

WORLD 6
MYANMAR PARDONS
PRISONERS**MONEY 7**
FISCAL PACKAGE MAY BE ON CARDS TO
MAINTAIN ECONOMIC RECOVERY**SPORT 8**
RCB VS KKR
IN IPL TODAY

Established 1864

Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL
BHUBANESWAR RANCHI
RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD
VIJAYWADA

RANCHI, SUNDAY APRIL 18, 2021; PAGES 8-4 ₹3

sunday pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



Kumbh ends after Modi's appeal

After PM's urge, opinion grows in favour
of holding rest of Shahi Snans symbolically

PNS ■ HARIDWAR/NEW DELHI

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to keep the remaining part of Kumbh Mela symbolic considering the surging Covid-19 cases, the Juna Akhada Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Swami Avdheshanand Giri on Saturday announced the formal conclusion of the Maha Kumbh for the Akhada.

Panch Dash Nam Juna Akhada is the largest of the 13 Akhadas.

Swami Avdheshanand Giri said the remaining Shahi Snan of the Kumbh should be observed symbolically on April 27 and later tweeted that protecting the lives of Indians is "our first priority".

"Considering the rising threat of Covid-19, we have formally immersed the various deities invoked for the Kumbh Mela," he said.

Earlier in a tweet in Hindi, the PM said, "I prayed that two 'Shahi Snan' have taken place and Kumbh (participation) should now be kept symbolic. This will boost the fight against this crisis."

Later, Modi thanks all the sants for cooperation with the administration and expressed his gratitude for their gesture.

Thousands of Kumbh visitors have tasted Covid-19 positives and dozens of seers have



Har Ki Pauri Ghat wears a deserted look during Kumbh Mela 2021 following a surge in Covid-19 cases in Haridwar on Saturday PTI

succumbed to the virus during the last two weeks inviting both domestic and international outrage for allowing such massive gathering at the time when the second wave of Covid-19 was spreading like wildfire across the country.

Earlier, addressing the media here, Giri said the PM had telephoned him to enquire about the Kumbh Mela and the health of the seers. The PM had also requested that since the main Shahi Snans have concluded, the remaining Kumbh should be observed symbolically. The Juna Akhada head said he would request devotees from across the nation to visit Haridwar only in small numbers, adding that the remaining Shahi Snan will be observed

only symbolically.

The remaining Snans are to be observed mainly by the Bairagi Akhadas. Earlier, the Niranjani Akhada had asked its Sadhus to leave for their respective destinations on April 17 considering the Covid surge. The Anand Akhada had also supported this view.

A majority of the 48.51 lakh people who took part in the last two royal baths (Shahi Snan) held on the occasion of Somvati Amavasya on April 12 and Mesh Sankranti on April 14 were seen openly violating Covid norms like face masks and social distancing.

The Kumbh has already been shortened this year to just one month from April 1 to 30 due to the pandemic.

Covid test, quarantine
to welcome returning
devotees back home

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The ordeal of Covid-19 test and quarantine awaits thousands of devotees who are returning home after attending the Maha Kumbh at Haridwar. As India grapples with a devastating second wave of the coronavirus and States imposing lockdown, several States and UTs, including Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Delhi and Gujarat, have made Covid-19 test mandatory for Kumbh returnees. Some States are also keeping the returnees in mandatory quarantine.

Thousands of Kumbh visitors and hundreds of "sadhus" who attended Kumbh Mela in Haridwar have tested positive for the coronavirus disease. On Saturday alone, 175 "sadhus" who attended Kumbh Mela have been found infected from coronavirus.

Gujarat on Saturday declared that all devotees returning to the State from Kumbh Mela will have to undergo a mandatory RT-PCR test before they are allowed to enter their respective cities and villages.

Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani said those found



infected will be isolated for 14 days.

Maharashtra Minister Anil Parab has announced those coming into the State from Kumbh Mela will be quarantined.

Nasik district administration is also taking necessary steps for quarantining those coming from Kumbh.

Earlier, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) mayor Kishori Pednekar claimed on Saturday that the devotees returning from the Kumbh Mela will distribute coronavirus like "Prasad" and said they should be quarantined "at their own cost" on their arrival.

The Madhya Pradesh Government has issued order to put those returning from Kumbh in quarantine or self-isolation. A major-

10 lakh new cases in
just 7 days in India**Record over 2.6L
cases in a day;
Delhi, Maha too
see highest rise**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India added nearly 10 lakh cases in just seven days ending April 17 as the country recorded over 2.6 lakh new Covid-19 infections and a record 1,493 deaths during the last 24 hours on Saturday.

The addition of nearly 25,000 new cases over the previous day count amounts to a rise of nearly 10 per cent, which shows that the growth of Covid-19 has more than doubled during the last two weeks.

Maharashtra, Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh are registering newer peaks and the situation remaining equally grim in the rest of the country.

The country had 1.52 lakh daily cases on April 10 when the death count stood at 838. A relative comparison shows that the death rate is steadily climbing up vis-a-vis new infections.

Amid the alarming rise in new infections and deaths, the country is battling a paucity of hospital beds, oxygen supply, ventilators, and life-safe antiviral drug Remdesivir. A major-



Health workers and family members carry the body of a patient who died of Covid-19 for cremation amid surge in coronavirus cases in Jammu on Saturday PTI

ity of the State have also complained of a shortage of vaccines and shut down several vaccination centres.

Several States have belatedly imposed lockdown restriction to tackle the surge, but it is too early to see if these are going to work effectively at this stage on the ground.

Delhi and Maharashtra recorded their biggest single-day rise in coronavirus cases since the beginning of the pandemic in January 2020. The national Capital registered over 24,375 new cases, taking its tally to 8,27,998, while Maharashtra's count rose to 3,70,707 with 67,123 new infections.

The death count in Delhi rose to 11,960 with 167 new fatalities on Saturday.

**Covid-19
IN INDIA****TOTAL CASES:**
1,47,82,461 (+2,60,533)**DEATHS: 1,77,168 (+1,493)****RECOVERED:**
1,28,03,791 (+1,36,853)**ACTIVE: 17,95,278****MAHARASHTRA: 37,70,707****KERALA: 12,21,168****KARNATAKA: 11,41,998****TAMIL NADU: 9,80,728****DELHI: 8,27,998 (+24,375)**Remdesivir price
drastically cut on
Govt intervention

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of increasing demand for anti-viral drug Remdesivir from across the States, the Centre on Saturday urged the injection makers to slash its price considerably. The Union Health Ministry in its "Clinical Management Protocols for Covid-19" has recommended the use of Remdesivir in patients in the moderate stages of the illness.

According to a statement from the Government, the Union Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilisers, Department of Pharmaceuticals, NPPA - Advisor (Costs) NI Chowdhury on Saturday ordered all pharma companies to comply with the revised norms with immediate and retrospective effect.

Pharmaceutical companies have reduced the price from 25 per cent to up to 68 per cent.

According to the details shared by the NPPA, Cadila Healthcare has reduced the price of its REMDAC injection to ₹899 from ₹2,800 earlier. Similarly, Syngene International has cut the price of its brand RemWin to ₹2,450 from ₹3,950 earlier. Hyderabad-based Dr Reddy's Laboratories has cut the



price of REDYX, which used to cost ₹5,400 earlier to ₹2,700 now. Similarly, Cipla has reduced price of its CIPREMI brand to ₹3,000 from ₹4,000 earlier. Jubilant Generics has cut the price of its remdesivir brand to ₹3,400 from ₹4,700 earlier.

Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers Mansukh Mandaviya said the Government plans to double the production in the country and has given permission to 20 more plants recently to increase capacity to manufacture. Ensuring adequate supply of Remdesivir to the people of Maharashtra remains the priority of the Centre, he said.

As per the Government's record, there is only one unit of EoU and one in SEZ. Government has reached out to all the Manufacturers of Remdesivir. No consignment is stuck, the Minister said as he asked concerned people to share the list of 16 companies, availability of stock and WHO-GMP with them.

Guv Droupadi Murmu tests Covid positive

PNS ■ RANCHI

Governor Droupadi Murmu was among the nearly 4,000 people who tested positive for Covid-19 in the state on Saturday. The sexagenarian was admitted to Bagwan Mahavir Medica Superspecialty Hospital in Ranchi and is undergoing treatment under Dr Vijay Mishra, who also treated Education Minister Jagannath Mahto in Ranchi before he was shifted to Chennai.

Doctors from the hospital said Murmu was stable. However, she was kept under observation and administered the antibiotics and multivitamins prescribed to Covid patients.

Meanwhile, as many as 30 Covid patients died during treatment on Saturday, taking



Governor Droupadi Murmu arrives at MEDICA hospital for better treatment after her Covid-19 report found positive, in Ranchi on Saturday Pioneer photo

the Covid toll in the State up at 1,406, a bulletin released by the National Health Mission (NHM) stated. At least 3,838 cases against 1,234 recoveries

took the active caseload to 25,619 on the day, the NHM bulletin highlighted.

Ranchi alone reported as many as 1,410 fresh cases of

infection on the day — the highest among the 24 districts in Jharkhand. The district also reported five Covid casualties in 24 hours. On the other hand, East Singhbhum reported 521 cases and six casualties on the day, the NHM stated in its bulletin.

While at least four Covid patients died in Bokaro, Sahebganj, Ramgarh and West Singhbhum reported two deaths each on Saturday. Dhanbad, Godda, Dumka, Khunti, Koderma and Pakur reported one Covid casualty each on the day.

In the wake of the spike in Covid cases, the Jharkhand Academic Council (JAC) decided to postpone the board exams for class 10 and 12 students. However, the council did not

specify any date for the exams.

The active caseload on Saturday crossed the 10,000 mark in Ranchi, which is at least 7,000 more than East Singhbhum, the second worst-affected district in terms of caseload. As many as 10,510 Ranchi residents were battling the viral infection by the end of Saturday, while the count of patients in East Singhbhum was 3,373.

As per Government data, the State on Saturday tested swab samples of at least 37,152 people and more than 10 per cent of them were found infected by the Covid-19 virus. So far, more than 1.58 lakh Jharkhand residents have been infected by Covid-19 and around 82.99 per cent of them have recovered.

The second wave of Covid-

3,838 found
infected, 30
die in 24 hrs

19 has also triggered an unprecedented rise in the growth rate of infection in Jharkhand, reveals government data. On Saturday, the growth rate of cases in Jharkhand was 1.89 per cent against the national average of 1.03 per cent. The doubling rate of cases in the state was down to 36.93 days against the national average of 67.94 days.

On Saturday, the state administered the first dose of vaccine against Covid-19 to 37,243 people, hardly 37 per cent of those registered for the jab. The second jab was administered to 8819 beneficiaries, only 3 per cent of the nearly 3 lakh registered for the dose.

4 Sikhs among
8 killed in mass
shooting in US

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The distraught families of Indian-Americans working at a FedEx facility in the US state of Indiana have expressed their anger, fear and anxiety in the aftermath of the latest mass shooting incident in the country that killed eight people, including four Sikhs.

Lalu to walk free
after serving half
fodder sentence

Jharkhand HC grants bail in Dumka treasury case; release from jail expected tomorrow

MRITUANJAY KUMAR ■ RANCHI

The Jharkhand High Court on Saturday granted bail to former Bihar Chief Minister and RJD Chief Lalu Prasad in a fodder scam case involving illegal withdrawal of funds from Dumka treasury, paving his release from jail on completion of half the sentence period. Lalu is presently being treated at AIIMS, Delhi.

The court granted bail to Lalu on bail bond of ₹5 lakh and a personal bond of ₹1 lakh. Lalu's lawyer Devarshi Mandal told PTI that they will move Special CBI court in Ranchi after it opens on Monday to seek his release following High Court order.

Explaining the release procedure, Mandal said, they have send an application to Lalu for his signature which will be submitted to the CBI court here on Monday along with the High Court order.

Mandal said the court has



granted bail to him on the basis of depositing a bond of ₹5 lakh and a personal bond of ₹1 lakh. He has also been asked to submit his passport and has been asked not to change his phone number and address.

This case is related to RC-38A/96 in connection with the illegal withdrawal from Dumka treasury. There is a case of illegal withdrawal of about ₹3.13 crore.

Mandal said all the formalities are expected to be completed expeditiously and the release in all probability will happen on Monday. Lalu will be freed after 39 months and 25 days of incarceration.

Earlier, taking the plea of the CBI as true, Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh had rejected Lalu's bail plea.

Continued on Page 4



An elderly voter shows her identity card as she arrives to cast her vote, outside a polling centre during Madhupur bypolls, in Madhupur on Saturday (Detailed report on Page 3) Pioneer photo

SAD DEMISE

Late Meena Harit
(17.06.1964 to 16.04.2021)
W/o Rajendra Kumar Harit (Raju Harit)
RAJ TRANSPORT

Please pray for
the departed soul.

In Grief
Raju Harit
Puja Harit, Payal Harit
Kumar Priyatosh Sanju, Sidharth Harit, Vibhav Harit
Cherry, Vidit & All Family Members

HOMETHEATRE

Gripping tale of terror from young eyes

UTOYA: JULY 22
Norwegian with English subtitles &PriveHD
*Ing: Andrea Berntzen, Aleksander Holmen, Solveig Køløen Birkeland
Rated: 6/10

There will always be a debate on whether it is appropriate to put out mounts of terror attacks and the impact it has on the victims. Some argue it is glorifying the terrorist in some way. Others want documentation. Over and above this debate, *Utoya* is a Norwegian mount which leaves no stone unturned to look at the terror killing on an otherwise peaceful island of Utoya in Norway in Norway's 26/11 with many left dead quite without premise. "It is the safest island on Earth, mom" one of the main protagonists says in the opening sequence of this film. The environs she is walking through are green, serene and enchanting which, by the way, is a complete contrast to what the film otherwise centres on with dogged starkness throwing up the real impact of a terror attack and its aftermath on any population in any part of the world.

Here, the movie pans out through the eyes of youngsters and the terrorist is given a grand go-by, being allowed to visit the screen only in pithy scenes with almost an abstract presence to give the audience some shape of the orchestrator. An English version of this film is all set to premiere on Netflix and that promises to take over in starkness, blood and gore from *Utoya*. For now, however, *Utoya* is a powerful story told candidly



even though the director could be faulted for what many may perceive as a story exploiting grim reality to make some noise on the small screen. Nevertheless, a gripping tale which should get a go by because of subtitles.



A BLACK CAPTAIN AMERICA?

FALCON AND THE WINTER SOLDIER
Episode 5
Disney+Hotstar
*Ing: Sebastian Stan, Anthony Mackie, Wyatt Russell, Erin Kellyman, Danny Ramirez, Emily VanCamp
Rated: 6/10

Those who have been following the miniseries would know how episode 4 ended — the Shield — all bloodied. The fallout is felt by the Falcon and Winter Soldier. The Shield, for now is back with Sam just how Steve Rogers had wanted. So are we looking at yet another Captain America? A Black Captain America? Like Isaiah Bradley played by Carl Lumbly says— no self-respecting Black will take up the job. With John Walker stripped of all his duties and the title of Captain America, there is a new person who

makes an entry — Contessa Valentina Allegra de Fontaine. Who is she and what is the agenda? Well, maybe we will get to see more of Walker in episode 6. Meanwhile, Flag Smashers have upped their ante and are preparing for the final count down. Will they succeed? Will the Falcon and Winter Soldier be able to prevent Karli from going full guns ahead? Given that death hangs over Falcon's head, things will come full circle next time. The only thing missing here is the awe-inspiring action. In almost all the episodes, till now, they have been far between. The series has Falcon, Winter Soldier and the now redundant Captain America and yet the action is way below on the makers list. That boggles the mind and wonders if it has all been saved for episode 6 for the wow factor. Definitely something that Avengers fans will be looking forward to. — Shalini Saxena

films & tv 02

Plan Your Day

Cold Brew Day is on April 20. SUNDAY PIONEER brings you recipes that will surely give you chills without costing too heavy on your pocket

COLDBREW POPSICLES WITH FRESH MINT

- Ingredients:
- half and half
 - 1 1/2 cups coffee beans
 - 2-4 tablespoons brown sugar
 - Mint leaves
- Directions:
- Grind the coffee beans. Place the grounds in a large pitcher or carafe. Add three cups of cold water and stir to combine. Cover and let steep for 12-24 hours.
 - Strain the coffee and add 2-4 tablespoons brown sugar. Stir to combine.
 - Place a few torn mint leaves into each popsicle mold and top with a few tablespoons of half and half. Freeze for 15-20 minutes, until slightly firm.
 - Insert popsicle sticks into each mold and freeze for another 20 minutes until set.
 - Remove the pops from the freezer and top with sweetened



coffee. Freeze until firm, 30-40 minutes. Enjoy!
Half and half: It's that simple. Half whole milk, half heavy cream. The texture is thicker and more luscious than milk, but less decadent and rich than cream.

CARAMEL SURPRISE COLD BREW



- Ingredients:
- 1-2 cups Coldbrew
 - Handful of ice
 - 1-2 tablespoons coconut milk
 - 1-2 teaspoons caramel syrup
 - Pinch of sweetener of choice (if desired)
- Directions:
- You can prepare coldbrew at home using French press or in a mason jar using muslin cloth, important is perfect coffee blend for your coldbrew. Keep prepared cold brew coffee in a pitcher or carafe in the refrigerator.
 - Pour one cup (eight-ounces) of coffee into a mug, cup or glass jar filled with ice. Stir in coconut milk and caramel syrup. Add sweetener, if desired. Serve immediately.
- Courtesy: Girish Chandra, Beverage Training Manager, Lavazza India

TELLY TALE

IT'S TIME FOR MAHASANGAM



COLORS' Mahasangam episodes have always raised the bar of entertainment with its complete package of drama and musical performances. One such blast of entertainment is the upcoming *Mahasangam* episode where the cast of *Choti Saradaarni* and *Udaariyaan* will share a screen during Baisakhi celebrations. Tejo (played by Priyanka Chaudhary) and Jasmine (played by Isha Mahviya) will invite Jass even after knowing that there is stress going on in Virk family due to Fateh's decision of going to Canada. The celebration will be sparked with singer B Praak's presence as he will sing some of his hit song *Teri Mitti* from *Kesari* and also his recently launched soulful track, *Baarish Ki Jaaye*.

In the special episode, Fateh (played by Ankit Gupta) will have his share of dramatic moments as he will get to know that the woman he saved and admitted to the hospital is awake and turns out to be Meher! (played by Nirmitt Kaur Ahluwalia). In a dramatic turn of events, Fateh will also come face to face with Sarabjit (played by Avinash Rekhi). Will he be able to bring together Meher and Sarab?

Singer B Praak, who was a part of the dramatic *Mahasangam* episode said: "I am excited to shoot here in Punjab with the cast of two most relevant show. *Choti Saradaarni* is my family's favorite and *Udaariyaan*'s concept strongly resonates with each one of us. The episode is going to be full of drama, entertainment and of course our beautiful new music track, *Baarish Ki Jaaye*. I had a lot of fun shooting with the cast of the show- They are fun, energetic, and extremely talented."

HERO TASTES DEFEAT

Sony SAB's *Hero* — *Gayab Mode On* will take a shocking turn with Dansh (Manish Wadhwa) defeating Hero (Abhishek Nigam) and stands triumphant. The upcoming episodes will send shock-waves to the viewers, with Hero assumed to be dead. At the beginning of the War of Worlds, our beloved Hero is vanquished by Dansh. The intense battle between the two is set to take

the viewers on a roller coaster ride and keep them on the edge of their seats.

With Rocky (Keshav Sadhna) uniting with Dansh to defeat Hero, the forces of the aliens get more robust, and it becomes difficult for Hero to fight them single-handedly. Dansh threatening to destroy the planet and cause harm to human beings leads to the battle of the War of Worlds. Dansh launches his attack with the help of Rocky and with each passing moment, it gets tricky for Hero to fight Dansh and protect his ring simultaneously. The battle gets fiercer, leading to the heartbreaking moment of Dansh beating Hero and conquering the magical ring. Hero's identity as Veer is exposed to Dansh and Zara simultaneously. Dansh is celebrating after winning over Hero and gaining the magical ring. But little does he know what's in store and what will this end of Hero lead to?



Is Veer Nanda aka Hero dead? What will happen next?

Manish Wadhwa, essaying the role of Dansh, said: "Dansh is very strong and an intense character. He never gives up and attacks back with force. The experience of shooting for this fight sequence has been amazing and it's fun to work with Abhishek. He is very hardworking and we both share great timing. Dansh is happy and very delighted with getting hold of the ring, unaware of what will happen next. So, stay tuned to witness exciting twists and turns on the show and join us on this thrilling journey!"

Abhishek Nigam, essaying the role of Hero, said: "This is the most intense fight sequence we have shot on the show so far and I was so much into the character that I could feel the same energy. Hero was putting in all the efforts to save the world and protect his ring, but he chooses his loss so that he can save the world. It was a learning experience while shooting for this sequence with Manish Sir. This sequence has come out really well and it will take the viewers on a thrilling never seen before ride. So, stay tuned and don't miss the fun!"

KUMKUM BHAGYA TURNS SEVEN

Zee TV's popular fiction show, *Kumkum Bhagya* has been an audience favourite ever since it was launched in 2014. Its intriguing

plot and the authentic portrayal of relatable characters like Abhi (Shabbir Ahluwalia), Pragya (Sriti Jha), Rhea (Pooja Banerjee), Ranbir (Krishna Kaul) and Prachi (Mugdha Chapekar) have kept the audience entertained throughout these past seven years and has helped the show gain countless fans across the globe. Produced by Television's czarina Ekta Kapoor, *Kumkum Bhagya* has witnessed roaring success on the viewership charts every year and has won more than 50 awards till date. But it looks like there is no stopping the show even as the show completed seven years on April 15.

The family drama that explores and brings a range of emotions as well as the deepest intricacies of human relationships has kept the viewers hooked all this while through several interesting twists and turns in its storyline! In fact, the show has also managed to successfully reinstate the belief that opposites do attract by showcasing how despite having contrasting personalities, its lead protagonists are inseparable.

As Kumkum Bhagya completes seven glorious years, Shabir Ahluwalia who plays the role of Abhi got nostalgic and said: "It is not just a show, but a feeling for me. I've been associated with it for seven years now, but it doesn't feel like it's been so long. I must say that all these years have been a breeze and the entire unit including the technicians and actors are like a family for me. Generally, you hear people saying this when the show is coming to an end, but our case is different. When you're around the same people for seven years, you know them even better, as you have seen them at their best and their worst. I have to add that the writers and the creative team are fantastic, and they've held all of us together. I've been associated with the producers, Balaji Telefilms for nearly two decades and they are like a family to me. As we complete seven years, I would like to say Thank You Ekta for believing in me, Shobha aunty for being there always and Jeetu uncle, you're a rockstar and always guide us for the best. I also want to thank Zee TV for giving us such a great platform to showcase *Kumkum Bhagya*. Last but the most important, *Kumkum Bhagya* is what it is today because of all our fans, so thank you so much to all."



‘I don’t regret my choices’

KUNAL JAISINGH, who plays Veer in SET’s *Kyun Utthe Dil Chhod Aaye*, tells MUSBA HASHMI the attraction of playing the role, how it has become his priority and his story of giving endless auditions

■ What is your role in Kyun Utthe Dil Chhod Aaye?

I play Veer, a self-destructive and brooding person who is addicted to alcohol. I am paired opposite Gracy, who plays Amrit in the show. I will be donning a different look. I am extremely excited to be a part of this show and to work with such a lovely production house.

■ What made you take up the role?

The show offers beautiful love stories, many action scenes and gives a bit of knowledge to all the viewers about how people's suffering during the partition. Earlier the show managed to depict the pain and sorrow of 1947 perfectly. Now with a leap of four years, the makers are showing the story of the 1951 era and have planned many new things for the viewers. The concept of the show is unique and the overall plot is not only interesting, but intense and heart-wrenching for me. Other than that, I wanted to be a part of the show which stands out from all the other shows I have done in the past.

■ Did you have any apprehensions?

No, not at all. I knew I was going to be part of this story post leap. I was actually excited for it. With a lot of twists and turns ahead in the show, this will be a good start for me.

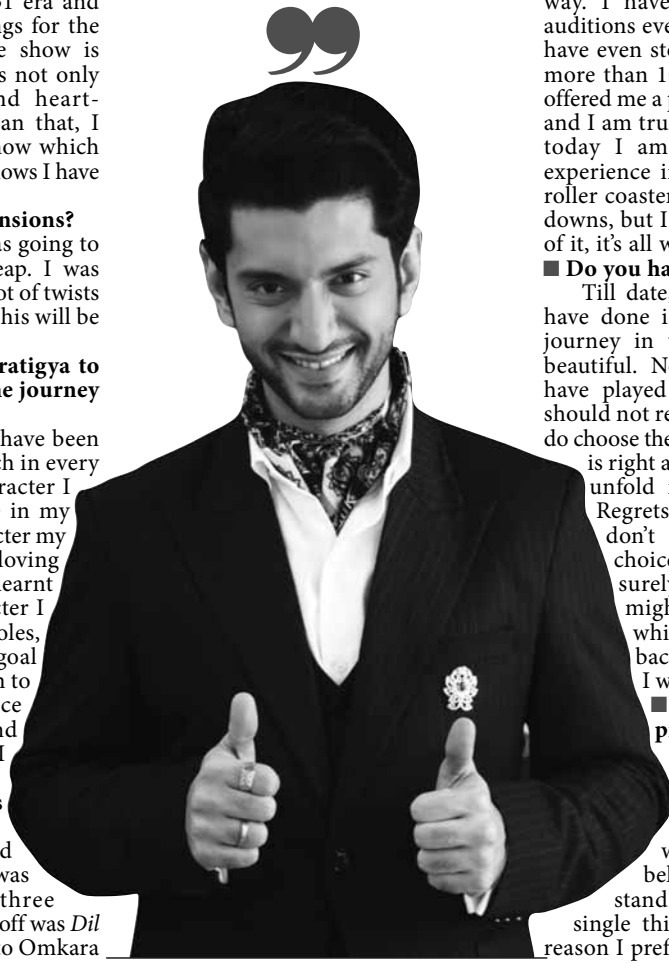
■ From Mann Kee Awaaz Pratigya to Kyun Utthe Dil... how has the journey been for you?

It has been a great one. I have been able to grow and learn so much in every role I have played. Every character I essayed holds a special place in my heart because with each character my audience and my fans started loving me more. Not only that, I learnt something from every character I played. Those were not only roles, but life lessons. My only goal during all these years has been to make sure that the audience understands the actions and emotions of the characters I play.

■ Omkara Singh Oberoi was a much loved character...

Each show has his trials and a story to tell. *Ishqbaaaz* was focused on the story of three brothers, and India's first spin-off was *Dil Boley Oberoi*. When it comes to Omkara

I was always passionate about my career, but getting into this space has been difficult, given the fact that the City of Dreams has a lot to offer but the hard way



he was an artist who was the one balancing factor between the brothers and the family. Omkara has been a special character for me. It earned me a lot of love and support from my fans. I am grateful for all that. The character will always be valuable to me. I feel blessed and lucky and I never thought it would be so popular. The team, of course, was great. We are still like a family. We all have encouraged each other to perform at our best and that was visible in the show.

■ How did acting happen?

I was always passionate about my career, but getting into this space has been difficult, given the fact that the City of Dreams has a lot to offer but the hard way. I have been a part of endless auditions ever since I have come here. I have even stood in an audition line for more than 10 hours. This industry has offered me a platform to project my skills and I am truly humbled by the fact that today I am getting to do that. My experience in the industry has been a roller coaster ride with a lot of ups and downs, but I have learnt that at the end of it, it's all worth it.

■ Do you have any regrets?

Till date, I don't regret anything I have done in life. If I talk about my journey in the industry, it has been beautiful. None of the characters that I have played overlaps each other. We should not regret anything. After all, we do choose the opportunities that we think is right at that time. How things will unfold is not in anyone's hands. Regrets just make you sad and I don't want to feel sad for the choices that I have made. I have surely mellowed with time. I might not do the roles now which I did earlier, but when back then, I was proud of what I was doing and will always be.

■ What is there in the pipeline?

My pipeline is full with the current show that I am doing. It is my only priority. I am focused and would like to be loyal to it. I believe to make one's work stand out one should focus on a single thing at a time. That is the reason I prefer not to juggle projects.

ALL-PARTY MEETING

Govt aims to normalise situation soon in State: CM

CM seeks everyone's help to curb infection in State

PNS ■ RANCHI

Holding an all-party meeting on virtual mode here on Saturday Chief Minister Hemant Soren appreciated all the political parties for making suggestions in the meeting. "With the cooperation of all, we will be able to prevent the infection of Corona once again. Strict steps will be taken to break the corona chain," he said. At the same time, various political parties told the CM that in this time of crisis, they

are with the government. Whatever decision will be taken by the government, they will cooperate. There will be no politics of any kind in this.

The CM discussed in detail with representatives of various political parties for effective control over Covid-19. During this time, several important suggestions were made by political parties in relation to prevention and rescue of Corona. The CM said that the important suggestions that have come up during the deliberations in the all-party meeting are very important. This will help the government to for-

mulate further strategies to deal with Corona. The CM said that he is constantly keeping an eye on preventing the second wave of Corona and providing better treatment facilities to the infected persons.

Addressing the representatives of political parties, the CM said, "We are all aware of the present situation in Corona. Every day the number of infected is increasing rapidly and the number of dead is also increasing significantly. In such a situation, the government is working fast in the direction of test, testing and treatment. To speed up the investigation,

in 10 to 15 days, while six new RTPCR labs are also being set up. Instructions have been given to arrange 50 oxygen-rich beds in each district and 100 additional oxygen-rich beds in the division. Apart from this, medical kits are also being made available in every Anganwadi center. The way the government was successful in stopping the first wave of Corona with limited resources, now it is taking all appropriate steps to stop the second wave as well."

The CM said that for the treatment of Covid-19, complaints of shortage and black marketing of some life-saving drugs are constantly being received. In such a situation, the government has started negotiations to buy such medicines directly from its producing companies. He also said that the corona vaccination campaign is constantly being expedited, as vaccine consignments are being received, people are being put in place. On the issue of reducing the age limit for taking vaccine by some political parties, he said that it is a matter of the central government and the center will be requested in this regard. Several important sugges-

tions were given by political party representatives in the meeting, which include helpline numbers in all districts, production of oxygen by local industrialists, availability of life saving drugs, curb on

black marketing of medicines, increase in infrastructure and beds in hospitals of State, taking help from Central hospitals, nursing students and doctors, screening of migrant workers returning to State, taking help

from political and social organisations, setting up hospitals in indoor stadiums etc. Different political parties gave different opinions on the issue of lockdown. While the Left parties said that lockdown is not a

solution to the problem, some parties suggested weekly lockdown and some suggested full lockdown. At the same time, all parties agreed to strictly follow the government guidelines regarding corona.

CM for providing medical kits to people under home isolation

Asks officials to appoint para medical staff

PNS ■ RANCHI

Chief Minister Hemant Soren today directed officials to provide medical kit to the corona infected patients living in home isolation. The departmental officers were instructed to provide all the necessary medicines, oximeters and masks etc in the medical kit.

The CM said that pulse oximeter should be ensured in all Anganwadi centers in the State. He directed the Health Secretary to appoint trained youths of the State who have done para-medical courses on contractual basis to overcome the shortage of medical staff in hospitals as per requirements. The CM was holding a high-level meeting held at his residence on Friday.

Soren said that to overcome the shortage of medical staff in dedicated hospitals, Covid care centers, etc in the dis-



Chief Minister Hemant Soren holds a meeting with senior officials in Ranchi on Saturday
Pioneer photo

tricts make an action plan and appoint manpower. He said that every possible effort should be made to increase oxygen-rich beds in hospitals and maintain ICU beds etc in hospitals.

He directed that the hospital management should work by preparing a better action plan for the treatment of corona infected patients. The CM said that the hospitals should ensure the provision of Oxygen Plant and Air Separation Unit. He said that constantly strive for the avail-

ability of Redmesivir.

The CM said that the number of corona infected patients is increasing daily. So patients should be closely monitored and special vigilance should be taken in the areas where more cases of corona are coming.

The CM said that in order to ensure that the infected patients do not face problems, medics should be fully prepared.

In the meeting, the Health Secretary apprised the Chief Minister about the latest status of Corona infected patients and preparations related to the system of treatment.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Secretary of the State Sukhdev Singh, Development Commissioner Arun Kumar Singh, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Rajeev Arun Ekka, Health Secretary KK Soan, Disaster Management Secretary Amitabh Kaushal, Urban Development Secretary Vinay Choubey, Campaign Director of NRHM Ravi Shankar Shukla and other senior officials.



Chief Minister Hemant Soren during a virtual all party meeting about the rising infection of coronavirus, in Ranchi on Saturday
Pioneer photo

Kovas machines are being purchased, which will be installed

INBRIEF

MASK MUST AT STATIONS, RAIL TRAVEL

In view of the guidelines issued from time to time by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India for prevention of Covid epidemic, extensive steps have been taken by the Ministry of Railways to prevent infection of Covid-19 epidemic. Wearing masks is an effective way to prevent epidemics. Keeping this in mind, for the purpose of using face masks and bringing awareness towards hygiene, a provision has been made to pay a fine of Rs. 500 under Indian Railway Rules-2012 on all persons who spit back and forth on the railway premises (including trains) and do not wear masks / face covers properly. This rule has been implemented for 06 months with immediate effect. In view of the infection status of Covid-19 by the Ministry of Railways, it has been made mandatory for all passengers to wear masks / face covers at the station and during the journey. Along with this, emphasis has also been laid on maintaining cleanliness in the railway premises for effective control over it. Spitting or messing around in this sequence is prohibited, because doing so may endanger the lives of other people along with the dirt. Use spittoon to spit.

BLOWING-IN OF BLAST FURNACE-2 OF BSL

Blowing-in of Blast Furnace-2 of BSL was done by Executive Director (Works) Atanu Bhowmick. On the occasion, Chief General Manager (Iron) Anjani Kumar, Chief General Manager (Services) BK Tiwari, Chief General Manager (Mechanical) PK Baisakhia, Chief General Manager (Blast Furnace) M.P. Singh and other officers and personnel of Blast Furnace were present. Blast furnace-2 was blow-down on 13 April last year for shotcreting which was to improve the CDI rate and productivity of the blast furnace along with improving the refractory insulation of the inner wall of the stack area and will help in reducing the coke rate. On completion of the work successfully, Mr. Bhowmik congratulated all the workers.

Medica hospital to start FCCP programme

PNS ■ RANCHI

Bhagwan Mahavir MEDICA Superspecialty Hospital, Ranchi (A unit of Medica Hospitals Pvt. Ltd.) is introducing the Fellowship in Critical Care Pharmacotherapy (FCCP) programme, first of its kind in the country, partnering with the University of Findlay, Ohio, USA for the PharmD (Doctor of Pharmacy) graduates. It's a 2-year post-graduate superspecialty programme to train the fellows to be the critical care pharmacotherapy specialist so as to cater to the needs of the Critical Care Unit of the hospitals in the country to provide safe and superior patient care.

Dr. Vijay Kumar Mishra, Medical Director, Director of Critical Care & Neuroanesthesia and also the Fellowship Program Director, said, "It's a proud moment for me to introduce such a program through Medica Hospital Ranchi, which is happening for the first time not only in the state but also in the entire country, this course "has the potential to give a new shape to the critical care practice in the country and today we have signed the official MoU with the University of Findlay, Ohio, USA, with a belief that through this collaboration we will be able to produce a world-class training programme".

71.60 % polling in Covid-hit Madhupur

NO UNTOWARD INCIDENT REPORTED: DC

SURESH NIKHAR ■ BERMO

Madhupur Assembly constituency today witnessed 71.60 per cent polling despite the district facing increasing cases of Covid-19 in the second wave. Till 6 pm, the total percentage of polling in the constituency was about 71.60 per cent, out of which the female voting percentage was 73.31 and male voting percentage was 70.07, informed Deputy Commissioner cum DEO, Deoghar, Manjunath Bhajantri.

The Deputy Commissioner while addressing the media said that voting in the constituency was conducted in a completely fair, safe and peaceful environment.

He said that the voting percentage was slow in the first one hour. As the day progressed, the turnout percentage increased.

Bhajantri said that this time in Madhupur bye-election, special facility was given to old and differently-abled voters at polling stations, which made them very comfortable to vote. As a result, Divyang voters took an active part in this Mahaparva and their numbers got increased.

The DC said that the Vajra Griha Center at Charki Hill has been constructed for the counting of votes. Teams of JAP and Para Military forces have been deployed for the security of strong room. Apart from this, barricading and CCTV cameras have also been installed



A youth shows his ink-marked finger after casting his vote outside a polling centre during Madhupur By-polls, in Madhupur on Saturday
Pioneer photo

from the security point of view.

Bhajantri was informed that a media center has been constructed at the Strong Room Complex situated in Charki hill where all arrangements have been made for media representatives.

Apart from this, instructions have been given to officers and personnel to reach the counting hall by 6 pm, so that counting can be started at the scheduled time. No personnel shall bring mobile phone or electronic gadget to the counting venue. Instructions related to this have been given to all personnel. In the event of inadvertently bringing a mobile phone or electronic gadget to the counting venue, arrangements have been made to keep it at the counting place itself.

Superintendent of Police Ashwani Kumar Sinha said that peaceful polling was held in Madhupur Vidhan Sabha. Adequate number of paramilitary forces and Jharkhand

affected the cremation process in the state, especially in Ranchi, with the administration having to look for alternative locations for cremating Covid-infected bodies. In the wake of the alarming rise in casualties, the health department had to appoint nodal officers to overlook cremation of Covid victims in all the 24 districts.

As per government data, as many as 1376 Jharkhand residents have died of Covid-19 infection so far, and more than 14 per cent of the deaths occurred in the past one week – a trend that has swung the government into action. The active caseload has also jumped close to 25,000 in no time with the state reporting close to 10,000 cases in the past 72 hours.

NHM data highlights that as many as 155115 people have been infected by the virus in Jharkhand so far and 84.25 per cent of them have recovered. The recovery rate has dropped from more than 98 per cent last month. The doubling rate of infection has also dropped to 39.27 days in the state against the national average of 72.17 days. In March, the doubling rate was more than 2000 days in Jharkhand.

Covid claimed one life every 201 casualties in past 7 days

PNS ■ RANCHI

At least one person died of Covid-19 every hour on an average in Jharkhand during the past one week, causing arguably the worst ever spike in casualty rate since the entry of the virus in the state back in March 2020, data with the state government reveals.

As many as 201 people have died of the viral infection in the state since April 10, indicating that on an average around 28 deaths occurred in the state every day during the past seven days, figures compiled by the National Health Mission (NHM) highlights.

Ranchi topped the list in terms of casualties during the week, followed by East Singhbhum, which continues to account for the highest number of total Covid fatalities among the 24 districts in the state so far. As per NHM data, Ranchi accounted for 61 of the 201 deaths, while East Singhbhum reported 42 Covid fatalities.

The figures are also indicative of the fact that Ranchi and Jamsshedpur – two of the largest cities in Jharkhand – jointly accounted for more than 50 per cent of the total Covid casualties that occurred in the tribal state in the past one week.

While the government has been taking several measures to strengthen the medical infrastructure in the wake of the sudden crisis, the lack of medicines and shortage of dedicated beds in the hospitals have added to the trauma of state residents, facing the wrath of growing Covid infection amid limited healthcare facilities.

The rise in Covid casualties has also



People waiting for vaccination at a vaccine centre in Ranchi
Pioneer photo

SER launches mega Covid awareness drive

PNS ■ RANCHI

In view of the further surge in COVID cases, South Eastern Railway (SER) has launched awareness campaigns at its major stations with appeal to passengers for adhering to COVID Appropriate Behaviour (CAB).

Frequent announcements are being made at stations through the PA system with appeal to travelling passengers to wear masks, wash hands with soap and sanitizer at regular intervals, maintain physical distance and to avoid crowded



places. Passengers are also being encouraged to get vaccinated.

As a part of the Passenger Awareness Campaign, Banners and posters on COVID-19 health protocols are being displayed at major stations. COVID-19 awareness posts and videos are also being regularly uploaded in SER's social media pages.

In this connection, a clear

message has been disseminated to all for wearing face mask covering in railway premises including trains which is essential for the interest of public health. Fine up to Rs 500 will be imposed by on duty railway officials authorised for this purpose on persons found disobeying the guidelines. This will be implemented with immediate effect and will continue for a period of 6(six) months or till further instruction in this regard. To provide clean and hygienic environment to the passengers in the trains, regular sanitization of station premises and train coaches has already

been undertaken by SER. Additional RPF personnel have also been deployed to prevent overcrowding inside the station premises. Passengers with only confirmed tickets are being allowed to board the long distance trains.

Apart from adhering to COVID health protocols, passengers are also being requested to reach stations well in advance to avoid last minute rush at station premises. It is also requested for passengers to book their tickets through online mode to avoid queue and crowd at the booking counters.

ज्ञारखण्ड सरकार
मेडिकल हेल्पलाइन 104 पर अब
विडियो कॉलिंग
एवं चिकित्सकीय सुविधा उपलब्ध है।
राज्य में कोरोना के दूसरी लहर के दौरान कोरोना संक्रमितों के लिए टॉल फ्री हेल्पलाइन नंबर— 104 पर विडियो काउंसलिंग शुरू किया जा रहा है। वैसे व्यक्ति जो कोरोना संक्रमित हैं, जिन्हें किसी प्रकार की जानकारी लेना हो अथवा कोई असुविधा हो रही हो तो कृपया इस सेवा का लाभ अवश्य लें। विडियो कॉलिंग के माध्यम से यह सेवा उपलब्ध करायी जा रही है। यह सुविधा स्वस्था वेबसाइट के लिंक :-
https://swaraksha.nic.in/public/index.php पर उपलब्ध है।
स्वास्थ्य, चिकित्सा शिक्षा एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग, झारखण्ड सरकार

Quadruple murder: Web Series inspired man to kill wife and 2 daughters

Assailant was facing financial crisis

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Forty two-year-old man Deepak Kumar, the main accused who was wanted in connection with four murders which had taken place on April 12 on Teesta Road under Kadma Police Station area was inspired by a web series to commit the gruesome act. The assailant was sent to jail today. Revealing about the breakthrough, SSP Dr M Tamil Vanan said that during interrogation they came to know that

the main accused Deepak Kumar was inspired by a web series to kill his wife, two daughters and also had plans to kill few others.

The SSP said that after killing his wife and daughters he killed their tuition teacher as she had seen the dead body of his wife. Not only did he kill her but also raped her dead body, the SSP said.

“During interrogation we found that Deepak was inspired by web series Pataal Lok to plan the entire conspiracy. Deepak was a fan of Pataal Lok and Asur web series and one day before executing the crime he with his wife had watched one of the web



series. Deepak was inspired by a character Hathoda Tyagi in Web series Pataal Lok therefore he had executed all the murders by attacking them with a hammer,” revealed Vanan.

The SSP went on to inform that the assailant was under financial crisis due to loans therefore he killed his wife and daughters so that they did not have to suffer once he went to jail. He said that due to his childhood friend Prabhu and his brother in law Roshan he was under the burden of loan.

Deepak after murdering his family had invited Roshan and his wife to lunch at his house where he had plans to kill them. But his plans could not succeed after which he fled to Rourkela, Puri, Ranchi and was finally nabbed by Dhanbad police while he was trying to deposit money in the bank on Friday.

It may be recalled that 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' brother-in-law Ankit Kumar with a hammer, leading to grievous injuries to Roshan and Ankit.

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.

Forty two-year-old man Deepak Kumar, the main accused who was wanted in connection with four murders which had taken place on April 12 on Teesta Road under Kadma Police Station area, being sent to jail on Saturday

Pioneer photo

Sindri MLA airlifted to Hyderabad

PNS ■ DHANBAD

Amidst rising deaths due to corona in coal capital the Sindri MLA Indrajeet Mahto who was undergoing treatment at local private hospital has been airlifted to Hyderabad after complaints of infection in lungs .

Mahto was admitted to ADDJ superspeciality hospital on April 12 after was found positive during the election campaign at Madhupur and some parts of West Bengal.

On Saturday he was advised to be shifted to a higher center as was finding difficulty in breathing and his oxygen level too was below normal.

Though none of the doctors of aforementioned hospital were available for comment BJP rural district president Gyan Ranjan Sinha, who accompanied Mahto from Dhanbad to Bokaro from where he was taken to Hyderabad said : "The MLA was not feeling well due to chest congestion though he had turned entire according to report of test that was

Mahto was admitted to ADDJ superspeciality hospital on April 12 after was found positive during the election campaign at Madhupur and some parts of West Bengal

conducted on Friday.

The doctor from Hyderabad was contacted for advice and on his directive an air ambulance from New Delhi took him to Hyderabad from Bokaro".

Meanwhile, after seven deaths reported in a day due to corona the district administration has decided to increase beds in district.Now it has decided to convert Divisional railway hospital too as covid hospital for continence of positive patients.

This hospital would have 42 beds for corona patients including 6 beds with ventilator and oxygen facility.

In addition the private clinics and the nursing homes too have been asked to ensure more beds for corona positive patients.

Corona cases all-time high in Jamshedpur, several shops sealed

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR:

The city has turned into a Corona hot bed with more than 500 positive cases reported from the past three days. The figures are all time high ever since the first positive case was reported on May 12 last year. Out of 5000 tests being conducted in the city, more than 500 positive cases are being reported every day. The positive cases have crossed the 23000 mark so far.

In view of the rising number of Covid cases, the health department is conducting Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) on the go for people at public places. RAT is also conducted through nasal and throat swabs like RT PCR tests.

However, the result of the test is out within an hour. Doctors say that RAT is a low sensitivity test when compared to RT PCR, and may not be as accurate as the latter. The RT PCR test, on the other hand, takes around 48 hours, but the results are more accurate.



The official explained that rapid antigen tests detect the presence of

viral proteins (antigens) expressed by the Covid-19 virus in a sample taken from the respiratory tract of a person. " The result of the test is made available within 15 minutes, " he said adding that the objective is to trace, track and treat Covid positive patients. The East singhbhum health department has intensified the rapid antigen test drive keeping in view the spurt in Covid-19 cases.

Meanwhile with a quantum rise in the number of COVID – 19 positive cases in the city, the administration has decided to conduct raids at different public places, shops, and markets where norms of social distancing are being violated. On Friday night several shops at Jugsalai, Bistupur and Telco areas were sealed for the violation of Covid norms for 48 hours.

“Despite the rising number of COVID-19 cases, people are still not following the rules. Strict enforcement of the triad of precautionary measures — use of masks and

sanitisers and following social distancing — in public spaces has become a priority,” said Krishna Kumar, city manager, JNAC.

The Kolhan Division which was under green zone, came under coronavirus map with two persons testing positive at Chakulia, under East Singhbhum district on May 12.

The officer admitted that the Covid cases are increasing fast, informing that the department is paying more and more focus on detection of cases as well as vaccinating the people.

Significantly, there is a crisis of Covishield vaccine at the government-run health hubs. In most of the 20 health hubs, the vaccine is being given to the recipients of second dose only due to the short supply.

On the other hand, 27 private health hubs which are also contributing to the Covid vaccination drive by accepting Rs 250 per dose apparently do not face any supply crisis.

कार्यालय—अनुमंडल दण्डाधिकारी, सदर, हजारीबाग

—: प्रेस—विज्ञप्ति —:

हजारीबाग जिला अंतर्गत अवस्थित सभी निजी अस्पतालों के प्रबंधकों को सूचित किया जाता है कि हजारीबाग जिला में विगत कुछ दिनों में कोविड—19 संक्रमित मरीजों की संख्या में अप्रत्याशित वृद्धि हो रही है। कोविड—19 के संक्रमण का मामले की संख्या को दृष्टिगत रखते हुए यह अत्यन्त आवश्यक है कि सभी अस्पतालों में उपलब्ध बेड/ऑक्सीजन एवं वेंटिलेटर का समुचित उपयोग हो। सरकार द्वारा सभी अस्पतालों के 50 प्रतिशत बेड कोविड के लिए आरक्षित करने हेतु आदेश संसूचित है। हजारीबाग जिला अंतर्गत अवस्थित सभी निजी अस्पतालों को निदेश दिया जाता है कि वर्तमान में अस्पताल में उपलब्ध बेड की विवरणी दिनांक 17.04.2021 तक ऑनलाईन प्रवृष्टि करना सुनिश्चित करेंगे साथ ही उपलब्ध बेड का 50 प्रतिशत आरक्षित रखने का अनुपालन प्रतिवेदन उपलब्ध कराया जाय। ताकि कोविड—19 के मध्यम /गंभीर लक्षण वाले जरूरत मंद रोगियों को सही समय पर ईलाज हो सके।

PR 245727 District(21-22).D

अनुमंडल दण्डाधिकारी,
सदर, हजारीबाग

कार्यालयक अभियंता का कार्यालय पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, लातेहार

(E-mail ID-eedwsd.latehar@gmail.com)

ई- प्रोक्योरमेंट निविदा सूचना (3rd Call)

निविदा सूचना संख्या— DWSO/LTR/GPT-08/2020-21		दिनांक— 17.04.2021	
1	विभाग का नाम	—	पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता विभाग झारखण्ड रांची।
2	विज्ञापनदाता का पदनाम एवं पता	—	कार्यालयक अभियंता, पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, लातेहार।
3	वेबसाइट पर निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि एवं समय	—	19/04/2021 को 3.30 बजे अपराह्न तक।
4	बीड प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	—	29/04/2021 को 05.00 बजे अपराह्न तक।
5	अग्रधन की राशि एवं परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य (हार्ड कॉपी) जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि/समय एवं स्थान	—	30/04/2021 के अपराह्न 04.00बजे तक कार्यालयक अभियंता का कार्यालय पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, लातेहार।
6	निविदा खोलने की सम्भावित तिथि एवं समय	—	01/05/2021 को 04.00 बजे अपराह्न।
7	प्रोक्योरमेंट कार्यालय का सम्पर्क नं०	—	9430725642
8	ई— प्रोक्योरमेंट सेल का हेल्पलाईन नं०	—	0651—2490920
9	कार्य की विवरणी	—	

क्र०	कार्य का नाम	गुण संख्या	नलकूपों की संख्या	प्राकलित राशि	अग्रधन की राशि (रु० में)	परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य (रु० में)	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि
1	Construction of 300 x 125 mm dia and 60 m(lav) deep gravel packed drilled tube well with installation of IM -II Handpump, 1.85m dia PCC PI atform and 3.0 m long drain on trunking basis in in different Rural habitation in Latehar District during the FY-2020-21	LTR/GPT-1	30	3847666.00	77000.00	5000.00	03 Month

नोट— निविदा की प्राकलित राशि घट—बढ़ सकती है तदनुसार अग्रधन की राशि देय होगी।
विस्तृत जानकारी हेतु वेबसाइट— <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in> पर देखा जा सकता है।
कार्यालयक अभियंता
PR 245722 Drinking Water and Sanitation (21-22)_D पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, लातेहार

कार्यालयक अभियंता का कार्यालय, भवन निर्माण विभाग, भवन प्रमंडल, सिमडेगा

अति अल्पकालिन निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना 05/2021-22	
1. विज्ञापन दाता का नाम	—: कार्यालयक अभियंता, भवन प्रमंडल, सिमडेगा।
2. परिमाण विपत्र की विक्री की तिथि एवं समय	—: 29.04.2021को अप० 1बजे तक।
3. निविदा प्राप्ति की तिथि एवं समय	—: 29.04.2021 के अप० 3 बजे तक।
4. निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय	—: 30.04.2021 के अप० 3.30 बजे से।
5.परिमाण विपत्र विक्री का स्थान — (क) कार्यालयक अभियंता का कार्यालय, भवन प्रमंडल सिमडेगा (सभी कार्यों के लिए) (ख) अधीक्षण अभियंता भवन निर्माण विभाग, भवन अंचल सं—2, रॉकी का कार्यालय (सभी कार्यों के लिए)	
6. निविदा प्राप्ति का स्थान	—:कार्यालयक अभियंता का कार्यालय, भवन प्रमंडल, सिमडेगा (सभी कार्यों के लिए)।
7. कार्य विवरणी	—:

Sl. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	B.O.Q Rate	Time Of Completion	Remarks
1	अनुसूचित जन जाति आवासीय मध्य विद्यालय, हाटिंग होडे, बानो की नरमल्लि।	24,47,000.00	49,000.00	5,000.00	3 (Three) Months	
2	अनुसूचित जनजाति आवासीय मध्य विद्यालय, सेवई की नरमल्लि।	19,26,800.00	38,600.00	5,000.00	3 (Three) Months	
3	Renovation of 100 Bedded ST Hostel at the Campus of Simdega Collage Simdega.	24,98,500.00	50,000.00	5,000.00	3 (Three) Months	
4	Renovation of S.T Girls Hostel at the campus of Parvati Inter College Simdega	23,11,900.00	46,300.00	5,000.00	3 (Three) Months	
5	Renovation of S.T Hostel (2 nd) at the campus of Simdega,Government ST BalikaHostel in sewai(Hostel No.01) in Simdega and Girls Hostel KhutitoliSimdega.	20,38,900.00	41000.00	5,000.00	3 (Three) Months	
6	Construction of Rising and Renovation of Boundary wall of ST Girls Hostel at the Campus of Parvati Inter College Simdega.	17,64,900.00	35,300.00	5,000.00	3 (Three) Months	
7	Renovation of Boys Hostel (50 Bedded) Simdega Collage Simdega.	24,44,400.00	48,900.00	5,000.00	3 (Three) Months	
8	Renovation of Shree MadhavHari Anne Boys Hostel Simdega.	22,70,300.00	45,500.00	5,000.00	3 (Three) Months	
9	Construction of Steel Truss And Roof Work for Shree MadhavHari Anne Boys Hostel Simdega.	19,17,900.00	38,400.00	5,000.00	3 (Three) Months	
10	Renovation of Govt. ST Balika Hostel in Sewai in Simdega District (Hostel No 01) and	11,77,000.00	23,600.00	2,500.00	3 (Three) Months	
11	Renovation of SS Boys Hostel Kolebira (Hostel No-01) and SS Boys Hostel Kolebira (Hostel No-02)	17,61,000.00	35500.00	2,500.00	3 (Three) Months	
12	अनुसूचित जनजाति आवासीय मध्य विद्यालय, हाटिंग होडे, बानो के छात्रावास की नरमल्लि।	12,40,600.00	24,900.00	2,500.00	3 (Three) Months	

निविदा की शर्तें—WWW.jharkhand.gov.in एवं कार्यालय के सूचना पट पर देखा जा सकता है।
PR.NO.245705 Building(21-22):D कार्यालयक अभियंता, भवन प्रमंडल, सिमडेगा।

Haryana restricts office attendance to 50%

Chandigarh: To contain the coronavirus spread, the Haryana government on Saturday restricted the physical attendance in its offices to 50 per cent. Also, the entry of outsiders to the offices is curtailed.

In an order, the Chief Secretary said to allow officers of the rank of undersecretary or equivalent and below to work from home and their physical attendance be restricted to 50 per cent. It further said all officers of the level of deputy secretary or equivalent and above are to attend offices regularly.

The officers attending the office should stagger their arrival timing between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. to avoid crowding in the lifts and corridors.

IANS

Covid- second wave hits urban areas of Bokaro harder

Bokaro: In the second wave of the coronavirus infection, a majority of the fresh cases (infections) are being reported from urban areas across the district.

In fresh COVID-19 reports, Bokaro saw a steep surge; the district recorded 404 new positive cases of coronavirus in the past three days, including a magistrate and 24 others engaged at judiciary services, 41 Bokaro Steel Plant's employees and others, informed AK Pathak Civil Surgeon Bokaro.

“Majority of cases belong to the urban areas,” he added.

Last year during the first COVID-19 wave the urban areas of the district were not so badly affected, but during the second wave, which is sweep-



ing the country rapidly, around 80 to 90 per cent of cases are being reported from urban areas, he said.

The number highlights that people should need to be more cautious in urban areas amidst the administration to focus on expanding the vaccination drive, said Pathak.

“According to my opinion, the key reasons behind the sharp increase could be attrib-

uted to a severe decline in compliance of COVID-appropriate behaviours, particularly in the use of masks and social distancing,” added Pathak.

It has been seen that people in urban areas do not adequately follow the COVID guidelines. Flouting of safety norms, gatherings, the frequent flow of travelers, and increased testing are the other main reasons behind the rise in the cases in the city areas, he said.

Meanwhile, the overall number of positive reported cases in the district rushed to 840 while the district's death toll stands at 78, including four deaths on Friday. Though, 60 patients were recovered and discharged from the hospital, said Pathak.

Deputy Commissioner Bokaro, Rajesh Kumar Singh has deputed one Incident Commander in each police station of the district to comply with the SOP issued by the government.

The Incident Commander has to comply with the protocol of each containment zone, under which the COVID-19 positive person or his family members should not walk outside unnecessarily, and he has to provide the information to the people around the said area, said Singh.

Closer to the commercial shops around each containment zone is also the responsibility of the Incident Commander so that the crowd does not gather there, he said.

PNS

Palamu admin asks home isolation inmates to keep indoors

PNS ■ DALTONGANJ

Palamu administration has warned people serving home isolation not to indulge in any outside activity like roaming around, mixing with people going to grocery shops, coming over to tea stalls or paan shops or for any gossip or street corner talking etc.

DC Palamu Shashi Ranjan said every such home isolation serving people must adhere to the strict Covid appropriate behaviour and under no circumstances violate it. He said all block level officers are told to be very careful of the home isolation people.

SP Palamu Sanjeev Kumar said police have been ordered to tame and contain people violating norms of the home isolation.

The SP said police have

been asked to lodge cases under disaster management act and IPC section as well if the violator of the home isolation proves stubborn.

The district epidemiologist Dr Anup Kumar said till April 17 afternoon 217 people are undergoing home isolation and are doing fine. Anup Kumar said just two people who were having their home isolation developed some complications who were brought and placed in the dedicated Covid care center in Daltonganj.

Anup Kumar said people having mild symptoms have been asked not to panic and long for beds in the hospital as beds are meant for the severe Covid symptoms ridden people. Sources said the number of the home isolation people is set to shoot up in the next few days in Palamu.

Lalu to walk free after serving half fodder sentence

From Page 1

Lalu had then once again requested for bail from the Jharkhand High Court.

Lalu was serving jail sentences in four cases of fodder scam. Recently, Lalu's bail plea was filed in the High Court on the basis of completing half of the sentence. According to Lalu's Advocate, on April 9, half of Lalu's sentence in the Dumka treasury case has been completed. Ranchi's CBI Court had sentenced him to seven years in the Dumka treasury case.

However, in the biggest and fifth case of fodder scam of illegal withdrawal from Doranda treasury, hearing is going on in Ranchi's special CBI Court. In this case also, a decision can be made against Lalu and can go to jail once again.

The RJD chief is suffering from serious diseases and undergoing treatment at AIIMS in Delhi. Earlier, he was getting treatment in Rajendra Institute of Medical Science (RIMS) in Ranchi.

Facing shortage of oxygen, Remdesivir, ventilator: States



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Grappling with the surge in Covid-19 cases, various States in a meeting with the Centre on Saturday highlighted the shortage of oxygen cylinders, Remdesivir in hospitals, ventilator stocks and poor supply of vaccine doses. Eleven States and Union Territories, including Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, account for 79.32 per cent of the new coronavirus cases in the country were present at the meeting. The high-level meeting was chaired by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan with the Health Ministers of 11 States and Union Territories to review measures taken by them for prevention, containment and management of the recent surge in Covid-19 cases.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to meet top officials of several ministries later in the evening to review the overall covid situation and vaccination drive.

M a h a r a s h t r a , Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal, Delhi, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh have been reporting an unprecedented surge in new infections.

In a statement here, the Ministry said “Many of them (States) raised the issue of dovetailing the medical oxygen supply lines and capping of



US must lift export ban on raw materials for production of vaccines, says CPM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CPI(M) polit bureau on Saturday said that the United States must lift their export ban on raw materials for the production of vaccines.

In a statement, the Left party pointed out that the export ban by the US is a doublepeak, citing US President Joe Biden's assurances in the recently convened Quad Summit.

“The ban on exports of materials used in vaccine production goes completely against these stated aims. The Modi government, which sets

prices of essential drugs like Remdesivir which has been sold in the black market at exorbitant prices.

“Double mutant strain in Maharashtra was a key point of concern. The Delhi Government requested for additional beds in Central Government hospitals as was done in 2020 to help tide over the emergent health crisis,” the Ministry said.

The notification of the Home Ministry, granting permission to states to utilize up to 50 per cent of their annual allocation of State Disaster

much store on the Quad alliance, must ensure that the Biden administration keeps to its committed word and immediately ensures supply of essential vaccine material to India. This is the least that must be done when India is facing vaccine shortage in the face of an unprecedented surge of Covid infections,” said CPI(M).

The CPI(M) also pointed out the concerns raised by Serum Institute of India head Adar Poonawala on hampering of production in India due to the US Government's ban on export of raw materials of

Response Fund, and that of the Union Health Ministry, allowing utilisation of unspent pending balance under National Health Mission as on April 1, 2021 for COVID management purposes, were reiterated, it said.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan informed the states on the steps taken to provide medical grade oxygen and augmenting Remdesivir stocks in the country.

The states were also informed about the issuance of the calendar of medical oxygen supply from different oxygen

vaccine.

“The scaling up of vaccine production in India is being hampered by the shortage of the intermediate material required for vaccine produc-

tion. Much of this material such as filters, solutions and plastic bags come from the United States. But the U.S. Administration has banned the export of vaccine material under its Defence Production Act. Despite requests by the Indian authorities, no relaxation or exemption has been given for export of these items,” the CPI(M) said in a statement.

manufacturers in the country. The steps taken for unhindered movement of oxygen cylinders from their manufacturing units across states were also detailed, the Ministry said.

Taking note of the active surge in cases witnessed since last February in which most states have now crossed their highest tally, Harsh Vardhan urged the states to give special focus on the prominent five to six cities in their administration and map medical colleges to either these cities or adjoining 2-3 districts. The states were asked to seek out positive

Cong's 14-point attack on Govt over Covid 'mismanagement'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Maintaining that India has been caught off guard in its fight against the deadly coronavirus once again despite having a year to prepare, Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Saturday urged the Government to ramp up its strategy to tackle the menace as she pointed out to the overwhelmed medical infrastructure and shortage of vaccines and drugs.

Sonia was speaking during the meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting, which was attended by former party chief Rahul Gandhi, general secretaries and State in-charges of the party.

She reiterated her insistence on lowering the immunisation age to 25 years and above “as also all younger persons with at-risk health disorders like asthma, angina, diabetes, kidney & liver diseases and other similar ailments.”

The Congress came out with a 14-point attack on Government over ‘grave errors’ in Covid-19 management.

Sonia also spoke about her letter to Prime Minister



Narendra Modi after her meeting with chief ministers of Congress-ruled states to take a jibe at the Centre.

Both Sonia and Rahul earlier have written to Modi asking him to expand the country's vaccination drive against Covid-19.

“I have written to the Prime Minister after meeting with them. Our Chief Ministers have spoken to the Prime Minister and written to the concerned minister from time to time pleading for relief. Some of them were left with only a few days of vaccine, no oxygen or ventilators. But there has been thundering silence on the part of the Government. On the contrary some other states have received preferential treatment/relief,” she said.

“Instead of listening to the constructive suggestions of the opposition, Union Ministers are pressed into service to attack leaders of opposition for giving those sugges-

tions. This convoluted “me versus you” debate is childish and totally unnecessary,” she added.

Sonia said Goods and Services Tax (GST) on all equipment, instruments, medicines and support required to prevent and treat Covid-19 should be made free. “It is a matter of grave concern that life saving drugs like Remdesivir etc. and medical oxygen as also other basic supplements are subjected to GST @ 12%. Even basic equipments like Oxymeters and life saving critical equipment like ventilators are subjected to 20% GST. In the current state of affairs, this is inhuman and untenable,” she added.

The Government must provide financial support for the poor in the form of monthly income support and transfer ₹6,000 in the account of every eligible citizen, who have been hit by the partial curfews, travel restrictions, closure and lockdowns put in place by authorities, she said in her CWC meeting statement.

“Similarly, with reverse migration of labour already having started, it will be critical to immediately address

their need of safe transportation as indeed their suitable rehabilitation in host as well as home States,” Sonia said.

At the meet, she said that the Modi government was unprepared in evaluating and managing the crisis. She added that the Congress believed that fighting the pandemic was national challenge and that it should be kept above party politics. She said that the government did not listen to constructive suggestions made by the Opposition on the management of the pandemic, and that Union ministers attacked leaders of opposition for giving suggestions.

“This convoluted ‘me versus you’ debate is childish and totally unnecessary,” Sonia asserted accusing the Centre of giving preferential treatment to some states while maintaining “thundering silence” on requests of states ruled by the Congress and opposition parties.

“As the central and state governments move ahead to control the situation by resorting to partial curfews, travel restrictions, closure and lock downs; we will again be restricting economic activity that will hit the already beleaguered people, especially the poor and the daily wagers,” she said.

Taking on these challenging times as Indians rather than as political opponents will be true ‘Rajadharma’, Sonia stressed.

Vardhan said about 1.58 crore doses are still available with the states while another 1.16 crore doses are in pipeline, to be delivered by next week.

Emphasizing that there is no shortage of vaccines, he strongly pushed for further ramping up the vaccination exercise.

Wearing 2 face masks more effective in beating Covid: Study



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Wearing two face coverings or masks can nearly double the effectiveness of filtering out SARS-CoV-2-sized particles, preventing them from reaching the wearer's nose and mouth and causing Covid-19, as per a recent study.

The findings published in JAMA Internal Medicine also states that the reason for the enhanced filtration is not about adding too many layers of cloth but eliminating any gaps or poor-fitting areas of a mask.

“The medical procedure masks are designed to have very good filtration potential based on their material, but the way they fit our faces isn't perfect,” said Emily Sickbert-Bennett, PhD, associate professor of infectious diseases at the UNC School of Medicine and lead author of the study. To test the fitted filtration efficiency (FFE) of a range of masks, UNC researchers worked with James Samet, PhD, and colleagues in the USEPA Human Studies Facility on the campus of UNC-Chapel Hill. There they filled a 10-foot by 10-foot stainless-steel exposure chamber with small salt particle aerosols and had researchers don combinations of masks to test how effective they were at keeping particles out of their breathing space.

A transmission electron microscopic image that shows SARS-CoV-2 also known as 2019-nCoV, the virus that causes Covid-19, isolated from a patient in the US, as the Virus particles are shown emerging from the surface of cells cultured in the lab- the spikes on the outer edge of the virus particles give coronaviruses their name, crown-like.

Each individual mask or layered mask combination was fitted with a metal sample port, which was attached to tubing in the exposure chamber that measured the concentration of particles entering the breathing space underneath the researcher's mask. A second tube measured the ambient concentration of particles in the chamber. By measuring particle concentration in the breathing space underneath the mask

Lack of Covid-suitable behaviour, virus mutation cause Covid spurt: AIIMS head



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lack of Covid-appropriate behaviour and mutation of the virus are the two main reasons behind the rapid spread of coronavirus infections in the country, AIIMS director Dr Randeep Guleria on Saturday said even as he expressed concern over the religious and political activities taking place in a few States, cautioning that they must be done in a restricted manner.

“The cause for the surge ... is multifactorial. But two main causes are that people have stopped following Covid-appropriate behaviour during January-February when the vaccination started and cases went down. Also, at this time, the virus mutated and spread more rapidly,” Dr Guleria said to a news agency.

“This is a time when a lot

of religious activities happen in our country and polls are also underway. We must understand lives are also important. We can do this in a restricted manner so that religious sentiment is not hurt & Covid appropriate behaviour can be followed,” said Dr Guleria. He also highlighted that India was witnessing a huge strain in the healthcare system and efforts need to be stepped up to keep increasing our hospital beds/resources for the increasing number of cases.

We also have to urgently bring down the number of Covid-19 cases, he added.

“This is a time when a lot of religious activities happen in our country and polls are also underway. We must understand that lives are also important. We can do this in a restricted manner so that

religious sentiments are not hurt and Covid-appropriate behaviour can be followed,” he said.

His remarks come in the backdrop of the ongoing Kumbh mela in Uttarakhand, which has attracted people from different parts of the country in large numbers.

Talking about the immunisation drive, Dr Guleria said that India should gradually lift or lower the age bar so that more and more people come into the pool of people who can be vaccinated. That will happen in the coming few weeks.

“We will have more and more vaccines that will come into the common pool which will allow us to open up the vaccination to a larger population,” he said.

altering the fit is about 40-60 per cent effective at keeping Covid-19-sized particles out. A cloth mask is about 40 per cent effective.

Their recent findings on doubling of face masks show that when a cloth mask is placed over a surgical mask, the FFE improved by about 20 per cent, and improved even more with a snug-fitting, sleeve-type mask, such as a gaiter. When layered over procedure masks, cloth masks improve fit by eliminating gaps and holding the procedure mask closer to the face, consistently covering the nose and mouth.

DRDO setting up hosp in Ahmedabad for Covid patients



RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has conveyed to the Gujarat Government that DRDO is establishing a 900-bedded hospital in Ahmedabad to cater to the “alarming surge” in Covid-19 cases there.

The Union Home Ministry has also directed the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) or the Central paramilitary forces to spare 25 doctors and 75 paramedics and ensure that they report by April 21 to man the hospital in Gujarat.

“The hospital is being established at the Gujarat University Convention Centre, Ahmedabad to cater to the alarming surge of the Covid cases there,” reads an order issued by Additional Director General (Medical) of CAPFs under the Union Home Ministry on Friday.

It has further been decided and conveyed that CAPFs are required to provide 25 medical officers and 75 paramedical/nursing staff, reads the order.

“It is, therefore, requested that the following number of doctors and paramedics/nursing staff be detailed for the purpose please,” it said.

The detailed staff should report to the nodal officer (Colonel B Chaubey, DRDO Hospital, Ahmedabad by April

21 positively, it said.

Through the order, the ADG (Medical), CAPFs, Dr Mukesh Saxena has also named Devarshi Raval as the nodal officer for making logistical arrangements at Gujarat University.

The letter has been circulated to Inspector General (Medical) of the Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).

The BSF will send 10 doctors and 30 paramedics, the CRPF will spare 10 doctors and 25 nursing staff and SSB to chip in with five doctors and 20 paramedical personnel for the DRDO hospital in Ahmedabad.

Through the communication to the heads of CRPF, BSF and SSB, the Ministry has asked them to send their team on priority and the doctors and paramedics have to report to the nodal officer of the said hospital latest by April 21.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) hospital set to be operationalised by late next week, officials said.

On Friday, the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh directed the DRDO to reopen the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Covid care hospital here which was set up in July last year. He has also asked the defence body to set up a new facility in Lucknow.

Kumbh Mela: Plea in SC seeks direction to clear mass gathering from Haridwar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking directions to the Centre and others to clear the “mass gathering” from Haridwar amid a surge in Covid-19 cases across the country and prescribe a safety protocol with respect to people returning from Kumbh Mela.

The plea, which referred to the recent spike in COVID-19 cases, has also sought directions to the Centre and the Uttarakhand government to immediately withdraw the advertisements inviting people to Haridwar for Kumbh Mela.

It said that the Election Commission should be asked to issue direction to the authorities in the states where elections are being held to strictly enforce COVID-19 guidelines during the poll process and take appropriate action against the violators.

The plea, filed by Noida-resident Sanjay Kumar Pathak, said that COVID-19 cases are increasing rapidly across the country and the health infrastructure is “crumbling” in many states.

It claimed that hospitals and crematoriums are running out of space and shortage of essential drugs has been reported from many cities.

The petition said that India is currently witnessing its highest surge in COVID-19

cases since onset of the pandemic, but visuals of lakh of devotees crowding in Haridwar for Kumbh Mela and in election rallies in states have surfaced.

“On the one hand, poor common man on the street is often punished and treated violently by the police and executive authorities for individual violations of COVID-19 rules and regulations in the name of strict enforcement, and on the other hand, the authorities are not only permitting but facilitating and promoting congregation of people in the events like Kumbh-2021 and election rallies,” the plea has alleged.

It sought the apex court's direction to the Centre, Uttarakhand government and the National Disaster Management Authority to not encourage or promote any gathering or event “inconsistent with the spirit and object of the COVID guidelines” and orders issued by these authorities.

“It is axiomatic that the respondents have turned a blind eye towards the violation of COVID-19 guidelines at the Kumbh Mela and during election campaigns and rallies which have the potential to become super spreader events but common people on the street is being fined and challans are being issued,” the plea has claimed.

Private vehicle would not come within expression of public place: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A private vehicle does not come within the expression of a “public place” as per the explanation given under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, the Supreme Court has said.

A bench comprising justices U U Lalit and K M Joseph made the observation while deciding an appeal challenging an order passed by the Punjab and Haryana High Court affirming their conviction and sentence under the NDPS Act.

Two bags of poppy straw were recovered from the accused while they were sitting in a jeep at a public

place. The trial court, after considering the evidence on record, acquitted accused Major Singh but convicted accused Boota Singh, Gurdeep Singh and Gurmohinder Singh, under the NDPS Act and sentenced them to rigorous imprisonment for 10 years.

They were also asked to pay a fine of Rs 1 lakh, failing which they were directed to undergo further rigorous imprisonment for two years.

The accused argued before the top court that the vehicle in question was a private one belonging to accused Gurdeep Singh and was not a public conveyance, though it was parked on a public road.

Myanmar pardons prisoners

Unclear if
coup foes
among them

AP ■ YANGON

Myanmar's junta on Saturday announced it pardoned and released more than 23,000 prisoners to mark the traditional Thingyan New Year holiday, but it wasn't immediately clear if they included pro-democracy activists who were detained in the wake of the military's seizure of power in February. The releases were announced on state broadcaster MRTV, which said that junta chief Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing had pardoned 23,047 prisoners, including 137 foreigners who will be deported from Myanmar. He also reduced sentences for others.

The move comes as daily protests against the February 1 ouster of the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi continue, as does the use of deadly force against them.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, which monitors casualties and arrests, government forces have killed at least 728 protesters and bystanders since the takeover. The group says 3,141 people, including Suu Kyi, are in detention.



A man is embraced by two women outside Insein prison in Yangon, Myanmar on Saturday

AP

Unconfirmed but credible accounts with photos on social media claimed that three people were killed Saturday by security forces in a violent crackdown in the central city of Mogok, in Myanmar's gem mining region.

Detainees released Saturday from Yangon's Insein Prison included at least three political prisoners who were jailed in 2019, said witnesses and local press reports.

The three are members of the Peacock Generation per-

formance troupe where were arrested during that year's New Year celebrations for skits that poked fun at military representatives in Parliament and military involvement in business.

Their traditional style of acting is called Thangyat, a mash-up of poetry, comedy and music with a sharp undertone of satire. Several members of the troupe were convicted under a law banning circulation of information that could endanger or demoralise members of the military. The actors may have

drawn the special wrath of the military because they performed in army uniforms.

Several members were also found guilty of online defamation for livestreaming their performances. It could not be ascertained if all imprisoned members of the troupe were released.

Another freed prisoner was Ross Dunkley, an Australian newspaper entrepreneur sentenced in 2019 to 13 years in a Myanmar prison for drug possession. His release was con-

firmed by his ex-wife Cynda Johnston, reported The Sydney Morning Herald newspaper.

Dunkley co-founded the The Myanmar Times, an English-language daily, but was forced to give up his share in it. He became well-known for co-founding or acquiring English-language publications in formerly socialist states that were seeking foreign investment as they liberalised their economies, but was sometimes criticised for doing business with authoritarian regimes.

Early prisoner releases are customary during major holidays, and this is the second batch the ruling junta has announced since taking power.

Following the release of more than 23,000 convicts to mark Union Day on February 12, there were reports on social media that some were recruited by the authorities to carry out violence at night in residential areas to spread panic, especially by setting fires. Some areas responded by setting up their own neighborhood watch groups.

In March, more than 600 people who were imprisoned for demonstrating against the February coup were released from Insein Prison, a rare conciliatory gesture by the military that appeared aimed at placating the protest movement.

Those freed were mostly young people caught in sweeps of street demonstrations, while those considered protest leaders were kept locked up.

Troops level may increase in Af before withdrawal: Pentagon

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Before the complete withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan by September 11, there might be an increase in number of soldiers to ensure safe and orderly drawdown, the Pentagon has said.

"It is not out of the realm the possibility that for a short period of time, there will have to be some additional enabling capabilities added to Afghanistan, to help effect a safe, orderly, and deliberately planned drawdown of everybody by the president's deadline, early September," Pentagon spokesman John Kirby told reporters at a news conference on Friday.

However, Kirby did not elaborate on the nature of the increase in US troops. "I can't speak today with exactly what that would look like, how many, when they would be going in. But as we transitioned out of Iraq, of course, it's logical to assume that you may need some logistics help, maybe some engineering help," he said.

"You may have to add some force protection capabilities, temporarily, just to make sure that the drawdown goes in a safe, orderly, and effective way. Again, we'll know more as we get closer, but that would not be out of the realm of possibility," Kirby said.

Responding to a question, Kirby said that the Department



of Defense is still working out what the future bilateral security relationship is going to be with Afghanistan.

"We're going to transition to a bilateral relationship, a military relationship that's more akin to the kinds of relationships we have with other countries," he said.

"It will not include a US military footprint on the ground in Afghanistan with the exception of what's going to be required to support the diplomatic mission there. All that's still being worked out. So, I can't speak with specificity today about what contract support the Afghan security forces are going to need going forward," he said.

The United States, he said, will maintain counterterrorism capabilities to continue to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a launching pad for terrorist attacks on the US.

"We have a vast range of

capabilities available to us and we're not going to speak to the details of exactly how we're going to maintain those capabilities and utilise those capabilities," he said.

During a televised address to the nation earlier in the week, President Joe Biden said that keeping thousands of troops grounded and concentrated in just one country at a cost of billions each year made "little sense" to him.

He said all US troops would be withdrawn from the strife-torn country by September 11 to end America's longest war that has cost trillions of dollars and the lives of over 2,400 American soldiers.

The US and the Taliban signed a landmark deal in Doha on February 29, 2020 to bring lasting peace in war-torn Afghanistan and allow US troops to return home from America's longest war.

Worldwide Covid death toll tops a staggering 3m

AP ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

The global death toll from the coronavirus topped a staggering 3 million people Saturday amid repeated setbacks in the worldwide vaccination campaign and a deepening crisis in places such as Brazil, India and France.

The number of lives lost, as compiled by Johns Hopkins University, is about equal to the population of Kyiv, Ukraine; Caracas, Venezuela; or metropolitan Lisbon, Portugal. It is bigger than Chicago (2.7 million) and equivalent to Philadelphia and Dallas combined.

And the true number is believed to be significantly higher because of possible government concealment or the many cases overlooked in the early stages of the outbreak that began 16 months ago in Wuhan, China, at the end of 2019. Around the world, the trajectory of the virus and the race to bring it under control vary widely from country to

country. Even as the U.S. And Britain see their vaccination drives hit their stride and they begin to contemplate life after the pandemic, other places both rich and poor — France and India among them — are lagging behind in putting shots in arms and have imposed new lockdowns and other restrictions as cases soar.

Worldwide, deaths are running at over 12,000 per day on average and new cases at more than 7,00,000 a day.

The US toll alone is over 5,60,000, accounting for more than 1 in 6 of the world's Covid-19 deaths, by far the highest reported by any country. The United States is followed by Brazil, Mexico, India and Britain. This month, the US recommended a pause in the use of Johnson & Johnson's Covid-19 vaccine while authorities investigate extremely rare but dangerous blood clots, and some European countries are putting the vaccine on hold, too.

5 workers killed in police firing in power plant in B'desh: Reports

Dhaka: At least five people working at a under construction coal power plant being built by a Chinese firm in Chittagong were killed and 20 others injured in a clash with the police following a protest by the workers over wage and allowances, Bangladeshi media reports said on Saturday.

The incident happened when the protesting workers of the plant clashed with the police, prompting them to open fire in which five workers were killed, the *Dhaka Tribune* reported.

"The violence broke out around 10:30 am at the coal-fired power plant. Five have died while at least 20 others were injured in the clash, including police and local residents," a senior police officer was quoted as saying in the report.

"They attacked police who are on duty, forcing the policemen to retaliate. Four were killed during the incident while three policemen were injured," Chattogram Range Deputy Inspector General Anwar Hossain was quoted as saying by the Daily Star newspaper. *PTI*

Russia expels Ukrainian consul over classified information

Moscow: Russia detained a Ukrainian diplomat for allegedly receiving classified information from a database of the country's main security agency.

The Federal Security Service, or FSB, said Saturday that Alexander Sosonyuk, Ukraine's consul in St Petersburg, was taken into custody on Friday during a meeting with a Russian in which he received "information of a classified nature contained in the databases of law enforcement agencies and the FSB".

The FSB statement, reported by Russian news agencies, didn't give further details.

Ukrainian Foreign Ministry spokesman Oleg Nikolenko said Sosonyuk has been released from custody and is on Ukrainian diplomatic property.

It wasn't immediately clear if Russia would move to expel him.

Nikolenko said Ukraine was preparing a response, but didn't elaborate. The detention comes amid escalating tensions between Russia and Ukraine amid a Russian military buildup along the border with the eastern Ukraine region. *AP*

US Prez Biden, Japanese PM Suga discuss Chinese influence over Indo-Pacific

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden and Japan Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, in their first in-person bilateral meeting at the White House, discussed the increasing Chinese influence over the peace and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific and ways to strengthen the QUAD, comprising of India and Australia as the other two nations in the grouping.

Other issues like climate change, fight against coronavirus pandemic and North Korea did appear in their talks on Friday, which was the first for Biden with a foreign leader as the president of the United States.

"Our alliance has served its role as the foundation of peace and stability for the Indo-Pacific region and the world. In light of the current regional situation and the severe security environment, the importance of our alliance has reached new heights," Suga told reporters at a White House news conference with Biden.

In addition to the bilateral relationship, Suga said they

discussed the free and open Indo-Pacific.

"We agreed that while Japan and the US will take the lead to promote the vision through concrete efforts. We will also cooperate with other countries and regions, including the ASEAN, Australia, and India," he said.

"We also had serious talks on China's influence over the peace and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific and the world at large. We agreed to oppose any attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the East and South China Seas and intimidation of others in the region," Suga said.

Beijing claims almost all of the 1.3 million square mile South China Sea as its sovereign territory. China has been building military bases on artificial islands in the region also claimed by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Beijing has impeded commercial activity like fishing or mineral exploration by countries like Vietnam and the Philippines.

After outcry, White House says Biden will lift refugee cap in May

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Facing swift blowback from allies and aid groups, the White House said President Joe Biden plans to lift his predecessor's historically low cap on refugees by next month, after initially moving only to expand the eligibility criteria for resettlements.

In an emergency determination signed by Biden earlier Friday, he stated the admission of up to 15,000 refugees set by former President Donald Trump this year "remains justified by humanitarian concerns and is otherwise in the national interest." But if the cap is reached before the end of the current budget year and the emergency refugee situation persists, then a presidential determination may be issued to raise the ceiling.

That set off a deluge of criticism from top allies on Capitol Hill such as the second-ranking Senate Democrat, Dick Durbin of Illinois, who called that initial limit "unacceptable." White House press secretary Jen Psaki said later that Biden is expected to increase the refugee cap by May 15, though she didn't say by how much.

Biden has been consulting with his advisers to determine what number of refugees could realistically be admitted to the United States between now and October 1, the end of the fiscal year, Psaki said.

"Given the decimated refugee admissions program we inherited," she said it's now "unlikely" Biden will be able to boost that number to 62,500, as he had proposed in his plan to Congress two months ago.

Riot declared after police kill man in Oregon protests

Portland: Police in Portland, Oregon, said on Saturday they arrested four people after declaring a riot Friday night when protesters smashed windows, burglarised businesses and set multiple fires during demonstrations that started after police fatally shot a man while responding to reports of a person with a gun.

Police said they dispersed the crowd so firefighting crews could douse fires before they spread in extreme fire hazard conditions.

The vandalism downtown came after the police shooting earlier Friday and was also was part of vigils and demonstrations already planned for the night in the name of people

killed in police shootings nationwide. They include 13-year-old Adam Toledo of Chicago and Daunte Wright, a Black man in a Minneapolis suburb. Deputy Police Chief Chris Davis told reporters a white man in his 30s had been shot and killed in Portland by police. The man was pronounced dead at the scene in Lents Park, a leafy, residential neighbourhood of the city.

Two officers fired a 40mm device that shoots non-lethal projectiles, and one officer — an eight-year veteran — fired a gun, police said

in a statement. The officer is on paid administrative leave, and his or her name will be released, authorities said. *AP*

Italy's Salvini to stand trial for 2019 migrant standoff

Rome: A judge in Sicily on Saturday ordered former Interior Minister Matteo Salvini to stand trial for having refused to let a Spanish migrant rescue ship dock in an Italian port in 2019, keeping the people at sea for days.

Judge Lorenzo Iannelli set September 15 as the trial date during a hearing in the Palermo bunker courtroom, the LaPresse news agency reported. Salvini, who attended the hearing, confirmed the outcome and insisted he was only doing his job and his duty by refusing entry to the Open Arms rescue ship and the 147 people it had rescued in the Mediterranean Sea. *AP*

After China, US envoy Kerry in S Korea for climate talks

Seoul: US climate envoy John Kerry met with South Korea's foreign minister in Seoul on Saturday for talks ahead of a virtual climate summit of world leaders called by President Joe Biden for next week.

Kerry arrived in South Korea after a four-day visit to China where he held closed-door meetings with senior Chinese officials in Shanghai.

While Kerry's discussions with South Korea's Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong were focused on Biden's climate meeting and another video summit on environmental issues that South Korea will host in May, Chung also conveyed Seoul's "serious concerns" over Japanese government plans to start releasing treated radioactive water from the wrecked

Fukushima nuclear plant into the sea in two years.

Chung also requested US help for South Korea's efforts to secure more coronavirus vaccines as it wrestles with a slow vaccine rollout and a steady rise in infections, South Korea's Foreign Ministry said. The ministry didn't release any specific comments made by Kerry during the meeting.

Chung and Kerry agreed that the countries should cooperate to create "mutual synergy" between the virtual summits hosed by each country in the coming weeks, which would help set up the UN Climate Change Conference scheduled to be held in Scotland in November, the ministry said in a statement. *AP*

Era ends as Raul Castro steps down as Communist Party chief

AP ■ HAVANA

Raul Castro said he is stepping down as Cuban Communist Party leader, leaving the island without a Castro guiding affairs for the first time in more than six decades and handing control of the party to a younger generation.

The 89-year-old Castro made the announcement in a speech Friday at the opening of the eighth congress of the ruling party, the only one allowed on the island.

"I concluded my task as first secretary ... With the satisfaction of having fulfilled (my duty) and confidence in the future of the fatherland," he said in a typical terse, to-the-point finale that contrasted with the impassioned

verbal pyrotechnics of his brother Fidel, who died in 2016.

Castro didn't say who he would endorse as his successor as first secretary of the Communist Party. But he previously indicated he favors yielding control to 60-year-old Miguel Diaz-Canel, who succeeded him as president in 2018 and is the standard bearer of a younger generation of loyalists who have been pushing an economic opening without touching Cuba's one-party system.

"All processes have a continuity and I think Diaz-Canel should be there now," said 58-year-old driver Miguel Rodríguez. Castro's retirement ends an era of formal leadership that began with his brother Fidel and country's 1959 revolution.

"One has to step aside for the young people," said 64-year-old retiree Juana Busutil, for whom Castro "is going to continue being the leader."

The transition comes at a difficult time for Cuba, with many on the island anxious about what lies ahead.

The coronavirus pandemic, painful financial reforms and restrictions imposed by the Trump administration have battered the economy, which shrank 11% last year as a result of a collapse in tourism and remittances. Long food lines and shortages have brought back echoes of the "special period" that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

Prince Philip laid to rest in royal funeral

PTI ■ LONDON



to Britain and the Commonwealth.

The ceremony, which began at St George's Chapel in

Windsor Castle with a national minute's silence at 15:00 local time on Saturday, was a religious one though without any

sermons, as planned by the Duke — who passed away aged 99 last week on Friday.

"The Order of Service for the funeral was agreed with the Duke of Edinburgh during his lifetime, and reflects the Duke's military affiliations, and personal elements of His Royal Highness' life," Buckingham Palace said in a statement.

At the end of the ceremony, the Duke's coffin was carried to his resting place in the royal vault beneath St George's Chapel.

CORRIGENDUM	
Reference to publication of ICICI Bank Limited vs SHISHIR DUTT SHARMA, Case No-Suit No 1967/17., ICICI Bank Limited vs SANJAY KUMAR PANDIT, Case No-Suit no 933/18, ICICI Bank Limited vs KULVINDER SINGH, Case No-FAO 213/2015, ICICI Bank Limited vs MEHKAR SINGH, Case No-CM(M) 549/2020 & CM APPL.27986/2020, ICICI Bank Limited vs SUBODH KUMAR, Case No-CM(M) 602/2020 & CM APPL.30659/2020, ICICI Bank Limited vs JITENDRA CHATURVEDI, Case No-CM (M) 22/2020, ICICI Bank Limited vs MOHD ASIF, Case No-CM(M) 178/2021, ICICI Bank Limited vs ARCHANA RAJ, Case No-CM(M) 573/2020 & CM APPL.29273/2020, ICICI Bank Limited vs MOHAMMAD ARIF, Case No-CSSCJ.1871/19, ICICI Bank Limited vs VIJAY GUPTA, Case No-Suit No. 1088/2018, ICICI Bank Limited vs RAHUL YADAV, Case No-CM (M) 222/2020, ICICI Bank Limited vs VIJAY GUPTA, Case No-Suit No. 1088/2018 of April 17, 2021 published in The Pioneer (Eng.) and The Pioneer (Hin.). Due to inadvertent mistake the Auction Date was wrongly mentioned as May 1, 2021 and April 22, 2021 instead of May 06, 2021. We therefore, requesting to read it as May 06, 2021. and remaining content is unchanged.	
Dated: April 17, 2021 Place : Delhi/ NCR	

कार्यालय नगर निगम, भरतपुर	
क्रमांक :- न.जि.म. / निगम / 2021-22 / 02-07	दिनांक :- 05.04.2021
ई-निविदा सूचना - 01/2021-22	
नगर निगम, भरतपुर द्वारा नगर निगम, भरतपुर में उपयुक्त श्रेणी में एवं अन्य विभागों के "A" & "AA" श्रेणी में परीक्षित सर्वेक्षकों से निर्धारित प्रश्न में ई प्रोक्वोरमेंट प्रक्रिया से वेबसाइट http://eproc.raajasthan.gov.in पर ऑनलाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा की महत्वपूर्ण शर्तें एवं विवरण वेबसाइट http://sppp.raajasthan.gov.in एवं http://eproc.raajasthan.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है।	
कार्यों की संख्या	18 कार्य
कार्यों की कुल लागत	505.46 लाख
वेब साइट http://eproc.raajasthan.gov.in से निविदा डाउनलोड करने की समय व तिथि	दिनांक 15.04.2021 से 05.05.2021 तक एवं सायं 6.00 बजे
वेब साइट http://eproc.raajasthan.gov.in से ऑनलाईन निविदा अपलोड करने की अंतिम समय व तिथि	दिनांक 05.05.2021 सायं 6.00 बजे
नगर निगम में प्रोसेसिंग शुल्क निविदा शुल्क की सूचीआर. स्लिंग एवं अमानत राशि का घोषणा पत्र का मूल रद्वीय भौतिक रूप से जमा करने की तिथि	दिनांक 06.05.2021 दोपहर 12.00 बजे
निविदा खोलने की समय व तिथि	दिनांक 07.05.2021 दोपहर 12.00 बजे
UBN Number:- 1. DLB2122WSOB01462 2. DLB2122WSOB01465 3. DLB2122WSOB01467 4. DLB2122WSOB01471 5. DLB2122WSOB01474 6. DLB2122WSOB01476 7. DLB2122WSOB01478 8. DLB2122WSOB01479 9. DLB2122WSOB01480 10. DLB2122WSOB01481 11. DLB2122WSOB01482 12. DLB2122WSOB01483 13. DLB2122WSOB01484 14. DLB2122WSOB01486 15. DLB2122WSOB01489 16. DLB2122WSOB01492 17. DLB2122WSOB01495 18. DLB2122WSOB01496	
आयुक्त नगर निगम, भरतपुर	
राज.सं.बा.प / सी / 21 / 615	

AMID COVID 2.0

Fiscal package may be on cards to maintain economic recovery

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

A fiscal stimulus package may be on the cards again as the Government looks at ways to prevent the present surge in Covid-19 cases and the ensuing restrictions imposed by the States from derailing the economic recovery.

After last year's lockdowns, which resulted in the country's GDP contracting by (-) 23.9 per cent, it was hoped that the economy will grow hand-somely in FY22 to register a double digit growth.

For this to happen, the RBI has projected a Q1 FY22 GDP growth of 26.2 per cent. But the recent surge in the pandemic has again raised serious ques-

tions about the health of the economy.

There are some discussions within the government about the need, shape and timing of a fresh fiscal stimulus package.

The idea is to see that the poor and small businesses do not suffer and their livelihood support is not disturbed, said an official source, on condition of anonymity.

The source said that any such package, if finalised, would come up later this month or next month.

The Union Finance Ministry has so far not indicated about any new stimulus to contain the disruptions caused by the fresh Covid-19

wave in the country.

Last year, the government and the RBI came up with a series of announcements to provide relief to the common man and businesses impacted by the Covid-induced lockdown.

Under its 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' package and the Garib Kalyan Yojana, the government had announced packages worth over Rs 20 lakh crore.

While the economic situation is still much better than last year and the government has indicated against a complete lockdown this year, support measures could just look at the most vulnerable sections of the society and the industry.

Sources said that like last year, the package may include measures by the government as well as compliance relief offered by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Already, various ministries are providing inputs to the Centre.

The worry for the government this time round is also about inflation that has seen an increase in the last few months.

This actually means that people are already struggling with higher food prices while their income is dogged with uncertainty.

The RBI will also have to do a balancing act over growth aspirations and containing inflation.

DPIIT notifies PLI scheme for ACs, LED lights

MERE ASSEMBLY OF FINISHED GOODS NOT TO BE INCENTIVISED

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT) has notified the PLI scheme for ACs and LED lights and said that selection of companies to avail the incentives would

done to support manufacturing of components which are not made in India presently.

It said that mere assembly of finished goods would not be incentivised and companies investing in basic/core components would get a higher priority.

Earlier this month, the government approved a production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for white goods - Air Conditioners (ACs) and LED

Lights - with a budgetary outlay of Rs 6,238 crore. It will be implemented over 2021-22 to

2028-29. According to the notification of the DPIIT, the Empowered Group

of Secretaries chaired by Cabinet Secretary will monitor the PLI scheme, undertake periodic review of the outgo under the scheme, ensure uniformity of all PLIs and take appropriate action to ensure that the expenditure is within the prescribed outlay.

The group will be empowered to make any changes in the modalities of the scheme within the overall financial outlay of Rs 6,238 croreIt said

that the incentive per beneficiary will be applicable on incremental sales (net of taxes) of manufactured goods (as distinct from traded goods) over the base year (2019-20) subject to ceilings.

"Mere assembly of finished goods shall not be incentivised. Selection of companies for the scheme shall be done so as to incentivise manufacturing of components or sub-assemblies which are not manufactured in India presently with sufficient capacity," it said.

Indian pharma exports grow at 18% to 24.44 bn USD in FY 21

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Pharma exports from India witnessed over 18 per cent growth to USD 24.44 billion during the last financial year against USD 20.58 billion in FY20, Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (Pharmexcil) said on Saturday.

"We have observed a big leap in our exports in the month of March 2021 which is USD 2.3 billion (figures for March are provisional) and is highest among the exports of all the months of this financial year, the growth rate for this month is 48.5 per cent against the exports in March 2020 (USD 1.54 billion)," Udaya Bhaskar, Director General of Pharmexcil said in a release.

Growth rate seems relatively big as the exports of March 2020 was crunched due to lockdown across the world and supply chain disruption, he was quoted as saying.

When the global pharma market is negatively grown by 1-2% in 2020, there is a big surge in demand for Indian made generics owing to its quality and affordability, the official said adding Drug formulations and Biologicals is the second largest Principal commodity being exported by India. The Pharma exports body is expecting big growth in Indian vaccine exports in the coming years and the government policy on PLI (production Linked Incentive) scheme will also help the domestic

pharma to grow by reducing import dependence and develop export potential in the days to come as most of the countries are looking at India for APIs (active pharmaceutical ingredient) he said.

North America is the largest exporting region for Indian pharmaceuticals with more than 34 per cent share.

Country wise exports to the US, Canada and Mexico have recorded a growth of 12.6, 30 and 21.4 per cent respectively. South Africa being the second largest exporting country, recorded a big jump of 28 per cent growth while Europe was the third largest exporting region which has recorded approximately 11 per cent growth over previous year.

Crude to be around \$60 a barrel in 2021

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Global crude oil prices are expected to be in the range of \$60 a barrel over the long term period as OPEC+ decision to cap supply until demand recovers and the pandemic continuing to keep a check on consumption.

According to a research report by ICICI Securities, Brent has recovered and is over \$ 60/bbl since February, 21 vs April, 20 low of \$ 21/bbl driven by demand recovery from lows and OPEC+ capping supply to ensure supply deficit since July last year.

"OPEC+ capping supply until demand recovers is estimated to ensure supply deficit of 1.3 million barrels of oil per day in calendar year 2021 and keep Brent above \$60/bbl," the brokerage said.

The expectation for the crude was that it may surge in 2021 on the back of economies recovering as vaccinations tamed the spread of Covid-19. But the lockdowns again due to fresh surge in Covid cases has delayed demand recovery in Europe.

Also, the probability of US sanctions on Iran's oil exports being lifted appears to have increased significantly. EU and other signatories to the nuclear deal are talking to Iran and US separately to bring

them on the same page and revive the deal.

Indications are that US sanctions on Iran exports may be lifted as early as before Iran's presidential elections due on June 18.

"While OPEC+ capping supply should keep Brent above \$ 60/bbl, delay in demand recovery and US lifting sanctions on Iran exports would cap further rise. We estimate long-term Brent at \$60/bbl," ICICI Securities said.

With regard to gross refining magind (GRMs) the outlook is modest as capacity addition is expected to exceed to refined products demand growth.

Second Covid wave to disrupt fabric demand: Ind-Ra

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The second wave of Covid-19 resurgence can potentially disrupt fabric demand, said India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra).

"Woven fabrics production continued to improve mom, though marginally, in January 2021, despite remaining 21 per cent YoY lower," Ind-Ra said.

"While recoveries for blended and knitted fabrics were quicker, that of woven is expected to be delayed with micro-lockdowns and work-from-home culture."

Besides, export demand for woven fabrics is expected to plunge over Q1FY22 with key destination countries grappling with a second wave of pandemic.

"Fabric exports remained muted in January 2021 on a mom basis, and 17 per cent YoY lower.

Demand for imported fabrics surged over December 2020-January 2021, led by restocking by retailers."

"Imports in value terms doubled between November 2020-January 2021 with higher shipments from China, Bangladesh and Vietnam."

AGEL arm bags 150 MWac solar project

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Adani Green Energy arm AREHFifteenL has bagged a 150 MWac solar energy project capacity from Torrent Power.

Adani Renewable Energy Holding Fifteen Ltd (AREHFifteenL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL), participated in a Tender issued by Torrent Power Ltd for procurement of power through competitive bidding process, from grid connected solar photovoltaic power projects to be setup in Gujarat.

AREHFifteenL has been awarded a project capacity of 150 MWac Solar Power Project, a BSE filing said.

The fixed tariff for this project capacity is Rs 2.22/ kWh for a period of 25 years.

Operating margins of sugar companies expected to moderate in FY22: ICRA

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The operating margins of sugar companies are likely to moderate in FY22 due to higher production cost and reduced export subsidy, ratings agency ICRA said in a statement.

Besides, benefits from improved distillery performance was also cited by the agency as a factor that might moderate operating margins.

"In the medium term, the government support measures for higher diversion of sugar for ethanol production would reduce the sugar surplus and support in improving the demand supply dynamics of the industry on a sustainable basis," ICRA said.

As per the agency, domestic sugar production is expected to increase by 10 per cent to 30.2 million MT in SY2021 and outstrip consumption by

around 4.2 million MT.

ICRA expects sugar exports at around 5.5 million MT supported by the export policy and the closing stocks are likely to remain higher than normative sugar stock levels of 6-6.5 million MT at around 9.5 million MT for SY2021 season.

However, the stocks are expected to be lower than the previous season at around 11.0 million MT.

"Given the sugar surplus scenario in the domestic market, any significant increase in the sugar prices is ruled out in the near term. However, the higher diversion of sugar towards ethanol and the remunerative pricing of ethanol is expected to result in an improved distillery performance in FY2022," said Sabyasachi Majumdar, Senior Vice President & Group Head, ICRA.

Correction an opportunity to add cyclical: MOFSL

FIANS ■ MUMBAI

Market correction due to Covid resurgence is an opportunity to add cyclical stocks said Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

In a report, MOFSL said resurgence in second wave of Covid-19 has led to elevated market volatility and correction. Lately, both Nifty and Bank Nifty are down 5 and 15 per cent from their recent highs, respectively.

"To contain the pandemic, several states have announced localised restrictions with Maharashtra yesterday unveiling set of broad-based measures for two weeks mini-lockdown."

"We expect the set of restrictive measures to impact near-term economic recovery till cases stabilise. However, key

government authorities and policymakers have ruled out national lockdown."

Consequently, MOFSL recommend that correction should be viewed by the investors as a buying opportunity and advocated adding a balanced mix of growth, cyclical and defensive stocks in their portfolios."We continue to be 'OW' on the BFSI, IT, Metals, Cement and Capital Goods, Neutral on Consumer, Auto and Pharma while staying 'UW' on Energy, Utility and Infrastructure."

On the bright side, it said that vaccinations are gradually beginning to accelerate.

"As vaccination pick up further with approvals for more vaccines now in place, we expect the focus to shift back to growth, cyclical recovery and fundamentals.0

FICCI writes to 25 CMs on Covid management, urges to avoid lockdown

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Industry body FICCI has written to Chief Ministers of 25 States urging them to avoid imposing partial or total lockdown in the wake of fresh surge in Covid cases.

The industry body also argued that the economy has barely begun to turnaround from the impact of the earlier lockdowns and such decisions now will push the push the economy into downward spiral.

In the letter written to state CMs by FICCI President Uday Shankar, the chamber has acknowledged the need to break the Covid chain but has suggested the strategy to focus more on ramping up covid testing, awareness drive and enforcement of Covid appro-

priate behaviour rather than lockdown.

"The population may be sensitised about the Covid appropriate behaviour like wearing masks, physical distancing and personal hygiene.

Support may be taken by involving volunteers from the schools, colleges and the NGOs. Strict compliance to Covid protocol may be ensured with suitable penalties for violations," the letter states.

FICCI has represented to the Union Government to open up the vaccination for all the people above 18 years of age to give a massive push to the vaccination drive as there is no shortage of vaccines and the inoculation capacity can be increased with the participation of the private sector.

Petrol, diesel price unchanged for 2nd consecutive day

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Fuel prices in the country remained unchanged on Saturday as oil marketing companies decided to go on a pause mode and analyse the global developments on oil prices before effecting a revision.

Accordingly, pump price of petrol and diesel remained at ₹90.40 a litre and ₹80.73 a litre respectively in Delhi.

The price of the two auto fuels had fallen by 16 paise and 14 paise per litre respectively on Thursday after a 15 day break when OMCs kept its prices static.

Across the country as well the petrol and diesel price remained unchanged on Saturday but its retail levels varied depending on the level of local levies on respective states.

SEARCH FOR MISSING



ISHANI @ POOJA

General public is hereby informed that a girl (depicted in the photo), **Namely: Ishani @ Pooja D/o Shri Dharam Das R/o H. No. D-153, Vijay Vihar, Ph-II Delhi** has been missing since 26.03.2021 from her house. In this regard a case vide DD No. 91A dated 27.03.2021 has been lodged at Police Station Vijay Vihar, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:-

Age : 20 Years, **Height:** 5'1", **Complexion :** Fair, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Blue colour suit and cream colour leggy and sandal in feet.

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing girl, may inform SHO, Vijay Vihar, Delhi at E-mail Id – cic@cbi.gov.in or Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

SHO
P.S., Vijay Vihar, Delhi
Rohini Distt., Delhi
Ph. No. 011-27061294, 27061295

Phone: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639
DP/784/RD/2021

SEARCH FOR MISSING



Sachin Mittal

General Public is hereby informed that a person namely **Sachin Mittal S/o Sh. Sajjan Kumar, R/o H.No. B-1/9, Budh Vihar Ph-I, Delhi** has been missing since 31.03.2021 from the area of PS. Vijay Vihar. In this regard a **DD No. 107-A Dated 31.03.2021** has been lodged at PS, Vijay Vihar, Delhi. The description of Missing person is as under:

Name: Sachin Mittal, **Father's Name :** Sh. Sajjan Kumar, **Age :** 35 years, **Height :** 5'9", **Face :** Long, **Complexion :** Wheatish, **Built:** Medium, **Wearing :** Blue Jeans, White Shirt, Sports Shoes in feet.

If anyone having any clue/information, kindly inform the undersigned.

SHO
P.S., Vijay Vihar, Delhi
Ph : 011-27061294
27061295

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>
e-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax : 011-24368639
Ph. : 011-24368638, 24368641
DP/781/RD/2021

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED GIRL



Kusum @ Kiran

General Public is hereby informed that one girl (depicted in the photo) namely **Kusum @ Kiran D/o Sh. Ashok R/o Jhuggi No.424, Cow Street, Indira Camp, Sector-03, Rohini, Delhi Aged-17 Years** has been reported missing/kidnapped since 21.03.2021 at about 4 AM from her residence vide **FIR No.097/21 u/s 363 IPC Dated 22.03.2021** registered at Police Station South Rohini, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:-

Complexion: Wheatish, **Height:** 5'2", **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **ID:** KS mark on right hand, **Clothing:** Green coloured suit, Green coloured salwar.

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing/kidnapped girl, may inform SHO, South Rohini, Delhi at E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in>

Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641
FAX No. : 011-24368639
DP/775/RD/2021

Sd/-
SHO, South Rohini, Delhi
Tel.: 011-27512189, 27510515

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



The general public is hereby informed that an unidentified person about 75 years of age whose name, residence, and family is unknown had been found dead opposite Kabutar Market, Jama Masjid, Delhi. In this regard, a vide has been registered with **DD No: 49-A, dated 12.04.2021 at PS Jama Masjid, Delhi**. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to identify the deceased person, but no clue has come to light so far.

The description of the UIDB is as under:
Sex: Male, **Age:** 75 Years, **Height:** 5'6", **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Oval, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** White colour kurta and white colour pajama.

If anyone has any information about his relatives, kindly inform the SHO/Jama Masjid, Delhi.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax : 011-24368639
DP/764/CD/2021

SHO
P.S. Jama Masjid, Delhi
Ph. No. 011-23269777, 2326125

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED BOY



Neeraj

General Public is hereby informed that one boy (depicted in the photo) namely **Neeraj S/o Sh. Shambhu Nath R/o E-86, Ground Floor, Vijay Vihar, Ph-2, Delhi Aged-13 Years** has been reported missing/kidnapped since 13.03.2021 at 5 PM vide **FIR No.118/21 u/s 363 IPC Dated 20.03.2021** registered at Police Station Vijay Vihar, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Complexion: Wheatish, **Height:** 5'5", **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **Clothing:** Cream coloured pant, Blue coloured T-shirt and sport shoes in feet.

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing/kidnapped boy, may inform SHO, Vijay Vihar, Delhi at E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in>

Sd/-
SHO, Vijay Vihar, Delhi
Tel.: 011-27061294-95
Mob.: 8750870329

Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641
FAX No. : 011-24368639
DP/762/RD/2021

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(See Section 82 Cr.PC)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that **Pooja Mishra, D/o Ravinder Mishra R/o RZ 123, Gali No.5, Naryan Vihar, Prem Nagar 2nd, Kirari Suleman Nagar, North-West Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to has committed) the offence in case **CC No.7962/17 S. k. Motor Vs Pooja Misra u/s 138 NIA Act, P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Pooja Mishra cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Pooja Mishra has absconded (or is concealing herself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Pooja Mishra of **CC No.7962/17 S. k. Motor Vs Pooja Misra u/s 138 NIA Act, P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **24.05.2021**.

By Order,
Ms. Anuradha Sonker
Metropolitan Magistrate (NI Act)-08
DP/787/RD/2021 Room No.215, 2nd Floor, Dwarka Court, New Delhi

SEARCH FOR MISSING



Lakhan

General public is hereby informed that a boy **Lakhan S/o Raju, R/o Aasha Kiran, Home sector-1, Rohini, Delhi** has been missing since 03.03.2021 at 04:00 PM from the area of PS Vijay Vihar, Delhi. In this regard, **DD No. 61-A dated 03.03.2021 has been registered at P.S. Vijay Vihar, Delhi**. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the missing boy but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the missing boy is as under:

Name: Lakhan, **Gender:** Male, **Age:** 20 years, **Height:** 5'1", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Medium, **Wearing:** Blue colour jeans, green colour t-shirt and slippers on his feet.

If anyone has any information regarding this missing boy, kindly inform SHO/Vijay Vihar, Delhi.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax : 011-24368639
DP/779/RD/2021

SHO
P.S. Vijay Vihar, Delhi
Ph. No. 011-27521294, 27521295

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED











Tarsen Lal

General Public is hereby informed that one person **Namely: Tarsen Lal, S/o: Sh. Durga Das, R/o: H.No. B-750, Sec-1, Rohini, Delhi** has been missing/ kidnapped since **22.03.2021** from the area of P.S. Vijay Vihar, Delhi. In this regard a case vide **DD No. 126A, dated 22.03.2021** has been registered at P.S. Vijay Vihar, Delhi. The description of the missing/ kidnapped person is as under:

Age: 64 years, **Height:** 5'8", **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **Complexion:** Shallow, **ID Mark:** Mentally Disturb, **Wearing:** Blue colour kurta, pajama and slipper in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing person but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this missing person kindly inform to the following.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail Id - cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639
DP/772/RD/2021

SHO
P.S. Vijay Vihar, Delhi
Ph.: 011-27511294, 8750870329

POINTS TABLE							
			P	W	L	NRR	PTS
1		RCB	2	2	0	+0.175	4
2		CSK	2	1	1	+0.616	2
3		MI	2	1	1	+0.225	2
4		DC	2	1	1	+0.195	2
5		RR	2	1	1	+0.052	2
6		KKR	2	1	1	+0.000	2
7		PBKS	2	1	1	-0.909	2
8		SRH	2	0	2	-0.400	0



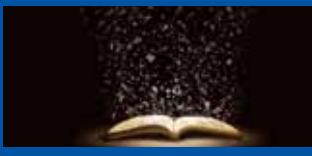
the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

Lokas 2: What Exists Above

To move from the *Bhulok* to *Bhuvalok* (Astral Plan), from *Tamas* to more *Rajas*, we need to work on controlling our senses

2



4

Of learning and wisdom

Every seeker must undergo a mandatory grooming process before being allowed exposure to the particular subject of learning

I personally think that if you deny something or if you hide something you're inadvertently admitting it's wrong
— Amber Heard



TELLING THE TALE OF HERITAGE

Stories are an excellent mode of keeping the history of heritage alive, writes SUTAPA BASU, as she shares her impressions on the importance of making heritage a part of contemporary storytelling

Stories have disseminated consciousness of our past cultures since times immemorial. Whether through cave paintings or oral narrations, the earliest mode of passing traditions, history, customs, and rituals through generations has been only through storytelling. Before written language was discovered, even certain work skills were passed from father to son through stories. The reason is simple, anything woven into a story is unforgettable. Storytelling is a powerful tool that has massive lasting impact. When we listen to stories or read them, they boost our feelings of trust, compassion, empathy and positively influence our social behaviour. Storytelling has a unique ability to build connections. When we hear a well-told story, your brain reacts as if we are experiencing it ourselves. We respond to stories because they cultivate a sense of togetherness. Thus, stories that tell us about our past or what we have inherited from our ancestors make us feel, we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

WHAT IS HERITAGE?

Heritage is the complete scope of inherited traditions, monuments, objects, and culture. Most significantly, it is the range of contemporary activities, meanings, and behaviour that we draw from them. Heritage includes, but is much more than just preserving, excavating, displaying, or restoring a collection of old things. Heritage is tangible as well as intangible. Monuments, artifacts, books, archived records of events are tangible while traditions, lifestyles and mannerisms are some of the intangible elements that we inherit. We can explore heritage through excavations, conservation, restoration and display of concrete objects. However, history of songs, recipes, cuisine, nuances of language, dances, dress and other conventions of legacy need to be perceived and appreciated. An excellent mode of keeping the history of heritage alive, generation after generation, is through stories. For what is history but story telling? Let's see how some of the palpable as well as abstract elements of heritage have benefited through telling stories.

ARCHITECTURE

Old forts and castles, mansions and monuments are natural source for stories, myths, and tales. When I visited Chittorgarh fort, one of the myths I heard was about how the religious fervour of Meera Bai, the Princess of Mewar, had kept intact her chamber in the huge palace though the rest of the royal residence had been flattened. Obviously, I went back and read up everything available about the history of the palace and fort. I discovered more such myths. In *The Pillars of the Earth*, author Ken Follet

describes in great detail how a 12th century cathedral is built. He makes a tale of its unusual architecture, politics and weaves civil war, famine and religious strife around it. Bimal Mitra's Bengali novel *Saheb, Bibi, Golam* made into the famous film, *Sahib, Bibi Aur Ghulam* is set in a *zamindari* mansion that resonates with the culture of the period. His entire story is about the feudal and patriarchal traditions which emanate from the mansion. Another story like that is *Shatranj Ke Khilari* about the *nawabi* culture that has been filmed in the old palaces of Lucknow.

CUISINE

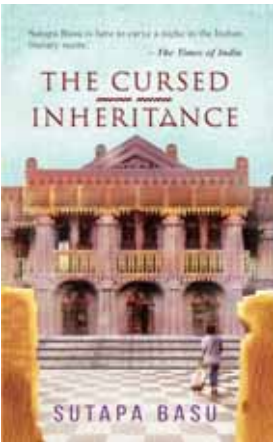
An amazing story that revolves around food, its concoction, history and influence is *Like Water For Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel. Tita, the tragic protagonist of the story, is only able to express herself when she cooks. The chapters even carry recipes. They fascinated me and I even cooked some of them. The stories about food gave me a wonderful view of regional cuisine. Another book that has enamoured me is *The Flavour of Spice* by Marryam H Reshi that gloriously celebrates spices. Reading her book, I embarked upon a delightful foray into the heritage of Indian cooking as she traces history of spices as far back as possible.

WAY OF LIFE

Reading *Gone With The Wind* by Margaret Mitchell gives the reader an excellent insight into lifestyles, dresses, social customs and attitudes prevalent in southern parts of USA during the American Civil War in the 1800s. The book has become a reference point for scholars of that period. Vikram Seth's novel *A Suitable Boy* brings us the perfume of courtesans and old-world charm of the pre-independence period. It gives us a peep into lifestyles, notions and sentiments of a bygone culture.

DRESS

Dramas written by playwrights such as Shakespeare, Kalidas or Anton Chekov, when staged, are a feast for costume designers. They display the fashions worn during a specific period in a certain parts of the world where the dramas are set. However, stories are created not only by writers but are also told by raconteurs. When the *Ramcharitra Manas* or *Meghdoot* is recited there are vivid descriptions of garments, headresses and weapons which make them come alive through mental visuals for the listeners. History and heritage of dresses come alive only through these descriptions. We can then compare them and find out what of that heritage still remains in our fashions today.



WE RESPOND TO STORIES BECAUSE THEY CULTIVATE A SENSE OF TOGETHERNESS. THUS, STORIES THAT TELL US ABOUT OUR PAST OR WHAT WE HAVE INHERITED FROM OUR ANCESTORS MAKE US FEEL, WE ARE PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER THAN OURSELVES

MEANS OF TRANSPORT

Read *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen and we find out about chaises, stagecoaches, barouches, phaetons, and curricles. What about *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* by Jules Verne to know about submarines or fictional wonder vehicles such as the muggle car from the *Harry Potter* series? *Pather Panchali* by written by Bibhutibhushan Bandhopadhyaya and put on celluloid by Satyajit Ray shows its protagonist's obsession with the train that passes his village. Since his only travel experience had been on a bullock cart, the speeding train enthralled him.

TRADITIONS

Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* is a wonderful cameo on the traditional Christmas spirit. Similarly, *Sense and Sensibility* by Austen profiles the Victorian custom of older men marrying young girls. Emily Bronte's novel *Wuthering Heights* is all about how social class creates conflicts among its characters. Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Jhumpa Lahiri's *Namesake* and *The Lowlands* are excellent profiles of traditions and rituals in different parts of India. Arvind Adiga's *The White Tiger* gives insights into class disparities of an India of a decade ago. Chitra Divakaruni's *Palace of Illusions* takes the reader back to the rituals of the *Mahabharata* period of Indian history while *Before We Visit the Goddess* is about multi-generational bonds, that rise from the countryside of Bengal, India and sweep into the streets of Houston, Texas.

NUANCES OF LANGUAGE

Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is a wonderful study of the use of dialect by different social classes in nineteenth century America. In fact, introducing dialect into literary writing goes back to Chaucer. Non-standard spellings and slang are used often in literature to delineate characters and give them identity. Evolving language is one of true measures of heritage. Do you remember Eliza Doolittle in George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*? If only learning the correct dialect could make a flower girl into a lady of consequence, how important can language be in the reconstruction of society? Ruskin Bond often uses regional nuances and dialect to create atmosphere and build his characters. Many of his stories are set in the terai of the Himalayas and his villagers often use words in their own dialect in dialogues. With such eminent authors to light up my path, I have included many features of heritage in my books to build ambience, build characters and bring authenticity to my storytelling. In all

my historical fiction books, I create the historical period through visual pen pictures of the dress, cuisine and traditions of the period and place. In *The Curse of Nader Shah*, I have exposed Nader Shah's obsession with the colour red on his garments and his creation of the four-cornered hat, the *kulah-e-naderi*. In *The Legend of Genghis Khan*, I have described the wide range of knives that the Mongols always carried on their belts and their varied purpose. *Padmavati* has numerous regional words sprinkled across the story for the sake of authenticity. My latest book, *The Cursed Inheritance* focuses on the city of Kolkata and its cultural nuances. The *zamindari* mansions that dot the city inspired the setting of this cozy mystery inside a dilapidated yet grand mansion of Kolkata, called Sarkar Bari. I describe egg concoctions being cooked that are special to Kolkata as well as a coal stove built inside an iron pail, a common cooking implement in Bengal. Kolkata is one of few cities which still has the hand-pulled rickshaws. Mentioned numerous times in my new book, is Kolkata's iconic vehicle though the protagonist also empathises with the emaciated pullers and their livelihoods. I have chronicled the tradition of celebrating the festival of Durga Puja in the mansions of old *zamindari* families in this novel. Belief in *tantric* practices and demons as guardians of treasures is one the regional features of rural Bengal which has been exploited to the hilt. Stories, narratives, and storytelling are central aspects of all cultures and thus, a part of heritage. For the storytelling to become an effective propagator of cultural history, it must engage the listener or reader, and provide a narrative that is both cognitively and emotionally compelling. People are natural storytellers. They tell narratives about their experiences and the meanings that these experiences have in their lives. All cultures and societies also possess their own stories or narratives about their past and their present, and sometimes about their view of the future. The memories and retelling of the past provide a sense of security in an uncertain world. Stories, both written and verbal, are veritable source for this history. Stories are a thread of timelessness that runs through a rapidly changing environment. Hence, stories revolving around heritage bring a special sense of belonging and of continuity. It reduces global conflict and brings empathy for co-existence. All said and done, storytelling is one of the dominant means of preserving heritage and passing down of values and traditions that make the global social fabric stronger. *The writer is an author and poet. Her book, The Cursed Inheritance, has been recently published*

Importance of behavioural economics during Covid

The coronavirus pandemic has not only grabbed the headlines but has also thrown the global health emergency care in disarray. The ubiquitous virus has not spared anyone, not even the most prosperous economies of the world.

Studies have shown that people living with comorbidity (i.e., concomitant morbidity) are under high risk of falling critically ill or succumbing to coronavirus. They are dying from the in-hospital complications and a high incidence of mortality. The comorbidity is mostly of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity, cerebrovascular accident, malignancy, asthma, cardiovascular disease, chronic kidney and obstructive pulmonary diseases, etc.

Moreover, persons with diabetes have been in the lime-light since the inception of the pandemic as the epidemiological data have revealed their high risk of several clinical adversaries (The Lancet, 2020). As per the statistics, 71 per cent of deaths are owing to NCDs globally, 41 million people every year, of which 15 million are under the age of 70 years. Moreover 8.5 million cases are from low and middle income countries.

The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology published its findings based on 61 million individuals in England on their absolute and relative risk of mortality due to Covid-19 and the type of diabetes. It finds that the odd ratio of in-hospital deaths is 3.51, and 2.03 for persons with type-1 and type-2 diabetes, respectively. Information from 1561 Covid-19 patients from two hospitals in Wuhan showed that those with diabetes (9.8%) were more likely to need admission to the intensive care unit or to die, and similar cases are also noted from other parts of the world.

However, despite having a high percentage of diabetes, the



A patient waits inside an ambulance to be admitted to a dedicated Covid-19 hospital in Ahmedabad on April 15, 2021

AP

reported cases of mortality in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan are comparatively low so far. The climatic and geographical factors have some bearing on this low fatality rate in this region. (Apicella et. al., The Lancet, July 17, 2020).

Using the Longitudinal Aging Study in India (LASI, 2017-19) database of the Harvard, IIPS and the University of Southern California on disease and health condition of the popu-

lation aged 45 years and above, we estimated that 18.28 per cent have comorbidity. About 60 per cent of the patients with diabetes have high blood pressure, while 17.32 per cent of patients with high cholesterol levels are suffering from chronic heart diseases. This co-occurrence of more than one disorder in the same individual is a matter of utmost concern during the raging pandemic. Our results also demonstrated that 75 per cent of the indi-

viduals suffering from comorbidity are hardly ever or never engaged in vigorous physical activities. Out of total patients suffering from comorbidity, about one-quarter indulge in substance use. Cases among females are more than males and it increases with the rise in income from the second to fifth income quintile.

The Government's initiative to prioritise the people with comorbidity in this age group on the vaccination list is the

need of the hour and has been followed from March 1 to curb the second wave of covid.

However, the public spending on NCDs is less than 0.5 per cent of GDP in India. The findings of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) of 2015-16 state that obesity has given a steep rise to hypertension among people with BMI more than 30. While 11 per cent of the eligible women (i.e, age 15-49) have hypertension, including 7 per cent having stage-1

hypertension, and stage-2 and stage-3 hypertension at 1 per cent each. On blood pressure parameter, it finds 61 per cent women as compared to 43 per cent men, but only 1 per cent of them take anti-hypertensive medicines.

The National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke (NPCDCS) has been executed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to

raise awareness regarding risk factors and establishment of NCD clinics, cardio care centre and screening at primary health-care level. The National Action Plan has also been conceived along the global monitoring framework to reduce the premature deaths from NCDs to 25 per cent by 2025. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has militated against Government's efforts of integrating NPCDCS with National Health Mission and AYUSH to promote a healthy lifestyle and strengthening infrastructure to detect NCDs at an early stage.

The focus of the healthcare system in India at present lies on four important directions -- intervention in maternal and child health, preventive and affordable healthcare, medical infrastructure, and communicable and non-communicable diseases. Under the aegis of Ayushman Bharat Scheme, the Health and Wellness Centres, Primary Healthcare Centres, Community Health Centres are providing free diagnostic services for the NCDs.

Simply designing and implementing policies are not sufficient to weaken the bond between Covid-19 and comorbidity. There is a need to eliminate practical and psychological barriers to healthy behaviour, which is possible by the adoption of a behavioural economics approach. Integration of these idiosyncratic approaches into policymaking will illustrate its ability to improve both the effectiveness and efficiency of policies through well-designed interventions in curtailing the comorbidity, especially during the second of Covid-19.

(Pratap C Mohanty teaches Economics at IIT Roorkee. He specialises in Health Economics. Pragya Taneja is a PhD Fellow, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Roorkee)

Integration of idiosyncratic approaches into policymaking will illustrate its ability to improve both the effectiveness and the efficiency of policies through well-designed interventions in curtailing comorbidity, especially during the second of Covid-19



PRATAP C MOHANTY



PRAGYA TANEJA

PERSPECTIVE

Takers' total reliance key to vaccination success

From the early-vaccinated who share their experience with others to the vaccine administrators, local bodies that facilitate the vaccination centres, healthcare community, policymakers and the media, everyone has a role to highlight the need to support and encourage the vaccination drive



SUBHROJOYOTI BHOWMICK

It is crucial that the world's largest vaccination campaign in India must succeed with more shots being administered because this is the green shoot of hope we have to rebuild our lives and our economy and to build India stronger.

Covid-19 has had an unprecedented impact in the way we live and work. The lockdown and quarantine protocols also fueled social anxiety as more cases were identified, and reports of deaths due to Covid-19 related complications trickled in.

Every death is a tragic loss; every death impacts people and families in ways that go unreported. With over 1.69 lakh lives already lost to the pandemic, there is urgent need to embrace the nationwide vaccination drive.

The nation's resilience and prompt action has seen it record among the world's lowest number of cases and deaths per million of the population, but we must continue to build on this through the most effective and safe tool that science has developed — prompt vaccination.

After all, vaccines have helped contain several contagious diseases. The fact that we are smallpox free is just one example of how successful vaccination campaigns have enabled the nation to address pressing health-care crises.

While the first dose of smallpox vaccine reportedly arrived in the country in 1802, the country's first national campaign in 1962 enabled us in achieving the desired effect through the tireless efforts of volunteers and a greater awareness among the public on the need to be vaccinated.

We have seen similar success in preventing tuberculosis through the BCG vaccination programme. Further, from being hyperendemic for polio in the early 1990s, India's success in eliminating wild polioviruses is another inspiring example of the success of the children vaccination programme and awareness campaigns. These successful

vaccination campaigns have helped save millions of precious lives.

What is common across all successful vaccination campaigns is the fact there has been strong grassroots acceptance. With no clear sight on when the Covid-19 pandemic will end, and if the world will ever go back to the place as we knew it, it is crucial to take the jab.

Let us take a moment to look back on the same period last year: There was no hope in sight as the pandemic wreaked havoc across the world. Less than a year later, we have hope and confidence in a number of approved vaccines, highlighting the inspiring work of our scientists. With multiple variants of the virus being reported, being vaccinated is important to support humanity's collective effort to contain the pandemic.

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi has warned, the country, with its large population of 1.3 billion, stands to face trouble if vaccinations are not taken to prevent new infections. The strategy of the nation to first inoculate front-line workers followed by the elderly and now opening up vaccinations for all over 45 is the right direction as we need to ensure lower mortality, given that the elderly and those with medical conditions are more vulnerable to the complications arising from Covid-19.

With vaccination centres set up in key locations across all States, people have more access to vaccination. More than 10 crore doses of the vaccine have already been administered, including over nearly 1.35 crore people taking both the doses, as of April 14.

My family members and I have taken the jab, and the confidence it brings is enormous. The process was seamless; we visited the vaccination centre near our home. There were trained volunteers who explained to us the process of the vaccination, what to expect, and we were back home in no time.

It is both a privilege and an hon-



A medic prepares to administer a dose of Covid-19 vaccine during the vaccination festival Tilka Utsav, at EDMC Vishwakarma Park Dispensary in New Delhi

PTI

our to get the opportunity to protect oneself, and at the same time, support the safety of the family and community. Being vaccinated, I believe, is the first step to protecting yourself and your family, and thereby the wider community and the nation. While it is important to continue to follow all protocols, vaccine ensures that you are less vulnerable to the disease, which gives you a sense of immense relief.

The Government of India has taken the right steps, by authorising the emergency use of Russia's Sputnik

V Covid-19 vaccine, and also fast-tracking approval for other shots already passed by other major countries. With the rising cases in India, vaccination is the most effective tool in our battle against Covid-19. And as the Government rightly stated, "It is very critical to expand the basket of vaccines for domestic use and hasten the pace and coverage of vaccination".

What is the key to the success of this vaccination mission is that every member of the public plays a key role in contributing to it. From the early-

vaccinated who share their experience with others to the vaccine administrators, local bodies that facilitate the vaccination centres, the healthcare community, the policymakers and the media, everyone has a role in highlighting the need to encourage the vaccination drive.

We have a solution to the unprecedented challenge we faced, and it would be unwise, and in fact a disservice to the nation, to squander this opportunity due to apprehension, uncertainty, or misinformation. India's vaccination drive is

moving in the right direction and we must step up the tempo to enable safety for all our fellow citizens, so that as a country we can focus on our growth and socio-economic and developmental priorities.

(The writer is NABH Assessor for Hospitals and Ethics Committee and honorary lecturer, Institute of Clinical Sciences, University of Birmingham, UK; and Consultant, Digital Health Programmes, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad University of Technology (formerly WBUT), West Bengal)



Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331

