

RANCHI, THURSDAY APRIL 15, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3

**OPINION 6**  
ELECTIONS IN THE  
TIME OF COVID**WORLD 8**  
IRAN PREZ CALLS 60% ENRICHMENT  
AN ANSWER TO 'EVILNESS'**SPORT 12**  
PSG, CHELSEA  
IN CL SEMIS

the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

I TIE UP  
WITH CAUSES:  
SONAKSHI  
10 VIVACITY

# CBSE Class X board exams cancelled

**Govt defers Class XII examinations amid rising Covid concerns****PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Centre on Wednesday announced the cancellation of CBSE Board examinations for Class 10 and postponed Class 12 exams in the wake of the coronavirus crisis. Both board examinations were scheduled for May-June.

The revised dates will be announced after June 1. The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the wake of rising cases of Covid-19 cases and concerns raised from various quarters, including a few Opposition parties.

The meeting was attended by Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', education secretary and other officials. The meeting also discussed a uniform policy or guidelines on board exams across States as was being demanded by several State Ministers.

The CICSE, which is the other prominent national board for school examinations, said it is reviewing the situation and will come up with a decision soon in this regard.

According to the official sources, Modi said the



Government would keep in mind the best interests of the students and ensure that their health is taken care of at the same time their academic interests are not harmed.

After the announcement, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi tweeted that a decision must be taken for Class 12 too. "Glad the Government has finally cancelled the 10th standard exams, however a final decision MUST be taken for the 12th grade also. Keeping students under undue pressure until June makes no sense. It's unfair. I urge the Government to decide now," she tweeted.

The decision by Centre on CBSE will affect over 21 lakh students across the country. This is the first time that the Central Board of Secondary Education has altogether cancelled the board examinations conducted by it. Last year, the exams were partially cancelled

in Delhi in the wake of riots in northeast Delhi and Covid-19 cases.

The CBSE will review the situation on June 1 to decide on the Class 12 exam schedule while objective criteria will be decided for Class 10 results.

In a statement issued after the meeting, the Union Education Ministry said, "Looking to the present situation of the pandemic and school closures, and also taking in account the safety and well-being of the students, it is decided as follows."

"The Board Exams for Class 12 to be held from May 4 to June, 14, 2021 are hereby postponed. These exams will be held hereafter," the Minister added.

The situation will be reviewed on June 1, 2021 by the Board, and details will be shared subsequently, the official statement read.

# India's daily Covid count nears 2L

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

India's daily Covid-19 count neared the 2-lakh mark on Wednesday as the situation turned alarming in several States and reports of unavailability of hospital beds, ventilators, and oxygen cylinders poured in from all over the country.

India recorded 1,94,108 cases and 972 deaths late on Wednesday. The country case-load spiked despite a certain degree of containment achieved in Maharashtra where the daily surge has remained confined in the range of 55,000 to 60,000. During the last 24 hours, Maharashtra recorded 58,952 fresh cases and 278 new deaths.

On a day when the Maharashtra Government began to enforce stringent restrictions, including a ban on the movement of people in public places without a valid reason, prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC and

night curfew for 15 days, the number of infections dropped from Tuesday's tally of 60,212 to 58,952, while deaths came down from 281 to 278 in various parts of the State.

With 58,952 fresh cases, the total infections climbed from 35,19,208 to 35,78,160. Similarly, with 258 new deaths, the total Covid-19 toll rose from 58,526 to 58,804.

However, Covid-19 cases continued to hit new peaks on daily basis in States such as Uttar Pradesh (20, 510 new cases), Delhi (17,282),

Karnataka (11,265), Chhattisgarh (12,603) and Madhya Pradesh (9,720), Gujarat (7,410) among others. In terms of death, Maharashtra accounted for 278, Delhi 104, Chhattisgarh (90), UP 67, Karnataka 38, and Gujarat 73.

In Uttar Pradesh, panic set in after Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, former Chief Minister and Samajwadi Party

president Akhilesh Yadav and a couple of Ministers and top bureaucrats tested positive for novel coronavirus infection as the State recorded 20,510 cases in the last 24 hours. Officials claim that 68 people died of Covid-19 during this period.

Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Amit Mohan Prasad said 20,510 new cases of Covid

were reported in the State during the past 24 hours.

However, he said, 4,517 Covid-19 patients had recovered and at present 1,11,835 active cases were undergoing treatment.

So far 9,376 people had died of Covid-19 in the State, including 68 who succumbed to the deadly virus in the last 24 hours, he said.



Health workers conducts Covid-19 testing of passengers at Anand Vihar Bus Terminal in New Delhi on Wednesday  
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

## 6 pm to 6 am night curfew in all cities in Rajasthan

**Jaipur:** Rajasthan on Wednesday night announced a 12-hour daily curfew — from 6 pm to 6 am — starting Friday, across all cities, as part of a series of measures to combat a worrying spike in Covid cases. The curfew will be in effect till the end of the month.

## Covid-19 IN INDIA

**TOTAL CASES:**  
1,40,65,622 (+1,94,108)**DEATHS:** 1,73,087 (+972)**RECOVERED:**  
1,24,23,992**ACTIVE:** 14,62,828**MAHARASHTRA:** 35,78,160**KERALA:** 11,89,176**KARNATAKA:** 10,94,912**ANDHRA PRADESH:** 9,37,049**DELHI:** 7,67,438 (+17,282)

## Russia swears by India friendship to allay Pak-ties fear

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Days after promising military equipment to Pakistan, Russia on Wednesday tried to pacify India by assuring that Moscow's ties with New Delhi and Islamabad are independent. Moreover, India is a "trusted partner" of Russia, its envoy said here.

His statement came after Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's recent visit to New Delhi and then to Islamabad. In Pakistan, Lavrov said Russia was ready to supply special military equipment to Pakistan to boost its counter-terror capabilities.

Allaying apprehension, Deputy Chief of Russian Embassy Roman Babushkin said India is a "trusted partner", and there were no divergences or misunderstandings between the two countries and that it has "limited cooperation" with Pakistan based on "independent" relations.

He also welcomed the recent commitment by India and Pakistan to follow the 2003 ceasefire on the Line of Control (LoC) and said these are "very important steps" for regional stability.

However, at a joint media briefing with Babushkin, Russian Ambassador Nikolay Kudashev criticised the Indo-Pacific strategy by western countries describing it as "dangerous" and an effort to revive the cold war mentality. Babushkin said India must be part of the process of shaping regional consensus on Afghanistan and that New Delhi and Moscow have similar approaches for the Afghan peace process.

# UK strain, double mutant coronavirus found in Jharkhand patients

**Genome sequencing confirms presence in Ranchi, East Singhbhum****SAURAV ROY ■ RANCHI**

The UK mutant strain and double mutant strain of Coronavirus have been found among Covid patients in Ranchi and East Singhbhum districts, the Regional Genome Sequencing Laboratory (RGSL) at Bhubaneswar-based Institute of Life Sciences (ILS) confirmed on Wednesday.

The Health Department had sent as many as 52 Covid positive samples to Bhubaneswar last week for genome sequencing, and the test reports confirmed that at least nine of these samples were of UK mutant strain while four were double mutant, a press communique from the Government stated, asking residents to be cautious.

The genome sequencing of samples from Jharkhand confirmed that at least eight of the nine UK mutant samples were from Ranchi and the remaining one was from East Singhbhum. Among the four double mutant strains, three were from Ranchi and one from East Singhbhum, ILS found.

At a time when the state is already battling the worst wave of Covid-19 infections, the presence of mutant strains of the virus has rung the alarm bell for the health department. The mutant strains of the virus have higher transmissibility and are also likely to evade the immune response of the body developed after exposure to the un-mutated Covid-19 virus or



Covid-19 patients getting treatment inside Sadar hospital at the Covid ward, in Ranchi on Wednesday  
Ratan Lal | Pioneer

vaccination, claim scientists.

The presence of mutated virus strains in Ranchi and East Singhbhum could be one of the reasons for the sudden spike in Covid cases and fatalities, say experts.

"The new mutated strains of the virus have a higher transmissibility, which could be one of the reasons for the spike in cases lately in Jharkhand," said the state coordinator of Indian Medical Association (IMA), Dr. Ajay Kumar Singh.

Ranchi and East Singhbhum have reported more than 50 per cent of the fresh Covid cases that surfaced in Jharkhand in the month of April — a trend that could be attributed to mutation in the virus. As per government data, Ranchi alone has reported 8,384 of the 19,703 Covid

cases that surfaced in Jharkhand since April 1. East Singhbhum has reported 2,798 of the fresh cases this month.

Health officials said that the Covid samples sent for genome sequencing to Bhubaneswar were stored at -80 degree Celsius and had CT value of less than 25. Of the 52 samples from Jharkhand, 39 were selected for whole genome sequencing. Genomic sequencing is a testing process to map the entire genetic code of an organism, which in this case, is the virus.

While the UK strain of the virus was first found in European countries, the double mutant variant of the Covid-19 virus first emerged in India and has spread to other countries like the USA, Germany and UK.

# Covid-19: State reports over 3k cases, 31 deaths in 24 hrs

## Active caseload inches close to 20K

**PNS ■ RANCHI**

Jharkhand reported more than 3,000 cases of Covid-19 infection and over 30 casualties on Wednesday, which took the active caseload closer to the 20,000 mark and the Covid toll up at 1,292, figures compiled by the National Health Mission (NHM) highlighted.

As per a bulletin released by the NHM, Ranchi accounted for 1,273 of the 3,198 cases and seven of the 31 fatalities on the day. On the other hand, East Singhbhum, the districts with highest reported cases of Covid deaths, accounted for nine casualties and 368 fresh cases, the NHM bulletin further stated.

Government records reveal that the fresh cases and casualties reported on Wednesday were the highest reported in a day this year. While Ranchi was the only district to report more than 1,000 cases on Wednesday, at least seven districts — Bokaro, Deoghar, Dhanbad, Koderma, Hazaribag, Ramgarh and Sahebganj — reported more than 100 fresh cases of Covid infection.

As per NHM data, Dhanbad reported five Covid



Body of a Covid-19 victim at Sadar Hospital in Ranchi on Wednesday  
Pioneer photo

fatalities on the day, while Dumka, Bokaro and Koderma reported two deaths each. Chatra, Simdega and Sahebganj reported one death each. Wednesday's findings take the Covid toll in Ranchi to 330 and that in East Singhbhum to 388. A recent genome sequencing confirmed that both these districts have presence of the UK mutant and double mutant strains of the virus.

While the fresh cases broke all past records of 2021, the state also recorded its highest Covid recoveries in a day on Wednesday. As many as 1798 Covid patients, including 1212 in Ranchi alone, recovered from the viral infection in the

day. However, the active caseload in Ranchi was still 7,648 — the highest in Jharkhand — despite the recoveries on Wednesday.

The active caseload in East Singhbhum was up at 2,285 as the district reported 368 cases against 156 recoveries in the past 24 hours.

As per Government data, the state tested swab samples of 31,797 people on Wednesday, and more than 10 per cent of them were found infected. So far, as many as 1,47,792 people have been infected by the virus in Jharkhand and around 86.59

per cent of them have recovered.

The doubling rate of infection in Jharkhand further dropped to 45.33 days against the national average of 80.05 days on Wednesday. As per government data, the growth rate of infection in the state was 1.54 per cent against the national average of 0.87 per cent.

Meanwhile, Jharkhand administered the first dose of the vaccine against Covid-19 to 76,431 people and the second dose to 7,215 beneficiaries on Wednesday.



Chief Minister Hemant Soren pays tributes to former MLA Simon Marandi at Littipara on Wednesday

Pioneer photo

# Beat corona with 30-minute brisk walk daily!

**ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Regular exercise or a 30-minute brisk walk in your neighbourhood park five days a week while following the social distancing norms can go a long way in beating Covid-19. Physical inactivity may land you in ICU or also prove fatal for you in case the pathogen catches you, according to a study that analysed nearly 50,000 Covid positive adults.

Even patients who were inconsistently active had lower chances for a severe Covid-19 infection, suggesting any

## Physical inactivity may land you in ICU or also prove fatal for you in case the virus clings to you, claims study

amount of physical activity has benefit, said the findings published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine.

"This is a wake-up call for the importance of healthy lifestyles and especially physical activity" said Robert E Sallis, a physician at the Kaiser Permanente Fontana Medical Centre in the US.

Researchers said the potential for regular physical activity to lower the severity of

Covid-19 illness should be promoted by public health agencies and that pandemic control recommendations should include regular physical activity across all population groups. "People who regularly exercise had the best chance of beating Covid-19, while people who were inactive did much worse," Sallis added.

For the study, the team identified 48,440 adults with a Covid-19 diagnosis from

January 1, 2020, to October 21, 2020. They found 6.4 per cent were consistently active and 14.4 per cent were consistently inactive, with the remainder falling in the inconsistently active category. Among all Covid-19 patients, 8.6 per cent were hospitalised, 2.4 per cent were admitted to the ICU, and 1.6 per cent died.

"What surprised me the most from this study was the strength of the association between inactivity and poor outcomes from Covid-19," said Deborah Rohm Young from the Kaiser Permanente

Southern California.

"Even after we included variables such as obesity and smoking in the analysis, we still saw inactivity was strongly associated with much higher odds of hospitalisation, ICU admission, and death compared with moderate physical activity or any activity at all," Young added. The results showed that inactivity is strongly associated with poor Covid-19 outcomes, Sallis said, while suggesting walking 30 minutes a day, five days a week at a moderate pace can prevent Covid-19 affliction.

# Quadruple murder: Tuition teacher sexually assaulted before death

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Even after 48 hours since 42-year-old Tata Steel employee Deepak Kumar killed his three family members and a tuition teacher at Kadma, the police are yet to trace the killer. Meanwhile, the postmortem report has suspected sexual assault on the teacher identified as Rinky Ghosh. Her viscera have been sent to Ranchi-based forensic science laboratory for further investigation. During the investigation, the police also found a towel with stains of semen over it. According to information, four separate teams have been set up to nab Deepak and detect the case conclusively, but as of now the same are yet to trace the killer. “The teams are conducting a search operation to nab the prime accused. We had put Deepak’s cellphone number on surveillance and have found his last location some-



where in Bistupur, but the cellphone is now switched off. We are confident to nab him soon,” said a police official.

OC, Kadma police station, Manoj Kumar Thakur said that the tuition teacher Rinky Ghosh was the last person to be murdered. “Moreover, Rinku was found lying in semi-nude condition. From her apparel we suspect that Deepak might have raped her before killing her,” said Thakur.

After killing his wife, two minor daughters and the 22-year-old tuition teacher at his residence in Tista road in Kadma, Deepak had called his friend Roshan Kumar to drop in at his place for lunch. Roshan who is a resident of Telco had come along with his wife, brother-in-law and a toddler daughter at Kadma. But Deepak who was in a killing spree had also attacked his friend and the friend’s brother-in-law Ankit Kumar with a hammer, leading to grievous injuries to Roshan and Ankit.

Both Ankit and Roshan are undergoing treatment at Tata Main Hospital, where the condition of Ankit (28) is said to be serious. Roshan managed to escape from Deepak’s residence along with his wife, toddler daughter and brother-in-law had informed Deepak’s brother-in-law Binod Kumar, leading the latter to inform the police.

# Farmer’s son Sushil ranked 45th in UPSC ESE

Villagers welcome Sushil in a road show  
DEVASHISH BADAL ■ GIRIDIH

Sushil Kumar Suman, son of Rameshwar Mandal, a resident of Karihari under Giridih district, has been successful in the Engineering Services Examination ESE of UPSC. Sushil was welcomed by villagers in a road show on Wednesday.

Sushil got first position in matriculation examination from Rajdhanwar High School and after that he continued his further studies by giving tuitions due to poor financial condition of his family. He has been successful in the examination in the third attempt.

Sushil passed out in 2013 from IIT and runs his own coaching center in Delhi, where he prepares students for the GATE examination. He said that after passing from IIT, his job was in an American company, in which he



had to join in Hyderabad, but he quit his job and started his own coaching in Delhi. Sushil said that he had quit his job and made up

his mind for UPSC Engineering Services. On the success of his son, father Rameshwar Mandal said

that Sushil has achieved success by his hard work. Pushpa Devi, his mother, said, “We have suffered so much in poverty.”

# ESL Steel observes ‘Tika Diwas’; 394 employees get vaccine shots

PNS ■ BOKARO

In tune with Prime Minister’s ‘Tika Diwas’ call, Vedanta Electrosteel (ESL) conducted a COVID-19 vaccine drive for their eligible employees in coordination with the Jharkhand State Health Department.

Around 394 ESL employees, including business partners, received their vaccine shot at five centers inside the plant premises, informed a PR official of ESL.

Speaking on the occasion, Sadhana Verma, Head HSE, ESL Steel Limited said, we will continue to support the government in the nationwide vaccination drive. As a caring company, we would like our eligible employees to take the vaccine and protect themselves from the ill effects of the deadly virus.

“For ESL Steel Limited, people always come first, and we will walk that extra mile to ensure that our main strength, our people, is safe. I would urge all eligible employees to come forward and get them vaccinated,” added Verma.



“For ESL Steel Limited, people always come first, and we will walk that extra mile to ensure that our main strength, our people, is safe. I would urge all eligible employees to come forward and get them vaccinated,” added Verma

In an effort to increase the reach of vaccines, the government has issued an order to organise COVID-19 vaccination settings, both at public and private premises, which has around 100 eligible and willing beneficiaries, she said.

ESL Steel Limited has already made adequate arrangements to sanitize its people in the plant by sanitizing its premises and by providing hand sanitizers and masks to keep its employees safe.

All are also maintaining social distancing in the plant. It will continue to follow COVID-19 protocol in its plant and offices and carry awareness drives for the community people, she said.

# High-rise buildings become Covid hotspot in coal city

PANKAJ KUMAR ■ DHANBAD

As the number of corona positive patients as well as corona related deaths are increasing, the high rise buildings and dense colonies have emerged as hot spots in the coal city.

In last two days four deaths have been here including a noted dentist Dr KS Chang of \*Katras locality and JP Dasaundhi an advocate by profession of Barwadda besides two others including an elderly woman in different covid hospitals. With these death the death from Corona in coal city has reached 138. While Dr Chang died while treatment at Ranchi the advocate breathed his last at SNMMMCH.

The number of active cases too has crossed 8600 mark here including 505 undergoing treatment at different hospitals.

Incidentally, high-rise buildings have emerged as new hot spots of coro-

na, positive cases besides densely populated areas.

In the last one week over forty positive cases that surfaced after tests happen to be from such buildings. In a few cases both husband and wife have been found positive but work of contact tracing in those buildings have not begun as yet.

Civil surgeon Gopal Das said, contact tracing is the responsibility of ICDS cell and they can only say why there is delay in tracing of contacts who came in contact with positive persons.

Meanwhile, deputy commissioner US SINGH informed that ‘Himmat app’ has been launched in Dhanbad for those in home isolation. This app would guide them in different ways including providing them medical advice too.

Singh said, 60 bed ICU at Sadar Hospital premises would be made operational within a weeks time for critically ill patients.

# Completion of Fire Safety Awareness Week at BSL



PNS ■ BOKARO

The concluding ceremony of Fire Safety Awareness Week started from April 8 at Bokaro Steel Plant was organized in the premises of BSL’s Central Fire Station. The Chief Guest of the program was Executive Director (works) Atanu Bhowmik.

On this occasion, Chief General Manager (Security & Fire Extinguishing Services) Amendra Jha, General

Manager (Fire Extinguishing Services) Rajesh Sharma, General Manager (ED Operational Secretariat) NK Behera, General Manager (Fire Fighting Services) Kumar Rajnish, Asst. General Manager (Fire Fighting Services) SN Mishra along with other officers and employees of the Fire Fighting Services Department were present. At the beginning of the program,

Mr. Sharma welcomed the Chief Guest and gave detailed

information about various programs carried out.

Addressing the personnel during the program, Chief Guest Bhowmik gave a message to further increase fire prevention inspections and improve housekeeping.

He called for strengthening the system of firefighting equipment and insisted on being equipped with advanced technology for fire prevention keeping in view the current situation.

# ‘QAT’ gives more teeth to Palamu police

PNS ■ DALTONGANJ

Palamu police’s QAT (quick action team) is proving a shot in the arms of the district police said sources.

Launched just a few days ago by the SP Palamu Sanjeev Kumar this QAT comprising 21 combatants armed to the teeth and possessing mental and physical toughness to override any challenging situation has proved its worth in one anti naxal operation and in one other drive against the organized criminals in this short span of coming into the formation said the immediate commanding officer of QAT K Vijay Shankar assistant superintendent of police Palamu.

SP Sanjeev Kumar said this outfit is equipped with a survival kit to enable it to brave the vagaries of Nature as well as to tame and contain the naxals, criminals, gangsters etc at the shortest notice to act and intervene.

Answering a query if this outfit is trained in jungle warfare to which the

SP said this outfit has had its

combat training at the hands of the CRPF here.

In response to one more query if this QAT be seen as an alternate to the CRPF or a substitute of it or a replacement of the CRPF K Vijay Shankar said the CRPF is an elite force and has a long standing expertise and specializing in tackling extremism, countering insurgency and is far more and advanced equipped force and so even remotely ours QAT is not any replacement of the CRPF.

Shankar said the formation of the QAT is indicative of our boys’ capability to take on the challenges thrown by the extremists and the criminals on their own and thus not to look towards the CRPF every now and then even for small surgical intervention.

Reminded that security forces in the jungles tracking or smoking out naxals from the holes have faced episodes of the snake bites and striking by the lightning in Palamu to which Vijay Shankar said our boys will handle it as this outfit has pouches of life saving medicines too.

# Covid-19 update — 10 important facts worth taking note of!



BY DR RAJENDRA KUMAR JHA

SARS COV 2 infection leading to the disease called COVID 19, has taken a new Avatar. This is clearly more infectious, is spreading much too quickly and tends to attack a greater number of people through index cases in comparison to its previous form. This is conspicuously different as it easily involves children, young adults and females in large numbers and at times critically too!

As we know it is the spike protein S2 of the virus, which attaches to human ACE receptors thus allowing its entry into the body cells and consequently damage the system.

Vaccines generate antibodies against the spike proteins and therefore don’t allow foothold to the virus. Multiple mutations at critical locations within the spike proteins create a variant which generally change their character reflected both in their infectiousness and lethality.

This unprecedented speed of the illness now reclaiming densely populated areas of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Bengal in a short time is a matter of great concern. Now it is upstaging our infrastructure preparedness with much larger death numbers. Such is the situation that only three days back one of my friend had to literally struggle to find a bed in hospitals across the capital city of Jharkhand for one of his COVID infected family members. Such help-

lessness has never been seen in our lifetime and deserves thorough understanding.

Let us update ourselves on this pandemic

■In order to acquire “herd immunity” against this virus, we must get vaccinated in large numbers and as quickly as possible by expanding the base for vaccine accessibility. Those who are obese and suffering from co- morbidities such as diabetes and high blood pressure even if they are younger than 45 should be made eligible without much delay.

■We are witnessing COVID disease even amongst those who have taken vaccine. They often forget that proper antibodies are not achieved until two to four weeks following second dose of the vaccines has been taken.

■This is now very evident that some of those who have taken both vaccine dose successfully have developed covid. Most likely these cases are as a result of significant mutations of the original virus which has found foothold at our surroundings.

■Don’t miss the second dose even if you developed covid 19 before you could get the second dose. Complete the second dose by scheduling vaccination after 28 th day of the illness. Remember antibodies produced by the vaccine last longer than the infection generated antibodies.

■Only today we have received genome sequencing results of RTPCR positive cases from Jharkhand as circulating in our state.

■It is now established that four out of thirty nine patients which constitute around 10%

(4/39) of the studied samples are harbouring dangerous double mutants ( B.1.617 lineage ), an Indian variant, which are highly infectious, lethal and partially refractory to available vaccines.

■9/20 patients (approx 20%) Studied patients whose nasopharyngeal swab were subjected to genome sequencing, had famous UK variant ( B.1.1.7 lineage ) which is relatively more infectious than the original strain of the virus but less infectious than the aforesaid Indian variant, is better contained by vaccine produced antibodies.

■However dangerous South African and Brazil variants have not been found yet in latest genome study conducted at Regional centre for genomic studies at Bhubaneswar, for Jharkhand published on 14 th April 2021

■However there is some good news too. The sero survey done a month and half back shows that around forty five percent population of Jharkhand have developed antibodies against the SARS COV 2 virus and if it can be believed that we are not far away from reaching a stable state if the above national sero - survey is to be really believed.

■Wearing a mask, keeping adequate distance preferably in open and ventilated surroundings and regular hand washing continues to be as important a way to protect each and all. At the end Every one has to trust that it is a temporary phase of disruption and very soon we will overcome this too. Keep your faith intact!!

The author is former Professor and Head, Department of medicine, RIMS, Ranchi.

# Dist Admin launches Covid Live Dashboard

Information on availability of beds in hospitals made available

PNS ■ RANCHI

Now, one will get information about the status of beds in private and government hospitals of Ranchi district for Covid-19 treatment. Deputy Commissioner, Ranchi Chhavi Ranjan inaugurated the Covid-19 Live Dashboard online on Wednesday.

According to the administration complete information can be found on the live dashboard by visiting the official website of Ranchi district ranchi.nic.in. With the availability of beds in various private and government hospitals on the Covid-19 Live Dash Board, information on Covid case data, active cases, death from



Ranchi DC Chhavi Ranjan holds a meeting with officials in Ranchi on Wednesday Pioneer photo

corona infection, vaccination etc will be available on the website.

Based on the information received from various hospitals on the dashboard, the data related to beds will be uploaded on the site. Anyone can check the availability of beds at any time by visiting the site.

Meanwhile, the DC also chaired a meeting with private pathological laboratories operators here on Wednesday. In

the meeting, all lab operators were instructed to carry out Covid-19 tests as per their capacity. Ranjan said that all private labs should increase the number of tests and examine the sample to the best of their ability.

During the meeting, the DC took information from all private lab operators about the lab's capacity and daily tests. He instructed the concerned officer to notice the lab, which is

testing less than the capacity. Notices were given to SRL Lab, S Sharan Lab and Medica. The DC instructed the concerned officer to carry out the necessary investigation if the number of investigations by the lab is zero.

During the meeting, Ranjan instructed all private lab operators to clear the backlog

sample test. He asked them not to delay in giving reports, make the report available to the concerned cell and person of the district administration in time.

Private lab operators were severely reprimanded by DC in the meeting for lack of capacity and due to negligence in the work of investigation. He said that common people should not have any kind of trouble. Magistrates will conduct random checking of Private Labs. Strict action will be taken if the lab is closed and samples are not being checked.

The DC asked the private lab operators to make inquiry counters in the lab so that the people coming for the test do not have any problem so that people can get the information related to the test easily. He said that if anyone wants to get information related to the investigation from the SRF ID, then it should also be arranged at the counter.



Chief Minister Hemant Soren addresses a election campaign rally in support of party candidate Hafizul Hassan Karon, ahead of Madhupur by-elections, on Wednesday Pioneer photo



Traffic police personnel try to stop a motorcyclist during mask checking drive in Ranchi on Wednesday Ratan Lal I Pioneer

## BJP accuses Deoghar administration of working as JMM worker

Party complaints against Cong MLA Irfan Ansari

**Ranchi:** Accusing the Deoghar district administration of working as JMM workers in Madhupur, the Opposition BJP has demanded the Election Commission of India (ECI) to ensure fair polls in the constituency. The BJP with this demand submitted a memorandum to Chief Electoral Officer Ranchi. The delegation was headed by BJP State secretary, Subodh Singh 'Guddu'.

The BJP in its memorandum has stated that Deoghar district administration is working as JMM workers. The BJP delegation through its memo-

random highlighted that recently the Deoghar DC distributed pamphlets with information about the places he will visit. Singh said, "The Deoghar DC through his visit will highlight the various welfare schemes of the state government which is indirectly campaigning in support of JMM candidate."

The BJP state secretary said that the act of Deoghar district administration is against the service code of conduct of a Civil Servant and also against the model code of conduct. The BJP also alleged that apart from this today (April 14), Jamtara MLA Infran Ansari performed puja at Baba Baidhyanath Dham temple and also uttered communal

remarks.

The BJP delegation stated that Ansari performed puja at Baba Baidhyanath Dham temple on the intervention of Deoghar district administration which is against the rules and regulations of Baba Baidhyanath dham temple authority. It may be noted that only Hindus are allowed to perform puja at Baba Baidhyanath Dham.

Few days back the BJP had made a similar complaint against the Deoghar district administration of removing BJP flags and banners from houses. The BJP delegation had stated that while the JMM flags and banners were not removed by district administration, flags of BJP were

removed by district administration.

In Madhupur bypoll there is a direct fight between JMM candidate and minority affairs minister Hafizul Hassan and BJP candidate Ganga Naryan Singh who switched sides from AJSU last month. The campaigning at Madhupur has reacted peak with Chief Minister Hemant Soren camping in Madhupur for days. The BJP too has put its senior leaders including BJP legislative party leader and senior leader Babul Marandi, BJP state president Deepak Prakash and others. Thursday is the last day of campaigning, while the election will be held on April 17. The results will be declared on May 2. PNS

## Students give mixed reactions on cancellation of CBSE X exam

Govt cancels CBSE Class 10 exams and postpones Class 12 exams

PNS ■ RANCHI

The Union Education Ministry's decision to cancel the CBSE Class X and postponing the Class XII examinations 2021 has drawn mixed reactions from the student community in Ranchi.

Some of them are satisfied with the decision, whereas others are asking the ministry to conduct the exams with full Covid 19 protocols. Surbhi Priya, a Class X student from Bridgeford School, Tupudana said, "The decision to cancel the Class X examination by CBSE is a welcome step in larger interest of students. As the Corona cases are surging day-by-day with the situation becoming out of control from State and Centre it is students who have to take their own safety."

Echoing the views of Surbhi Priya, her mother Ekta Sinha says, "We cannot afford our kids to take risk in the name of examination. We appreciate the decision of the Centre to cancel the examination as during examination hundreds of students gather at examination centres. It is a high risk zone and there are chances of spreading of infection."

However, there are students, who are happy with the decision to cancel the class X examination but are doubtful on the decision of promoting students based on internal assessment.

A class X student from Surendranath Centenary School

requesting anonymity said, "The decision on promotion of students based on internal assessment is doubtful as it will be the prerogative of class teachers to give grade to students. The students who are favourites of the class teacher will get good grades despite the fact that they are good or average in academics."

Moreover, there are students who opine that CBSE should conduct examinations full of corona protocols. Anil Sharma, father of a boy whose kid is a student at DPS Ranchi said, "Offices and business establishments are opened, also the Election Commission of India is conducting elections in different states and bypoll why students have to suffer. Examinations could be conducted with full corona protocols such as by increasing the number of examination centres."

There are also students who opined that if CBSE Class X examinations can be cancelled why not competitive examinations. The Ministry of Education cancelled the CBSE Class 10 exams and postponed the Class 12 exams 2021.

This decision was made in a meeting held by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with education minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' and CBSE officials today.

The Centre decided to postpone the examination after Opposition leaders such as Arvind Kejriwal and Rahul Gandhi have appealed to the Centre to postpone board exams. Parents, child rights bodies, several state governments have also made similar appeals to the centre to reconsider the plan to conduct offline CBSE board exams next month.

The CBSE Class X examination was to commence from May and was to run till June mid.

## RIMS to get 3 additional RT PCR machines to speed up Covid testing

Health Minister chairs meeting of governing board

PNS ■ RANCHI

Health Minister Banna Gupta on Wednesday approved the procurement of three additional RT PCR machines at Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) to speed up the process of Covid testing in Ranchi, the worst affected district in terms of caseload in Jharkhand.

Chairing a meeting of the governing board of the State-run hospital, Gupta said that in the wake of the growing cases of Covid-19 infection in the state, the government has decided to add more teeth to RIMS' Covid-fighting machinery.

The minister also approved the procurement of 256 Slice CT Scan machines for the Radiology wing and Trauma Centre at RIMS, besides opening vacancies for four scientists and eight lab technicians in the Microbiology wing of the largest State-run hospital in Jharkhand. The new recruitments, he said, will help in research related to viruses and other micro-organisms.

The meeting on Wednesday was virtually attended by Health Secretary KK Soan, Ranchi MP Sanjay Seth and Kanke MLA Samri Lal. RIMS Director Dr. Kameshwar Prasad and other senior doctors of the hospital were also present, sources said.

"Given the current Covid-19 situation in the state, it is important to speed up the testing process. The additional RT PCR machines will help RIMS test more samples on a given day and also clear the backlogs," Gupta said.

The sudden rise in demand for



Health Minister Banna Gupta during an online RIMS board meeting, on Wednesday Pioneer photo

Covid tests flooded labs in Ranchi with swab samples in the past couple of weeks, which eventually led to a delay of over 48 hours by private labs in providing RT PCR test reports to residents. As per NHM data, about 25,000 swab samples were still pending for tests.

The second wave of Covid-19 has rung the alarm bell for the Jharkhand government. Amid an unprecedented rise in cases and casualties, the state is also faced against crisis of beds and medicines used for treating Covid patients, health officials said. As per records with the National Health Mission (NHM), the state has been reporting more than 2000 fresh cases of infection and over a dozen Covid deaths every day on an average in the past one week.

Meanwhile, the health department has sought 1500 ventilators from the Centre as most of the 700-odd beds with ventilators in Ranchi

have been occupied. The state also received around 1500 vials of Remdesivir injections for treatment of Covid patients earlier this week after the health minister apprised the Centre about the crisis in the state.

Besides decisions related to strengthening the infrastructure for the fight against Covid-19 virus, Gupta on Wednesday also approved procurement of various equipment for the cardiology wing of RIMS. The equipment will help in cardiac surgeries and placing pacemakers in patients in need of such surgical interventions.

The state, however, is yet to get a genome sequencer to detect new and mutated strains of virus without having to send samples to Bhubaneswar. Covid samples recently sent for genome sequencing confirmed the presence of double mutant and UK mutant strains of Covid-19 in Ranchi and Jamshedpur.

## INBRIEF

**SETH FOR DEVELOPING KHELGAON AS HOSPITAL**

MP Sanjay Seth spoke to Union Coal Minister Prahlad Joshi about the Corona explosion in Ranchi highlighting the shortage of beds in hospitals. Seth urged the minister that Ranchi's Khelgaon, which is being looked after by CCL, has enough space. He urged the minister that CCL can provide beds, oxygen cylinders and other necessary resources here. By doing this, the large population of Ranchi will also get relief and their proper treatment will also be done. Seth said that the above work can be done through CSL and other items of CCL. Prahlad Joshi assured him that he is talking to the CMD soon on this issue.

**SEVERAL TRAINS FROM MUMBAI TO ECR STATIONS**

For the convenience of passengers, many special trains are being operated from Mumbai to various stations of East Central Railway. Apart from this, the operating period of special trains running earlier has also been increased. All special trains are fully reserved. Passengers are requested to follow the Covid-19 Potocal during the journey. The trains include 01153/01154 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus-Danapur Special and 01303/01304 Solapur-Guwahati-Solapur Special, 01427/01428 Pune-Bhagalpur-Pune Special, 01429/01430 Pune-Danapur-Pune Special, 09005/09006 Bandra Terminus-Barauni-Bandra Terminus Special and 09097/09098 Bandra Terminus-Barauni-Bandra Terminus Special among others.

**JPA WELCOMES CBSE DECISION**

President of the Jharkhand Parents Association Ajay Rai has welcomed the CBSE's decision to postpone the 10th to 12th exam. Rai said that the manner in which Corona has wreaked havoc everywhere and common people are traveling everywhere, the State government has not been able to provide beds for the victims of infection within the entire Jharkhand State including the Capital Ranchi. It has been, in the circumstances of people dying in yearning, this decision of the central government is a relief for every parent, which they welcome, he said.



**AMBEDKAR JAYANTI CELEBRATED AT SAIL**

Baba Saheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar Jayanti was celebrated in a safe environment in SAIL units in Ranchi today following all COVID protocols. In the leadership of Kamakshi Raman, ED (HRD), MTI; KK Jha, ED (Safety), Ajay Arora ED (RDCIS) and Jagdish Arora, ED(CET), senior officials of SAIL Ranchi Units offered floral tributes to Baba Sahab Bhim Rao Ambedkar. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Jayanti was also celebrated in the SC / ST cell of SAIL Ranchi. All employees remembered with gratitude the invaluable contributions of Baba Sahab in Nation Building.



**BSL PAYS TRIBUTES TO DR AMBEDKAR**



April 4 is celebrated as Ambedkar Jayanti all over the country. This year, on the occasion of Babasaheb's birth anniversary, Director-in-charge of BSL, Amarendu Prakash garlanded the statue of Dr.Ambedkar located in Sector 4. On this occasion, Executive Director (Medical and Health Services) of BSL Dr. AK Singh, Executive Director (Projects) and Additional Charge (Personnel and Administration) R. Kushwaha, Chief General Manager (Personnel) Pawan Kumar and Chief General Manager (Technical) Laxmi Das were also present along with other officers.

## Several officers deputed to control Covid menace in State

Oxygen Task Force formed

PNS ■ RANCHI

The State government on Wednesday deputed several IAS and JAS officers in different capacities to curb the Covid menace in Jharkhand. The government has given additional charge to Director, Primary Education Bhuvanesh Pratap Singh, to join the Health and Family Welfare department with immediate effect.

Singh has been assigned the duty of monitoring and executing works for home isolation of Covid-19 patients across the State and ensure execution of government orders on the same.



A medic collects swab samples from passengers for COVID-19 test in Ranchi on Thursday Vinay Murmu I Pioneer

Meanwhile, the State government on Wednesday also formed an Oxygen Task Force meant to ensure continuous availability and supply of oxygen in various hospitals of the

State. Director Industries JK Singh has been made the Secretary of the Task Force, while Transport Commissioner KK Pasi and Joint Secretary

Rural Development Aditya Ranjan have been made members. Director, Medicine, Ritu Sahay has been made the member secretary in the Task

Force.

The Oxygen Task Force is mandated to coordinate with the Oxygen producing units and ensure that the hospitals and health centres across the State get uninterrupted supply of oxygen.

Also, 11 Jharkhand Administrative Service officers have been asked to join the Health department and Ranchi district to help in Covid-19 related works. The officers, who have been asked to join the Health department include AK Mishra, AK Singh, VK Gupta, AN Ambashta, OC Odiya, Aseem Kispotta, Ravishankar Vidyarthi and RN Alok. Ravi Shankar, Sanjay Kumar and Rajesh Kumar have been deputed at Ranchi district for Covid-19 related works.



Chief Minister Hemant Soren pays tribute to Dr B R Ambedkar on his birth anniversary at Chandankiari in Madhupur on Wednesday Pioneer photo

# Navy Chief calls for better synergy among Quad navies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Underlining the high level of synergy among the navies of the Quadrilateral countries, Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh on Wednesday said these forces can come together in a plug-and-play mechanism in case of a military need in the Indo-Pacific region.

Making this observation here during the ongoing three-day Raisina Dialogue, the Navy chief said there is immense interoperability between the navies of the Quad grouping. His remarks came months after the Quad navies including India, US, Japan and Australia carried out the Malabar series of naval drills off the Indian coast.

Participating in the Dialogue inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, Admiral Philip Scot Davidson, Commander of the US's Indo-Pacific Command, identified the Quad as a strategic opportunity diplomatically, militarily and economically, as he designated China as "the greatest strategic threat" to rules-based international order.

The two Navy top commanders during the conclave held virtually discussed the potential of the Quad and agreed that there are many new spheres of engagement where



the grouping can come together and also include more like-minded countries.

Asked about the future of Quad military in terms of joint patrolling and others, the Indian Navy chief said the Quad started as a consultative grouping and has evolved and grown organically. "There is no dearth of issues that it can handle and we have a robust engagement with the navies of all Quad members," he said.

The Navy chief said the Quad navies already enjoy high degree of interoperability and highlighted that the Malabar exercise started with the US in 1992.

Similarly, he pointed out that India has been carrying bilateral naval exercises with Japan since 2012 and with the Australian Navy for the last six years. "So if an opportunity

arises, we have the capability and capacity to come together in almost a plug and play mechanism," he said.

The US Navy commander said the Quad has tremendous potential for cooperation, going far beyond the security sphere. "The vaccine approach is a powerful signal to the region that the Quad is working for the common good outside these four countries," he said.

Noting that the Quad has gained momentum, Davidson said, "It's a diamond of democracies in region... We should think about it in broadest possible terms."

He also said China seeks to exploit the current global pandemic with increased military aggression throughout the Indo-Pacific. He added that China's intent is to undermine international law and norms.

# Well done, Modi! says Cong after Govt cancels CBSE Class X exams

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Soon after the CBSE Class 12 examinations were postponed and Class 10 exams cancelled, the Congress took to social media and messaged "well done Modi ji". Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra had been rallying for putting off the board exams

The decision was taken by the Prime Minister after a meeting with Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' and other top officials amid growing demands for cancelling or postponing the board exams as Coronavirus cases have seen an unprecedented surge across the country in a deadly second wave.

"Well done Modi ji, listening to sound advice from Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi and the Congress will go a long way in mending our nation. It is our democratic duty to work together for the betterment of our people. It's good to see BJP finally put nation over ego," the Congress tweeted.

After the announcement, Priyanka

Gandhi tweeted that a decision must be taken for Class 12 too.

"Glad the Government has finally cancelled the 10th standard exams however a final decision must be taken for the 12th grade too. Keeping students under undue pressure until June makes no sense. It's unfair. I urge the Government to decide now," she tweeted.

She had earlier said it would be "downright irresponsible" of boards like the CBSE to force students to sit for the exams in the circumstances. "Board exams should either be cancelled, rescheduled or arranged in a manner that does not require the physical presence of children at crowded exam centres," she wrote last week to Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank last week.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who had also urged the government to postpone or cancel the exams, also welcomed the move.

"I am glad that the exams have been cancelled/postponed. This is a great relief for lakhs of students and their parents," he tweeted.

# Ambedkar gave a strong base to Independent India: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Paying tribute to the framer of the Indian Constitution Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said Ambedkar gave a strong foundation to independent India so that the nation could move forward while strengthening its democratic heritage.

President Ram Nath Kovind also paid rich tributes to Ambedkar on his 130th birth celebrations.

Prime Minister also released four books related to Bhim Rao Ambedkar, whose birth anniversary falls on April 14. The books are written by Kishor Makwana.

Addressing the Association of Indian Universities' 95th annual meet and a national seminar of vice-chancellors through video conferencing, Modi said that Babasaheb Ambedkar gave a strong foundation to independent India.

"Babasaheb Ambedkar gave a strong foundation to independent India so that the nation could move forward while strengthening its democratic heritage," he said.

The event was hosted by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmedabad. Paying tributes to Dr Ambedkar, Modi said in a



**Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu remembered Ambedkar for bridging the gaps of inequality**

tweet, "I bow to the great Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar on his birth anniversary. His struggle to bring the deprived sections of the society into the mainstream will continue to be an example for every generation."

"Today, the country is also working to spread the message of Babasaheb to the people. Places associated with Baba Saheb are being developed as Panch Tirtha," said the Prime Minister.

On account of the Covid-19 surge, the authorities are keeping the celebrations in a low key.

President Ram Nath Kovind urged fellow citizens to "imbibe his ideals in our lives by learning from his life and ideas and contribute towards building a strong and prosperous India".

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu remembered Ambedkar

for "bridging the gaps of inequality".

Senior BJP leader and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh paid tribute to Ambedkar saying Baba Saheb should not just be seen as a Dalit icon. He was a renowned name among world intellectuals not just in India, but globally as well.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla paid floral tribute to Ambedkar saying "Owing to Babasaheb's visions, India progressed at a fast pace after independence that benefitted all fractions of society."

The Centre has announced April 14 as a public holiday for all Central Government offices including industrial units.

# India will raise its climate ambitions but not under pressure: Javadekar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Tuesday made it clear that it will raise its climate ambitions but not under pressure and that it was suffering because of the mistakes of others and "is not responsible for climate change that is happening".

Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar in his speech after a meeting with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian at the French Embassy also said that India will not allow anybody to forget their historical responsibility.

French minister le Drian said the consequences will be disastrous if the world is not able to limit global warming to 2 degrees Celsius, or even 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.

That's why it is absolutely indispensable that all countries increase their climate commitments by the time the COP26 takes place in Glasgow, as required by the Paris Agreement, he said.

"This increase in ambition must include setting new nationally determined contributions by 2030 and also long-term strategies to achieve carbon neutrality. We must stop building new coal-based power plants and it is essential that we progressively stop this mode of electricity production at a global level," le Drian said.

Javadekar said, "We will complete our commitments, raise our ambitions but not under pressure. And we will also ask countries to provide finance and technological support and about their (climate)



actions."

He said India is the only G-20 country to walk the talk on the Paris climate agreement and "we have done more than we promised". The Minister said that the frequency of abnormal (weather) events has increased but "let us not forget that this is not a new phenomenon".

"What we are suffering today was caused 100 years ago. European and American countries and China, in the last 30 years, emitted (greenhouse gases) and therefore, the world is suffering... India is suffering because of the actions of others," he said, adding that historical responsibility is a very important aspect in climate debate.

"We cannot just forget it (historical responsibility), and we will not allow anybody to forget it," Javadekar said.

Everyone is facing common threats, but those who have polluted will have to act more, he said adding that they (developed countries) committed in Copenhagen, 100 billion dollars per year... but where is the money. There is no money in sight," he said.

Under the Copenhagen Accord, developed countries committed to a goal of mobilising 100 billion dollar a year by 2020 to help developing countries mitigate climate change.

# AYUSH manufacturing unit makes record ₹164-crore turnover

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In view of increasing demand for AYUSH products and services by people amid Covid-19 pandemic, the Indian Medicines Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited (IMPCL), a public sector manufacturing unit of the Union Ministry of AYUSH, has recorded its highest-ever turnover of ₹164 crore in 2020-21.

The company has recorded an all-time high profit of approximately ₹12 crore, the Union AYUSH Ministry said in a statement here on Tuesday.

Its previous highest turnover was ₹97 crore in 2019-20.

Adding another feather in IMPCL's cap, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation recommended its 18 Ayurvedic products for WHO-GMP/COPP certification subject to certain observations in March 2021.

The WHO provides "World Health Organization, Good Manufacturing Practices / Certificate of Pharmaceutical Product (WHO-GMP/CoPP)" certification to companies after conducting an inspection.

This certification is an endorsement of the quality of IMPCL's products. It will help IMPCL to commence export of quality medicines.

IMPCL is one of the most trusted manufacturers of AYUSH medicines in the country and is known for the authenticity of its formulations. "During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was able to cater to the needs of the country in the shortest time, probably the first company in the country to provide Immuno boosting medicines as AurakshaImmuno Boosting Kit.

# Maldivian Foreign Minister to begin two-day India visit today



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Maldivian foreign minister Abdulla Shahid will begin a two-day India visit on Thursday with a focus on further deepening of ties between the two countries.

Announcing the visit, the Ministry of External Affairs said it is expected to lend further momentum to the close bilateral cooperation.

It said Shahid will hold talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday covering bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest.

"Foreign minister Shahid's visit is expected to lend further momentum to the close bilateral cooperation between the two countries," the MEA said in a statement.

It said Shahid will participate in the Raisina Dialogue in virtual mode.

Maldives is India's key maritime neighbour in the Indian Ocean Region and occupies a central and special place in the prime minister's vision of 'SAGAR' — 'Security and Growth for All in the Region', the MEA said.

# Vardhan launches initiative to spread awareness about nutrition



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan has launched an initiative aimed at spreading awareness about nutrition and locally available nutritious food, fruits, and vegetables, a statement said on Wednesday.

Vijnana Bharati (Vibha), 'Global Indian Scientists and Technocrats' (GIST) Forum, Vigyan Prasara, and Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark (PRAB-HASS) have come together to launch mission "Aahaar Kranti" with the motto of 'Uttam Aahaar-Uttam Vichaar' (Good Diet-Good Cognition).

Launching the initiative on Tuesday, Vardhan said, "Today, when the country is reeling under the onslaught of

a pandemic like COVID-19, a balanced diet serves as a special tool to reduce the impact of the pandemic. At such a time, the need to create awareness about the importance of a balanced diet has become more vital than ever before."

The statement said the "Aahaar Kranti" movement is designed to address the peculiar problem being faced by India and the world -- hunger and diseases in abundance.

Studies estimate that India produces as much as two times the amount of calories it consumes. However, many in the country are still malnourished. The root cause of this strange phenomenon is the lack of nutritional awareness, it said.

The movement proposes to address the problem by working to rouse the people to the

values and richness of India's traditional diet, to the healing powers of local fruits and vegetables, and to the miracles of a balanced diet, it added.

"Aahaar Kranti" will renew the focus on nutritionally balanced diets replete in locally sourced fruits and vegetables.

While Vijnana Bharati (Vibha) and GIST Forum initiated the programme, several other agencies have also joined hands and agreed to pool in their expertise and resources, the statement said.

Besides various central and state government ministries and agencies, the Department of Science and Technology's autonomous body Vigyan Prasara and PRABHASS are a part of this collaborative effort. More organisations will join the mission as it proceeds, it said.

# Global warming making Indian monsoon seasons stronger, more chaotic: Study

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Climate change will make summer monsoon rainfall in India stronger and more erratic, according to a study that predicts extremely wet years in the future, with potentially grave consequences for over a billion people's well-being, economy, food systems and agriculture.

The study, published in the journal Earth System Dynamics, compared more than 30 state-of-the-art climate models from all around the world.

"We have found robust evidence for an exponential dependence: For every degree Celsius of warming, monsoon rainfalls will likely increase by about 5 per cent," said study lead author Anja Katzenberger from the Potsdam-Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) in Germany.



"Hereby we were also able to confirm previous studies but find that global warming is increasing monsoon rainfall in India even more than previously thought. It is dominating monsoon dynamics in the 21st century," Katzenberger said.

The researchers noted that more rainfall is not necessarily a good thing for the farming sector in India and its neighbouring countries.

"Crops need water espe-

cially in the initial growing period, but too much rainfall during other growing states can harm plants — including rice on which the majority of India's population is depending for sustenance," said study co-author Julia Pongratz from Ludwig-Maximilians-University (LMU) in Germany.

"This makes the Indian economy and food system highly sensitive to volatile monsoon patterns," said

Pongratz.

A look into the past underlines that human behaviour is behind the intensification of rainfall, according to the researchers.

Starting in the 1950s, human-made forcings have begun to overtake slow natural changes occurring over many millennia, they said.

At first, high sun-light blocking aerosol loadings led to subdued warming and thus a decline in rainfall.

However, from 1980 onwards, greenhouse gas-induced warming has become the deciding driver for stronger and more erratic monsoon seasons.

"We see more and more that climate change is about unpredictable weather extremes and their serious consequences," said group leader and co-author Anders Levermann from PIK and Columbia University in the US.

"Because what is really on the line is the socio-economic well-being of the Indian subcontinent," Levermann said.

# Access to professional education not Govt largesse, says SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Access to professional education is not a "Governmental largesse" and state has an affirmative obligation to facilitate its reach at all levels, the Supreme Court has said.

This obligation assumes far greater importance for students whose background imposes formidable obstacles on their path to access quality education, the apex court said.

A bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and M R Shah made these observations in a verdict on separate pleas filed by two students from Ladakh who were not admitted to MBBS degree course in medical colleges here despite due nomination by the Union Territory and in terms of the

seats notified by the Centre. "While the right to pursue higher (professional) education has not been spelt out as a fundamental right in Part III of the Constitution, it bears emphasis that access to professional education is not a governmental largesse. Instead, the state has an affirmative obligation to facilitate access to education, at all levels," the bench said in its judgement delivered on April 9.

"This obligation assumes far greater importance for students whose background (by virtue of such characteristics as caste, class, gender, religion, disability and geographical region) imposes formidable obstacles on their path to accessing quality education," it said.

While allowing the peti-

tions filed by the two students, the top court directed that the admission formalities be completed immediately and, in any event, within a week.

The bench noted that both the petitioners were nominated by the Ladakh administration for admission to MBBS degree course under the 'central pool' seats set apart by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

It noted that one of them has been allocated seat at Lady Harding Medical College while the other has been assigned to Maulana Azad Medical College.

"We have been constrained to take up the issue under Article 32, since the fundamental rights of students from Ladakh to pursue professional education are implicated," it said.

# Cong always striving towards achieving Ambedkar's goal: Sonia



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday said her party is always striving towards achieving the path shown by Bhim Rao Ambedkar of building a strong nation where every citizen progresses without discrimination.

Paying rich tributes to Ambedkar on his 130th birth anniversary, she said the Congress has always emphasised on the establishment of an egalitarian society.

"Today, when the thinking of conservatism and discrimination is trying to weaken the society, the Congress party is always conscious that every section of the country should progress equally and without discrimination, we all together build a strong nation. This is the unshakable path of Babasaheb," she said in her message.

"Congress party is always conscious that every section of the country should progress equally and without discrimination, we all together build a strong nation. This is the unshakable path of Babasaheb," she said.

"In accordance with Baba Saheb's ideals, the Congress party has always emphasised the establishment of an egalitarian society in the country and waged a decisive struggle against centuries of discrimination, untouchability and inequality.

"Today if even the weakest person in the margins of society can reach the highest position of the country in a democratic manner, then this is our biggest achievement in 73 years and is a true tribute to Baba Saheb's dreams and aspirations," the Congress chief said.

# Ex-Chief Election Commissioner GVG Krishnamurty dies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Chief Election Commissioner Dr GVG Krishnamurty passed away on Wednesday morning due to a prolonged illness. He was 86. He is survived by his wife Padma Murty, son and senior Supreme Court advocate G.V. Rao, and daughter Dr Radha Bodapati.

Mourning the loss of an illustrious former member of ECI family, Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra recalled that Dr GVG Krishnamurty made exemplary contribution during his tenure in the Commission as Election Commissioner from 1st October 1993 to 30th September 1996.

# Modi, Didi two sides of same coin: RaGa

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Beginning his election campaign in Bengal for the Left-Congress-ISF alliance in Bengal Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday launched a massive broadside against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee saying each was complementary to the other insofar as the State’s contemporary politics was concerned.

Attacking Modi for trying to defile Bengal’s rich culture by inciting hatred and peddling false dreams of “Sonar Bangla” (golden Bengal) which he called a “mirage” he said the Prime Minister and his party BJP was dividing Bengalis for votes.

“Like in Assam, Tamil Nadu and elsewhere the BJP is trying to spread hatred amongst the people and divide them” in the name of caste and religion... the people of other states have learnt with experience that the BJP have only hatred and divisive politics to offer in the name of lofty dreams like Sonar Bangla that they are peddling now” Gandhi told a rally at Gopakhar in North Dinajpur district of North Bengal.

The so-called Sonar Bangla was a “mirage” which the BJP was selling in every state to hide

its failures at the Centre he said.

Criticising each and every step taken by the Modi Government he said “they promised you unearthing of black money through demonetization but could they do it ... they failed in that ... and ended up bringing hardship to common man.”

Attacking the Modi Government for “its insensitivity when thousands of people were walking back home hundreds and thousands of kms,” the former Congress president said, “those thousands of people from your area know it well how they returned home during the lockdown ... instead of putting money to your pocket to lessen your hardship they were waiving tax burdens on the large corporate houses of Modi’s choice saying they would create jobs ... but did that happen ... No.”

During his first rally in Bengal in this election season, Gandhi took a dig at Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and said his party would never align with the BJP and the RSS, unlike the TMC, which in the past had been an alliance partner of the saffron party-led NDA.

Hitting out at Mamata Banerjee he said that the Bengal Chief Minister’s remote control was in the hands of Narendra Modi adding they were the two

sides of the same coin.

Attacking Banerjee for being part of the BJP’s alliance for many years he said “she was in the BJP’s closet for many years but did the Congress ever made any alliance with the BJP or the RSS ... did the Congress compromise with an ideology that murdered its political Guru (Mahatma Gandhi) ... we will prefer to die than to go with the BJP-RSS.”

Trying to distinguish differentiate between Banerjee’s fight against the BJP and the Congress’ struggle against it he said “for Mamata Banerjee it is merely a political fight ... but for the Congress it is a battle of ideology on which it cannot compromise.”

Reminding the BJP’s slogan of “Congress Mukta Bharat” (Congress-less India) he said, “the slogan was coined because they know that the Congress will never surrender before the ideology of RSS.”

He attacked the TMC for introducing the culture of cut money and extortion in Bengal he said “the people of Bengal gave an opportunity to TMC. But, they failed in every respect... This is the only state where you have to pay cut money to get jobs ... in Bengal there is no industry, no road, no infrastructure ... nothing ... now the people of Bengal have to go to other states for jobs.”

# BJP ‘outsiders’ raised corona cases: Mamata

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Apparently putting a new coating to her “outsider” weapon, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said that the “BJP’s outsiders” were responsible for the increase in the number of corona cases in Bengal.

Intensifying her tirade against the “BJP’s outsiders” she said “in Bengal we had controlled corona ... the cases had been reduced” to negligible numbers but “as the election campaign it started spreading because the BJP’s outsiders brought it from other States.”

She said “I have been repeatedly talking against bringing people from outside states to Bengal for campaigning but they did not listen to me and brought them to our State ... these people would not come to Bengal when corona was at its peak ... it was only we who were fighting to contain the disease ... and now when we had controlled it they brought outsiders who brought the disease with them, infected the local people and fled.”

Alleging that the State Government had been continuously asking for vaccines from the Centre she said “now they are coming to ask for votes ... but when we asked for vaccines they would not give it to us ... we have deposited the required money for the vaccines but they are still not coming.”

With the daily cases rising by more than 10 percent --- the latest figure reaching to about 4,800 on Tuesday - -- there has been a huge shortage of vaccine in most Bengal hospitals. According to State health department 3 lakh Covishield vaccines reached

Kolkata on Wednesday noon and another badge of 2 lakh Covaxin would reach the State by Wednesday night.

Referring to the Cooch Behar police firing that killed four people in Sitalkuchi constituency of the North Bengal district Banerjee on Wednesday said she would get the matter probed and ensure justice for the kin of the victims.

Banerjee visited Mathabhanga Hospital where the injured were being treated three days after the Election Commission lifted the 72-hour ban on political leaders visiting the district.

“I can assure you that whosoever is guilty will be brought to justice after the elections,” Banerjee said adding her Government would support the victims family with all kind of support. Four persons Manirul, Samilul, Hamidul and Nur Alam were killed in the firing. Banerjee also met a distant relative of BJP supporter Ananda Burman who was shot dead on the same day by alleged TMC goons in the same constituency and assured them justice too.

“The Government will track every-one responsible for the cold-blooded killing and ensure they are punished as per law,” Banerjee said reminding how the wife of a victim was pregnant and that of another had a small child.”

Four persons were killed as central forces opened fire at alleged hooligans who “attempted to snatch their rifles” at booth number 5/126 during polls on April 10. The clash broke out when the quick response team of the central forces were escorting a group of voters who had been stopped from voting by miscreants to the booth.

# Keralites celebrate Vishu amid pandemic fears

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Despite the emergency situation prevailing in the State, Keralites celebrated Vishu (the Malayalam New Year Day), a day which marks the annual agricultural operations with gaiety though in a subdued manner.

Family members woke up early in the mrrning to see the Kani( the first sight) made up of a picture of Lord Krishna resplendent with ornaments, grains, seeds, new cloth and a bunch of currency, which assures an year filled with prosperity and happiness.

The eldest member of the family gave away Vishu Kaineettam (a token gift) in the form of a coin and new cloth to members of the family. Nostalgia marked the occasion as 85 year old V B Radha, the patriarch of Perumbavoor’s Vembanattu family gave away Kaineettam to her children, grand children and great grand children.

The cattle herds in agricultural family too were in for a treat in the morning itself as they were worshipped with lighted lamps and pictures of Lord Krishna. Farm workers toiling in the paddy fields assembled in the farm lands in the early hours itself to commence symbolic agricultural operations.

It is an age old tradition for the village astrologers to call on families to provide the annual forecast, popularly known as Vishu Phalam. Village astrologers are gone long back and people call on them in the morning hours to know what is in store for them in the coming year.

“Things will not be as bad as it was in 2021. The Covid-19 pandemic will definitely subside and normalcy would gradually return to the country. There are signs of negativity giving way to opti-



mism,” said Parappanangadi Unnikrishna Panickar, Sanskrit and Vedic scholar about the coming days.

True to the prediction, it rained heavily in the State on Vishu Day and the chief minister, who was undergoing treatment for Covid-19 at the Kozhikode Medical College Hospital for the last three days returned to his palatial home at Pinarayi in Kannur. Speaker P Sreeramakrishnan, who was in the ICU since he was questioned by the Customs Department in connection with hawala transaction, was moved back to the hospital ward after it was found that he too had defeated the pandemic.

“Vishu is always the beginning of a new dawn. It is a harbinger of happiness and peace . That’s why it is being celebrated in unison by all sections of Kerala society,” said Prof P G Haridas, eminent historian.

# Bhangipara: Cold horror stalks villages in Sunderbans

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ SANDESHKHALI

Cold horror is a small expression to depict the prevailing tension among the locals in this back-of-beyond village bordering Sunderbans.

Outsiders are clearly not welcome at Bhangipara. Such is the fear that not a single soul here would volunteer to talk.

After much cajoling Rani Mondal (name changed) decides to show some courage but on conditions of anonymity. “Babu you will go today ... but tomorrow after the elections if they win they will bomb our houses, attack our children ... kill our old people,” she says.

Why would she not talk of the young men? “Beche thakle to bolbo (how can I refer to the young men? Are they alive)? ... they have been killed by the men of Shahjahan” (a local TMC tough) she alleges.

Even as she walks up to the Jora Mandir area around where

the incident took place she says, “our fault was that the BJP got a lead of 150 votes from this area (though the TMC won the seat) during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections... violence started only after that as their goons came and attacked our men just because they were doing BJP”

Her father Hari (name changed) says “they came like an Amphan (the cyclone is the latest symbol of horror in the locals’ collective mind), charged bombs ... we along with our women hid on the roof or beneath our beds ... there were gunshots all around. As the men ran towards the Bheris (fish ponds) they were chased... by the evening it was all over ... two bodies were fished out” subsequently.

The two victims were Sukanto Mondal and Pradip Mondal. A third Devdas Mondal is missing still now. His father says “My son was raising a BJP flag at the shop which irked them ... they were already wounded by the lead BJP got here

... in front of my house my son ran away for his life towards the Bheri ... they followed him ... there after we do not know what happened. They later brought two bodies but my son has not returned even today ... almost two years... look at my eyes ... can you find any tears... they have dried up ... he helplessly looks at heavens hurling all his complaints up there.”

And then he shows his two grand children and a young dahguter-in-law. “There is no relief. At this old age I have to go out silently to work and manage some food for these little ones and the daughter-in-law. I cannot look at their eyes ... they have no hope ... no pleasure,” he says relating the worst part of it all.

“And what is worse is the CID that is probing the case does nothing ... often we are told that the police is pressured by the TMC to harass us and even arrest us ... what have we done ... this was not like that in the CPI(M) Government ... they

were not so cruel.” He would not reveal whether the family did CPI(M) earlier or not.

Padma Mondal the wife of a victim and now a BJP leader shows courage saying “we will not let the culprits go unpunished ... the people cannot speak up out of fear ... but tomorrow they will definitely.”

The alleged perpetrator of the crime Shahjehan however would rubbish the allegations as “false and baseless ... they have their land slipping beneath their feet and now they are blaming the TMC.” When told to explain his meteoric rise from rags to riches he says “we have been doing business for so many years.”

Cut to the nearby village where the family of Abdul Kayum Mollah, have a different tale to tell. “It is the BJP men who attacked us and killed the man here ... he was chased and shot dead because he was a TMC,” say the victim’s family members asking in a hushed tone “Dada Brother is ki sotti aschhey (elder brother is

BJP really coming).

When asked about the source of the family’s earning they say “we do odd work like farming, fishing or sometimes construction labourers...”

When reminded that there is no material difference between the earthly condition of the two sides, both being poor Asfaq Sk a relative of the victim says “Dada jani to ... agey to erokom chilo na ... ekhon hoi (we know it ... earlier it was not like that ... today it is like that.)”

When asked about their real problems both the sides have similar things to say: lack of income, lack of education and health facilities, lack of job and corruption. “I went for Asha Karmi ... they asked for Rs one lakh” says Ameena Khatoun adding the job still eludes her as she could not pay the amount.

And what will they do on the polling day April 17. “God knows babu ... will we be allowed to vote?” That is another common refrain on both sides.

# ₹50cr-worth drugs seized in narco-terror module bust in J&K’s Tangdhar sector

PNS ■ JAMMU

Troops guarding the line of control in North Kashmir’s Tangdhar sector late Tuesday night foiled a major smuggling bid by recovering a drugs consignment worth ₹50 crores. According to defence sources, troops initially foiled an infiltration bid in the forward area and also recovered a 10 kg of narco consignment worth 50 crores (approximately).

According to a Srinagar based Defence Spokesman Lt Col Emron Musavi, “late Tuesday night smugglers were spotted carrying the narcotics along the Line of Control. Indian Army & BSF troops detected a suspicious movement and challenged the smugglers probably accompanied by Pak based terrorists”.

He said, “the contact was near the LoC fence about 500m from the LoC. A brief exchange of fire took place in which one JCO of Indian Army sustained minor injuries. Detailed search in the morning led

to recovery of the narcotics haul. The infiltrators managed to escape”, he added.

Defence Spokesman said, “this is the second consecutive busting of ‘Pak Sponsored Narco Terror Model’ in the past one week in the valley”.

Incidentally, he said, a 10 KG heroin consignment was recovered from the same general area a week ago in a joint operation. However, he said, this time smugglers were spotted carrying the narcotics along the LoC.

Narco and terrorist infiltration are known to be carried out through the Tangdhar bowl. The police are carrying out investigations to identify and arrest the network involved in the smuggling and infiltration attempt.

The Defence spokesman said, “security forces, police and intelligence agencies continue to carry out synergised actions to counter any effort to carry out infiltration or smuggling of weapons and contraband across the LoC”.

## Goa to extend ‘Tika Utsav’ by 10-12 days: CM

**Panaji:** The Goa government will extend the Covid-19 vaccination drive, ‘Tika Utsav’, by 10-12 days, said Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Wednesday, urging people above the age of 45 years to take advantage of the vaccination outreach programme.

“‘Tika Utsav’ will continue for 10-12 days so that those who are eligible get themselves vaccinated. Lockdown is not the solution for Covid-19 but vaccination, maintaining social distancing, wearing face masks is.

We should avoid public meetings and unnecessary gatherings,” added Sawant while speaking at an event organised by the Directorate of Fire and Emergency Services.

“Get tested immediately if you have COVID-19 signs and symptoms and maintain home isolation. If we need to contain the spread of the infection, then people will have to cooperate. The government will not lag behind when it comes to hospitalisation or providing Covid-19 care kits. Early treatment is the

key,” said the Goa Chief Minister. The ‘Tika Utsav’ programme was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a four-day mass vaccination campaign for inoculation of people above the age of 45 years from April 11 to April 14.

Sawant said that while the neighbouring state of Maharashtra had gone into lockdown, a similar fate should not “befall” Goa, urging people to maintain social distancing and adhere to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). **IANS**

## Gujarat CM to meet religious leaders on Covid situation

**Gandhinagar:** The Gujarat Chief Minister, Vijay Rupani on Wednesday evening, will hold a virtual meeting with various religious leaders of the state on the prevailing situation of Corona infection in the state.

The CM will hold discussions with them and request cooperation from every community in the fight against the virus.

Vijay Rupani will have a virtual meeting with many religious leaders of the state at 4 p.m. in the evening on Wednesday.

Many dignitaries from various religious communities like Ratnasundarji Maharaj

Saheb, Namramuni Maharaj Saheb, Vraj RajKumar, Dwarkesh Lalji, Brahmavihari Swami, Sant swami of Vadtal Temple, Tyagvallabh swami, Shernath Babu, Avichaldasji Maharaj, Dilipdasji Maharaj, Shambhu Prasad Tundiya, Maulana Lukman Tarapuri and Right Reverend Silvence Christian will participate in the meet.

The CM will have discussions with them regarding the current Covid situation in the state, and their role in the fight against the pandemic. **IANS**

## Andhra logs 4K more Covid cases, active cases cross 28,000 mark

**Amaravati:** Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday reported 4,157 new Covid-19 cases, taking the tally to over 9.37 lakh, while active cases reached 28,383.

The state, which was logging over 2,000 cases for some days, has now the tally double to over 4,000 cases. There were also 18 more deaths, in the past 24 hours, pushing the toll to 7,339.

Meanwhile, 1,606 more persons have recovered in the last 24 hours, raising the number of recoveries over 9 lakh.

East Godavari district reported the highest number of cases at 617, followed by Srikakulam (522), Chittoor (517), Visakhapatnam (417), Kurnool (386), Anantapur (297), Nellore (276), Prakasam (230), Vizianagaram (154), Krishna (135), Kadapa (112) and West Godavari (60). East Godavari’s tally has crossed 1.27 lakh, the highest among all the districts, while the state’s positivity rate rose to 6.03 per cent, against the national average of 5.32 per cent. **IANS**

## Renaming Harijans as Dalits sabotaged Gandhi’s dream: Acharya Kunjhol

**KOCHI:** On the occasion of the 130th birth anniversary of Dr BR Ambedkar, the chief architect of Indian Constitution, a vedic scholar of repute has called for the abolition of the word Dalit once and for ever and to bring back the name Harijan used to denote the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

“Harijan is the most sanguine word which accorded respect, sanctity and beauty to the depressed and oppressed communities. The word was introduced by Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation. He even named the world famous magazine he launched as Harijan. But certain vested interests sabotaged Gandhi’s dream and renamed the communities as Dalit, a term which has no Indianness in it,” said Acharya M K Kunjhol, the chief patron of Kerala State Harijan Samajam, a 64 year old organisation working for the upliftment of



the Harijans.

Kunjhol, Kerala’s living Mahatma, who has been honoured with Padma Sri by the President of India for the selfless and dedicated work he is doing among the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes for the last 70 years, attributed to a deep rooted conspiracy by anti-national elements in getting the name Harijan replaced with Dalit.

When Mahatma Gandho took up the agitation to get the practice of untouchability ameliorated and eradicate caste discrimination, he asked the people to propose a common nomenclature for the scheduled castes and tribes who were being treated as untouchables.

# Migrant workers from Bihar relieved after return but worried about work

**Patna:** After the recent surge in the number of Covid cases in nearly all parts of the country amid the second wave of the pandemic, the people living outside Bihar are now returning to their native State. The Indian Railways have also run special trains to facilitate their return. The migrant workers who have returned to Bihar have now begun to worry about finding work here. Some are thinking about doing farming while many people are thinking about engaging in contractual labour.

Hundreds of people from Mokama, adjoining Bihar’s state capital Patna, earned their livelihood working in other states. Many such people have returned to their native villages. Anand Kumar, a resident of Ghoswari village, says that dozens of people from his village had gone to other states to earn money and have now returned home or are preparing to return to their native place fearing a lockdown.

He said he had also come back to his native place when the lockdown was imposed last year in view of the pandemic. He was left with-

out work after the lockdown was lifted following which he again returned to Bihar. Now once again due to the lockdown people are forced to return to their native places.

Subedar Rai, a resident of a village near Ghoswari, used to work as a security guard in Mumbai. His whole family was infected with coronavirus and his wife died of the infection. Following this, he left Mumbai and returned to his native village. He said nobody cares in big cities. “I have returned to my native village facing a lot of trouble. Now come what may, I will not leave Bihar. I will work in the fields,” he added.

Ram Surat, a labourer who works in a Pune factory, has also returned to Bihar. He had returned home last year when the situation due to the pandemic had worsened. When the situation improved, the factory owner called him back to work, but now everybody has returned to their homes. He has a family in Bihar. “I will stay in Bihar for a few days and when the situation improves, then I will return to

work.” He is relieved that he has returned to his native state.

However, asked how will he get employment here, he says that he could survive for some days but if the situation due to the pandemic persists for a long time, then it would become difficult.

Ramnandan, who lives in Chanka village of Purnia district, does not want to leave Bihar now. He said he returned home last year and is now doing farming. What is the use in moving out of Bihar. Advising other people, he says that one should search for work in Bihar. He said the state government is also working towards giving work to people.

People from Bihar travel in search of work to most parts of the country. Due to the surge in Covid-19 cases, factories and businesses are being shut down in many states, due to which people are returning to their native states. However, the number of infected cases is also rapidly increasing in Bihar. The people who have returned to their states are relieved that at least they have returned to their villages. **IANS**

# Maha logs 58,952 new corona cases, 278 deaths

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Notwithstanding a marginal drop in the number of Covid-19 cases, the pandemic situation continued to be grim in Maharashtra on Wednesday, as the state recorded 58,952 fresh cases and 278 new deaths.

On a day when the Maharashtra government began to enforce stringent restrictions, including a ban on the movement of people in public places without a valid reason, prohibitory orders under section 144 of CR.PC and night curfew for 15 days, the number of infections dropped from Tuesday’s tally of 60,212 to 58,952, while deaths came down from 281 to 278 in various parts of the state.

With 58952 fresh cases, the total infections climbed from 35,19,208 to 35,78,160. Similarly, with 258 new deaths, the total Covid-19 toll rose from 58,526 to 58,804.

As 39,624 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year went up to 29,05,721. The recovery rate in the state for the first time in several days

dropped from 81.44 per cent to 81.21 per cent.

The number of “active cases” total cases in the state rose from 5,93,042 to 6,12,070. The fatality rate in the state dropped from 1.66 per cent to 1.64 per cent.

With 54 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai rose from 12,023 to 12066, while the infected cases went up by 9931 to trigger a jump in the infections from 5,35,264 to 5,45,195.

While Pune accounted for a maximum 1,12,213 “active cases” in the state, Mumbai stood second with 86,635 active cases, followed by Thane (84,098), Nagpur (65,368), Nashik (44,880), Aurangabad (14,680), Ahmednagar (17,937), Nanded (13,917), Bhandara (12,993), Jalgaon (12,126), Latur (13,622) Buldhana (4849), Parbhani (8847), Beed (8517), Nandurbar (7158), Chandrapur (7898) and Gondia (6536).

Of the 2,28,02,200 samples sent to laboratories, 35,78,160 have tested positive (15.86 per cent) for COVID-19 until Wednesday.

Currently, 34, 55,206 people are in home quarantine while 28,494 people are in institutional quarantine.



www.dailypioneer.com

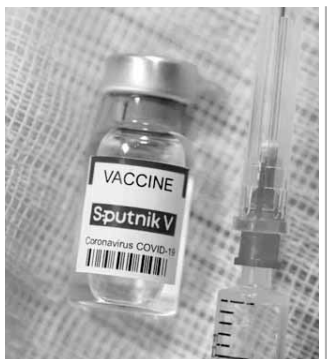
facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

## Going all out

The Govt's decision to procure COVID jabs from abroad should be welcomed for a variety of reasons

The Indian Government's "vaccine *maitri*" may have earned it laurels among the nations that received the approximately 6.45 crore COVID shots, but it has left it clutching at straws and getting the flak in its own backyard. With the Coronavirus cases rising exponentially across India and with more deaths being recorded due to its new strains, the Centre is facing criticism that in its enthusiasm to earn global brownie points it put its own citizens at risk by distributing the shots to other nations instead of ensuring that all its citizens were inoculated first. As the second wave of infections tears across the country, there are calls for opening up the inoculation process for everyone as the new strain is not sparing children and the youth this time around.



Hence, faced with a shortage of the COVID jabs the Centre first gave the nod for the use of Russia-made Sputnik Vaccine for emergency use and moves are now afoot to enlarge the COVID-19 vaccine basket by giving approval to the shots manufactured in the US, the UK and Japan. The National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEGVA) has recommended that shots being manufactured abroad as well as those which have already received approval for "restricted use by the USFDA, EMA, UK MHRA, PMDA Japan may be granted emergency use approval in India". It is understood that the "vaccines, which

are listed in the World Health Organisation's emergency use listing, may also be granted emergency use approval in India".

The decision has come at the right time as it would encourage imports of bulk drug material and help in optimal utilisation of domestic fill-and-finish capacity which will, in turn, provide a fillip to our vaccine manufacturing capacity and total jab availability for domestic use. The Centre, trying its best to calm the citizens, has assured them that there is no vaccine shortage and over 1.67 crore doses are still available. While there is some strength in the argument that the Government should have catered to its citizens first, the fact remains that the healthcare authorities and the public, too, is to a certain extent responsible for the state we are in today. First of all, given the fact that vaccines are direly needed at this time, how do we explain the criminal average wastage of 6.5 per cent in India? Plus, if people had listened to the Government, got inoculated in massive numbers and observed the Corona protocols diligently, there would not have been such a surge in cases. When the number of infections dipped after the first wave, had we shunned vaccine hesitancy, things would have moved with assembly-line precision and a large part of the population would have had the shots by now. However, it's not too late and the Centre is doing its bit to provide succour to its citizens. We need to calm down, behave like responsible citizens and help the Government in its endeavour in any way we can. After all, this is a situation that none of us had ever faced before.

### PICTALK



Nihangs show their horse-riding skills on the last day of Baisakhi Mela in Bathinda district

PTI

## Double whammy

Our insouciance is responsible for the alarming rise in pollution and Corona cases in the Capital

Both the pandemic and the pollution have made life miserable for the residents of Delhi. It's a double whammy this year — unlike last year when Delhiites had some relief during the Coronavirus-induced lockdown as the level of pollutants fell drastically, thanks to the restriction on vehicular movement and the ban on industrial activity. However, this relief was short-lived since the Capital's air quality started to deteriorate with the lifting of curbs. As the COVID-19 cases surge towards another peak, Delhi is witnessing the worst air quality since 2018. As the country is fighting the pandemic with indigenous vaccines (now with the imported ones, too), masks, social distancing and the "Test-Track-Treat" methodology, it must also think of cutting down on pollution. We must remember that one's immunity plays a vital role in fighting the virus and pollution certainly doesn't help it. Hence, lowering the pollution level will only aid our fight against the contagion. The Particulate Matter (PM) is the biggest contributor to Delhi's pollution and



the main factors behind the increase in its concentration include vehicular emissions, biomass and garbage burning and industrial smoke effluents.

Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a meeting with the Chief Ministers stressed that there is no need for another lockdown as the country now has enough infrastructure to control the infection. But unfortunately the Governments have failed to control the pollution in Delhi — which is ranked the world's most polluted Capital and 10th most polluted city across the globe in the *World Air Quality Report 2020* by a Swiss air technology company, IQAir — and the only solution in sight to control the PM levels in the Capital is another lockdown. But it's not right to blame only the Governments as the citizens also are no less responsible for this pathetic situation. Actions like car pooling, switching off the ignition at stop signals, using public transport, use of electric vehicles, and so on, are far from being our habit. Similarly, simple things like wearing masks properly, maintaining social distance, sanitising hands regularly and strictly adhering to the COVID-appropriate behaviour are not followed, which helps the infection spread. Until we mend our ways, we are doomed to lose both battles, against the pandemic and the pollution.

# Elections in the time of COVID

With half the phases in the Bengal polls remaining, the virus management measures appear to be missing on the ground



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

The Congress candidate from the Srivilliputhur Assembly constituency, 63-year-old PSW Madhava Rao, passed away of COVID-19 complications five days after the Tamil Nadu election concluded on April 6. If he wins the election posthumously, the constituency will head for a by-election. Tamil Nadu is one of the 16 States in India experiencing a significant surge in fresh Coronavirus infections. However, the pictures of bulging election rallies/road shows there capture only people's indifference towards the virus. The wearing of masks seems to be a luxury rather than a compulsory practice.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has laid down strict COVID-19 protocols for the elections in five States. It forms a part of the February 26 announcement of the poll schedule. The guidelines remain virtually unchanged since the Bihar Legislative Assembly election in October-November 2020. However, they seem to be honoured more in the breach than in observance, at least with regard to campaigning.

The instruction is that the District Election Officer (DEO, who is mostly the District Magistrate) should identify dedicated grounds for public gatherings with clearly marked entry and exit points, put markers to ensure social distancing norms by the attendees, and the nodal district health officer should ensure that the COVID-related guidelines are adhered to by everyone in the district. The DEO and the District Superintendent of Police should ensure that the number of attendees does not exceed the limit prescribed by the State Disaster Management Authority for public gatherings. However, the swelling crowds at the rallies/road shows seem to throw these protocols out of the window.

While elections in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry and Assam were over by April 6, those in the State of West Bengal will continue till April 29. There,



only four of the eight phases have been completed until now. The elections are already scarred by violence, and the media is fully fixated on it. By contrast, the large-scale flouting of the pandemic norms has not engaged the media's attention sufficiently.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi repeatedly exhorts people to wear masks and maintain physical distancing norms in public. He is emphatic that nobody should be lax about the COVID-19 protocols. These are indeed meant for the people's own safety, and tens of millions of ordinary Indians like me follow his advice in letter and spirit. However, does he follow his own advice at the mammoth rallies that he has been addressing frequently in West Bengal? The crowd strength at his rallies is so oppressive that there is hardly any place to stand. There was palpable fear of a stampede at his rally in Kolkata's Brigade Parade Ground on March 7.

As the camera zooms in on different segments in the crowds at the Prime Minister's numerous rallies, it is easy to spot that masks are a rarity. Does Modi demand that those not wearing masks

AHEAD OF THE FOURTH GENERAL ELECTIONS IN 1967, THE CHIEF MINISTERS OF TAMIL NADU AND WEST BENGAL SHOWED THE WAY FOR DEVELOPING A CODE OF CONDUCT THROUGH ALL-PARTY MEETINGS. THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA OFFICIALLY ADOPTED IT IN 1968

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### WE ARE NOT PREPARED AT ALL

Sir — This refers to the editorial 'Double mutant strikes' (April 14). Your article is right on the money when it says that this variant multiplies quickly. You rightly raised the point about the lack of data and studies — that is peer-reviewed — it does not give the guarantee that these vaccines would work. One does need to be an Einstein to know that if things keep spiralling downwards, the day is not far when we surge past the US in becoming the worst-hit country.

We are importing vaccines but the recent halt in the rollout of Johnson & Johnson's vaccine in the US is also concerning as blood clots have been reported in patients who took this jab. It is bizarre that a country producing top doctors and scientists cannot figure out how this virus operates. The health briefings are an elephant dart to the public's face as all it does is present a rosy picture. It seems that our pandemic response is absolutely misguided and an absolute disgrace.

Sadly, our people could not refrain from going to events like the Kumbh Mela. Even the politicians are busy holding rallies as their priority is to win elections rather than to control the virus. All this has led to pandemic fatigue as people have been following the rules for long, for something that isn't even their fault. It's too late in the day to wish for this pandemic to have never afflicted humankind. The only thing to do now is to just mask up and stay home!

Sean Colin Young | New Delhi

### EXERCISE CAUTION WHILE CAMPAIGNING

Sir — It doesn't behove Prime Minister Narendra Modi to speak insultingly of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and repeatedly call her "Didi o Didi". Such words belittle the dignity of a woman and the Election Commission must take note of it. Mamata was right in saying that the way the PM is cracking jokes on her, it sounds like a young man making a pass at a local woman. This is certainly below standard. "I know many things about you, Modi and Shah. But I have the dignity not to stoop so low," she said. She targeted Modi, saying that

## Punish vaccine hoarders



Amid the current surge in the number of Coronavirus cases, several States have reported the shortage of anti-viral drug Remdesivir. It is surprising that Gujarat BJP chief CR Patil has announced that 5,000 doses of Remdesivir would be made available free of cost by the party in Surat. But he didn't explain how he managed to get the stock despite the Government mandating that not more than six doses of medicine will be sold without a doctor's prescription.

The Government must respond and explain that when people are unable to get the

injection despite standing in queues for hours, how did 5,000 injections reach Patil? Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani's innocent response was that he is unaware of Patil's claim. "I don't know. Ask Patil," said Rupani. This response is careless and is not expected from a CM. It is a blatant case of corruption and a CBI inquiry must be initiated to find out how he managed to stockpile the Remdesivir injection. Worse still, this is the situation despite the Gujarat High Court pulling up the State Government over the worsening Coronavirus situation.

The COVID-19 patients are experiencing unimaginable difficulties due to the shortage of beds, oxygen and medicine supply and lack of proper testing and tracing. Though Prime Minister Narendra Modi claims that India has "walked the talk" on helping the world counter the pandemic despite its "limited resources", much is needed to be done to effectively deal with the rising COVID cases at home. Nailing the corrupt politicians who stockpile or hoard the vaccine is one such step.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

only someone who did not give due recognition to the women in his life can crack such jokes. However, Mamata also has crossed her limits several times in past.

Our political leaders must exercise caution while speaking in public. The common people follow the politicians blindly and such statements set a wrong precedent in politics. There are politicians like Uttar Pradesh's former Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav and Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan who have made insulting remarks against women. The politicians should maintain dignity and decorum in public life.

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

### STOP THE HATE SPEECHES

Sir — The overzealous campaign of the BJP's Suvendu Adhikari, with the choicest of abuses for our Islamic brethren, follows the culture of his new political masters. Sadly, such

electing to govern, they themselves will have to deal with the pandemic upsurge. It is shameful that their behaviour should be COVID-inappropriate in public while seeking votes. The battle against the virus cannot be wholly dependent on vaccinations. Experience has shown that even those vaccinated can contract COVID-19.

The second wave of the pandemic has gripped India even as half the phases in the West Bengal election remain. It devolves upon all political parties to come together and take recognisable measures so that the poll campaign does not aggravate the situation. It might involve curtailing big rallies/road shows featuring star campaigners. One is reminded how ahead of the Fourth General Elections in 1967, the Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu and West Bengal showed the way for developing a Code of Conduct through all-party meetings. The ECI officially adopted it in 1968. Such all-party meetings on the COVID-19 situation are the need of the hour.

(The writer is an author and independent researcher based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)

## SOUNDBITE

The 'Tika Utsav' will continue for 10-12 days. Lockdown is not the solution for COVID-19 but vaccination, social distancing and wearing masks is.

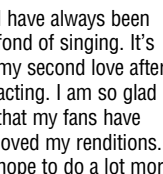


Goa Chief Minister — Pramod Sawant



It is the lockdown that has been overwhelmingly important in bringing down infections and deaths. It has not been achieved by the vaccination programme.

British Prime Minister — Boris Johnson



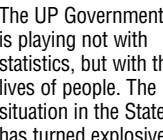
I have always been fond of singing. It's my second love after acting. I am so glad that my fans have loved my renditions. I hope to do a lot more soon.

Actor — Sara Khan



I'm very happy with the progress of the team over the last 18 months. If we continue to build on this, I am sure we can defeat any team.

Indian hockey captain — Manpreet Singh



The UP Government is playing not with statistics, but with the lives of people. The situation in the State has turned explosive.

Congress leader — Priyanka Gandhi-Vadra

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SOUTH



MARKANDEY KATJU

If we want real integration, North Indians must study the history and literature of South India, too, right from school

All Indians, including those from the South, have read about the great Mauryan Empire, the Gupta Empire, the Empire of Harshavardhan, the Mughal Empire, and so on in their school history books. But, how many North Indians have heard of Krishnadeva Raya of the Vijayanagara Empire (whose statue along with his two queens, still stands in the Tirupati temple), or of the great Chola and Pandya kings? Regrettably, very few North Indians would be aware of these great kings from the South. Most Indians have read the ‘*Ramayan*’ and the ‘*Mahabharata*’, which are epics about North Indian kings, and most Indians have read the works of Surdas, Tulsidas, Kabir, and the stories of Munshi Premchand. But how many North Indians have read the great Tamil epics ‘*Silappathikaram*’, ‘*Manimekalai*’, or the great Tamil treatise ‘*Tirukkural*’ by Tiruvalluvar, about whom the great Tamil poet Subramania Bharati wrote: “Tamil Nadu is known throughout the world because of *Tirukkural*.” How many have heard the ‘*Tiruppavai*’ by the poet saint Andal, which is sung in the month of January all over Tamil Nadu, or the great poetry of Subramania Bharati who wrote powerful verses for women’s emancipation around 1910 much before anyone dared to do so in the country? Very few.



North Indians know of Hindustani music but how many know of Carnatic music, and its trinity of Tyagaraj, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Shyama Shastri? Hardly any. How many North Indians have heard of the great Keralite social reformer Narayan Guru, who belonged to the low-caste Ezhava community and fearlessly criticised and campaigned against the inhuman caste system? Practically none. For long, North Indians have regarded South India as a dark land populated by uncivilised people and are blissfully unaware of the South’s great achievements in various fields. Indeed in the ‘*Ramayan*’, Kishkindha, which is believed to be in the present State of Karnataka, was regarded to be a land populated by monkeys from whom Lord Rama raised a ‘*vaanar sena* (monkey army)’ to invade Sri Lanka. Regrettably, even today, many North Indians look down on South Indians due to their ignorance of the culture and achievements of the South. For instance, South Indian temples are massive and unbelievably beautiful. They reveal the high level of knowledge of architecture and geometry of the ancient and medieval South Indians. For example, the Brihadishvara temple of Tanjore is simply astounding and one wonders how the builders could use such huge stones to create it. In fact, it reminds one of the Egyptian pyramids. The gigantic rock relief ‘Descent of the Ganges’ in the ancient port city of Mahabalipuram, capital of the Pallav Empire, is truly amazing.

The large number of Roman coins found in South India show the extensive trade between it and ancient Rome from the time of Emperor Augustus (who reigned from 27 BC to 14 AD). This indicates how highly developed the economy in ancient and medieval South India was as they, unlike North Indians, were seafaring people, with extensive commercial contacts in Southeast Asia. The Chola king Rajendra Chola is believed to have executed military campaigns in Southeast Asia (Sri Lanka, Sumatra, and so on), which could only have been possible with the aid of a powerful navy. In Ilango’s epic ‘*Silappathikaram*’ one comes across these lines: “May the Pandya king prosper, who ruled over the South, after conquering the Ganga and the Himalayas in the north.” At first I thought this was only poetic exaggeration, however, later I read of credible accounts of a South Indian king (perhaps Rajendra Chola) leading a Napoleonic invasion of north India up to the Ganga and even beyond (apart from invading Sri Lanka, the Malaya peninsula, southern Thailand and so on.) If we want real integration of India, North Indians must study the history, culture and literature of South India, too, right from school and give the South Indians the respect they deserve. (The writer is a former judge of the Supreme Court of India. The views expressed are personal.)

# Irreconcilable differences?

While India insists on de-escalation in Eastern Ladakh, the Chinese prefer the *status quo*. As it appears, both sides are unwilling to relent

The 11th round of India-China military talks to defuse tension in Eastern Ladakh, that was held after a gap of nearly two months, has again ended without any major breakthrough. The marathon talks lasted 13 hours as has been the trend in the past, but the Chinese side this time was rigid and uncompromising. Ever since the successful disengagement of troops from the lake area and the Kailash Range in February this year, a stalemate exists as far as further disengagement is concerned from the areas of Hot Springs, Gogra, Demchok and over stopping of Indian patrols in Depsang.

Immediately after the disengagement was completed, the 10th round of talks was held between the military commanders of the two nations. But it failed to arrive at any consensus as far as further disengagement from the remaining areas was concerned. However, the talks were dubbed as “constructive” and both sides hoped for a fruitful outcome. A joint statement issued by the two countries after the talks positively appraised the disengagement from the lake area, terming it a significant step that would provide a good basis for resolution of other remaining issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Western Sector.

Though the much-awaited 11th round has once again ended in a stalemate, there are two noticeable differences. Unlike in the past, no joint statement has been issued by the two nations. In another first, the Chinese side has responded with a statement from the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) with the Press statement issued by the spokesperson of its Western Theatre Command instead of its Defence Ministry. The statement issued by the PLA was full of rhetoric and laced with diplomatic niceties, indicating that it may have been drafted at the Ministry level but was issued by the PLA. This indicates some sort of unhappiness or disagreement which may need intervention at the highest level.

The PLA’s statement said, “We hope India can treasure the current positive situation of de-escalation in the China-India border regions, abide by related agreements reached by the two countries and the two militaries in previous meetings, meet China halfway and safeguard peace and stability in the border regions together”; once again reiterating the “half-way” offer rejected outrightly by India in the past. What’s the point of talking about de-escalation when the Chinese have not even completed the promised disengagement?

A couple of weeks earlier, General Naravane, the Indian Chief of the Army Staff, had observed that the threat in Eastern Ladakh has “not gone away altogether” since the PLA was still maintaining its considerable troop strength in the “rear areas” as before. “De-escalation will take place only when these elements go back to their garrisons,” he had said. The much-needed de-escalation still eludes both sides.

While the Indian side insisted on complete disengagement from Hot Springs, Gogra, Kongka La and Demchok, including the lingering issue of Depsang, the Chinese did not concede to troop pullback from these friction sites as earlier agreed to, leave alone discussing Depsang. The disengagement from the Depsang plains is believed to be the bone of contention since it is not directly relat-



TO WARD OFF ANY THREAT IN THE AREA, INDIA HAS ALSO BUILT UP A STRONG FORCE THERE, INCLUDING ARMoured VEHICLES. THE LOGISTICS OF SUSTENANCE OF SUCH A LARGE FORCE AND KEEPING THE ARMoured FLEET FUNCTIONAL IN SUCH EXTREME COLD WEATHER CONDITIONS IS A HERCULEAN TASK

The writer is a political commentator, security and strategic analyst. The views expressed are personal.



ed to last year’s aggression. Hectic diplomatic activity had preceded the 11th round of talks for “maintaining peace and tranquillity and providing conditions for the progress of bilateral relations.” The Indian Foreign Minister, in a telephonic conversation with his Chinese counterpart, had insisted on “early resolution of remaining issues along the LAC and disengagement at all friction points.”

In a virtual meeting of the Working Mechanism of Consultation and Coordination on India China Border Affairs (WMCC), held in the last week of March, it was decided to hold the 11th round of talks between the Corps Commanders as early as possible in order “to further ease the situation on the ground and jointly safeguard the hard-won peace and stability in the border areas.”

All eyes were thus set on the 11th round of negotiations, hoping not only for disengagement from the remaining areas but also for the resolution of the Depsang imbroglio. So, the big question is, why are the Chinese so sensitive about this area and unwilling to concede? The Depsang plains are sandwiched between the Aksai Chin and Siachen glacier. Located at the height of 16,000-17,000 feet above sea level, the area provides good mobility to the armoured vehicles. The Karakoram Pass and the Sasser Law Pass, both strategically important to India and located within its territory, are on its flanks. Much of these plains had been

under Chinese control since the mid-1950s. Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO) is also located adjacent to the plains. In 1962, the Chinese occupied much of the Depsang plains west of the DBO, with India left with a small bulge. The new road built by us to connect the DBO with the Shyok area and beyond is under the observation of the Chinese and remains vulnerable to its artillery fire. The area is strategically important because China and Pakistan can jointly threaten India with a pincer movement in a strategic collusion and cut off the vital area from the rest of Ladakh. Conversely, India can threaten Aksai Chin and the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), though a build-up for any large-scale offensive would pose serious challenges.

Apart from the varying perception of the LAC, another peculiar factor in the area is the Limit of Patrol (LOP). India and China differ on the alignment of the LOP as well. The Chinese perception of the LOP is almost 20 km beyond our perception inside our territory. The tensions in this area are not recent. The Chinese had intruded in the area in 2013 and again in 2015 during the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping and then during the 2017 Doklam crisis.

The crux of the problem lies in both sides denying each other access to the Patrolling Points (PPs) located on the LOP. Earlier Indian troops had been patrolling up to PP 11, 12, 12A and 13 and had not moved beyond that till the perceived

LAC. But lately, the PLA has been preventing Indian troops from even patrolling till these PPs and the phenomenon has become more pronounced after the Doklam stand-off. Unlike the Chinese incursions in the Fingers Area (between Finger four-eight), the Chinese did not physically move into the area.

The Indian patrols can move in vehicles only up to an area called “Bottleneck” beyond which their movement is on foot. A kilometre or so beyond the bottleneck is “Y-Junction” where the route bifurcates, with one fork leading to PP10 to 12 and the other fork leading to PP13. When Indian patrols approach Y-Junction, the PLA troops come in vehicles from a nearby post and stop them from going further up to the LOP. In a *quid pro quo*, the Indian troops prevent the PLA’s men from going ahead of the “Bottleneck” area to their perceived LOP.

To ward off any threat in the area, India has also built up a strong force there, including armoured vehicles. The logistics of sustenance of such a large force and keeping the armoured fleet functional in such extreme cold weather conditions is a Herculean task. While India insists on de-escalation in this area simultaneously with the others, the Chinese prefer the *status quo*. As it appears, both sides are unwilling to relent. Indian troops are still in possession of a feature in the lake area that can prove as a “trump card” for hard bargaining with the Chinese to secure our interests in the Depsang plains.



ANIL GUPTA

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

IN THE ELECTION, THE CONSCIOUS PEOPLE OF BENGAL HIT SO MANY FOURS AND SIXES THAT THE SEATS OF THE BJP HAVE BECOME CENTURIES.  
—PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI



I CAN SAY THAT AFTER THE ELECTIONS ARE OVER, THE BJP WILL NOT EVEN GET 70 OUT OF THE TOTAL 294 SEATS.  
—WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER MAMATA BANERJEE



# Time to bridge the healthcare gap and tap indigenous potential

There has to be support from the Government for medical Research and Development activities towards advanced health solutions

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light the disparity among the haves and have-nots in access to healthcare in the country. However, everyone should have working and living conditions that are conducive to good health. The collaboration of various stakeholders in the health sector, who must work as a team as well as individually, is essential to achieve a fairer and healthier world in which all members of society have access to quality healthcare services irrespective of their socio-economic status.

The first step towards achieving universal access to affordable health services is to have uniform, unbiased and economical healthcare facilities available for all. This will help in early detection and treatment of various diseases and infections. Preventive healthcare measures are of

KM CHERIAN

The writer is a Padma Shri awardee and a cardiothoracic surgeon credited with India’s first bypass. He is Chairman and CEO of Frontier Lifeline Hospital. The views expressed are personal.

utmost importance in ensuring the overall health of a community.

While we have a plethora of health schemes in India like the ‘Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)’ to cater to the health of our citizens, it’s the execution part of such schemes that we lack in. Efforts are required to ensure that people are enrolled, databases are updated regularly and citizens avail the benefits of the scheme.

The Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) model can help in achieving the goal of accessible healthcare and realising the targets in the field. Private and Government entities need to collaborate and work in consonance, supplementing each other’s effort. They have to come up with specific strategies for various sections, such as those below

the poverty line.

It is imperative to monitor health inequities and help provide better access to affordable and quality healthcare. Many people in our country struggle to avail primary healthcare services. It is important that the Primary Health Centres (PHCs) in every State cater to the healthcare needs of migrant workers who are from varied backgrounds.

Fostering and nurturing indigenous technology is extremely important in building affordable healthcare infrastructure in India. There has to be support from the Government for medical Research and Development (R&D) activities towards advanced health solutions.

As far as possible, bureaucratic hurdles must be removed so that innovators and scientists are able to avail the benefits of various policy

initiatives. There has to be some provision for financial support and tax benefits so as to encourage these R&D entities. For instance, if a patient needs a heart valve replacement, Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR) is an alternative to conventional heart surgery but the long-lasting results of it are still in question.

It seems that there is an industry-wide push to make

these procedures popular, without really thinking about the long-term results. Currently, these valves are highly expensive in India (approximately ₹22.5 lakh) owing to which a majority of the people cannot afford it. Even the cost of conventional valve replacement (approximately ₹3 lakh) is also out of reach for many. The solution is indigenisation. The Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI) using Nitinol stents developed by the National Aeronautical Lab (NAL) and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is promising in this respect. Unfortunately, there has been no support from any Central Government agency.

We all know that several organs are received only from human donors and there is a wide gap in the supply and

demand. Today, science has reached a stage where these organs could be manufactured using one’s own cells through the 3D printing technology or by using a biological scaffold — like a shark fin — on which it could be grown. Shark skin is another potential tissue substrate to create biological tissue in view of its inherent tensile strength and durability. The Governments, both Central and States, as well as financial institutions mainly banks, should support these initiatives.

Unfortunately, due to ignorance on the part of regulatory bodies and other law enforcing agencies, even the licence for producing or manufacturing these has been poorly formulated and prioritised. Another important area is the realm of stem cell research with its tremendous regenerative potential, but we

face too many hurdles in manufacturing and commercial production.

Further, it’s critical to create awareness about various health issues in regional languages that people understand. Plus, there is a pressing need to emphasise upon the importance of nutrition and immunity development in maintaining individual health.

Vaccination can help in keeping vaccine-preventable diseases away but there are new viruses and strains that are being discovered every day. Recently, we have witnessed how the second wave of the COVID-19 virus has taken the country by storm. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that our population has a fairly strong immune system, along with affordable healthcare and indigenous R&D in medical science.



# Hiring to grow by 7% in Apr-June: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The intent to hire in the current quarter is likely to rise by 7 per cent over the previous three months if further lockdowns and workplace operating rules are not enforced, mainly driven by demand in healthcare, pharmaceuticals, educational services, e-commerce and technology start-ups and IT, according to a report.

In fact, out of the 21 sectors reviewed, more than 8 sectors will witness a 9-11 per cent rise in their intent to hire in the current quarter, TeamLease Employment Outlook Report has revealed.

“Indian economy has been regaining the lost ground and the same was reflecting in hiring as well. Be it the IMF, OECD or Fitch, all have been positive and this was bolstering the business sentiment and

the intent to hire. However, if we resort to lockdowns it will derail and further delay the recovery.

“In fact, it will impact the scope of growth in employment negatively. If we continue with our efforts and not opt for lockdown, the business optimism will remain intact and so the hiring.

The intent to hire will grow from 27 per cent point in January-March to 34 per cent in the current quarter,” TeamLease Services co-founder and executive vice president Rituparna Chakraborty said.

The report is based on a survey among 712 small, medium and large companies across the 21 sectors pan-India from January to June.

The report further revealed that healthcare, pharmaceuticals, educational services, e-commerce and technology

start-ups and information technology are the key sectors, who are likely to ramp up their talent pool.

In fact, more than 58 per cent of the corporates in healthcare and pharmaceuticals sectors, which is nearly 11 per cent higher than the January-March period, are keen on hiring talent.

Educational services, e-commerce and technology start-ups and IT have also indicated similar enthusiasm with 55 per cent, 51 per cent and 50 per cent the companies, respectively, expressing intent to hire.

According to the report, while there is an overall positivity, power and energy, BPO/ITeS, media and entertainment, consulting, marketing and advertising, travel and hospitality may take more time

to reach the kind of intent to hire enthusiasm that the other sectors are expressing.

Further, from a geography perspective, while metro and tier I cities (32 per cent) take the lead in terms of overall intent to hire, tier-III cities are not far behind.

Delving deep into cities barring for Kochi, Coimbatore, Nagpur and Kolkata most of the towns have expressed a growth in keenness to hire.

Meanwhile, with regard to functional areas similar to the previous quarter, sales (41 per cent) and marketing (34 per cent) continues to be the most sought after functional roles.

However, when it comes to hierarchy the preferences seem to have changed substantially as the intent to hire senior-level talent has dropped by 4 per cent point over January-March, the report added.

## 70% employers resume hiring for blue collar jobs: Survey

**Mumbai:**With the vaccination drive in full swing in the country and high optimism on the economic recovery, the hiring of blue collar workers is resurging as 70% of employers polled in a survey said they have resumed recruitment. Of the 70 % employers polled in the second edition of OIX People Survey, nearly 16% said they are hiring 100 per cent of capacity, while 54% are hiring up to 50% of capacity. About 60% of employers stated that they have faced no challenges in availability of talent, despite the fact that a large number of gig workers had preferred to return to their native place at the height of the pandemic.

## Recruitment activity logs 2% drop in March over previous month: Report

■ MUMBAI

The recruitment activity saw a drop of 2 per cent in March 2021 over the previous month, mainly dragged by a decline in job postings in sectors including banking/financial services, insurance, production and manufacturing, according to a report.

The overall data indicate that there was a slight decline in job posting activity in March, according to Monster Employment Index, a job analysis report by Monster.Com, a Qness Company.

# Markets undeterred by Covid, fundraising increases

■ NEW DELHI

Despite the uncertainty prevailing in FY 2020-21 owing to Covid-19 pandemic, fundraising in FY 2020-21 was better than that in FY 2019-20 for both Public Issues and Rights Issues, the finance ministry said in a statement on Wednesday.

During FY 2020-21, ₹46,029.71 crore and ₹ 64,058.61 crore were raised through Public Issues and Rights Issue respectively, as against ₹21,382.35 crore and ₹55,669.79 crore raised last year. This is an increase of 115 per cent and 15 per cent respectively in FY 2020-21 as compared to last year.In FY21, in all 56 public issues were launched, including 55 initial public offers

(IPO) and only one follow on public offer (FPO). The number of rights issue was also a high of 21.A finance ministry tweet said that last year around 2003 issues of Corporate Bonds for an amount of ₹7,82,427.39 crore also happened, surpassing the amount raised (₹6,89,686.19 crore) through 1,821 issues for the fiscal year 2019-20.Thus, while the number of issues increased by 10 per cent in FY 2020-21, the amount raised increased by 13.5 per cent as compared to the previous financial year.

With regard to mutual funds, the finance ministry said that Indian capital market has shown its resilience to withstand the ripples caused by exogenous shocks like the pandemic.

# Tech stocks turn attractive for mutual funds amid pandemic

■ MUMBAI

Technology stocks were among the favoured stocks among mutual funds amid the pandemic.

Technology sector saw a massive rise in weightage in FY21 to 11.9 per cent (up 300 bps YoY). The sector is now the second in terms of sectoral allocation by MFs, said a Motilal Oswal Financial Services Report. A year ago, it was in the third position.

In terms of value increase on a month-on-month increase in March, three of the top five stocks were from technology - Infosys (up Rs 7,000 crore), TCS (up Rs 3,960 crore), and HCL Tech (up Rs 1,690 crore). Stocks that saw a maximum decline in value MoM were of Reliance Industries, SBI, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, Bharti Airtel, Coal India, HDFC, Vedanta, and Info Edge.

The Fund Folio report also said that the year saw a notable change in the sector and stock allocation of funds. The weightage of domestic cyclical increased by 160 basis points to 58 per cent, led by an increase in the weightage of automo-

biles, NBFCs, cement, real estate, chemicals, and infrastructure.

Weightage of defensive stocks decreased 100 basis points to 32.5 per cent, led by consumer, utilities, and telecom. Global cyclical's weightage, too, fell 60 basis points to 9.5 per cent.

The consumer sector slipped to fourth place from second place a year ago, with a 240 bps decreased in weightage to 7.4 per cent.

Metals improved its position to 14 from 16 a year ago, with the weightage increasing by 80 bps to 2.6 per cent.

Assets under management (AUM) of the mutual fund industry witnessed a growth of 41 per cent in the last financial year to touch a new high of Rs 31.4 lakh crore. The growth was primarily led by an increase in AUM of equity funds (Rs 4.09 lakh crore), income funds (Rs 2.39 trillion) and other ETFs (Rs 1.29 lakh crore), the report said.

Equity AUM, including ELSS and index funds, of domestic mutual funds reached new highs of Rs 10.2 lakh crore (up 67 per cent YoY) in FY21, led by a rise in market indices.

# Global stocks follow Wall St higher after US inflation rises

■ BEIJING

Global stock markets and Wall Street futures rose Wednesday after traders shrugged off higher US inflation and a decline in Japanese machinery orders.

London and Paris opened higher while Shanghai, Hong Kong and Seoul rose. Tokyo was off less than 0.5%.

On Tuesday, Wall Street's benchmark S&P 500 index climbed 0.3% to a new high, propelled by tech and consumer stocks on optimism the vaccine rollout will allow business activity to return to normal.

Johnson & Johnson fell 1.3% after US regulators suspended use of its single-dose vaccine to investigate possibly dangerous blood clots.

The US government reported consumer prices increased by a stronger-than-expected 0.6% in March, the fastest rate since 2012. Higher inflation normally fuels fears interest rates might be raised to keep prices stable, but the Federal Reserve has said the economy will be allowed to “run hot” to ensure a recovery

in place.

Traders “took the well-telegraphed inflation pick-up” in stride,” Stephen Innes of Axi said in a report. Markets also are “seemingly unfazed” by the J&J suspension.

In early trading, London's FTSE 100 was up less than 0.1% at 6,896.64. Frankfurt's DAX declined less than 0.1% to 15,222.10 while the CAC 40 in Paris gained 0.2% to 6,196.15.

On Wall Street, the future for the S&P 500 index was up less than 0.1% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was unchanged. The Dow, which includes J&J, fell 0.2% on Tuesday. The Nasdaq, with more technology stocks, gained 1.1%.

In Asia, the Shanghai Composite Index advanced 0.6% to 3,416.72 and the Hang Seng in Hong Kong added 1.3% to 28,855.83. The Nikkei 225 in Tokyo shed 0.4% to 29,620.99 after government data showed February machinery orders fell by an unexpectedly wide margin of 8.5% from the previous month, adding to concern about the country's recovery.

# Land value within 500 metre of upcoming metro corridors to rise 10-15%

■ MUMBAI

As several cities add metro rail to their public transport facilities or extend their existing networks, a JLL report said that land value within 500 metre of upcoming metro corridors is expected to increase by 10-15 per cent, according to a JLL report.

Noting that India was introduced to the metro rail as an alternative mode of transport three decades, the report said: “Since then, the advantages of the metro rail system have increased many-folds. Primarily it has been the enhanced connectivity to the suburbs of the city, thus enabling distribution of the city population to a larger extent of land resulting to congestion reduction in the city.”

Covering a total of 760.62 km across India with another 578.34 km under construction, the past two decades has seen a tremendous growth of the metro rail.

Cities including Kochi, Chennai, Bengaluru, Nagpur and Nashik have seen significant expansion of new metro lines, which was highlighted by the Finance Minister in the

Union Budget hearing in January 2021.

Further, two new technologies including MetroLite and MetroNeoare are being planned to provide affordable connectivity options in tier II cities and peripheral parts of tier I cities.

“The real estate market has seen a steady growth along the metro corridors, owing to increase in developments alongside the routes. Furthermore, on an average, the land value within 500 metre of metro corridors has increased by 15-20 per cent, especially in residential and commercial areas,” said A. Shankar, Head - Strategic Consulting and Valuation Advisory, India, JLL.

He further said that it has been observed that appreciation in land value has been on a rise after the metro operation and increase by 2-5 per cent annually over other locations, compared to the construction and planning phase. The deployment of metro corridor directly impacts the real estate sector as it increases the land value, land use change and densification alongside the metro corridor.

# Bharti Airtel restructures its corporate structure

■ NEW DELHI

Bharti Airtel on Wednesday announced a new corporate structure with focus on four verticals - Digital, India, International and Infrastructure.

The new structure envisages Airtel Digital Ltd folding into listed entity, Bharti Airtel. This will now house all of the digital assets spanning Wynk Music, Airtel X stream, Airtel Thanks, Mitra Payments platform used by a million retailers, Airtel Ads, Airtel IQ, Airtel Secure, Airtel Cloud and all future digital products and services, the company said in a statement. The telecom business of the company will be housed in a newly-created entity, Airtel Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Bharti Airtel. Bharti Telemedia, the 100 per cent arm operating DTH services, will sit alongside Airtel Ltd for now.

## There is need for positive regulatory framework for internet cos: Facebook India head

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Facebook India Head Ajit Mohan said there is a need for a “forward-looking and positive regulatory framework” for internet companies, and that organisations also need to be more transparent about how they use customer data.

The executive noted that India has seen an “explosive shift” in terms of access to the internet and this expanded access gas-driven the emergence of entirely new models, a feat that no other country has managed to do so much in such a short period of time.

“We absolutely do believe that the internet needs new rules, not just in India but around the world. We operated for a very long time with not enough clarity on the traffic lights. And this is the moment when we should think especially in democratic societies, think about how we navigate complex issues where there are competing trade-offs. I'm hoping that we can emerge with a very forward-looking and positive regulatory framework,” he said at the Raisina Dialogue.

Mohan, Vice President and Managing Director, Facebook India, said that there are a few areas that the regulations can focus on.

“One is transparency mandates. Make it the company's to be more transparent about how data is used. Second, there's a lot of concern about algorithms, and how machines are controlling people's lives. I think we would be very keen to lean in and say how do we protect user agency where people have the opportunity to make explicit choices that drive algorithms,” he said.

Mohan added that a lot of the conversation has been about how large tech companies benefit from large sets of data.

“I think we have been very forward in saying we are open to creating frameworks that still protect the interests of privacy and safety when data moves around, but make it easier for users to move data between competing platforms. I do believe that we are a partner in this. But I agree with the framework that we need rules and we hope those will be forward-looking and positive,” he said.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**

**Principal Chief Materials Manager**  
**Headquarters Office, Baroda House, New Delhi-110001**  
**Mail ID : salenr365@gmail.com**

**No. 117-S-Sales-Auction Programme- 2021-22** **Dated. 12.04.2021**

**e-AUCTION NOTICE NO. June/2021**

E-Auction will be conducted for disposal of Ferrous Scrap, Non Ferrous Scrap, Other Misc Scrap, Condemned Loco, Coaches and Wagons, Scrap Rail and other scrap P Way material. Used lead Acid Batteries/Used oil/Refused oil will be sold only to recyclers registered with State Pollution Control Board. Auction programme is as under.

**e-AUCTION DATES FOR 'June, 2021.**

<b>S. No</b>	<b>Depot conducting auction</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> round</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> round</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> round</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> round</b>
1	Alambagh/Lucknow 0522-2451257	1	8	15	22
2	Shakurbasti 011-27015387	2	9	16	23
3	Jagadhari 01732-252388	7	14	21	28
4	Sr.DMM/LKO 0522-2234756	7	14	21	28
5	Sr.DMM/FZR 01632-244154	3	10	17	24
6	Sr.DMM/UMB 0171-2611203	2	9	16	23
7	Sr.DMM/MB 0591-2413141	3	10	17	24
8	Sr.DMM/DLI 011-23365311	1	8	15	22

E-Auction will be held from 10:00 AM on wards as per above programme

1. The details of item to be sold in auction will be available in catalogue at **www.ireps.gov.in**.

2. The intending purchasers may inspect the scrap material before the auction during working hours at nominated locations.

3. To participate in e-auction, purchasers need to get themselves registered with The details on last sold rates in auctions are available at **www.railnet.gov.in**.

4. ireps. For further details regarding registration and other conditions of e-auction, please visit Railway website '**www.ireps.gov.in**'.

**(Amir Chand)**  
**Dy. Chief Material Manager/Sig/C-I**

846/2021

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC NOTICE
My client HDFC Ltd. who had disburse a Loan to Mrs. Kusum and Mr. Nitin Arora against the mortgage of Property bearing No. A-1006, 10th Floor, Trident Embassy, Greater Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. has come to the notice that the original property documents viz Agreement to sell dated 29.12.2017 executed between M/s. HT Media Ltd and Mrs.Kusum and Mr. Nitin Arora is not traceable. It is hereby appealed to the general public that whosoever finds the document mentioned hereinabove may kindly return the same to the HDFC Ltd., The Capital Court, Munirka, Outer Ring Road, Olof Palme Marg, New Delhi-110067.	It is for information of general public that the original Sale Deed of Upper Ground Floor of Property No. C-40, situated in Shashi Garden, Mayur Vihar-1, Delhi-110091, jointly owned by Sh. Vikrant Vikram Singh and Sh. Uttam Kumar, by virtue of Sale Deed duly registered as document no. 2778, addl. book no. 1, volume no. 5263, pages 125 to 130, dated 15-02-2011, sub-Registrar-VIII, Delhi, has been lost/misplaced. If anybody has any right, title or interest in the said property and/or has any type of objection in the same, may approach to the above noted owners within 10 days from the date of publication of this notice.
<b>Karnail Singh, Advocate</b> Ch. No. 153, Saket Court Complex, Saket, New Delhi	<b>Nagi Asad (Advocate)</b> 214/4, New Lahore, Shastri Nagar, Delhi-110031, Enrl. No. D-761/200

 <b>AXIS BANK</b>	<b>Retail Asset Centre, Delhi:</b> Lower Ground Floor and Upper Ground Floor, Himalaya House, K.G. Marg, Delhi-110001. <b>Also at:</b> Axis Bank Ltd., Axis House, Tower T-2, 2nd Floor, I-14, Sector-128, Noida Expressway, Jaypee Greens Wishtown, Noida (U.P.)-201301											
<b>Corporate Office:</b> 'Axis House', Block-B, Bombay Dyeing Mills Compound, Pandurang Budhkar Marg, Worli, Mumbai-400025, <b>Registered Office:</b> 'Trishul', 3rd floor, opposite Samartheswar Temple, Law garden, Ellisbridge, Ahmedabad-380006												
<b>POSSESSION NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002</b>												
Whereas												
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Axis Bank Ltd. under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notice upon the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagor(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.												
The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagor(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates.												
The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagor(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Axis Bank Ltd.												
The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagor(s) attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.												
<table><tr><th>Name of Borrower / Co-borrower</th><th>Description of Property</th><th>1.Date of Demand Notice 2.Amount in Possession 3.Amount in Demand (Rs.)</th></tr><tr><td><b>1.Mr. Hitesh Agarwal</b> S/O Mr. Ramesh Chand Agarwal U-23/35 Ground Floor, Pink Town House, U Block, DLF Phase-III, Gurgaon-122022, Haryana <b>Also At:</b> Mr. Hitesh Agarwal S/O Mr. Ramesh Chand Agarwal U-23/35 28A Despalai Jeevan Jyoti Nagar, Kishangarh, Madanganj, Ajmer, Rajasthan-305801 <b>Also At</b> Mr. Hitesh Agarwal S/O Mr. Ramesh Chand Agarwal Price Water House &amp; Co. Chartered Accountants LLP Building 8, 7th &amp; 8th Floor, Tower-B, DLF Cyber City, Gurgaon-122002, Haryana</td><td>Immovable Asset: Residential Ground Floor Dwelling Unit called 'Town House' having its covered area of 76.50 Sq. Mtrs. (823 Sq. Ft.) bearing No. U-23/35 together with impartible and undivided prorate share of land in Plot No. 35, Road No. U-23, measuring 125.07 Sq. Mtrs. in the Residential Colony Known as DLF City Phase-III, (Earlier known as DLF Qutub Enclave Complex), situated in and around Village Nathpaur, Tehsil &amp; Distt. Gurgaon (Haryana) Bounded as under:-</td><td>1.23-09-2019 2.12-04-2021 3.Rs.71,16,421/- (PHR005602405672) &amp; Rs.4,95,378/- (HTR005602473530) Plus further Interest, incidental expenses and cost</td></tr><tr><td><b>2. Mrs. Khushboo Garg</b> W/o Mr. Hitesh Agarwal Shastri Nagar Colony, Ajmer Road Kerkri, Ajmer, Rajasthan-305404 <b>Mrs. Khushboo Garg</b> W/o Mr. Hitesh Agarwal 28A Despalai Jeevan Jyoti Nagar, Kishangarh, Madanganj, Ajmer, Rajasthan-305801</td><td>East: Property No. U-23/36 West: Property No. U-23/34 North: Road South: Property No. U-22/19</td><td></td></tr></table>				Name of Borrower / Co-borrower	Description of Property	1.Date of Demand Notice 2.Amount in Possession 3.Amount in Demand (Rs.)	<b>1.Mr. Hitesh Agarwal</b> S/O Mr. Ramesh Chand Agarwal U-23/35 Ground Floor, Pink Town House, U Block, DLF Phase-III, Gurgaon-122022, Haryana <b>Also At:</b> Mr. Hitesh Agarwal S/O Mr. Ramesh Chand Agarwal U-23/35 28A Despalai Jeevan Jyoti Nagar, Kishangarh, Madanganj, Ajmer, Rajasthan-305801 <b>Also At</b> Mr. Hitesh Agarwal S/O Mr. Ramesh Chand Agarwal Price Water House & Co. Chartered Accountants LLP Building 8, 7th & 8th Floor, Tower-B, DLF Cyber City, Gurgaon-122002, Haryana	Immovable Asset: Residential Ground Floor Dwelling Unit called 'Town House' having its covered area of 76.50 Sq. Mtrs. (823 Sq. Ft.) bearing No. U-23/35 together with impartible and undivided prorate share of land in Plot No. 35, Road No. U-23, measuring 125.07 Sq. Mtrs. in the Residential Colony Known as DLF City Phase-III, (Earlier known as DLF Qutub Enclave Complex), situated in and around Village Nathpaur, Tehsil & Distt. Gurgaon (Haryana) Bounded as under:-	1.23-09-2019 2.12-04-2021 3.Rs.71,16,421/- (PHR005602405672) & Rs.4,95,378/- (HTR005602473530) Plus further Interest, incidental expenses and cost	<b>2. Mrs. Khushboo Garg</b> W/o Mr. Hitesh Agarwal Shastri Nagar Colony, Ajmer Road Kerkri, Ajmer, Rajasthan-305404 <b>Mrs. Khushboo Garg</b> W/o Mr. Hitesh Agarwal 28A Despalai Jeevan Jyoti Nagar, Kishangarh, Madanganj, Ajmer, Rajasthan-305801	East: Property No. U-23/36 West: Property No. U-23/34 North: Road South: Property No. U-22/19	
Name of Borrower / Co-borrower	Description of Property	1.Date of Demand Notice 2.Amount in Possession 3.Amount in Demand (Rs.)										
<b>1.Mr. Hitesh Agarwal</b> S/O Mr. Ramesh Chand Agarwal U-23/35 Ground Floor, Pink Town House, U Block, DLF Phase-III, Gurgaon-122022, Haryana <b>Also At:</b> Mr. Hitesh Agarwal S/O Mr. Ramesh Chand Agarwal U-23/35 28A Despalai Jeevan Jyoti Nagar, Kishangarh, Madanganj, Ajmer, Rajasthan-305801 <b>Also At</b> Mr. Hitesh Agarwal S/O Mr. Ramesh Chand Agarwal Price Water House & Co. Chartered Accountants LLP Building 8, 7th & 8th Floor, Tower-B, DLF Cyber City, Gurgaon-122002, Haryana	Immovable Asset: Residential Ground Floor Dwelling Unit called 'Town House' having its covered area of 76.50 Sq. Mtrs. (823 Sq. Ft.) bearing No. U-23/35 together with impartible and undivided prorate share of land in Plot No. 35, Road No. U-23, measuring 125.07 Sq. Mtrs. in the Residential Colony Known as DLF City Phase-III, (Earlier known as DLF Qutub Enclave Complex), situated in and around Village Nathpaur, Tehsil & Distt. Gurgaon (Haryana) Bounded as under:-	1.23-09-2019 2.12-04-2021 3.Rs.71,16,421/- (PHR005602405672) & Rs.4,95,378/- (HTR005602473530) Plus further Interest, incidental expenses and cost										
<b>2. Mrs. Khushboo Garg</b> W/o Mr. Hitesh Agarwal Shastri Nagar Colony, Ajmer Road Kerkri, Ajmer, Rajasthan-305404 <b>Mrs. Khushboo Garg</b> W/o Mr. Hitesh Agarwal 28A Despalai Jeevan Jyoti Nagar, Kishangarh, Madanganj, Ajmer, Rajasthan-305801	East: Property No. U-23/36 West: Property No. U-23/34 North: Road South: Property No. U-22/19											
The above-mentioned Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagor(s) are hereby given a 30 days' Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days' from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.												
Date: 15-04-2021 Place : Gurugram		Sd/-, Authorized Officer, Axis Bank Ltd.,										

SEARCH FOR MISSING LADY	
	General public is hereby informed that one lady namely <b>Ram Devi, W/o Sh. Shiv Dayal, R/o H.No. H-2/5 Budh Vihar, Phase-I, Delhi.</b> Age about 40 yrs., Height 5", Wheatish Complexion, Long face, Medium Built wearing dark blue colour suit-salwar and chappal in feet has been missing since <b>22.03.2021</b> from the area of <b>PS Vijay Vihar, Delhi.</b>
In this regard a case <b>DD No. 61-A Dt. 22.03.2021</b> has been lodged at <b>PS Vijay Vihar, Delhi.</b> Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing lady but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this missing lady may kindly inform to the following.	
E-mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in Fax: 011-23011334 Ph.: 011-23014046 011-23015218 DP/782/RD/2021	S.H.O., <b>PS Vijay Vihar, Delhi.</b> Ph.: 011-27061294, 27061295

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED	
	General public is hereby informed that one person namely <b>Yogender Kumar Gupta S/o Sh. Anand Swaroop Gupta R/o H.No.2, Pkt-16, Sec-24, Rohini, Delhi</b> has been missing/kidnapped from the area of PS: Budh Vihar, Delhi since 24.03.2021. In this regard, a case <b>DD No. 51A Dated 24.03.2021</b> has been registered at <b>P.S. Budh Vihar, Delhi.</b> The description of the missing person as under.
<b>Age:</b> 47 Years, <b>Complexion:</b> Wheatish, <b>Height:</b> 6', <b>Face:</b> Round, <b>Built:</b> Medium, <b>Wearing:</b> Blue colour shirt & jeans and black colour shoes in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out him but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing/kidnapped person then please inform P.S. Budh Vihar, Delhi at following Tel No./e-mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in and Website: http://cbi.nic.in	
<b>Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641</b> <b>Fax No. 011-24368639</b>	<b>Sd/- S.H.O.</b> <b>PS: Budh Vihar, Delhi</b> <b>Ph: 011-27052772/73</b>
<b>DP/770/RD/2021</b>	

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED	
	General public is hereby informed that one lady Namely <b>Rajeshwari W/o Sonpal R/o E-82, Prem Nagar-I, Kirari, Delhi</b> has been missing/kidnapped from her house since dated 16.03.2021 with her 8 years old son namely Sooraj S/o Sonal, Height 3' 6" Face: Round. In this regard, a case <b>DD NO. 46A Dt. 18.03.2021</b> has been registered at <b>P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi.</b> The description of the missing lady is as under.
<b>Age:</b> 35 Years <b>Complexion:</b> Shallow, <b>Height:</b> 5', <b>Face:</b> Round, <b>Wearing:</b> White Colour Saaree. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing/kidnapped lady and her son then please inform P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi at following Tel No./ e-mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in and Website: http://cbi.nic.in providing clue about the person.	
<b>Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641</b> <b>Fax No. 011-24368639</b>	<b>Sd/- SHO</b> <b>PS: Prem Nagar, Delhi</b> <b>PH.: 9315164042, 9850870322</b>
<b>DP/783/RD/2021</b>	



# STEP TAKEN TO RELIEVE JAIPUR TRAFFIC

A major step has been achieved for solving the traffic congestion in Jaipur by creating the Jaipur Central Region as a traffic light-free city. In a meeting, chaired by the Minister of Urban Development, Shanti Dhariwal, a few important decisions were taken. It was attended by Gaurav Goel, IAS, JDC, VS Sunda, Chief Engineer, JDA and Anoop Bartaria, Consultant Designer and CMD, Sincere Architects along with their team.

The feasibility report of four intersections — B2 Bypass, Laxmi Mandir Tiraha, OTS Crossing and Jawahar Circle — were discussed and approved.

These projects have been designed to create a confluence of art, heritage and technology in pursuit to remove the traffic lights on these junctions. The feasibility report included the construction of heritage structures on all the four crossings conserving the heritage and architectural style of Jaipur. In all the crossings, the salient features of them are as under:

## B2 BYPASS

□A grand arch in marble and stone craft will be built on the B2 Bypass, which will be 80 feet high.

□An underpass connecting the Jawahar Circle to the Mansarovar side will be built. The underpass will be six lanes, which will be unique and decorated with traditional murals of art on both the sides. For turning traffic, two clovers are to be built.

□A detailed traffic survey and analysis has already been conducted.

□Smart underpasses and smart cloverleaf bridges will be created, which will be equipped with all IT based systems and IoT platforms.

□Street illumination and heritage lighting has been made a part of this project.

□Beautiful marble sculptures and traditional scenes of Rajputana will be sculptured in marble and metal on the heritage structures.

□First time in Jaipur, you will have pedestrian crossing, which will be totally ramped. It is going to be friendly for physically-challenged and senior citizens.

□A crossing for cyclists along with pedestrian crossovers will be made.

□The project will tantamount to multiple benefits — it will save fuel around 9.5 lakh liters every year, which will, in turn, result in substantial reduction in air pollution and improve its quality; ease of travel will result in ease of living; it will



also result in reduction of stress levels in travellers as there will be no congestion and of course, will save time.

## JAWAHAR CIRCLE

□The traffic light on the interface of JLN Road and Jawahar Circle is being removed by creating two major entry transitions, cuts in the median towards Jawahar Circle. The outer ring of Jawahar Circle is going to have a dedicated cycling

track and outer ring will be treated for pedestrian comfort and vehicular travel by stone cobble floorings.

□A welcome monument abutting the road coming from airport on the south end of Jawahar Circle has been planned. The monument will be built in white marble and there will be series of

arches and pillars highlighting the elements of Jaipur architecture. In this entire development of Jawahar Circle, major plantation will also be done to enhance the lanes.

□The parking on the inner road has been designed strictly according to the traffic engineering norms and the entries and exits will be controlled for security and safety of the people.

□Heritage lighting and signages will be also undertaken in the project.

□Pet friendly stations, WiFi zones, cafe huts, senior citizen support services and more has also been planned.

## LAXMI MANDIR TIRAHA

□The total amount of cars travelling on Laxmi Mandir Tiraha is 2.0 lakh per day. The signal light of the Laxmi Mandir is being removed by closing the median and for the traffic coming from the Sahakar Bhawan Road on the Tonk Road will be moving on the road between Apex Bank and Nehru Place. An underpass will be constructed which will cross over the Tonk Road and will open towards Sanganer side, thereby eliminating the traffic light at the junction.

□In continuity of the same, the

Gandhi Nagar traffic light is also proposed to be eliminated by creating an underpass and cloverleaf bridge.

□A statue of freedom fighters will be built in the garden court of Laxmi Mandir Tiraha.

□Sufficient parking facilities for the occupants abutting the road is also being planned.

□Around 6.50 lakh litres of fuel will be saved per annum.

## OTS CROSSING

□The OTS Chauraha will also be free of traffic light and will result into a smooth movement in all directions.

□After an indepth study of movement of traffic, a design has been prepared, which will take care of the six lane traffic on JLN road. A clover on the Jhalana road will be made, which will take care of the turning traffic.

□A unique gallery of heritage pictures for pedestrian and cyclist traffic connecting all four directions has been planned. This will save 7 lakh litres of fuel per annum. The design has been done by Anoop Bartaria of M/s Sincere Architects Engineers Private Limited.

All the projects will have unique heritage lighting and night illumination will be built in this. The innovative sculptures will enhance the night life of Jaipur.

# CRPF celebrates Valour Day

On the occasion of Valour Day, Kuldip Singh, DG, CRPF paid homage to the bravehearts who sacrificed their lives at the altar of duty. In a solemn ceremony, he paid rich tributes to the martyrs by laying a wreath at the National Police Memorial at Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. Later in the day, an investiture ceremony to facilitate the Gallantry Medal recipients and families of those bravehearts who were awarded Gallantry Medal Posthumously was conducted at Shaurya CRPF Officers institute, New Delhi. Kishan Singh, the surviving veteran of the Sardar Post Battle, was also facilitated in the ceremony.

Extending his best wishes to the personnel and their families, the DG said that the force owes its numerous milestones of success to the martyrs and veterans who scripted several sagas of valour while serving the nation with courage and commitment. He said that the force shall remain indebted to 2,235 martyrs who laid down their lives at the altar of duty.

Valour Day is celebrated each year to commemorate the exceptionally awe-inspiring battle at Sardar Post in Rann of Kutchh, Gujarat, where mere two companies of CRPF repulsed the attack of a full fledged Pakistani military brigade on April



9, 1965. Even when faced with sudden onslaught from a numerically superior enemy carrying modern arms and ammunition, the bravehearts of CRPF fought with exceptional courage and bravery. Not only did the CRPF repulse the attack, but it also neutralised 34 Pakistani soldiers and captured four alive. In this battle, seven bravehearts of CRPF made supreme sacrifice.



## Powergrid bags ISTD national award

Maharatna entity, Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has bagged the third place for Innovative Training Practices (Public Sector category) 2018-19 at the 29th National Award ceremony held

recently at New Delhi by Indian Society for Training & Development (ISTD). The award was received by Anil Saberwal, Executive Director (HRD, RB & CC) at SCOPE Complex, New Delhi.

# Fact check

Bharat Bhushan Ashu categorically refutes media reports of Bardana shortage as malicious misinformation



Outrightly rejecting the media reports regarding non-availability of bales with procurement agencies as malicious propaganda, Bharat Bhushan Ashu, Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister, Government of Punjab, underlined that there is no question of shortage of bardana in the mandies at all.

Tendering for Bardana procurement is a continuous process which starts much before the season as part of planning and goes on as and when the need arises. One cannot be sure of full quantity receipt through one tender only, the Minister pointed out that the last tender floated on April 12 and was necessitated only because permission from GoI to use used bags was received very late.

We have already got jute bales indented through the Jute Commissioner and NAFED, Ashu said that PP bales are also being received from various HDPE/PP bag suppliers. This, in addition to the permission to use good quality used bags already received by the state from Government of India on April 12, he pointed out hitting out at

those trying to create an issue where none exists.

Pointing out that season is already in full swing with farmers bringing their crops to mandies, Ashu said that as on Tuesday, 5,44,334 MTs of wheat has already been procured in the mandies by the procurement agencies out of which 44,728 MT has been procured under DCP for distribution in the state under Smart Ration Card Scheme.

Urging all the farmers to follow all health advisories as a safeguard against COVID, the Minister said due arrangements have been made to ensure that farmers bring their produce in a staggered way as per token issued by Mandi Board Punjab so that COVID-19 protocol can be maintained in order to curb the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

Reiterating Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh government's commitment to ensure smooth procurement experience for farmers, Ashu said that state is fully geared up to ensure our farmers don't have to face any difficulty whatsoever during the season like last four years.

# DOPPW & NCC commemorate Amrut Mahotsav

Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare is organising various activities to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence — Bharat Ka Amrut Mahotsav.

The department has started an awareness campaign entitled series of 75 important rules for family pensioners to know on social media, which was started from March, 2021. In this campaign two tweets per week are being disseminated through social media during coming year. These tweets are put in the form of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). As on April 12, 2021, five tweets have been disseminated by DoPPW on Rules for Family Pensioners to create awareness.

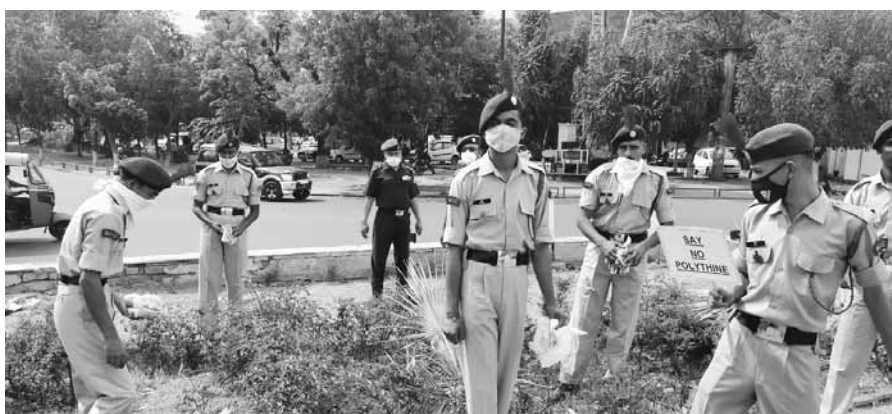
In another initiative, 75 offices across Ministries/Departments have been identified by DoPPW for extensive training on Bhavishya system. All these offices will be imparted training through VC followed by question-answer session to clear any doubt. Training (online pension processing module) will be across the Central Government Organisations. CAPFs offices covering different locations across country will also be covered in this regard as maximum number of cases pertain to them.



DoPPW has also planned to arrange an online workshop on pension awareness rules for senior central govt pensioners/family pensioners aged 75 years and above covering different cities in India. It will be started from May 2021. It will cover maximum number of cities from all parts of India. The workshop will be conducted region wise.

Besides, DoPPW will also publish a digital publication of 75 anubhav write-ups, including those already awarded. It will be starting from June 2021.

As part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, National Cadet Corps (NCC) also paid homage to the martyrs of the nation's freedom struggle, who



lost their lives on April 13, 1919 at the Jallianwala Bagh. National Cadet Corps also launched the pan India campaign to educate people against use of 'single use plastics'.

NCC has a strong cadet base of 14 lakh in the country,

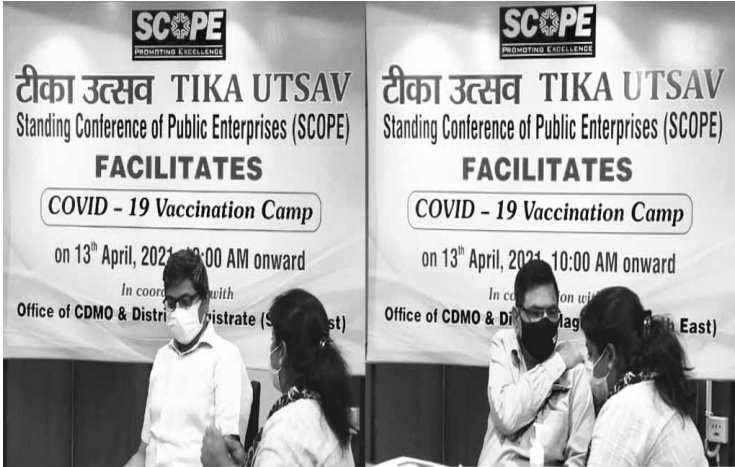
who have been quite vocal about environment issues. Cadets throughout the country gathered at 75 places. The

## SCOPE organises tika utsav

Partaking in Prime Minister's call for Tika Utsav (National Vaccination Festival) to combat COVID-19, Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE) organised a workplace vaccination camp for employees of Public Sector Enterprises.

Gurdeep Singh, CMD, NTPC; Atul Sobti, DG, SCOPE; B V N Prasad, CMD, CCI, Directors and other senior officials were among those who got vaccinated at the camp.

The vaccination drive was held in coordination with Chief District Medical Officer and District Magistrate (South East), New Delhi. Earlier, SCOPE had avidly participated in Government's Public Health Response Campaign for COVID-Appropriate Behaviour.



## Jammu Tourism celebrated Vaisakhi

Directorate of Tourism Jammu Organised the Vaisakhi Festival at Dera Baba Banda Bahadur, Reasi, in collaboration with the District Administration, Reasi. The festival was celebrated with great fervour while following the COVID-19 protocol and guidelines.

Hundreds of devotees paid obeisance at the revered shrine at Dera Baba Village of Reasi, which is situated approximately 30 km from the Katra town. The devotees from across the UT and also from neighboring states of Punjab and Haryana visited the Dera Baba Banda Bahadur Shrine.

It is worthwhile to mention here that the shrine is situated at



the village of revered Sikh warrior and leader Baba Banda Bahadur Singh ji who was a close confidant and follower of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. On this occasion, one medical camp was also organised by the District Administration Reasi and RT-PCR tests were conducted regularly. All necessary protocols which are in place were followed during the said festival.

Holder takes 3/30 as Maxwell's first IPL fifty (59) since 2016 helps RCB to reach fighting total

# SUMMER SLAM

MOTION PICTURE



Chennai Super Kings players Narayan Jagadeesan, R Sai Kishore, Suresh Raina and C Hari Nishanth don traditional dress on occasion of Tamil New Year

@ChennaiPL

## KOHLI FLOATED IDEA OF MAXI JOINING RCB

All-rounder Glenn Maxwell said that RCB captain Virat Kohli had first floated the idea of him joining the franchise during the India's limited overs leg of Australia last year. "We chatted after the ODI and T20I series in Australia. He talked to me about potentially playing for RCB. If I got the opportunity, he said 'we would love to have you!'," Maxwell said in a video tweeted by RCB. "He floated the idea back even then. There was a long process in work. Thankfully, I am playing for RCB now," he added.

## PANT WILL DO A GOOD JOB: LARA

Brian Lara believes Rishabh Pant has improved a lot in the last few months and will do a good job in leading Delhi Capitals. "I think he has got a team that will support him which is most important. He has grown in the last 4 months and I think he will do a good job."



Sunrisers Hyderabad all-rounder Jason Holder celebrates wicket of Glenn Maxwell IPLT20.com

**G**lenn Maxwell hit a 41-ball 59 to lift Royal Challengers Bangalore to a modest 149 for eight against Sunrisers Hyderabad in an Indian Premier League match here on Wednesday.

SRH bowlers, led by West Indian all-rounder Jason Holder (3/30) and star spinner Rashid Khan (2/18), put up superlative show and picked up wickets at regular intervals.

For RCB, Maxwell was the top scor-

Put in to bat, RCB were off to a decent start with Kohli and opener Devdutt Padikkal (11) hitting a few boundaries. However, Sunrisers didn't have to wait long for their first breakthrough as a back of the length delivery in the third over by Bhuvneshwar Kumar (1/30) spelled the end of Padikkal, who had returned after recovering from COVID-19.

Shahbaz Ahmed was the next to depart after playing a quick cameo, leaving RCB at 47 for two.

er, hitting five fours and three maximums with skipper Virat Kohli (33) Shahbaz Ahmed (14) and Kyle Jamieson (12) pro-

Put in to bat, RCB were off to a decent start with Kohli and opener Devdutt Padikkal (11) hitting a few boundaries. However, Sunrisers didn't have to wait long for their first breakthrough as a back of the length delivery in the third over by Bhuvneshwar Kumar (1/30) spelled the end of Padikkal, who had returned after recovering from COVID-19.

Shahbaz Ahmed was the next to depart after playing a quick cameo, leaving RCB at 47 for two.

“As a spinner, you’d love such tracks, it’s slow and there’s a bit of bounce, but you need to be accurate with the line and length. If you back up your strengths, you can perform on this surface”

—RASHID KHAN

At the halfway mark, Maxwell raised the tempo as the big-hitting Australian smashed Shahbaz Nadeem (1/36) for two sixes and a four in the first three balls of the 11th over, with Kohli joining the party with a boundary.

The two stitched a 44-run partnership before Jason Holder got rid of the


RCB skipper as wickets continued to fall at regular intervals.

With AB de Villiers in the middle, SRH captain David Warner introduced spin once again, bringing on versatile leg-spinner Rashid, and the move immediately paid dividends. The dangerous South African slapped the ball straight to Warner at covers with the slow nature of the Chepauk track coming to the fore once again.

The Afghan spinner struck once again, getting rid of Washinton Sundu (8). With Dan Christian also gone, Maxwell smashed three fours and a maximum in the last three overs.

## KEY PLAYERS


---



**PRITHVI SHAW**

Shaw is in good form recently and his aggressive batting in the powerplay overs set the tone

---



**JOS BUTTLER**

In Jofra Archer and Ben Stokes' absence, Jos is now the most experienced player in the team

Coming off a heart-breaking loss in the first match and hit by star all-rounder Ben Stokes' injury-forced ouster, a beleaguered Rajasthan Royals would hope for another inspirational knock from new skipper Sanju Samson when it faces a confident Delhi Capitals in an IPL match at Wankhede Stadium on Wednesday.

While DC made a superb start under new captain Rishabh Pant, clinching a seven-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings in their opening contest, RR suffered a four-run defeat against Punjab Kings in a high-scoring match on Monday night.

As if the loss was not enough, RR were dealt a severe blow on Tuesday when Stokes was ruled out of the remainder of the tournament with a broken finger. He sustained that injury during the agonising defeat.

In his absence, the pressure would be on the likes of Jos Buttler, Shivam Dube and Rryan Parag to deliver the goods and provide ample support to their young skipper, who has been sensational in the first match.



The likes of Manan Vohra (12), Buttler (25) Dube (23), Parag (25) all got starts but failed to lend the much-needed support to Samson. The major worry for RR team management would be the performance of its bowling unit.

RR bowling unit looked rusty and completely out of sorts in their opener.

Barring young Chetan Sakariya (3/31), who had a fantastic debut, all other RR bowlers went for runs and looked completely clueless against opposition batsmen.

M u s t a f i z u r Rahman, Chris Morris, Stokes, Shreyas Gopal, Rahul Tewatia — all went for big runs and need to pull up

**95**

Sanju Samson who smashed 95 sixes in 76 innings of 80 matches, needs just five sixes to become the second Rajasthan Royals batsman after Shane Watson (109 sixes in 78 matches) to complete a century of sixes in Indian Premier League

**68**

Rishabh Pant led Delhi Capitals to a seven-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings on captaincy debut in IPL. He led Delhi Capitals for the first time after playing 68 matches

**Faisal Features**

Other hand, the runner-up side DC, on the other hand, had a perfect start to their campaign as they defeated three-time champions CSK with consummate ease.

Opting to field, DC had allowed CSK to pile up a competitive 188 for 7 but Shikhar Dhawan and Prithvi Shaw made a short walk of the target with a 138-run opening partnership, that laid the foundation for the win.

On the bowling front, Chris Woakes (2/18) and Avesh Khan (2/23) had a good outing in the first game and would look to carry on their form but the likes of Ravichandran Ashwin, Tom Curran, Amit Mishra and Stoinis had a forgettable outing and would be desperate to make amends on Thursday.

The contest will also witness test of wits of two new captains in Pant and Samson.

Paris Saint-Germain knocked holders Bayern Munich out of the Champions League on Tuesday despite Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting scoring against his old club as a 1-0 defeat in the second leg at the Parc des Princes could not prevent the French giants from winning a tremendous quarter-final tie on away goals.

Neymar twice hit the woodwork for PSG in the first half and Choupo-Moting then put Bayern in front five minutes before the break.

But the reigning European champions could not get the second goal they needed after losing 3-2 at home in the first leg last week.

PSG have revenge following their 1-0 defeat in last season's final in Lisbon, and the dream of winning a first European Cup remains alive for the Qatar-owned club. Mauricio Pochettino's team, who had already eliminated Barcelona in the last 16, can now look forward to a semi-final against Manchester City or Borussia Dortmund. "I am delighted, despite the defeat. We were facing a great team, the European champions, but we are going back to the semi-finals," Neymar told broadcaster RMC Sport.

**CHELSEA ADVANCE**  
**SEVILLE:** Chelsea reached the Champions League semi-finals for the first time since 2014 despite a 1-0 defeat against Porto in Tuesday's quarter-final second leg in Seville. Thomas Tuchel's side will play Real Madrid or Liverpool for a place in the final after producing a masterclass in game management to win 2-1 on aggregate.

