket-taking bowler **SRH** search right combo "And Rahul is a wicket-taking bowler, you make him bowl those balls that are just too good. "Example is just the powerful (balls he bowled) in the last game he bowled absolute jaffa, his role is to come and spin the ball and if the boys are around and create some pressure, it gives him opportunity to take those wickets, so that's the role we look for him to do in the team." Against Sunrisers, Bond stressed that it is important to get rival skipper David Warner and Jonny Bairstow out. "Got to get those two guys in the properties of the set hose stressed that it is important to get yield in the properties of the properties of the set hose two guys is one of the best batsmen in the IPI, talisman for their team. We know how important they are," he think he is got a long way to go," Bond said ahead of the game against Sunrisers Hyderabad. "He (Rahul) is a good listener and is keen to get out there and implement it in the game and hope that will continue ovethe next few years," said

Mu m b a i I Indians bowling coach Shane Bond on Friday praised the team's leg-spinner Rahul Chahar, saying the 21-year fold is a wicket-taking bowler and his role never changes in the startstudded team.

Chahar, who has played 3 T20ls for India, returned with match-winning figures of 4/27 in a low-scoring the riller against Kolkata on Tuesday.

He is doing extreme-

KEY PLAYERS SURYAKUMAR YADAV

three seasons for MI and he'll be eager to make it big this time too



RASHID KHAN

He is arguably the best T20 bowle at present and his performance will be crucial for Sunrisers success

Getting the combination right would be top-most on Sunrisers Hyderabad's to-do list when they take on a qualitatively superior Mumbai Indians in an IPL encounter at Chepauk Umost on Sunrisers Hyderabads to-do list when they take on a qualitatively superior Mumbal Indians in an IPL encounter at Chepauk on Saturday, trying to arrest an early slide after back-to-back defeats.

To make matters worse, the nature of the Chemai track is not great news for the David Warmer-led Orange Army that failed to chase down a total which was less than 150.

Chasing has been Sunrisers achilles heel during the first two matches, once again bringing IXI and below-par Indian bench strength.

In these circumstances, facing a formidable team like Mumbai Indians, fresh from their Houdnin Act against Kolkata Knight Riders, would be a difficult proposition.

For skipper Warner, there are some serious questions about the choice of the playing XI, which many believe hasn't been well thought out and the results also back that assessment.

Using two wicketkeepers — Jonny Bairstow and Wriddhiman Saha — in the same XI hasti-

Using two wicketkeepers — Jonny Bairstow and Wriddhiman Saha — in the same XI hasn't

and Wriddhiman Saha — in the same XI hasnt served any tangible purpose with the veteran Indian looking completely out of sorts as an opener. With a seasoned man like Kedar Jadhav in the dug-out, along with two talented youngsters Priyam Garg and Abhishek Sharma, Saha is on borrowed time as far as his place in the side is concerned.

cerned.
With only Warner and Rashid Khan being certainties among the overseas players, a fit Kane Williamson is a must for SRH, factoring in his prowess against spin bowling.
The manner in which the likes of Manish

Pandey and Abdul Samad played cross-batted shots against RCB left-arm spinner Shahbaz Ahmed left Warner far from amused. The other issue has been team's



Matches Mumbai Indians

Jadeja was in the act in the fifth of

give Chahar his second wicket.

ain, grabbing a superb catch diving full-ngth to dismiss Chris Gayle for 10 to

Sunrisers Hyderabad

LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

Mumbai Indians beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by 34 runs in Shariah

Sunrisers Hyderabad defeated Mumbai Indians by 10 wickets in Shariah



Krunal Pandva who took 48 wickets at an average of 32.20 in 71 innings of 73 matches, needs two wickets to become the sixth bowler to complete a fifty of wickets for Mumbai Indians in IPI

196

David Warner who smashed 196 sixes in 144 innings of as many matches, needs four more sixes to become sixth batsman to complete a double century of sixes in IPL

bowling with T Natarajan not in the kind of form he was last season and Bhuvneshwar Kumar also on the expensive side. It is unlikely that MI will tinker with their playing XI and more so after winning a thriller against KKR. However, they would like to put up a better account of their bettier.



"He is doing extremely well, if you look at Rahul (Chahar), het is still young, who has played a fair-bit of cricket and now some high-pressure cricket, and (in) finals and a key member of our team, so in terms of his development, I still

160

COLEMAN'S SUSPENSION CUT CULEMAN'S SUSPENSION CUT
BENEVA: World 100m champion christian
Coleman's two-year ban for missing three
doping lests has been reduced by six months
to 18 months; the Court of Arbitration for
Sport said on Friday. But the American will
still miss the rescheduled Tokyo Olympics
this year as his ban runs until November 14.

NEW DELHI: Khelo India Games Gold-medallist Arundhati Choudhary (69kg) and Babyrojisana Chanu (51kg) advanced to the quarterfinals, while three others — Akash Gorkha (60kg), Sumit (69kg) and Gitika (48kg) also notched up opening-round wins at the youth world championships for men and women in Kielce, Poland.

NEW DELH: Indian women's T20 captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Friday announced that she has recovered from Covid-19. She had tested positive and made it public on March 30. After more than two weeks, her RT-PCR report has come negative.

Agenci

Maiden Asian Gold for Vinesh & Anshu

IPL, talisman for their team. We know how important they are, 'he said.

"They (Sunrisers) are very disciplined with the way they go about their work. They flogged us in the last game (we played against them) last season. They played beautifully. We plan the same for every team—how we are going to get them out, how we are going to best utilize the conditions,' added Bond.



Japanese rivals as she cruised to the title without losing a point in the

Japanese rivals as she cruised to the tile without losing a point in the 53kg category.
Vinesh has notched up seven podium finishes at the Asian meet over the years, including three Silver medals before this edition.
Also standing on top of the podium was Divya Kakran (72kg) while Sakshi Malki (65kg) settled for a Silver medal, a performance which should boost her confidence after enduring a long wretched run.
India has a rich haul of seven medals from the women's event as the country won four Gold, a Silver and two Bronze medals in this edition. Sarifa Mor (59kg) had won Gold while Seema Bisla (50kg) and Pooja (76kg) settled for Bronze medals of minursday.
Young Sonam Malik (62kg) unfortunately could not compete due to an injury. She had bagged lympic quota along with Anshu recently.

Pak win T20 series

AFP CENTURION

Pakistan beat South Africa by three wickets in the fourth and final T201 on Friday to win four-match series 3-1. Chasing the target of 145, Mohammad Nawaz finished the game with a six on the penultimate ball of Lizaad Williams' final ower of the match. He remained not out on 25 and took his side home which looked to have lost its way in the middle after Fakhar Zaman's (60) wicket in the 10th over of run chase. From 92-1 in 91. overs, the tourists were reduced to 129-7 in 18.2 overs, but ice cool Nawaz turned the tide in Sisanda Magala's 194 over to keep Pakistan in fire. Earlier, medium-pace bowder Fakhar Camaria sparked a South African collapse at SuperSport Park in Centurion. Faheem took three for 17 as South African, who were put into but after losing the toos. were put into bat after losing the toss, were bowled out for 144 on what is usually a high-scoring ground. Rassie van der Dussen top-scored for South Africa with 52 off 36 balls.

shortpasses

the next few years," said 42-year-old Bond, who played 18 Tests and 82 ODIs for New Zealand. According to Bond, Chahar's role in the team

never changes and the side wants him to bowl wicket-taking deliveries.

o u t -standing strike bowlers to

l in the power-play, t Boult, *Booms* (Jasprit nrah), and whoever mpliments them,

al Pandya who is filliant for us in the

last game, probably slightly more defensive bowler.

"We

TSITSIPAS IN MONTE CARLO SF

MONACO: Stefanos Tistispas advanced to the semi-finals of the Monte Carlo Masters on Friday when his quarter-final opponent Alejandro Davidovich withdrew after losing the first set 7-5.

ARUNDHATI, CHANU IN QF

HARMAN RECOVERS FROM VIRUS

PTI ALMATY

Dominating the proceedings in a depleted field, Olympic-bound wrestlers Vinesh Phogat and Anshu Malik won their maiden Anshu Malik won their maiden Asian Championship titles after comfortable triumphs in their respective summit clashes here on Friday. There was no stopping Vinesh in the absence of the Chinese and