

**WORLD 6**

JAPAN, US, FRANCE HOLD MILITARY DRILL EYEING CHINA PRESENCE

**MONEY 7**

GST COUNCIL TO MEET ON MAY 28

**SPORT 8**

ENG IPL STARS LIKELY TO MISS NZ TESTS

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## Delhi's death rate 4th in world; Maha follows suit

UP too has high Covid fatality rate

NAVIN UPADHYAY ■ NEW DELHI

When it comes to death, Delhi has emerged as one of the most favorite hunting grounds for coronavirus across the globe. With a case fatality rate (CFR) of more than 5 per cent, the national Capital is now only behind Poland, Mexico, and Romania on the daily casualty chart. Delhi's CFR is way above the national average of 1.2 pc.

While the caseload continued to show a downward trajectory across the country, the rise in CFA is worrisome. On Saturday, Maharashtra too recorded a high CFA of 2.6 per cent. The daily Covid-19 infections dropped further to 34,848 in Maharashtra, while the number of daily deaths surged to 910 in the State.

Delhi's neighbour Uttar Pradesh also recorded a relatively high case fatality ratio of around 2 per cent. The State logged in a caseload of 12,513 and a death tally of 281 during the last 24 hours.

On Saturday, the national Capital recorded 6,430 new



### Delhi Govt to set up 11 oxygen banks; home delivery in 2 hours

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government is setting up oxygen concentrator banks for patients in home isolation. At least 200 oxygen concentrators will be set up in each of the 11 districts and oxygen will be delivered in two hours to patients in need, said Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday.

"Patients who are not enrolled under the home isolation protocol of the Delhi Government may call 1031 and avail the oxygen concentrator facility," he said. Kejriwal said, "If patients in home isolation require oxygen,

our team will ensure the oxygen concentrator reaches their home within two hours. A technician will also accompany the team who will explain to the family members how to use the oxygen concentrator. However, our team of doctors will first ensure whether the person needs oxygen."

Covid-19 IN INDIA	
TOTAL CASES:	2,46,71,967 (+2,99,484)
DEATHS:	2,70,124 (+3,880)
RECOVERED:	2,07,68,937 (+3,42,266)
ACTIVE:	36,22,713
MAHA:	53,44,063 (+34,848)
K'TAKA:	21,71,931 (+41,664)
KERALA:	21,18,264 (+32,680)
UP:	16,09,140 (+12,513)
DELHI:	13,87,411 (+6,430)

## From Kerala to Bengal, impact of elections on Covid-19 surge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The impact of aggressive campaign and massive mobilisation by political parties

in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Assam and Puducherry in the run-up to the Assembly polls are seen as the principal reasons for massive spread of

corona in these States and Union Territory.

The judiciary, World Health Organization, and health experts have unequivocally agreed that the election-related mobilisation paved the way for a later day Covid-19 surge.

Here is a reality check:

### 3% positivity rate before Bengal campaign, 34% after elections

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

With corona cases spiraling up by the day, Bengal health data experts have started questioning whether March-May electoral extravaganza played the main villain in pushing up cases in the State.

According to State Government reports, while in the second week of March when election campaigns had just started the rate of corona infections was just about 3-4 per cent of the total RT-PCR tests done, the figure leaped up to 31 per cent in the first week of May when the election

Total cases:	10,94,802
Total Deaths:	12,993
Case fatality ratio:	1.2%
Recovery rate:	86.8%
Avg growth rate:	2%

process ended. "You do not need rocket science to prove that election rallies with thousands of people made a perfect recipe for disaster and the disaster is in front of you to see... Bengal had a pretty controlled affair till the month of March and the cases started jumping up with each electoral phase..." said Dr Kajalkrisna Dey.

### Recuperating Kerala relapsed

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

On February 26, 2021, while then Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora addressed a nationally televised Press meet to announce the poll schedule for the Assembly election to be held in West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, and also the Union Territory of Puducherry, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan was in a relaxed mood.

Kerala had almost recovered from the Covid-19 cases which shot up during the Onam and Christmas festivals. Minutes before he left for a public meeting at the Capital city to launch the State-wide election campaign of the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic

Total case:	4,41,191
Total death:	743
Case fatality Ratio:	0.3%
Recovery rate:	78.5%
Avg growth rate:	1.9%

Front, Minister for health KK Shylaja mailed him the details of the day's Covid figures.

It read that the State had diagnosed 3,671 new cases while 14 deaths were recorded from across Kerala. The positive rate was 5.41 per cent. The figures, new cases or fatalities, were comparatively lower than the national average and the scenario on that Friday did not warrant any apprehension, member of the task force had told him.

### TN contained virus, polls unleashed it

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu has seen both the extremes of the pandemic Covid-19 during the last year. The State succeeded in controlling the transmission of the pandemic in the initial days when delegates of Tablighi Jamaat congregation held at New Delhi returned to Tamil Nadu in the first week of March 2020.

Though the pandemic peaked by mid-2020 the total lockdown, had helped the authorities in bringing down the number of newly diagnosed cases from 40,000 in mid-2020 to below the 500 marks by February 2021.

### PUDUCHERRY SEES 60 TIMES JUMP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On February 26, when the Election Commission of India announced the schedule of Assembly polls, the Union Territory of Puducherry recorded just 29 Covid-19 cases and zero death. The total caseload stood 39,669 and the death figure at 667.

Ten and a half weeks down the line, the UT has seen 60 times jump in corona cases. The UT is recording at an average of 1,800 new cases and 25 deaths every day during the last week.

Total cases:	80,947
Total death:	1,099
Case Fatality ratio:	1.4%
Recovery rate:	77.1%
Avg growth rate:	2.4%

### Poll fever changed it all in Assam

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Assam lived with little trace of coronavirus till the electioneering picked up and leaders descended on the State from all parts of the country amid massive mobilisation of people and resources on the ground.

When the poll schedule was announced on February 26, the State recorded just 34 cases and one death in a 24-hour period. People lived without any fear of Covid, which was just beginning to show an uptick in other parts of the country in the early second week of February. But that was it. The poll fever changed it all.

Total cases:	3,19,630
Total death:	2,060
Case fatality ratio:	0.6%
Recovery ratio:	85.8%
Avg growth rate:	1.7%

### Written to Dr Reddy's for supply of 67L doses of Sputnik V: Kejriwal

New Delhi: Amid vaccine shortage faced by Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said his Government has written to Dr Reddy's Laboratories for supply of around 67 lakh doses of Russian Covid-19 vaccine Sputnik V.

### Cairn eyes AI assets to recover \$1.7 bn award due from Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

UK's Cairn Energy Plc has brought a lawsuit in a US court that potentially can lead to seizing of Air India's overseas assets such as airplanes to recover USD 1.72 billion from the Indian Government which an international arbitration tribunal had awarded after overturning levy of retrospective taxes.

Cairn on May 14 filed a lawsuit in the US District Court for the Southern District of New York seeking declaration of Air India as the "alter ego of Indian Government" by virtue of control and as a state-owned company it "legally indistinguishable from the State itself," according to a copy of petition reviewed by PTI.

## Industrialist Prakash Hinduja fined ₹1,270 crore for tax violations by Geneva court

J GOPIKRISHNAN ■ NEW DELHI

A court in Geneva has fined Indian industrialist Prakash Hinduja 157 million francs (₹1,270 crore) for tax violations.

According to Swiss newspaper Gotham City and Le Temps, the Geneva Court imposed the fine on Hinduja for claiming tax exceptions by showing his Monaco residency, while he was actually living in Geneva.

"The Geneva tax authorities suspect the billionaire of Indian origin Prakash Hinduja of staying in his villa in Cologny (GE) until April 2018, when he had officially settled in Monaco in 2007," reported Gotham City.

"In July 2018, the Geneva public prosecutor sought to collect information on Prakash Hinduja and members of his family on behalf of the cantonal

tax authorities, in the context of criminal proceedings, according to a judgment of the Federal Court rendered on April 21 (5A\_1042/2020).

In April 2019, the Federal Tax Administration opened its own investigation into this case, which targets several individuals. The following month, the Geneva tax authorities declared two receiverships, amounting to 154 million francs for cantonal and municipal taxes, and 3 million for federal taxes" reported Le Temps.

Hinduja Group controls Ashok Leyland, IndusInd Bank and Gulf Lubricants. The Indian origin conglomerate having business across the world was started by late PD Hinduja in early 1940s. The Hinduja Group's companies are controlled by holding companies situated in tax havens like Mauritius and Geneva.

## Plasma therapy no silver bullets: Study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Pouring water on the hopes of people on plasma therapy for Covid-19 treatment, a study has found that it's no silver bullet and its usage is not effective on virus patients. In other words, it has no effect on disease severity or mortality.

Plasma therapy is basically using blood plasma from recovered patients and infusing it into newly infected patients. Doctors have been divided over its efficacy with several of them from across India have been recommending the therapy, asking the patients to



arrange for plasma. They believe that it helps to transfer antibodies from recovered patients to new patients. It is said to boost the immune response of a new patient.

However, a team of doctors after conducting the

Randomised Evaluation of Covid-19 Therapy [recovery] trial, said in the "In recovery, the largest clinical trial of convalescent plasma for any infectious indication, we did not find evidence that high-titre convalescent plasma improved

survival or other pre-specified clinical outcomes in patients hospitalised with Covid-19.

"Whether convalescent plasma would benefit other patient groups is unknown and would need to be evaluated in other, adequately powered, randomised clinical trials," the study published in The Lancet said.

The trial is underway at 177 NHS hospitals from across the UK. Earlier, other studies including India's ICMR-PLACID Trial, as well as Argentina's PlasmAr Trial have also shown that plasma therapy has no benefit on hospitalised Covid patients.

### CAPSULE

**IMD: CYCLONE TAUKTAE MOVING TOWARDS GUJ**  
Mumbai: Cyclonic storm Tauktae has intensified and is heading towards the coast of Gujarat and the Union Territory of Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli, though it could bring gusty winds and showers to Mumbai, the IMD said.

**TOP JAMAAT LEADER HELD IN B'DESH**  
Dhaka: Top Jamaat-e-Islami leader and listed 1971 war criminal Shahjahan Chowdhury has been arrested by the police for allegedly instigating the violence unleashed by radical outfit Hefazat-e-Islam on March 26 during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh.



Boats seen anchored at the banks of Upper Lake during coronavirus curfew imposed due to the surge in Covid-19 in Bhopal on Saturday

## Kill Corona campaign in villages

CM orders Ministers, officers to review Covid care centres, seek locals' cooperation

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has told the ministers and officers in charge to conduct regular reviews of Covid Care Centers in cities and the Kill Corona campaign launched in rural areas to end Corona infection in the state. He said that spread of Corona in rural areas must be prevented effectively.

For this, extensive cooperation of the villagers must be sought. Disaster Management Committees, people's representatives, senior citizens of the villages should meet at regular intervals in gram panchayats at the local level to discuss about generating public awareness and preventing infection and connect villagers.

Chouhan said that it should be kept in mind that no patient of cold, cough and fever is left out.

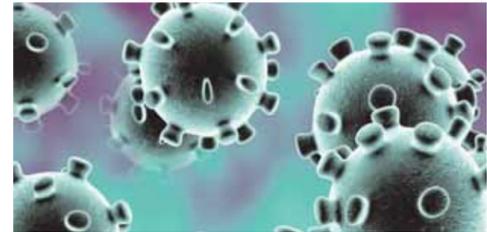
The treatment process should be accelerated by distributing free medical kit to the

patients. People with Corona symptoms should be tested. Corona testing should be increased. Chouhan said that this action plan should be implemented with utmost urgency so that no Corona victim loses his life.

The Chief Minister was in a discussion with members of the Corona Control Core Group through video conferencing from his residence today. He reviewed the condition and arrangements of corona in the districts of the state. Members of the Core Group, ministers, officers, ministers in charge of districts, etc. were present in the meeting.

Chouhan said that a list of families in which the earning member has died due to Corona and the children of the family have been orphaned should be prepared immediately and the benefits of pension scheme of the State Government must be made to them immediately.

Chouhan said that news of patients suffering from black



fungus is being received. The Government will provide free treatment to all these patients. The government has directed to create special wards for the treatment of black fungus in five medical colleges Bhopal, Jabalpur, Gwalior, Indore and Rewa.

He said that the general public should be told about the symptoms of black fungus in simple language. Officials of the State Government should discuss with experts to prepare an advisory in relation to identifying and treating this disease at the outset and make it available to the public.

The Chief Minister said

that there will be no shortage of medicines to treat black fungus disease. He has discussed about the supply of injections with the Central Government and pharmaceutical companies and the necessary medicines will be available soon. Additional Chief Secretary Mohammad Suleman said that the doctors of the Medical College have held a discussion with international level experts.

There has been a lot of detailed discussion regarding the infection and treatment of this fungus, the benefits of which will be given to the patients.

Chouhan said that a discussion regarding prevention and treatment of Covid, has been held with experts, WHO officers, officials of the Indian Administrative Service of Madhya Pradesh cadre posted in Delhi and other places, Indian Police Service and Indian Forest Service officers.

Their suggestions have been received as well as departmental cooperation will be sought from them. An action plan is being prepared in this regard.

There are 7,571 new Corona cases in the state on Saturday. 11,973 patients have recovered. The number of active patients has come down to 99,970. The state's positivity rate has come down to 11.05 per cent.

COVID IN MADHYA PRADESH		
Dists	Total Cases	Fresh Cases
Bhopal	112226	1241
Indore	136391	1548
Gwalior	50918	376

WEEKLY NATTER

ASIM RIAZ TURNS RAPPER

The heartthrob of the young generation, Asim Riaz has a huge surprise in store for us. The livewire who has amassed the love of people as an actor and featuring artist has yet another talent that he stages for the world on Eid. Riaz debuts with a fiery rap titled *Back To Start* released under India's leading record label, Sony Music India.

The teaser of the rap that dropped not long ago got the Asim Riaz squad excited scaling up the anticipation around it as it releases today. Making this year's Eid special, Asim opens about his struggle and hustle in his debut as a

rapper through the song. *Back To Start* has been penned and performed by Asim.

Asim says: "We take a look around us and we see that everything is changing and so much of the good change is being embraced. I had *Back To Start* with me since 2015 and I wanted to polish it till I was ready to put it out there for the listeners. I'm very pumped that it's releasing. My wish for everybody this Eid is to have the strength to embrace changes and hustle their way forward."

Released by Sony Music India, *Back To Start* is now available on all streaming platforms.

CINDERELLA TO LAUNCH WORLDWIDE IN SEPTEMBER

Kay Cannon's *Cinderella* featuring an all-star cast including Grammy nominated singer/songwriter Camila Cabello, Idina Menzel and Billy Porter, will launch exclusively around the world in over 240 countries and territories on Prime Video this September. The highly anticipated musical incorporates pop songs from contemporary global artists and original songs by Camila Cabello and Idina Menzel.

"*Cinderella* is a classic we all know and love, but this time with a modern unique twist and starring the sensational Camila Cabello and an all-star cast. Producer James Corden and the filmmaking team have taken this beloved fairytale and revamped it with a fresh, empowering perspective that will resonate with audiences and families around the world. We couldn't be more

excited for our global customers to sing and dance along to director Kay Cannon's reimagination of this classic story," said Jennifer Salke, Head of Amazon Studios.

*Cinderella* is a musically-driven bold new take on the traditional story you grew up with. Our heroine (Cabello) is an ambitious young woman, whose dreams are bigger than the world will allow, but with the help of her Fab G (Billy Porter), she is able to persevere and make her dreams come true.

Written for the screen and directed by Kay Cannon with covers of songs written by some of the top-selling musical artists of all time, *Cinderella* has an all-star cast that includes Idina Menzel, Minnie Driver, Nicholas Galitzine, with Billy Porter and Pierce Brosnan. Producers are Leo Pearlman, James Corden, Jonathan Kadin and Shannon McIntosh.

RASHMI AGDEKAR BECOMES CAUSE AMBASSADOR

After many Bollywood celebrities being tested positive for Covid-19 and understanding the hard times across, Rashmi Agdekar opens up about duty towards fighting the disease and helping the country by being a cause ambassador.

Agdekar has blown the audience's mind with her brilliant performance. The young and talented actress started her acting career in 2017, in the web series *Dev DD*. Since then she has played various critically acclaimed roles in several web series and movies. Celebrities like Varun Dhawan and Kartik Aryan have also joined initiatives as cause ambassadors are contributing during these tough times by sharing verified information with their followers, Rashmi Agdekar herself being a Covid survivor understands the need to support people at this hour and has

therefore become the cause ambassador for the campaign *Find a Bed*. The actor says: "In these tough times, many volunteers, NGOs, students, entrepreneurs etc are doing a lot of groundwork and helping people in need. If all these people are doing the actual hard work, the least I can do is amplify it. As a responsible citizen, it is my duty to spread awareness as much as I can in my capacity during this second wave. Being a Covid survivor myself, I know how much it takes a toll mentally and physically. Anyone in need of beds in their area or nearby can use this website ([www.findabed.in](http://www.findabed.in)) to search. This will hopefully reduce the stress of running from one hospital to another in an emergency."

On the work front, Rashmi Agdekar played the lead role in the MX player web series *I'mMature* which was critically acclaimed. The young and talented actor made her big-screen debut in Bollywood with *Anadhathun*.



'I'm having loads of fun working with kids'

LAVINA TANDON, who plays Jhanjharika in *Nikki Aur Jadui Bubble*, a fantasy show on Dangal TV, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about her role, the challenges faced and fun that she is having shooting with the kids

**What is Nikki Aur Jadui Bubble about?**  
It is a kids' fantasy show where there is the real world and the magical one which merge together. Sometimes our characters are in the real one sometimes in the magical. It is about a girl, Nikki; it's her story. Her father is a great magician and passes on his talent and world to his father without him realising this.

**What's your character here?**  
I play the grey shade here — Jhanjharika. I am also a magician and a powerful one at that amongst the women in the world of magic. She was not always evil but then a competition took place and she lost. She wanted the coveted bubble which has immense power and the bubble went to Nikki's father played by Himmanshu Malhotra. From here on, my character becomes negative and I become the evil witch and my job is to trouble everyone.

**How did you come on board the project?**  
I was shooting for another project as an assistant intern. But I keep getting scripts since I have done other shows. I have worked for Dheeraj Kumar earlier as well and my experience was good and saw no reason to say no. I went and gave the audition. After three weeks I got a confirmation call. But I was shooting in Goa for a web series and told the team that once I am done, I will be on board.

**It is a kid's fantasy show, are you having lots of fun?**  
We had lots of fun. There are no adults in the scenes with me. There are adults but we are never in the same frame. The good is that there is gossip, the atmosphere is stress-free. There is a negativity like there might be in other

adult shows — she got this costume, I didn't; she got this jewellery, I didn't. There is no such thing here. Kids are natural, they have no pretense. They come, shoot and go back to their studies. We spent a lot of time together and chatted and generally had fun. I learnt a lot from them as well. They are so full of energy.

**Were there any challenges since you are working with kids?**  
There were no challenges working with the kids like I said the kids in the show are extremely intelligent. I psyched myself saying that it is a kids' show so I need to have patience working with them. But they are quick learners. The challenge came in the form of getting into the look. I have two —one the normal and the other the evil witch. Switching and change in costume was time consuming.

**How did you get into acting?**  
I never had plans to get into acting. Acting chose me. I was 12 when my mother's friend was coordinating for a show — *Tum Bin Jaaon Kahaan* on Zee TV — that had a requirement for a girl with curly hair. It was a show by Aruna Irani Production House. I went for the audition and got selected. The minute I stood in front of the camera they chose me since I fit their character to a T. I shot 70-80 episodes. But then my Class VII finals came and I had to leave the show. But I kept getting work sometimes back-to-back.

**Hero Bhakti Hi Shakti Hai was a role you did and grabbed eyeballs. What made the show popular?**  
It was one of the few superhero shows. Back then, there was just *Shaktiman*. *Hero Bhakti...* became

popular because the story was interesting and attracted the kids. Also, every week there was a new character that kept the interest. Kids back then watched TV. Today, they are glued to their mobiles, video games and social media.

**Is there a role that you hated doing?**  
No, not really. I never put myself in a position where I ended up hating doing something. Acting is my profession. If I don't love I can't do justice to the characters I have done.

**What's next?**  
At present, I am not willing to work on anything due to the pandemic. I was even scared to go out to buy groceries let alone step out to shoot. But I am committed to *Nikki Aur...* so I will shoot for it but no new projects for the time being.

TELLY TALE

**DANCE IT OUT**  
*Colors' Dance Deewane* is a show that never stops to surprise, impress and entertain the viewers. In the upcoming episode, special guest dancers who garnered a lot of fame with their deewangi for dance like Yogesh Shaw, Alok Shaw, Siza, Kishen Bilagali, Rupesh Bane, Tejas Varma, Sagar, Jayshree, Mukul, Akash and Vaishnavi will perform in pairs with the *Dance Deewane* contestants. The performances surely will be filled with entertainment, passion, and a whole lot of swag.

The most highlighted dance performances of the evening were by Alok and Aman who impressed Madhuri. Even Gunjan's performance with Sagar

has performed a host of impactful roles in movies and OTT series and has dazzled audiences with her beauty and stellar acting skills. For those eagerly awaiting her next project, Raima will be seen next in Amazon Prime Video's upcoming series *The Last Hour*. Raima shared her experience of getting auditioned and her selection for Nyima's role.

Talking about Nyima's character and on bagging the role, the actor spoke about her experience of giving a screen test for the first time and shared her thoughts on it. Giving it her best shot with the help of a stellar director Amit Kumar by her side, it sure seems that Raima had a blast on set with the cast and packed a punch on the show that is all set to keep us on the edge of our seats.

On auditioning for the role and her character, Raima shares: "In all these years in the industry, I have never done a screen test. When I learnt that Amit wanted to do a screen test for my character in *Calcutta*, I first avoided it, as I have always had a phobia of auditions. Later, I gathered my strength and somehow decided to do it. I first thought I am never going to get this part but surprisingly, I got a confirmation call from him in a couple of days. I am very happy and excited to be a part of this series. With all my work, I've always tried to understand the vision of the director and then added my own individuality to it which helps me stay focused on my character. My director Amit told me what he expected from the character, but at the same, asked me to keep it real and feel it. His guidance and my vision helped me get the best out of me. It was such a great experience shooting for the series."

The *Last Hour* stars Sanjay Kapoor, Shahana Goswami, Karma Takapa, Robin Tamang, and Shaylee Krishen along with Raima Sen. It will exclusively stream on Amazon Prime Video from the May 14, 2021 in more than 240 countries and territories.

**ATHARVA ASKS A TRICKY QUESTION**  
Sony SAB's *Wagle Ki Duniya* —

*Nayi Peedhi Naye Kissey* continues to keep the audience glued to the show with exciting and relatable day to day. In the upcoming episodes, we see how Atharva gets frustrated with his parents as they keep calling him a 'kid' in certain situations but 'old enough' as per their convenience otherwise.

Atharva feels his parents' behaviour is unfair towards him as they change their stance about his age and maturity according to the situation, which irritates him. As a protest, the innocent Atharva decides to go on a hunger strike. Rajesh and Vandana try to calm him down and request him to not go on a hunger strike so instead Atharva puts a condition, that for the next three days if anyone refers to him as 'old enough', the person will have to perform an act of punishment as decided by him.

The question is, will the Wagle's come to a common conclusion for this problem or will Atharva's frustration increase? What is the punishment Atharva has in mind?

Pariva Pranati, essaying the role of Vandana, said: "As artists, we always endeavour to bring a smile on the faces of our fans and I feel so lucky and blessed that with the role of Vandana, I am able to do it. The upcoming track is very interesting not only for the kids who love the show but also for the parents as well. We have all faced this situation growing up, parents wanting us to behave maturely in certain situations and enjoy like a kid in certain other. The challenge put by my son, Atharva would be interesting to watch and the climax of that challenge would be very intriguing in a way that would reveal a different facet of Atharva. We all are working very hard and putting our heart and soul into the episodes. I would like to request the audience to keep watching the episodes from the comfort of their homes!"

Sheehan Kapahi, essaying the role of Atharva, said: "Baccha ya Bada? This is a confusing question, and the upcoming track will address this dilemma brilliantly. Throughout our show's journey, we have always tried to bring highly relatable topics, which I feel has struck the right chord with our viewers. For kids of my age, this is the biggest question in our minds, and for our parents, they are probably facing similar questions too. How will my parents react to this question? The upcoming episodes will unravel the mystery."

Bora on the *Mirchi* song was spellbinding. After Gunjan's performance, Dharmesh Yelande couldn't hold back his praises and was in complete awe of her. He said: "I'm speechless. The stage is different every time and the level at which you dance is very high. I would like to thank Sagar too as he is so good and catches the audience's attention. When he performs in his group, we only look at him. Today I could feel that my one eye was on Gunjan and the other on Sagar because this *jodi* is just amazing."

Pallavi and Siza sent Madhuri Dixit on a nostalgia trip when they performed a medley of her songs choreographed by her guru Saroj Khan. Madhuri was extremely touched and gave them ₹101 as token of appreciation. The chocolate boy of *Dance Deewane* season 1 Kishen Bilagali danced on an extremely scintillating performance with Arundhati, the dance raised the temperature of the set.

**'I HAVE NEVER DONE A SCREEN TEST'**  
Over the past few years, Raima Sen

**HIBA'S FAVOURITE SEHRI DELICACY**  
Hiba Nawab aka CP in Sony SAB's *Jijaji Chhat Parr Koi Hai* was in Bareilly with her family and friends during Ramadan.

Get up close and personal with Hiba as she gets candid about her favourite Ramadan memory, the food she loves, and how is she spending her Ramadan in her hometown this year.

Talking about the holy month of Ramadan, she said: "I believe the most



Plan Your Stay At Home Sunday

Give your Sundays a perfect start by cooking some delicious meals. How about Fluffy Banana Walnut Pancakes or Almond Cinnamon Tart for breakfast? Here are the recipes.

FLUFFY BANANA WALNUT PANCAKES

- Ingredients**  
Maple Walnut Cream:  
■ 1/2 cup California walnuts  
■ 1/4 cup water  
■ 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup
- Pancakes:**  
■ 1 medium-size very ripe banana  
■ 3/4 cup milk  
■ 2 tablespoons melted butter, plus additional tablespoon for skillet  
■ 1/3 cup liquid egg whites  
■ 1 cup flour  
■ 2 tablespoons sugar  
■ 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder  
■ 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon  
■ 1/4 teaspoon salt  
■ 1/3 cup chopped California walnuts
- Preparation:**  
■ To prepare maple walnut cream, place all ingredients in a



small food processor and process until light and fluffy.  
■ Mash banana with a fork in a large bowl and stir in milk and melted butter. Stir together dry ingredients in a medium bowl and stir into banana mixture, being careful to not overmix. (A few small lumps are ok)  
— California Walnuts

ALMOND CINNAMON TART

- Ingredients**  
■ 1 cup almond flake  
■ 150 gm monaco biscuit  
■ 2 gm cinnamon powder  
■ 200 gm fine sugar  
■ 200 ml fresh cream  
■ 60 gm unsalted butter
- Method:**  
■ Roast the almond flake in preheated oven at 180 degree celsius for 4 minutes or till golden in colour.  
■ For toffee sauce, caramelise sugar, add 40 gm of butter followed by cream and thoroughly mix it  
■ For monaco crumble, crush biscuits and mix 20 gm of butter with it. spread this mixture in 6inch mould and bake at 160 degree celsius for 10 min.  
■ In a bowl mix, roasted almond slivers and toffee sauce and pour this mix over biscuit crumble in the mould.  
■ Bake the mix set in mould in a preheated oven at 180 degree celsius for 15 min.



■ Serve once done and demould the tart. serve with vanilla bean ice-cream.  
— Almond Board of California

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# Govt dogged to counter black fungus attack

CM says advisory would be issued, need to identify cases on ward, village level

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that there is an urgent need to launch a widespread campaign in the entire State for the early detection of cases of black fungus.

Advisory should be issued by developing necessary strategies for immediate identification of cases of black fungus at ward and village level. This will ensure immediate treatment in such cases. Chouhan has directed to create special wards in five medical colleges of Bhopal, Jabalpur, Gwalior, Indore and Rewa for the treatment of black fungus.

Chouhan was addressing the discussion with experts

and group of officers on future action plans for strengthening Covid control and health services through video conferencing from his residence. Chouhan said that the campaign against corona in the State was conducted with the cooperation of the public.

The fight against Covid fought with the help of public through disaster management groups and other means has been successful and the infection has been controlled in the State from the district to the village level. A long fight remains in this direction. The State Government considers suggestions and discussion necessary to improve its strategy at every level. This meeting of experts and officials has been



convened with the objective that Madhya Pradesh should ideally control Covid.

The Chief Minister invited suggestions from experts and group of officers related to increasing participation of society in the management of Covid-19, make habits and behaviour necessary for Covid control a permanent part of our lives, better management of pri-

vate and Government hospitals, strengthening of health services, motivating citizens to adopt healthy living practices, expansion of traditional medical practices and relevance of other states and countries to the best practices and their states and their relevance to the state.

Besides, he also invited suggestions regarding the process of post Covid care, the status and prevention of black fungus, necessary preparations keeping in mind the third wave of Corona, and how we should behave after Corona. Additional Chief Secretary Health Shri Mohammad Suleman gave a presentation on the management of Covid-19 in the state.

Participants in this discus-

sion included Senior Consultant of NITI Aayog. Dr. K. Madangopal, Director General at Delhi-based Think Tank Research and Information Systems in Development Countries (RIS) and member of Board of Governors of the Reserve Bank of India Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Dr. Abhishek Jain of World Health Organization, Dr. Jyotsna Srivastava, Member of Gandhi Medical College Bhopal, Sushri Vandana Bhatia of UNICEF, Dr. Rahul Khare, Dr. Nishant Khare, Dr. Devashish Vishwas of AIIMS Bhopal, Dr. Lokendra Dave and Dr. Mahesh Maheshwari of Gandhi Medical College and Dr. PK Pandey of National Hospital.

# MP alerted to cyclone Tauktae, thunderstorm in parts of State

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Alert regarding intensified 'Tauktae' has been issued for 6 states including Madhya Pradesh; SDRF and NDRF teams have been on alert mode.

According to Met department there is a possibility of thunderstorm accompanied by lightning in some parts of the State during the next 24 hours. Some places in western Madhya Pradesh during the next 24 hours. There is a possibility of showers with thunderstorms or thunderstorms in parts of Madhya Pradesh.

During this next 6 hours it turned into a more severe cyclonic storm and during the subsequent 12 hours into a very severe cyclone and as it would

**Met issued warning of thundery activities and lightning and gusty winds at Indore, Ujjain, Hoshangabad, Bhopal divisions and Guna, Gwalior, Shivpuri, Chindwara, Seoni, Balaghat, Jabalpur, Shahdol, Umaria, Panna, Damoh, Tikamgarh districts**

be hitting adjoining and neighboring states Madhya Pradesh would also witness the effects. Shajapur recorded highest day temperature at 43 degree Celsius. Khajuraho recorded day temperature at 42 degree Celsius.

Bhopal recorded day temperature at 40.5 degree Celsius

while night temperature was recorded at 25.8 degree Celsius.

Night temperatures have soared and recorded at 28.5 degree Celsius at Hoshangabad, Sheopur recorded night temperature at 28.4 degree Celsius, Damoh recorded 27 degree Celsius, Rajgarh recorded night temperature at 26.8, Indore recorded night temperature at 26.4 degree Celsius, Betul recorded night temperature at 26 degree Celsius.

Met issued warning of thundery activities and lightning and gusty winds at Indore, Ujjain, Hoshangabad, Bhopal divisions and Guna, Gwalior, Shivpuri, Chindwara, Seoni, Balaghat, Jabalpur, Shahdol, Umaria, Panna, Damoh, Tikamgarh districts.

# Mins urge Mhow villagers to follow Covid protocols

PNS ■ MHOW

All type of efforts are being conducted in Indore district to control and break the chain of corona virus whether it is Government, administration, public representatives or the villagers.

In the rural Indore the villagers are unitedly working to defeat the corona and are following janta curfew rules.

Minister in charge of Indore district minister Tulsiram Silawat and minister Usha Thakur and Member of Parliament Indore Shankar Lalwani while inspecting Mhow villages on Saturday saw that the in the village Malendi the villagers have blocked the main entrance of the village and no outsider is allowed to enter in the village.

Even the ministers and collector Indore Manish Singh followed the rules set up by villagers and they did not enter in the village.

Ministers along with col-



lector Manish Singh, Mhow SDM Abhilash Mishra, Indore zila panchayat president Kavita Patidar, Dr Nishant Khare, ex-MLA Rajesh Sonkar, Mhow Tehsildar Dharendra Prashar and Mhow SDOP Vinod Sharma visited the village GawliPalasia, Simrole, Kodariya, Bhagwat Khedi etc. The ministers talked to the villagers enquired about the facilities

which they are getting to fight against corona pandemic.

The ministers urged the villagers to get themselves checked and not to hide their fever and cold and if they haven't got separate space in their house they stay in quarantine center of the village and the members of the corona positive family should compulsorily stay in house.

# Sewa Sadan distributes food among Covid patients, BMC staffers

Eye hospital has initiated vaccination drive on April 2, 2021

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

With the blessings of Paramhansa Sant Hirdaram Sahib and Siddh Bhauji, Sant Hirdaram Nagar based Sewa Sadan Eye Hospital is distributing 600 Thalys of nutritious food to ailing corona patients, their attenders and staff of Bhopal municipal corporation who are engaged in services everyday.

These services are undertaken since April 10, 2021 regularly. These patients are admitted in near by Chirayu, D.K'S., Kishnani and Rajdeep hospitals. Over 300 steamers have also been provided to them.

As many as 800 cups of tea, water bottles and biscuits packets are also provided everyday to these people.

In additions to hospitals, free oxygen cylinders and oxygen concentrators are being provided to the patients of Bhopal and rural areas in large scale. With the support of two International NGOs, Mission for Vision and One Global Village these services and relief activities are run by the SSEH.

Sewa Sadan have initiated the task of vaccination since April 2, 2021 since then this task is undertaken on a very large scale.

With the support of Sewa Sadan, now these centers are being run at Sadhu Vaswani, A.T. Shahni Schools and Sewa Sadan campus. Vaccination of persons of age group of 18 to 44 have also been launched. Staff and other logistic facilities of Sewa Sadan have been engaged in vaccination.



A view of a deserted road during coronavirus curfew imposed due to the surge in Covid-19 cases in Bhopal on Saturday. Pioneer photo

# Poet Prashast Vishal performs in 'Art Together'

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The latest episode of Art Together was all about beautiful lyrical poetry.

The super amazing poet Prashast Vishal impressed the audience with his experience in poetry in the latest episode of Art Together held in Saturday.

Prashast Vishal by profession is a Civil Engineer, but by passion a poet in the language of urdu and hindi. Also the founder of Jashn-e-alfaz.

Shating about his love for poetry, Vidhal shared that his motive is to grow Urdu adab and Hindi literature, especially among youngsters.

He Performed at almost 50 poet meets. Besides, he has also shared the stage with many renowned Poets of the country, planned and organized many successful events in Bhopal,

judged Several Poetry Contests. He is the winner of LNCT Khayal, 2019. On Saturday, Vishal recited some of his wonderful poetries. He also gave overwhelming performances before the audience as he read out his creations adding various emotions, and expressions in his poetry. There were some abstract poetry as well.

At the programme, the transparency of literature was appreciated by the audience. The literature lovers of the city appreciated the creations for his tremendous contribution in mounting up the literature among people.

Art Together is an initiative by Mehfil ANSH Happiness society to bring smiles on faces in these tough times. During this pandemic, the youngsters of Bhopal have come up together to create a peaceful.

# Mhow SDM injured en route to villages for Covid inspection

PNS ■ MHOW

Mhow SDM Abhilash Mishra got injured on Saturday when his Scorpio jeep in which he was moving was hit from behind by Maruti swift car when he was on his way for the inspection of different villages of Mhow tehsil to examine the covid protocol and Janta curfew being followed in village areas.

Sources said that the car was of BJP leader who with his followers was also going in the same direction as the minister Tulsiram Silawat and minister Usha Thakur along with collector Manish Singh were moving in different villages of Mhowtehsil.

Government Madhya Bharat hospital in charge Dr Hansraj Verma told *The Pioneer* that we have taken the xray of the SDM Abhilash Mishra and medicines has been issued to him also some hidden wounds has been identified on the upper part of the back bone of SDM on which we are keeping eye.

SDMMhow Abhilash Mishra who immediately after his medical examination returned to the office back to work told *The Pioneer* that no action has been taken on the car owner as his car suffered the big loss as it is totally damaged from front side and also the car owner was also moving for the inspection of villages

# Health Minister launches 'Samvad Setu' at J P hosp

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Health Minister Prabhuram Chaudhary today launched 'Samvad Setu' at Jai Prakash Hospital, Bhopal. The Health Minister Chaudhary on a video call enquired about the health conditions of admitted patients in the Corona ICU ward and asked the patients that how are you now, how is your health, is your care being taken properly. I wish for your speedy recovery.

Health Minister Prabhuram Chaudhary said that through 'Samvad Setu', the facility has been given to talk to the relatives of Covid

patients through video calls. He said that now the families of the patients will be able to take care of their respective patient through video calling themselves with the help of this new communication bridge. Health Minister Chaudhary also made patients talk to their families through 'Samvad Setu'.

Health Minister Chaudhary said that 4 tabs have been provided to Jai Prakash Hospital for the patients to communicate with their families. He said that this facility will encourage the patients so that the patients will not feel alone during the treatment period.

## IN BRIEF

### CM PAYS TRIBUTE TO MARTYR SUKHDEV

**Bhopal:** Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan garlanded the portrait of martyr Sukhdev on his anniversary at his residence today. Shaheed Sukhdev was a prominent revolutionary in the Indian freedom struggle. He was born on May 15, 1907 in Ludhiana. He was hanged along with Bhagat Singh and Rajguru on March 23, 1931. He is respected all over India for his sacrifice.

### CM PLANTS PIPAL ON RESIDENCE PREMISES

**Bhopal:** Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today planted a Pipal sapling at the Chief Minister's Residence premises. Chief Minister Chouhan plants a sapling every day under his resolve. Pipal is a shady tree. It purifies the environment. It also has religious and Ayurvedic significance. Apart from this, Pipal tree is also called Akshaya tree, because this tree is never leafless. It means it doesn't shed all its leaves together. The leaves keep falling and new ones keep coming. Due to this quality of the Pipal tree, it has been described as a symbol of the life and death cycle.

### CHOUHAN DISCUSSES COVID SITUATION WITH NATH

**Bhopal:** Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan discussed the situation with the leader of Opposition Kamal Nath on the phone and informed him about the situation of Covid infection in the state. Chief Minister Chouhan discussed with Kamal Nath regarding control of Covid infection and black fungus.

# Girl jumps into lake for want of cam phone

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Failed to get a camera mobile phone from family a B. Com first year girl jumped into the Upper Lake in the morning on Monday, brother rescued girl from the water; Talaiya police have started investigation into the matter.

Soon after the girl jumped her brother and divers of BMC deployed at the lake tried to rescue a girl who jumped into Lake at VIP road in the day on Monday. The girl was rushed to hospital where she was reportedly stable and identified as Nikita Meena of Airport road area.

In the initial investigation police found that the deceased had a fight with her brother and later she came to the Upper Lake and jumped.

After the preliminary investigation the body was sent for the post mortem and a case under section 174 of the CrPC was registered.

During the investigation police found that the girl's brother work with private company while father is farmer.

On Monday girl had a fight with her brother over demanding a camera mobile phone after he told that he would buy once markets are

open but girl was not willing and wanted to buy at any cost and left the house and reached

upper lake and jumped into lake.

Girl's brother followed her

and rescued her from upper lake. Police have started investigation.



A technician repairs CCTV camera during coronavirus curfew in Bhopal on Saturday. Pioneer photo

# Police book minor boy for molesting 4-yr-old girl

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Gandhi Nagar police has booked a minor boy who molested a four-year-old girl at Pratap Ward on Sunday; victim was neighbour of accused who took her while playing and molested her.

According to the police, the victim was playing outside her home when the accused lured her and took her to his house and molested her. The mother reached her after she failed to find her and on her way back home victim revealed the molestation.

The mother along with the victim approached police and lodged complaint against the accused.

The accused escaped from the spot. The police have started investigation and registered case of molestation.

Based on the complaint and after the preliminary investigation, police registered a case of molestation and POCSO Act and started further

investigation. Meanwhile Gautam Nagar police has booked a man for molesting a 26-year-old widow; victim who used run a road side stall was molested by the accused by entering her house.

Police said that the accused brother-in-law sedated cold drink of the victim with liquor and when she got drunk, the accused tried to molest her but she raised alert which forced the accused to escape.

In her complaint, the victim stated that her husband died few years ago and she used to run a food stall and used to keep evil eye on the victim and when she was alone at her house on Thursday accused came and molested her, victim raised alert which forced her to escape.

Based on the complaint, the police registered a case under sections 506 and 354 of the IPC and started search for the accused who went absconding after the complaint was lodged.

# Woman dies after falling in well while plucking mangoes



STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A 27-year-old married woman died after she fell in a well near at her farms at Bheropura under Eithkhedi police station area; deceased along with her husband had gone to celebrate marriage anniversary.

Police said that the deceased Savita Ahirwar fell while she was trying to pluck mangoes at her farm when she had gone to celebrate marriage anniversary with her husband and family.

At the time of the incident deceased was along with her 4-year-old son, 7-year-old nephew and their neighbor. Due to lockdown Savita and her husband Deepak had gone to their farms at Bheropura and when she was plucking mangoes she fell inside well.

The police have registered a case under section 174 of the

CrPC and started further investigation. The post mortem report is awaited, more details would be investigated in the further investigation.

Meanwhile, a 26-year-old electrician died after he fell from electricity pole while repairing fault at Maksudangarh road on Sunday.

Police said to police, the deceased Shakeel Khan sustained serious injuries after he fell from electricity pole while working and was rushed to a nearby hospital in Berasia and where he was referred to Hamidia hospital and died on his way to hospital. Police were informed and on the receipt of the information, a police team reached the spot and started investigation. After the preliminary investigation, the body was sent for post-mortem. The police have registered a case under section 174 of the IPC.

# Min inaugurates step down unit at AGUHC

V K Sarang says those from Govt, Pvt hospis who need long medical supervision would be referred to step down unit

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Medical Education Minister Vishwas Kailash Sarang inaugurated the step down unit at Ashoka Garden Urban Health Centre on Saturday. The ten-bed step-down unit has been set up under the joint aegis of the Health Department and the Wish Foundation.

Sarang said that those patients will be referred to the step down unit who have recovered and are in normal state after treatment in government and private dedicated health centre and dedicated Covid Hospital and who need to be kept under medical supervision in the hospital for a long time due to co-mor-

bidities or other health problems or if they require oxygen.

With the operation of the unit, space will be available for serious patients at Dedicated Covid Health Centre and Dedicated Covid Hospital.

The Minister informed that 3 doctors and 3 staff nurses along with the specialist will provide 24-hour services to monitor and provide treatment to the patients admitted in this unit. Yoga practice sessions will be organised daily for the mental health of the admitted patients. Online entertainment programmes will also be organised on Saturday and Sunday.

The necessary human resources for setting up this unit, oxygen concentrators for

supply of oxygen, PPE kit, sanitizer, pulse oximeter, non-touch thermometer and other necessary resources have been made available.

Arrangements are also being made to bring patients to the centre.

Sarang informed that apart from Bhopal, the work of setting up step-down units is also being done in other districts of the state. National Health Mission Director Dr. Pankaj Shukla, Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr. Prabhakar Tiwari, Civil Surgeon Dr. R.K. Srivastava, Unit Specialist Dr. Upendra Dubey, State Representative Dr. Shalini Kapoor, Urban Health Programme Specialist Dr. Savita Sharma were present on the occasion.

# 4,140 more patients recovered in J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Ahead of the arrival of the high level team of experts from New Delhi to study the high mortality rate of Covid-19 patients in Jammu, 63 more patients succumbed to the deadly virus taking the tally of deaths to 3,090 while total active positive cases stood at 51,475 as 3,677 fresh cases of coronavirus were detected across the region on Saturday.

Significantly, 4,140 more Covid-19 patients were recovered and discharged from various hospitals including 1,086 from Jammu Division and 3,054 from Kashmir Division.

Meanwhile, the corona curfew was also extended by the UT administration till May 24.

On the other hand to cover the left over population in the age group of 45 plus across Jammu district special vaccination camps are being organised across 100 centres in Jammu to vaccinate them.

So far around 98% of estimated 45+ population in Jammu

given first shot till date.

According to a statement issued by the office of Principal, Government Medical College, Jammu, "As per the recent sequencing data analysis of positive Covid-19 patients received from NCDC, New Delhi, B.1.617 variant is responsible for the recent surge in Covid-19 cases in Jammu division.

Dr. Shashi Sudhan Sharma said that the Department of Microbiology at GMC, Jammu besides testing of Covid-19 samples is also coordinating with NCDC New Delhi for routine sequencing of positive sample and as per the latest report received from them UK Variant was reported in >60% samples in March, 2021.

However, in April the %age of UK Variant dropped to 47% and B.1.617 increased from 5.8% to 38%.

Dr. Sharma further added that till date 434 samples have been sent to NCDC from Jammu Division among which a report of 64 samples is still awaited.

# RT varsity organises webinar 'Sambhavna'

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A webinar Sambhavna was organized on Saturday by the Journalism and Mass Communication Department of Rabindranath Tagore University, keeping in mind the imperative of mass communication and the eagerness of youth towards it.

'Sambhavna' is a series of webinars envisaged by the department where many experts related to the subject will discuss career possibilities in various genres of mass communication.

The webinar was organized by the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication of Tagore University, along with the Faculty of Maniviki and Liberal Arts and the Department of Training and Placement, whose first episode included M Poornima as the keynote speaker to talk on 'Journalism'.

In today's era, many students want to make their future in the field of journalism, but how should they be prepared for it to become a conscious and successful journalist of the country, many such questions arise in the mind of a student. Addressing the students through this webinar, Poornima highlighted the career prospects in the field of mass communication.

In her discussion, Poornima highlight-

ed the working of print media and digital media and encouraged the students to first grasp the language. She said that to adopt journalism, it is very important to get hold of many languages, language means not only Hindi or English but also the arrival of regional and foreign languages. It is very important. She further explained how we can prepare for the future by staying at home in this pandemic.

In the programme, a question answer round was also held by the students. Poornima gave answers while addressing the queries of all the students. At the end of her statement, she encouraged the girls to advance in the field of journalism.

This one-day webinar was organized by Visakha Rajurkar Raj, Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, in collaboration with Sangeeta Johri, Head of the Faculty of Humanities and Liberal Arts.

On this occasion, the department's Assistant Professor and 'Sambhavna' convener Prashant Soni and Vikrant Bhatt were also present. At the end of the programme Usha Vaidya, Professor of Faculty of Humanities and Liberal Arts, thanked the keynote speaker, organizing committee and all the participants present for their active participation in the event.

# No decision yet on lockdown in Tripura, says CM Biplab Deb

Agartala: Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb said on Saturday that no decision has been taken yet on imposing lockdown in any part of the state, even as Covid-19 cases continued to jump.

Speaking to reporters while visiting Covid care facilities in the Sepahijala district, Deb said such a decision is taken when healthcare experts and the administration collectively feel the necessity.

"There is no decision on lockdown yet," he said, adding that all updates will be made public.

In the Sipahijala district, 200 new beds have been prepared at two Covid care facilities,

and more than 1,400 beds are being prepared at two other centres.

Meanwhile, a door-to-door survey has started in three containment zones in the Agartala Municipal Corporation (AMC) area.

The State Government has decided to conduct rapid antigen tests in all houses in the AMC area, Health Department officials said.

Tripura recorded 449 new Covid-19 cases on Saturday, pushing the tally to 40,055.

The number of active cases climbed to 3,781.

With three more fatalities, all in the West Tripura district, the death toll rose to 426. PTI



Beneficiaries get a dose of coronavirus vaccine at a school-turned vaccination centre in Bhopal on Saturday. Pioneer photo

# AP clocks 22,517 new cases, 98 deaths

PTI ■ AMARAVATI

The cumulative coronavirus positive cases touched 14,11,320 in Andhra Pradesh as 22,517 infections were added afresh in the 24 hours ending 9 am on Saturday.

The state also reported 98 Covid-19 fatalities while 18,739 patients had recovered in a day, the latest bulletin said.

The last one lakh cases also came in five days as the state logged over 20,000 cases per day since May 11. The total recoveries increased to 11,94,582 and toll to 9,271, the bulletin said.

The active caseload in the state was now 2,07,467. East Godavari district reported 3,383 fresh cases, Anantapuramu 2,975 and Chittoor 2,884 in 24 hours. SPS Nellore and Vizianagaram added close to 1,000 new cases each while eight other districts registered between 1,000 and 2,000 each.

Anantapuramu reported 12 fresh Covid-19 fatalities, SPS Nellore 11, East Godavari ten, Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram nine each, Chittoor and Srikakulam eight each, Guntur and West Godavari seven each, Krishna, Kurnool and Prakasam five each in a day. PTI

# 281 more die in UP, State reports 12,547 fresh cases

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh on Saturday registered 281 fresh Covid-19 fatalities, raising the death toll to 17,283, while the infection count climbed to 16,09,140 with 12,547 more cases, according to the official data.

Of the fresh Covid-19 deaths, Meerut reported 19 fatalities, Chandauli 15, Kanpur 14, Lucknow and Auriaya 12 each. Ten deaths each were reported from Jhansi and Gautam Buddha Nagar, the State Government said in a statement issued here.

Of the 12,547 new cases, 879 were reported from Meerut, 801 from Gorakhpur and 617 from Lucknow.

A total of 28,404 Covid-19 patients recovered from the disease in the past 24 hours in the state, taking the total number of those recovered so far to 14,14,259.

The number of active Covid-19 cases in the State stands at 1,77,643, the statement said. PTI

# FADNAVIS' LETTER TO SONIA GANDHI ON COVID-19

## Maha Cong hits back, dares Fadnavis show courage to show mirror to Modi

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Miffed by a letter written by former chief minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis to Congress president Sonia Gandhi advising her party not to indulge in politics over vaccination but to play the role of a constructive Opposition, Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole on Saturday dared Fadnavis to show courage and write a similar letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the Covid-19 situation in the country.

Hours after Fadnavis shot off a four-page letter to the Congress president, Patole charged that by writing a letter to Sonia Gandhi, the BJP leader was trying to push under the carpet the 'sins' of Prime Minister Narendra Modi of converting the country into a cremation ground.

Charging that the Modi government had miserably failed in handling the Covid-19 crisis in the country, Patole said: "Rahul Gandhi had warned way back on February 12, 2020 of a Corona Tsunami, but BJP leaders like Modi and Fadnavis did not take him seriously. The result is that a staggering 4 lakh infections and more than 4,000 deaths are being reported every

day in the country. The Modi government's arrogance and mismanagement of affairs is responsible for the curry situation in the country"

"By writing a letter to Sonia Gandhi, Modi is trying to push under the carpet the 'sins' of Prime Minister Narendra Modi of converting the country into a cremation ground... Instead of writing a letter to the Congress president, Fadnavis should be asking his party's chief minister as to how 'Navami Gange' has turned into 'Shavami Gange'," Patole said.

Dubbing Modi as a "liar" for claims that the Centre had provided more than stocks of Remdesivir and Oxygen to states, Patole said that the Supreme Court had called the BJP's bluff by passing strictures over its false claiming in handling the Covid-19. "The Centre had claimed that utilising money from the PM's Care fund, it would set up Oxygen plants. But not even one plant has been set up in Maharashtra. In fact, Maharashtra which needs 1750 metric tonnes of medical oxygen, the state itself produces 1,200 metric tonnes of Oxygen. Such is the sad state of affairs that the Centre is not able to provide the remaining 550 MT of Oxygen to the state," the

state Congress chief said.

Charging that the BJP-ruled states like Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh were hiding information relating to Covid-19 infections and deaths, Patole asked: "Please let us as to how many Covid-19 tests in these BJP-ruled states. How many patients are getting Oxygen? How many deaths have taken place in the BJP-ruled states? Fadnavis should write a letter to the BJP president and statistics in this regard".

Patole said that there have been 1,23,871 deaths in just 71 days in Gujarat, the government there pegged the number of deaths at 4,218, and blamed the ego and greed of the BJP government at the Centre for the mess. "The BJP-ruled state governments of Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Bihar are using JCBs to remove bodies of the people who died of Covid. And the bodies are floating in river Ganga," he said.

Patole said that while the Centre had claimed it had made an allocation of ₹35,000 crore, the private vaccine manufacturers were selling vaccines to the centre at ₹150 per vaccine, ₹400 per vaccine to the state government and Rs 600 to individuals.

# Govt, admin, public all dropped guard after first Covid wave, says RSS chief

PTI ■ NEW DELHI:

After the first wave of Covid-19, the Government, administration and public dropped their guard which led to the current situation, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Saturday and urged people to stay positive and proactive to fight the pandemic.

Addressing a lecture series 'Positivity Unlimited', Bhagwat said the country should stay united and work as a team in these testing times, instead of pointing fingers at each other. "We are facing this situation because, whether it was the Government, administration or public, everyone dropped their guard after the first wave despite indications from doctors," he said.

Bhagwat said there is talk of a third wave. But, "we will not be scared. We shall stand like a rock."

"We have to stay positive and take precautions to keep ourselves Covid-19 negative in the present situation," he said.

The RSS chief said that this is not an appropriate time to point fingers and all should avoid making irrational remarks.

# Won't allow elements to disturb peace in Valley over Palestine situation: J&K police

Jammu: Jammu & Kashmir police on Saturday warned 'inimical' elements against disturbing public peace and order in the Kashmir valley in the garb of prevailing situation in Palestine.

A young mural artist, Mudasir Gul, was also picked up by the J&K police as he had painted a wall graffiti on the request of few local residents in Padshahi bagh area.

Gul had reportedly painted a face of a sobbing woman, wearing Palestine's flag as the headscarf, and wrote "We Are Palestine". Local reports claimed, Gul was directed by the local police officers to deface the graffiti on his own. Few other residents in the area who had participated in raising slogans and attempted to stage a demonstration in solidarity with Palestine were also rounded up by the police. Posting a series of tweets J&K

Police said, "it is keeping a very close watch on elements who are attempting to leverage the unfortunate situation in Palestine to disturb public peace and order in the Kashmir valley".

Claiming that restoring peace remains their top priority J&K Police in another tweet said, "We are a professional force and are sensitive to public anguish. But J&K police has a legal responsibility to ensure law and order as well. It, however, wouldn't allow cynical encashment of the public anger to trigger violence, lawlessness and disorder on Kashmir streets". "Expressing opinion is a freedom but engineering and inciting violence on streets is unlawful. All irresponsible social media comments that results in actual violence and breaking of law including Covid protocol will attract legal action". PNS

# 10-kg IED recovered in south Kashmir's Pulwama



Jammu: Jammu & Kashmir on Saturday claimed to have averted a major tragedy by recovering a 10-kg Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in southern Pulwama district.

In a tweet, a police spokesman said that they received inputs that Jaish-e-Muhammad terrorists were planning to carry out 'spectacular' IED attacks. "On the basis of which few suspects were questioned and on their admission an IED weighing 10Kgs has been recovered at Pulwama, thus a major attack has been averted," said the spokesman. PNS

# ISRO team suggests measures to restart O2 production at Sterlite Copper

Chennai: An expert team from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Saturday visited Vedanta Ltd's copper smelter plant Sterlite Copper and suggested measures to set right the technical snag that halted oxygen production, the company said.

Oxygen production at Sterlite Copper located in Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu was stopped on Friday due to

a technical snag. According to Vedanta, an expert team from ISRO came to the smelter plant to support the ongoing efforts and collaborate with the company's technical team. "They have suggested some measures to help rectify the production snag. This has helped fast-track the repair process for which we are thankful to the local administration, who was instrumental in facilitating this coopera-

tive effort to recommence our oxygen production," Vedanta said.

On Friday the company said a technical snag had developed in the cold box in the oxygen plant, leading to a temporary pause in production. "The possibility of minor technical fluctuations was anticipated given that the plant has been unattended for three years," the company said in a

statement.

On Thursday the company said one of its oxygen plants commenced production from May 12. "The first tanker carrying 4.8 tons of liquid oxygen is going to Tirunelveli/Thoothukudi. We will be dispatching two oxygen tankers on a daily basis to begin with, and gradually scale this up as we expand production," Vedanta had said. IANS



Children enjoying in the Arabian Sea at Badhwar Park area as per IMD, depression in the Arabian Sea likely to intensify into cyclonic storm 'Tauktae' on Saturday. PTI

# Govt relaxes certain norms to fast track approvals for imported cylinders, pressure vessels for medical O2

New Delhi: The Government on Saturday eases certain norms under Gas Cylinders Rules, 2016 to fast track approvals for imported cylinders and pressure vessels for storage and transportation of medical oxygen amid rising Covid cases.

The relaxations would be valid for six months or till further orders of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), an official statement said.

The department said that the certification of Petroleum and Explosive Safety Organization (PESO) will not be mandatory before importing consignment of oxygen cylinders, and containers.

The certification of PESO will be required before use of the oxygen cylinders, which entails weight and hydro testing, it added. "The Indian missions should, however, ensure that the oxygen cylinders should comply with India or international standards before shipment," it said. In case of filled cylinders, the agency exporting to India would have to certify that the oxygen filled in the cylinder is of such purity and concentration that is fit for medical use.

The certification would be attested by the Indian mission in the exporting country and soon upon arrival in India, such filled cylinders will be inspected on sample basis by an

empanelled agency of PESO. "All the filled cylinders must be verified for quality of gas filled therein under the supervision of medical/ Food and Drugs Controllers and if quality of gas conforms to their requirement of medical oxygen, cylinders may be sent directly to hospitals for use," the department said.

Regarding PSA (pressure swing adsorption) installations at hospitals with filling facilities or at COVID centres, it said PSA plants where generated oxygen is directly supplied to hospital and no filling of cylinders is taking place, in such cases the facilities do not need any permission or license under PESO rules. PTI

# Gehlot: Create special strategy to prevent infection in Jaipur

Jaipur: Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has expressed his deep concern over the continuous increase in the number of Covid patients in the State Capital, and directed the officials to formulate a special plan to prevent the spread of infection in Jaipur. He directed to further strengthen the arrangement zone, more testing, contact tracing etc. in the entire district to control the situation of Covid infection in Jaipur.

Gehlot was conducting a high level review on Friday night through video conference on other related topics including Covid compression, lockdown and availability of resources. He said the number of active cases in Jaipur has



increased from 18 thousand to more than 51 thousand in the last three weeks and it is a matter of great concern to keep the positive rate around 30 percent continuously. "We need to devise a new strategy for effective prevention on this." PTI

# Govt's bad job policy will ensure 3rd wave: Rahul



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Saturday called for a national vaccine strategy and claimed that the Government's "disastrous" inoculation policy will "ensure a devastating third wave" in the country.

He also accused the prime minister of making "mother Ganga cry" after bodies of suspected coronavirus victims were found floating in the river.

"The Government of India's (GOI's) disastrous vaccine strategy will ensure a devastating third wave. It can't be repeated enough - India needs a proper vaccine strategy," he said on Twitter.

Tagging media reports claiming that over 2,000 bodies have been found in 1140 km area along the Ganga, he alleged, "One who used to say 'Ganga' has called him has made Mother Ganga cry."

Rahul and the Congress have been attacking the prime minister and his government over its vaccine strategy and handling of the pandemic.

Senior Congress leader and former Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram too slammed the government over the issuance of 1.23 lakh death certificates between March 1 to May 10 this year in Gujarat and



said that government, in conjunction with some state governments, is suppressing the actual numbers of new infections and Covid-related deaths.

"The increase was an alarming number of about 65,000 death certificates. This increase cannot be explained as a natural annual increase in the number of deaths. It can only be attributed to a pandemic or any other natural disaster," the Congress leader said.

Hitting out at the government, Chidambaram said that the party's suspicion on the actual death toll were confirmed by the fact that hundreds of unidentified bodies have been found floating on the river Ganga and nearly 2,000 unidentified bodies have been found buried on the sands along the river Ganga.

"We have a strong suspicion that the Government of India, in conjunction with some State Governments, is suppressing the true numbers of new infections and 18 Covid-related deaths," he alleged.

He said, "If our suspicions are true, this is a grave misdeed

apart from being a national shame and a national tragedy." Chidambaram said that Central government and the Gujarat government owe an explanation to the people of India. "We demand answers and an explanation," he added.

Chidambaram also said that the National Human Rights Commission should collect the true numbers from every state about the death certificate issued last year and this year.

In a separate tweet, Rahul Gandhi appealed to people to stay safe after cyclone Tauktae warning was issued by the government in many states. He also appealed to Congress workers to provide all assistance to those in need.

"May 15 Cyclone Alert has been issued in Kerala, Maharashtra, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Karnataka. Cyclone Tauktae is already causing heavy rains in many areas.

"I appeal to Congress workers to provide all possible assistance to those in need. Please stay safe," he said on Twitter.

# Tauktae ravages Kerala's coastal areas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As torrential rain and fierce winds influenced by cyclonic storm 'Tauktae' (pronounced as 'Tau' 'Te') in the Arabian Sea have left a trail of destruction in Kerala's coastal areas on Saturday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the cyclone 'Tauktae' has intensified and likely to intensify into a 'very severe cyclonic storm' in the next 12 to 15 hours with a wind speed of 120 to 130 kmph gusting to 145 kmph. It is also expected to move north north-westwards and cross the Gujarat coast between Porbandar and Naliya as a very severe cyclonic storm around May 18 afternoon or evening. The IMD has placed a 'cyclone watch' for south Gujarat and Diu coasts.

This is the first cyclonic storm this year as India fights a deadly second wave of Covid, which has led to a frightening surge in the country's caseload over the last two months. Many flights have been cancelled for Kerala, Mumbai, and Ahmedabad due to bad weather on Saturday. Officials said that Tauktae intensified very rapidly from a depression to a cyclone on Friday. "There were two more cyclones in the past with similar tracks. One in 1933 between May 13 to 19 and another in 1975 between May 20 and 21," he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reviewed the preparedness of states, central ministries and agencies concerned to deal with the situation arising out of cyclone Tauktae and asked them to take every possible measure to ensure that people are safely evacuated. He also called for

**The IMD said the cyclonic storm will be a very severe cyclonic storm from May 16-18 and cross the Gujarat coast on May 18**

ensuring maintenance of all essential services such as power, telecommunications, health and drinking and their immediate restoration in the event of damages caused to them, a statement said.

The IMD said the cyclonic storm will be a very severe cyclonic storm from May 16-18 and cross the Gujarat coast on May 18. Along with Gujarat, coastal areas of Goa, Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have been put on alert after the IMD said the impact of the cyclone will be felt in the southeast, east-central and northeast Arabian Sea, Lakshadweep islands, Maldives area, triggering heavy rainfall in coastal and adjoining districts of all states.

"Very heavy to extremely heavy rainfall causing flash floods and landslides" over the coastal districts of Kerala, Karnataka and Goa till Sunday and Saurashtra, Kutch in Gujarat on Tuesday and Wednesday is expected, the IMD has said. Fishermen have been asked to avoid heading to Arabian Sea till Tuesday, tourism activities have been restricted and necessary precautions have been advised for naval operations in anticipation of rough sea. Tidal wave of about 2-3 m above

astronomical tide is likely to inundate coastal areas of Morbi, Kutch, Devbhoomi Dwarka and Jamnagar districts and 1-2 meters along Porbandar, Junagarh, Gir Somnath, Amreli, Bhavnagar and 0.5 to 1m over the remaining coastal districts of Gujarat, IMD has warned. The cyclone is likely to cause rain - of varying intensity - in parts of Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan too.

Due to the bad weather, Air carriers like Vistara and IndiGo have already issued a travel advisory to passengers travelling to and from Chennai.

Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Pune, Goa, and Ahmedabad. As per the advisory issued by Vistara on Saturday, flights to and from Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Pune, Goa and Ahmedabad might be impacted till May 17 due to the adverse weather conditions expected over the Arabian Sea triggered by cyclone Tauktae. Due to the adverse weather conditions expected over the Arabian Sea, flights to and from Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Pune, Goa and Ahmedabad might be impacted till May 17, 2021," it said. IndiGo also issued a travel advisory stating that flights to and from Kerala's Kannur. The airline tweeted, "Travel Advisory: Due to Cyclone Tauktae, flights to/from Kannur are impacted. You may visit Plan B to opt for alternate options or get a refund."

According to the IMD, over Devbhoomi Dwarka, Kutch, Porbandar, Junagarh, Gir Somnath and Jamnagar

districts of Gujarat extensive damage is expected on May 18. There could be total destruction of thatched houses or extensive damage to kutcha houses; some damage to pucca houses; threat from flying objects; bending/ uprooting of power and communication poles; major damage to kutcha and pucca roads; flooding of escape routes; minor disruption of railways; overhead power lines and signalling systems; widespread damage to salt pans and standing crops etc. Similar damage is also expected in Amreli, Rajkot and Morbi districts.

Visuals showed that from Thiruvananthapuram in the south to Kasaragod in the north, hundreds of families living close to the sea have had to abandon their homes and rush to relief camps set up by the state government in the face of massive sea-incursions. Several houses close to the sea in districts like Kasaragod, Kannur, Kozhikode, Thrissur, Ernakulam and Alappuzha have been partially or completely damaged by the impact of the cyclone.

In cities like Kochi, Kozhikode and Thiruvananthapuram, there are widespread reports of waterlogging due to overflowing drains and canals. Rupturing of trees and electric posts have resulted in power outages and damage to vehicles.

Airports Authority of India (AAI) has took stock of the preparedness of western coastal airports in Southern Region and Western Region airports through a Video Conference and directed the concerned airports to take all precautions and plan preparedness.

# Experts for action as WhatsApp privacy policy comes into effect

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

With the controversial WhatsApp privacy policy coming into effect from Saturday for its over 2 billion users, including more than 400 million in India, industry experts emphasised that the Government must implement stricter data privacy rules and restrain the Facebook-owned app as was done while banning Chinese apps to protect the sovereignty of the country.

Giving an interim solace for those who do not accept the new policy, WhatsApp has said that its users will not immediately lose their accounts or face curtailed functionalities on the platform on May 15, but they will have to eventually go through limited functions if they fail to accept the new norms in the due course of time.

On Thursday, a senior Ministry of Electronics and IT official said during an Assocham event that the Government is pro-actively looking at a best possible action over the new WhatsApp privacy policy.

MeitY Special Secretary and Financial Advisor Jyoti Arora stated that the ministry is aware about the fact that Germany has banned the privacy policy of WhatsApp.

"There is no judicial order in favour of WhatsApp. In view of the unlawful nature of this privacy policy, the government should restrain WhatsApp as was done while banning Chinese apps to protect sovereignty of India," said Advocate Virag Gupta, who is arguing K.N. Govindacharya's matter before the Delhi High Court for disclosure of details of designated officers of social media companies.

# Govt suppressing actual number of Covid-related deaths, alleges Chidambaram

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader and former Union Finance Minister P Chidambaram on Saturday slammed the Central Government over the issuance of 1.23 lakh death certificates between March 1 to May 10 this year in Gujarat and said that the Government, in conjunction with some State Governments, is suppressing the actual numbers of new infections and Covid-related deaths.

Addressing a press conference here virtually, Chidambaram said, "On May 14, Divya Bhaskar, a Gujarati language newspaper, published a news story that sent shock waves throughout Gujarat and the country."

He said that the thrust of the story was that during the period March 1 to May 10 of this year (2021), Gujarat issued about 1,23,873 death certificates as against about 58,000 death certificates issued during the same period last year (2020).

"The increase was an alarming number of about 65,000 death certificates. This increase cannot be explained as a natural annual increase in the number of deaths. It can only be attributed to a pandemic or any other natural disaster," the Congress leader said.

He said that the Congress had independently verified the two numbers referred to for the period of 71 days.

"We have collected the numbers from 33 districts (including the cities), the sum of the number of the death certificates nearly tallies with the numbers published by Divya Bhaskar - 1,23,873 in 2021 versus 58,068 in 2020.

"During the period March 1, 2021 to May 10, 2021, the government of Gujarat has officially admitted to only 4,218 Covid-related deaths," he said.

"The difference between the increase in the number of death certificates (65,805) and the official Covid-related deaths (4,218) must be explained. It cannot be explained as 'natural annual increase' or 'due to other causes'. We have a strong suspicion that the bulk of the increased number of deaths is due to Covid and the state government is suppressing the true number of 18 Covid-related deaths," Chidambaram said.

# India will have 51.6 crore vaccine doses by end of July: Vardhan

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Saturday said India will have 51.6 crore Covid-19 vaccine doses by July end including the 18 crore doses already administered.

Vardhan reviewed the public health response to Covid-19 and progress of vaccination with Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat.

These states are depicting a higher growth rate in the number of daily cases, rise in positivity, high mortality and saturation of healthcare capacity.

The Minister highlighted the critical challenges faced by the states.

Vardhan expressed a strong view that the present plateauing of Covid cases should not be taken as a sign for complacency but as a breathing space to expand, revamp and improve Health Infrastructure.

State health administrators were advised to increase ICU



and oxygenated beds, undertake oxygen audits, take stock of availability of medicines in the state and strengthen their medical workforce.

A common point of consensus among the state health Ministers was that vaccines had resulted in milder forms of Covid thereby preventing loss of precious lives.

Taking note of the fact that all the states require more vaccines to expand their vaccine coverage, Vardhan said, "Production is being steadily ramped up to cater to

increased demand while vaccines that are being produced now continue to be equitably apportioned and swiftly sent to states/UTs."

Detailing the ramping up of vaccine production, he said, "We will have 51.6 crore vaccine doses by the end of July including the 18 crore doses already administered. Sputnik has been approved.

This along with the slated approval of the new vaccine of Zydus Cadila, Serum Institute of India- Novavax vaccine, Bharat Biotech's nasal vaccine

and the Genova mRNA vaccine will push the availability of Covid vaccines to 216 crore doses in the August-December period."

Union Minister of State for Health, Ashwini Kumar Choubey assured his colleagues in states that the Union government will listen to all their requirements and try to fulfill them as per capacity.

States were advised to ensure complete utilization of available vaccination slots for 45+ age-group, health care workers, frontline workers with awareness campaigns for conveying the importance of completing the second dose of vaccine.

It was reiterated that States need to focus on reduction of vaccine wastage as that will be factored in subsequent allocations to that state.

States were advised to constitute a 2/3-member team at State level on the lines of the dedicated team at Union Health Ministry to regularly coordinate with manufacturers for timely supplies of vaccine through 'other than government of India channel' and also to coordinate with private hospitals for their procurement.

The Union Health Ministry has already shared the list of private hospitals along with doses contracted and supplied with state/UTs.

# CRPF directs med wing to brace up for 3rd Covid wave

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Amid estimates of prediction of a third wave of Covid-19, the CRPF headquarters has directed its medical directorate to prepare for this and keep the infrastructure created during the first wave of the pandemic as also the equipment fully operational to face the eventuality.

The whole nation is hit by the second wave of Covid and the CRPF has also not been left untouched by this. During the course of the pandemic, the paramilitary has put in all the efforts to strengthen medical infrastructure which was developed during the first wave and has succeeded to some extent, officials said.

"Factoring in the prediction of the third wave, the Competent Authority has desired that top priority must be given to maintenance of infrastructure/equipment developed so far and they should be kept functional and in working order, and regularly reviewed and audited in a compact manner, a senior official said.



The headquarters has also directed all the sectors, medical directorates and composite hospitals to take requisite action and submit a report of action taken for perusal of the Director General Kuldiep Singh, they said.

In a record of sorts, the 3.25 lakh-strong force has completed the vaccination against Covid-19 with both the doses barring about 8,500 personnel who could not be

administered the doses due to temporary postings or comorbidities. Those left from vaccination are being sought to be inoculated in top priority after stabilising their comorbidities fixing posting issues.

The CRPF is the lead agency for counter-insurgency, anti-terror operations and law and order duties. It has a strong deployment in Jammu and Kashmir, Naxal-hit States and the Northeast.

# Plea in SC seeks using PM Cares Fund for oxygen plants, vaccines

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

A plea has been moved in the Supreme Court seeking directions to utilise PM Cares Fund for the purpose of installation of oxygen plants, procurement of Covid-19 vaccines and other essential equipment at 738 district hospitals across the country.

The plea added that it was already announced on April 25 that PM Cares Fund would allocate money to set up 551 oxygen plants using pressure swing adsorption at public health facilities.

The plea has been filed by advocate Viprava Sharma also urged the top court to issue directions to the states/UTs to ensure that all the private/charitable hospitals within their jurisdiction to procure, installed and commissioned the subject medical plant with essential backups and thereby, have become self-sufficient in having more than adequate inhouse basic and essential life support service of medical oxygen within the shortest possible time.

a stay on April 24 notification issued by the Centre to the extent it capped the exemption from import duty granted to medical equipment, for a period of three months.

The plea said: "Three-month time period is too short a period from the standpoint of logistics involved in importing these highly sophisticated medical equipment in India by over 300 concerned notable hospitals throughout the country."

"Pass appropriate urgent directions to the respondents to ensure forthwith setting up of electric and all other kinds of crematoriums in all cities within their respective administration and also they also forthwith undertake to maintain/improve the existing electric crematoriums all of which have been used much beyond their respective capacity and may soon get non-functional", added the plea.

The plea also asked the top court to direct states to set up electric and other crematoriums in all cities and additionally, maintain and improve the condition of existing facilities.

# Covid situation in country stabilising, says Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With 11 States reporting over one lakh active Covid-19 cases while eight have active cases between 50,000 and one lakh and 17 have less than 50,000 cases, India is presenting a mixed trend of Covid-19 situation in the country even as the Government on Saturday asserted that overall, the situation is stabilising.

India in a day recorded 3,26,098 Covid-19 cases that took the tally to 2,43,72,907, while 3,890 new fatalities pushed the death toll to 2,66,207.

The Central Government officials at a press conference here also took a dig at the Delhi Government for reporting Single-dose vaccination coverage among healthcare workers below the national average of 89 per cent.

"Single dose vaccination coverage is 95 per cent in Rajasthan, 96 per cent in Madhya Pradesh and 99 per cent in Chhattisgarh. In Delhi, it stands at 78 per cent, which is 11 per cent below the national average. It should be taken to above 95 per cent," Dr VK Paul,

Niti Aayog (Health) member said.

Similarly, he said, overall single-dose vaccination coverage among frontline workers stands at 82 per cent in the country. It is 93 per cent in Gujarat, 91 per cent in Rajasthan, and 90 per cent in Madhya Pradesh -- well above the national average. He said, it stands at 80 per cent in Delhi which has been complaining of shortage of vaccines for its citizens.

Talking about the overall Covid-19 situation in the country, he said it is stabilising and the government will work towards ensuring further stabilization.

"Some states have shown a clear pattern, in some states there are concerns and in some others there is a trend towards an increase. It is a mixed picture. But overall, the situation is stabilising and we hope and we will work towards ensuring further stabilisation and rapid decline of this pandemic."

He said that ten states account for 85 per cent of the total coronavirus cases in the country.

The official said 11 states have over one lakh active

COVID-19 cases, 17 have less than 50,000 cases while eight have active cases between 50,000 and one lakh.

Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Chhattisgarh, which are recording a high number of novel coronavirus cases, are also reporting decline in the number of active cases.

Twenty-four states have a COVID-19 positivity rate of more than 15 per cent while Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Daman and Diu, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh have reported a major drop in case positivity, he said.

The active cases have reduced to 36,73,802 and comprise 15.07 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has improved to 83.83 per cent, he stated.

Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health, said a total of 18.04 crore vaccine doses have been administered so far in the country. This includes 12.74 crore people above the age of 45 years, 1.62 crore frontline workers and 42.59 lakh people between the age of 18-44 years who have received their first dose.

# 110 medical cadets commissioned as officers join battle against Covid-19

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

The medical cadets of the Armed forces commissioned as Medical Officers on Saturday have joined the battle against Covid-19. They will be leaving immediately to join as interns in 31 Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) hospitals across the country, which are also designated for Covid care.

The Defence Ministry said 110 medical cadets, including 21 female cadets, of the 55th batch of the Armed Forces Medical College were commissioned as Medical Officers into the Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) on Saturday. The cadets were commissioned by Commandant, AFMC Lt Gen Nardeep Naithani in a brief ceremony. Ninety four cadets were commissioned into the Indian Army, 10 in the Indian Air Force and six in the Navy. The Passing Out Parade had to be called off for the first time since 1982, keeping in mind the Covid-19 restrictions.

In his commissioning

address, Lt Gen Naithani congratulated the newly commissioned officers for joining AFMS which is the finest integrated medical organisation in the country. He complimented the parents of the students for the success of their children. He added that it has the unique distinction of having the entire batch that entered AFMC in 2016 graduating together with 100 per cent success, which by itself is the best tribute to the teachers at AFMC.

The Commandant reminded the graduating batch that they were joining the medical profession at a time when the country was passing through a difficult phase. He exhorted them to use their knowledge and skills acquired at AFMC to provide the best possible care to their patients as they join the nation's battle against Covid-19.

Lt Gen Naithani expressed confidence that given their academic rigour and training, the newly commissioned Medical Officers would always measure up to the highest standards expected from military doctors.

# Israeli airstrike on Gaza home kills 10

AP ■ GAZA CITY

An Israeli air raid in Gaza City killed at least 10 Palestinians, mostly children, early on Saturday in the deadliest single strike since the battle with Gaza's militant Hamas rulers erupted earlier this week. Both sides pressed for an advantage as cease-fire efforts gathered strength.

The latest outburst of violence began in Jerusalem and has spread across the region, with Jewish-Arab clashes and rioting in mixed cities of Israel. There were also widespread Palestinian protests Friday in the occupied West Bank, where Israeli forces shot and killed 11 people.

The spiralling violence has raised fears of a new Palestinian "intifada," or uprising at a time when there have been no peace talks in years. Palestinians were set to mark Nakba (Catastrophe) Day on Saturday, when they commemorate the estimated 7,00,000 people who fled or were driven from their homes in what is now Israel during the 1948 war surrounding its creation. That raised the possibility of even more unrest.

US diplomat Hady Amr arrived on Friday as part of Washington's efforts to de-escalate the conflict, and the UN Security Council was set to meet Sunday. But Israel turned down an Egyptian proposal for a one-year truce that Hamas

rulers had accepted, an Egyptian official said Friday on condition of anonymity to discuss the negotiations.

Since Monday night, Hamas has fired hundreds of rockets into Israel, which has pounded the Gaza Strip with strikes. In Gaza, at least 126 people have been killed, including 31 children and 20 women; in Israel, seven people have been killed, including a 6-year-old boy and a soldier.

Rocket fire from Gaza and Israel's bombardment of the blockaded Palestinian territory continued into early Saturday, when an airstrike on a three-story house in a refugee camp in Gaza City killed eight children and two women from an extended family.

Mohammed Abu Hatab told reporters his wife and five children had gone to celebrate the Eid al-Fitr holiday with relatives. She and three of the children, aged 6 to 14, were killed, while an 11-year-old is missing. Only his 5-month-old son Omar is known to have survived.

Children's toys and a Monopoly board game could be seen among the rubble, as well as plates of uneaten food from the holiday gathering.

"There was no warning," said Jamal Al-Naji, a neighbour living in the same building. "You filmed people eating and then you bombed them?" he



An Israeli airstrike hits the high-rise building housing The Associated Press' offices in Gaza City on Saturday

said, addressing Israel. "Why are you confronting us? Go and confront the strong people!"

Shortly afterward, Hamas said it fired a salvo of rockets at southern Israel in response to the airstrike.

A furious Israeli barrage early Friday killed a family of six in their house and sent thousands fleeing to UN-run shelters. The military said the operation involved 160 warplanes dropping some 80 tons of explosives over the course of 40 minutes and succeeded in destroying a vast tunnel network used by Hamas.

## Palestinian march in Paris defies ban, is met by tear gas

Paris: French riot police fired tear gas and used water cannons Saturday in Paris as protesters supporting Palestinians in the Gaza Strip defied a ban on marching in the French capital. Hundreds of people marched peacefully in other cities in France and elsewhere in Europe.

In Paris, protesters scattered and played cat-and-mouse with security forces in

the city's northern neighborhoods after their starting point for a planned march was blocked.

Paris police chief Didier Lallemand had ordered 4,200 security forces into the streets and closed shops around the kick-off point for the march in a working-class neighborhood after an administrative court confirmed the ban due to fears of violence.

# Iran's hard-line judiciary chief registers for presidential run

AP ■ DUBAI

Iran's judiciary chief, a hard-line cleric linked to mass executions in 1988, registered on Saturday to run in the Islamic Republic's presidential election next month, a vote that comes as negotiators struggle to resuscitate Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

The cleric, Ebrahim Raisi, is among the more prominent hopefuls — he garnered nearly 16 million votes in the 2017 election. He lost that race to Iran's relatively moderate President Hassan Rouhani, whose administration struck the atomic accord.

Raisi's close ties to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and his popularity — due partly to his televised anti-corruption campaign — could make him a favorite in the election. Analysts already believe that hard-liners enjoy an edge as Rouhani is term limited from running again.

The public has widely grown disenchanting with Rouhani's administration after 2018, when then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the nuclear deal.

Raisi, wearing a black turban that identifies him in Shiite tradition as a direct descendant of Islam's Prophet Muhammad, offered fiery remarks to jour-



Ebrahim Raisi, head of Iran's judiciary leaves a news conference after registering his candidacy for the June 18 presidential elections at the elections headquarters of the Interior Ministry in Tehran, Iran on Saturday

nalists at the Interior Ministry as he registered. He vowed that if he wins the June 18 vote, corruption will be "dried up."

"Those who founded and partnered with the current situation can't claim they can change it," Raisi said. "People are complaining about the current situation. They are upset. Their disappointment is on the rise. This should be stopped."

The 60-year-old sought to strike a populist note, urging the public to donate to his campaign and "turn their homes into election headquarters" as he wasn't wealthy.

"We need individuals who believe in change," he said. Raisi had been named as a

possible successor to Iran's 82-year-old supreme leader, leading some to suggest he wouldn't run in the race. His entry immediately saw some hard-liners announce they would withdraw, raising Raisi's prominence further among the candidates.

A February telephone survey conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and the Toronto-based organization InraPoll found Raisi with an approval rating of 27 per cent, the highest among likely candidates. The survey found 35 per cent undecided; the poll interviewed 1,006 Iranians and had a margin of error of 3.09 per cent.

# Japan, US, France hold military drill eyeing China presence

AP ■ KIRISHIMA TRAINING AREA (JAPAN)

Dozens of Japanese, American and French troops landed amid pouring rain from a CH-47 transport helicopter onto a grassy field at a training area in southern Japan, part of Saturday's joint scenario of defending a remote island from an enemy invasion.

The three nations' first joint drills on Japanese soil — dubbed "ARC21" and which began Tuesday — come as they seek step up military ties amid growing Chinese assertiveness in the region.

Japanese soldiers and their counterparts from the French army and the U.S. Marine Corps also conducted an urban warfare drill using a concrete building elsewhere at the Japanese Self-Defense Force's Kirishima Training Area in the southern Miyazaki prefecture. Around 200 troops took part in Saturday's exercises.

On Saturday, the three countries were also joined by Australia in an expanded naval exercise involving 11 warships in the East China Sea, where

tensions with China are rising around the island of Taiwan.

The drills come as Japan looks to bolster its military capabilities amid a deepening territorial row with China in regional seas. Japan is increasingly concerned about Chinese activity in and around Japanese-claimed waters surrounding the Japanese-controlled Senkaku islands, which Beijing also claims and calls Diaoyu. Since the end of World War II, Japan's constitution has limited the use of force to self defense. Japan in recent years has continued to expand its military role, capability and budget.

Japan's Vice Defense Minister Yasuhiko Nakayama, who observed the exercise, stressed the significance of French participation in the joint exercises regularly held between Japan and the U.S., and often with Australia.

"It was a valuable opportunity for the Japanese Self-Defense Force to maintain and strengthen its strategic capability necessary to defend our remote islands," Nakayama said.

## UN chief: Foreign fighters in Libya are violating cease-fire

United Nations: The UN chief said foreign fighters and mercenaries remain in Libya in violation of last October's cease-fire agreement and called for their withdrawal and an end to violations of the UN arms embargo, saying these are "critical elements" for lasting peace in the north African country and the region.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a report to the UN Security Council obtained Friday by The Associated Press that the smooth transfer of power to a new interim government, which took power in March, "brings renewed hope for the reunification of the country and its institutions and for a lasting peace."

But he said progress must continue on the political, economic and security tracks to enable elections to go ahead on December 24. Libya has been wracked by chaos since a NATO-backed uprising toppled longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi in 2011, and split the oil-rich North African country between a U.N.-supported government in the capital, Tripoli, and rival authorities based in the country's east, each backed by armed groups and foreign governments.

# Saudis to host meeting of Muslim nations' FMs

Dubai: Saudi Arabia has called for foreign ministers of the world's largest body of Muslim nations to hold a meeting Sunday. The gathering is to discuss Israeli acts of violence against Palestinians and the Israeli police's use of force against protesters at Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem.

The kingdom will host the virtual summit, gathering ministers of the 57-nation Organization of Islamic Cooperation "to discuss the Israeli aggression in the Palestinian territory," particularly acts of violence in the vicinity of Al-Aqsa Mosque, the body said Saturday.

The Saudi-headquartered OIC includes countries Iran, Turkey, Indonesia and a range of Muslim majority nations.

The sanctity of Al-Aqsa mosque, one of Islam's holiest sites, is a sensitive and emotive issue for Muslims around the world. The OIC was formed 51 years ago in response to a Jewish extremist arson attack on the Al-Aqsa Mosque in east Jerusalem.

# Indian-American policy expert Neera Tanden appointed WH senior adviser

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Indian-American policy expert Neera Tanden has been appointed as a senior adviser to US President Joe Biden, two months after she withdrew her nomination as Director of the White House Office of Management and Budget due to stiff opposition from Republican senators.

Tanden has been entrusted with two tasks — launch a review of the US Digital Service, and plan contingencies that could result from the Supreme Court's consideration of Republican lawsuits seeking to strike down the Affordable Care Act.

Tanden, 50, is currently the president and CEO of a progressive think-tank, Center for American Progress (CAP). She expected to join the White House team on Monday.

"Neera's intellect, tenacity, and political savvy will be an asset to the Biden administration," CAP founder and director John Podesta said.

He said the White House has made remarkable progress combating numerous once-in-a-generation challenges — from vaccinating millions of Americans to delivering real



social media outbursts against several lawmakers, including those from her own Democratic Party. She became the Biden administration's only Cabinet nominee rebuffed by the Senate.

Tanden previously served as a senior adviser for health reforms at the US Department of Health and Human Services. She worked with Congress and stakeholders on particular provisions of former President Barack Obama's signature legislative achievement, the Affordable Care Act.

Before that, Tanden was the director of domestic policy for the Obama-Biden presidential campaign, where she managed all domestic policy proposals. Tanden also served as policy director for Hillary Clinton's first presidential campaign. Before the 2008 presidential campaign, Tanden served as legislative director in Clinton's office, and deputy campaign manager and issues director for Clinton's 2000 Senate campaign.

## GLOBE TROTTER

### 12 KILLED IN TORNADO STRIKES IN CHINA

Beijing: Twelve people were killed and over 300 injured when two powerful tornadoes walloped Chinese cities of Wuhan and Suzhou on Friday night, leaving a trail of destruction of houses.

### PAK: 11 DEAD AS VEHICLE PLUNGES INTO CANAL

Lahore: Eleven people, including seven children, of the same family were drowned after their vehicle plunged into a canal in Pakistan's Punjab province, rescue authorities said. The accident happened on Friday in Sheikhupura district, some 50 kms from Lahore, when the vehicle heading towards Khanqah Dogran from Qila Didar Singh skidded off the road and plunged into the canal.

### ETHIOPIA AGAIN DELAYS NATIONAL ELECTION

Nairobi: Ethiopia has again delayed its national election after some opposition parties said they wouldn't take part and as conflict in the country's Tigray region means no vote is being held there.

# Kid reporter who interviewed Obama at White House dies at 23

West Palm Beach (US): The student reporter who gained national acclaim when he interviewed President Barack Obama at the White House in 2009 has died of natural causes, his family says. Damon Weaver was 23 when he died May 1, his sister, Candace Hardy, told the Palm Beach Post. Further details were not released. He had been studying communications at Albany State University in Georgia.

Weaver was 11 when he interviewed Obama for 10 minutes in the Diplomatic Room on Aug. 13, 2009, asking questions that focused primarily on education. He covered school lunches, bullying, conflict resolution and how to succeed.

Weaver then asked Obama to be his "homeboy," saying then-Vice President Joe Biden had already accepted.

"Absolutely," a smiling Obama said, shaking the boy's hand. He used that meeting to later interview Oprah Winfrey and athletes like Dwyane Wade.

"He was just a nice person, genuine, very intelligent," Hardy said. "Very outspoken, outgoing. He never said no to anybody." Weaver got his start in fifth grade when he volunteered for the school newscast at K.E. Cunningham/Canal Point Elementary in a farm community on the shores of Lake Okeechobee.

# China successfully lands its rover on Mars



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, members at the Beijing Aerospace Control Centre celebrate after China's Tianwen-1 probe successfully landed on Mars, at the centre in Beijing, Saturday

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Saturday successfully landed a spacecraft on Mars after surviving "nine minutes of terror", becoming the second country in history to have a rover on the red planet.

The rover, Zhurong, named after a god of fire in Chinese mythology, successfully landed at the pre-selected area in Utopia Planitia on Mars, the official Xinhua news agency reported on the Communist giant's latest achievement in its ambitious goals in space.

The six-wheel solar-powered Zhurong rover weighs about 240 kilogrammes and carries six scientific instruments. It will be later deployed from the lander for a three-

month mission in search of life on Mars' surface.

Tianwen-1, consisting of an orbiter, a lander and a rover, was launched on July 23, 2020. It was the first step in China's planetary exploration of the solar system, with the aim of completing orbiting, landing and roving on the red planet in one mission.

The China National Space Administration (CNSA) said in a statement that its rover has successfully landed on Mars on Saturday after "nine minutes of terror".

The lander, carrying a Mars rover, touched down at its pre-selected landing area in the southern part of Utopia Planitia, a vast plain on the northern hemisphere of Mars, at 7:18 a.m. (Beijing Time), the CNSA said.

**UJVN LIMITED**  
H.O. "Ujjawal" Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006  
Telephones: 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135-2763508  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvn.com

**e-Tender Notice** दिनांक: 15.05.2021  
Office of the (Executive Engineer (Test), Ganga Valley, UJVNL, Haridwar), invites online bids from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:  
**Tender No. - 01/UJVNL/EE(Test)/GV/2021-22**  
**Name of Work - Supply Installation Testing and Commissioning of Fixed Type On Line DC Insulation Monitoring System for Chilla Power House**  
**Estimated cost: 78,40,698.00 + GST**  
**Date of availability of bid document on website: 17.05.2021 (11:00 Hrs)**  
**Last date for submission of bids on website: 17.06.2021 up to 17:00 Hrs**  
For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal "http://uktenders.gov.in" Executive Engineer (Test),  
"Avoid Wasteful use of Electricity"

**INDO COTSPIN LIMITED**  
REGD. OFFICE - 78 K.M. DELHI MILE STONE, NH-1, G.T. ROAD, VILLAGE JATTIPUR, POST BOX NO. 3, POST OFFICE SAMALKHA, PANIPAT -132103 (Haryana)  
CIN:- L111HR1995PLC032541 Website:www.indocotspin.com  
Email ID:rajpalaggarwal2000@yahoo.com, info@indocotspin.com  
Statement of Standalone Audited Financial Results for the Quarter/Year Ended March 31, 2021

PARTICULARS	(Amount Rs. in Lacs)		
	3MONTHS ENDED 31.03.2021 Audited	YEAR TO DATE FIGURES FOR CURRENT PERIOD ENDED 31.03.2021 Audited	CORRESPONDING 3MONTHS ENDED IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR 31.03.2020 Audited
Total Income from operations (net)	313.72	816.08	997.37
Net Profit/(Loss) from Ordinary activities after Tax	17.25	4.77	10.64
Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after Extraordinary Items)	17.25	4.77	10.64
Paid Up Equity Share Capital Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve as shown in the Balance Sheet of Previous Year)	420.05	420.05	420.05
Earnings Per Share (before Extraordinary Items) (of Rs. 10/- each): Basic and Diluted (in Rupees)	0.41	0.07	0.25
Earnings Per Share (after Extraordinary Items) (of Rs. 10/- each): Basic and Diluted (in Rupees)	0.41	0.07	0.25

NOTE: (i) There is no qualification on the audit report for the quarter/year ended 31st March, 2021 (ii) The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly/Year Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The Full format of the Quarterly/Year Financial Results is available on the Stock Exchange websites: www.bseindia.com, tele-91-9896034879

For Indo Cotspin Limited  
Bal Krishan Aggarwal  
Managing Director  
DIN NO.: 00456219

Place: Panipat  
Date: 15/05/2021

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता  
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड, बलीदाबाजार (छ.ग.)

ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

ऑनलाईन निविदाएं आयटम दर पर अनुबंध हेतु नीचे उल्लिखित कार्य के लिये छत्तीसगढ़ के राज्यपाल की ओर से अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता के कार्यालय में एकीकृत पंजीयन व्यवस्था वे सभी श्रेणी के पंजीकृत देकेदारों से आमंत्रित की जाती हैं:-

क्र.	निविदा सूचना क्र./दिनांक	सिस्टम क्र.	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (रु. लाख में)
1.	02/07.05.2021	76700	EMPANELMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT AGENCIES (ISAs DWSM) FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF JAL JEEVAN MISSION IN THE DISTRICT BALODABAZAR-BHATAPARA OF CHHATTISGARH	623.48

1. बिड प्रारंभ तिथि - 12.05.2021  
2. बिड सबमिशन की अंतिम तिथि - 25.05.2021

उपरोक्त निर्माण कार्य की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, प्रचौहर राशि, विस्तृत निविदा विवरण, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेब पोर्टल <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> में देखे जा सकते हैं।

हस्ता /-  
कार्यपालन अभियंता  
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड  
बलीदाबाजार-मदापारा (छ.ग.)

R.O. No:- 60572/12  
R.O. Date:- 13/05/2021

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR**  
**HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR**  
Telefax :- 0194-2496089, Email Id:- xennmhchdk@yahoo.in

**(Short-term)**  
**GIST of E -NIT NO: MHCHD/TS /2021-22/20/e-tendering Dated:-12-05-2021**  
For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited from registered/reputed/experienced firms with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work:-  
**Name of Work:- SITC of Open-well Submersible Pumping Units along with allied Mechanical works for water supply at Govt. Chest Disease Hospital, Srinagar.**  
**Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs) :- 1.45**  
**Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees) :- 200**  
**Time of completion (in Days) :- 05**  
**AA Accorded Vide No :- 08-MCS of 2021, Dt: 27-04-2021**  
**TS. NO :- MHCHD/TS15 of 05/2021**

1. The Tender document Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website [www.iktenders.gov.in](http://www.iktenders.gov.in) from 12-05-2021 (18.00 hrs).

2. The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from 13-05-2021 (10.00 hrs). to 19-05-2021 (14.00 hrs) in two (02) cover.

3. The bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on 19-05-2021 (16.00 hrs) or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar.

**Sd/- Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar**

No. DIPK-1587/21 Dated:- 15.05.2021

# GST Council to meet on May 28

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a growing chorus over the GST Council meeting not being convened for over seven months, the Union Finance Ministry on Saturday announced that the next meeting of the panel that decides on taxes on goods and services will be held on May 28.

After over a dozen central and state levies such as excise duty, service tax and VAT were subsumed in a nationwide Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2017, the Council, headed by Union Finance Minister and including representatives of all states and union territories, was mandated to meet every quarter to deliberate on issues at hand.

The GST Council last met on October 5, 2020 to finalise contours of borrowings by states to meet shortfall in tax revenues. The meeting got extended and ended on October 12.



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will chair the 43rd meeting of the GST Council on May 28, her office tweeted.

"Smt @nsitharaman will chair the 43rd GST Council meeting via video conferencing at 11 AM in New Delhi on 28th May 2021. The meeting will be attended by MOS Shri @ianuragthakur besides Finance Ministers of States &

UTs and Senior officers from Union Government & States," it said.

Opposition party-ruled states have been complaining about not holding the GST Council meeting in recent weeks. West Bengal Finance Minister Amit Mitra earlier this week wrote to Sitharaman seeking urgent convening of the meeting to discuss the issue of compensation shortfall to states

and other pending items.

"You are kindly aware that the GST Council was mandated to meet once in every quarter. Unfortunately, this solemn mandate has been violated twice over, by not calling a meeting of the Council for two consecutive quarters - not even virtually.

"This has undermined a federal institution, where all states are represented irrespective of political parties, regions or size of population, along with the Government of India. I fear that not holding meetings regularly also lead to a trust deficit," Mitra wrote.

When GST was implemented, states were promised that they will be compensated for any shortfall in tax revenues arising out of their taxes being subsumed in a national GST, for the first five years.

This was to be done by levy of a cess, on top of the GST rate, on certain luxury and sin goods.

# Power consumption grows nearly 19 pc in 1st fortnight of May

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Power consumption in the country grew by around 19 per cent in the first fortnight of May to 51.67 billion units (BU) over the same period last year, showing recovery in industrial and commercial demand of electricity, according to the power ministry data.

Power consumption in the first fortnight of May 2020 was 43.55 BU. The power consumption in the entire month of May last year was 102.08 BU.

During the first fortnight of May this year (from May 1 to 14), peak power demand met or the highest supply in a day touched the highest level of 168.78 GW (on May 6, 2021) and recorded growth of over 15 per cent over 146.54 GW (peak met) recorded in the same period in 2020 (on May 13, 2020).



The power consumption in April grew nearly 40 per cent to 118.08 BU.

Power consumption in April 2020 had dropped to 84.55 BU from 110.11 BU in the same month in 2019, mainly because of fewer economic activities following the imposition of lockdown by the government in the last week of March 2020 to contain the spread of deadly COVID-19.

The power consumption also fell in May 2020 to 102.08 BU from 120.02 BU in May 2019.

Similarly, peak power demand met or the highest power supply in a day also slumped to 132.73 GW in April last year from 176.81

GW in the same month in 2019, showing the impact of lockdown on economic activities.

# Power engineers body demands mass vaccination

IANAS ■ NEW DELHI

All India Power Engineers Federation (AIPEF) has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Power Minister R.K. Singh requesting that all the states be directed to hold mass vaccination camps to cover electricity personnel on top priority basis and be treated as frontline workers.

Shailendra Dubey, Chairman AIPEF said as many as 1,000 power sector employees and engineers have succumbed to Covid-19 and more than 15,000 have been infected from the virus.

In Maharashtra, a total of more than 7,100 power employees are Covid positive and about 210 have died. While, in Uttar Pradesh, more than 4,000 power sector employees are suffering from coronavirus and there have been 140 casualties.

# Covid pushes India's Pharma industry growth to 59% in April



IANAS ■ NEW DELHI

The fresh wave of Covid-19 in the country has pushed up sales of medicines and resulted in exponential growth for the pharmaceutical sector.

According to total sales audit data from world's largest pharmaceutical market research firm IMS Health, the Indian Pharma Market (IPM) grew 59 per cent yoy in April, 2021 vs 16 per cent yoy in March, 2021 due to the low base effect in April, 2020 and sharp surge in Covid-19-related sales.

On the MAT (moving annual turnover) basis, IPM grew 9.6 per cent, primarily driven by pricing growth of 4.3 per cent and new product launch growth of 4.6 per cent. Volume growth was muted at 0.8 per cent.

According to a report from Emkay Global Financial Services, all major therapies posted high double-digit growth in April 21.

Within Chronic therapies, Cardiac therapy grew 22 per cent.

# NTPC augments Covid care facilities across India, adds over 500 oxygen beds

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned NTPC has augmented COVID care facilities across the country and added more than 500 oxygen supported beds besides 1,100 isolation beds at its plants in different states.

The company has set up COVID care centres with facilities of 200 oxygen supported beds and 140 isolation beds in Badarpur, Noida and Dadri, it said in a statement.

It has also set up a 500-bed COVID health centre at Sundargarh in Odisha where 20 ventilators have been provided. "NTPC Ltd has added more than 500 beds with oxygen support and more than 1,100 isolation beds across plants in various states to provide support to the critical COVID care," the statement said. Besides the COVID care centres that are operational in Dadri, Korba, Kaniha, Ramagundam, Vindhyachal, Barh & Badarpur, NTPC will



be setting up additional facilities at North Karanpura, Bongaigaon and Solapur as well. Other hospitals are on their way to increase the number of beds with oxygen facilities, it said. Meanwhile, NTPC has inoculated over 70,000 employees and associates across its operations. The massive vaccination drive continues across plant locations.

NTPC has also started vaccinating those who are in the age bracket of 18-44 at many of its plant locations. Vaccination drives have been undertaken across NTPC stations in coordination with respective state administrations. The company is running 24x7 control rooms across plants for better coordination for patients across sites which is coordinated by a special task force.

The task force also helps in coordination for hospital beds and other treatment facilities across various empanelled and non-empanelled hospitals. The control rooms also coordinate for procurement of medicines, hospital equipment and services.

# NO NEGATIVE RT-PCR REPORT 4 pilots spends 21hrs in aircraft

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Four pilots as well as cabin crew members of SpiceJet's Delhi-Zagreb flight had to reportedly spend 21 hours, almost a day onboard the aircraft they operated from Delhi to Croatian capital Zagreb this Tuesday before flying the Boeing 737 back home as there was a sudden change in rules making negative RT-PCR test results mandatory for anyone coming from India.

The crew were not allowed to come out of the plane and they conducted the return flight to Delhi -- after the 21-hour rest period -- without passengers or cargo. The two commanders and as many first officers had to spend their layover inside the aircraft in Zagreb airport before flying the plane back to Delhi without any passengers or cargo.

"Prior to departure from



India, email confirmation was received from Croatian authorities that RTPCR is not required for crew," the airline's spokesperson said. SpiceJet says the crew was on board for 21 hours.

On arrival in Zagreb on Tuesday, the crew, including four pilots, as well as cabin crew members, was told that the

orders have changed. "Due to sudden and massive increase in COVID cases in India, they were then instructed that RTPCR test is required. This came as a surprise," the airline's spokesperson said.

SpiceJet had operated flight SG-9035 on May 11 on Delhi-Tbilisi-Zagreb with two sets of pilots, meaning four pilots. As

the crew had not undergone the mandatory RT-PCR test, Croatian authorities did not allow them to alight from the aircraft, said people in the know.

Since the crew could not fly back immediately due to the FDTL (flight duty time limitation) restrictions, bedding, food and water was provided in the aircraft, according to the spokesperson.

"Aircraft was cleaned. DGCA (Directorate General of Civil Aviation) permission was obtained. Crew rested in the aircraft for 21 hours (as mandated by regulation).

The unfolding Covid catastrophe in India has seen some countries suddenly change their rules for crew and passengers from the country. Sometimes these changes happen when aircraft are on their way from India to those countries.

# India to become major production hub for ACC batteries: ICEA

IANAS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA) has welcomed the Rs 18,100 crore Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme that has been approved for Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) battery storage in the country.

In a statement, ICEA that represents mobile and component manufacturers such as Apple, Motorola, Nokia, Foxconn, Wistron, Flextronics, Lava, Vivo and others, said that it would promote newer and niche cell technologies in the country.

"We at ICEA believes that the PLI scheme would give thrust to 'Make in India' initiative and will attract huge investments of Rs 45,000 crore plus in the coming years. With this push for ACC batteries, the sector would witness robust growth in the coming years," said Pankaj Mohindroo, Chairman, ICEA.

ACC batteries are the new generation of advanced storage technologies which store electric energy as electrochemical and convert it back to electric energy as and when required. The ACC covers major sectors, which are consumer electronics, mobiles, electric vehicles, advanced electricity grids, solar rooftop etc.

Mohindroo said that we need to work on securing the raw material supplies for these core technologies specially lithium and cobalt.

"Our import burden of Rs 20,000 crore will also turn into a big opportunity and would make the country a major hub in producing clean energy," he added.

The ACC battery storage manufacturers will be selected through a transparent competitive bidding process.

The manufacturing facility would have to be commissioned within two years. The incentive will be disbursed thereafter over five years.

# Airtel rolls out Covid support initiatives for customers on its digital platform

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bharti Airtel has rolled out a range of Covid support initiatives for customers by leveraging its digital platform.

With this, the telco joins a growing list of companies that have introduced digital tools to help people amid the deadly second wave of the pandemic.

Airtel has integrated easily accessible bouquet of Covid support resources and related information in the Airtel Thanks app's Explore section, the company said in a statement.

"Covid SOS aggregates verified and updated contacts

for important supplies such as medicines, oxygen, plasma donors, ambulance, hospital beds, and testing centres. With a few clicks, the platform connects users to these service providers/resources and tries to ensure that users do not have to waste precious time to access this data," the statement said.

The information available on 'Covid SOS' is verified by their teams,

it said and added the platform is powered by Airtel IQ. "Airtel Thanks users can also book a vaccination slot for themselves and their loved ones through the app," the statement said.

# Covid Care: Boeing plans to set up field hospitals in India

IANAS ■ NEW DELHI

Aerospace major Boeing has tied-up with state governments along with NGOs to set up field hospitals in India to treat Covid patients.

Accordingly, the aerospace major has been in talks with five state governments to provide such facilities in their jurisdictions.

In the last few days, Boeing India has reached out to UP, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Telangana and Tamil Nadu state governments.

The initiative as part of Boeing's India Covid relief commitment envisages setting up of such facilities in each of five states which are facing the pandemic resurgence.

As part of the programme, the funding, land and utilities,

facility, equipment, doctors as well as medicines will be provided through a partnership model by the joint effort of Boeing, the concerned state government and NGO partners, 'Doctors for You' and 'Care USA'.

The state governments will provide the infrastructure and utilities while 'Doctors for You' will provide the medical infrastructure and staff.

The first such facility is expected to come as soon as possible.

"We are in conversations with local and international relief organisations to deploy Boeing's \$10-million emergency assistance package to support India's Covid-19 response," said Salil Gupte, president, Boeing India.

"As part of that effort, we're

working with medical, government and public health experts across India to provide relief, including medical supplies and emergency health care to communities most impacted."

Last month, Boeing announced a \$10 million emergency assistance package to support India's Covid-19 response.

At present, Boeing has 3,000 employees in India.

The company develops, manufactures and services commercial airplanes, defence products for customers in domestic civil and military sectors. Lately, India has been heavily battered by record new daily increases in coronavirus infections, prompting lockdowns and restrictive measures.

# Jet Airways' annual general meeting on June 8

New Delhi: The annual general meeting of Jet Airways, which suspended operations more than two years ago, will be held on June 8, according to a regulatory filing.

The affairs of the full service carrier, which is currently undergoing an insolvency resolution process, is being managed by resolution professional Ashish Chhawchharia.

Heled on June 8, will consider and adopt the company's audited standalone financial statements for the financial year ended March 31, 2020 together with the reports of auditors.

WESTERN RAILWAY			
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE No.S/18/2021 Date 12.05.2021			
S.N.	Short Description of item	Quantity	T.O.D.
374	Bearing Piece Assy. for Uncoupling Gear	6871 Nos.	24.05.2021
375	LED Signal Lighting Unit route, Shunt, Calling on	143 Nos.	27.05.2021
376	Top Spring Seat for Axle Box	912 Nos.	27.05.2021
377	Pin for FIAT IR Bogie	1694 Nos.	27.05.2021
378	Distributor Valve	275 Nos.	27.05.2021
379	Packing 37mm thick for Height Adjustment	1145 Nos.	27.05.2021
380	Hand Brake Cable assembly.	1145 Nos.	27.05.2021
381	Azithromycin 500mg Tab	245670 Nos.	27.05.2021
382	Meropenem 1g Inj	11840 Nos.	27.05.2021
383	Piperacillin 4g and Tazobactam 500mg Inj	22994 Nos.	27.05.2021
384	Solid MIG/MAG Copper Coated.	18500 Nos.	28.05.2021
385	Indexable Inserts to Sandvik	191 Nos.	28.05.2021
386	18W (4Feet Length) LED Tubular Lamps	5116 Nos.	28.05.2021
387	Secondary Spring Outer for Chair Car	100 Nos.	28.05.2021
388	Branch Pipe	30 Nos.	28.05.2021
389	Foot Step Arrangement	43 Sets	31.05.2021
390	Yaw Damper	575 Nos.	31.05.2021
391	Secondary Lateral Damper	334 Nos.	31.05.2021
392	Primary Vertical Damper	2200 Nos.	31.05.2021
393	Foot Rest Complete	82 Nos.	31.05.2021
394	Security Plate	2600 Nos.	31.05.2021
395	Security plate	610 Nos.	31.05.2021
396	Brake Cylinder	339 Nos.	31.05.2021
397	Yoke for Upgraded High Tensile CBC	1093 Nos.	31.05.2021
398	Brake Beam Complete	568 Nos.	31.05.2021
399	Slack Adjuster Type (ITEM 44)	400 Nos.	31.05.2021
400	Non Asbestos K Type Composition Brake Block	53608 Nos.	31.05.2021
401	Pin/Cotters For BMBS Casnub Bogie	240 Nos.	31.05.2021
402	Modified Floor Door Arrangement	600 Nos.	31.05.2021
403	Automatic Twist Locks	1339 Nos.	31.05.2021
404	Flexible PVC flooring sheet	120 Nos.	01.06.2021
405	Suspension Clamp Body	1000 Nos.	01.06.2021
406	415 V ac 3 phase tower AC system	164 Nos.	01.06.2021
407	"7/8" DIA. Lock Bolt & Collar	21854 Nos.	01.06.2021
408	Pin/Cotters For BMBS Casnub Bogie	240 Nos.	01.06.2021
409	Bolster Bottom Gusset, without 168 Dia.Hole	4 Nos.	01.06.2021
410	Suction Machine with Foot Pedal	1 No.	01.06.2021
411	Hermetically Sealed Compressor Copeland	130 Nos.	02.06.2021
412	3 Phase induction Condenser motor	253 Nos.	02.06.2021
413	Prevailing Torque Type Nut	567 Nos.	02.06.2021
414	Needle Roller Bearing Assy.	271 Nos.	02.06.2021
415	Pin/Cotters For BMBS Casnub Bogie	240 Nos.	02.06.2021
416	Pin/Cotters For BMBS Casnub Bogie	240 Nos.	02.06.2021
417	Brake Head Pin Assembly For BMBS Casnub Bogie	480 Nos.	02.06.2021
418	POH Kit	2409 Nos.	02.06.2021
419	Load Sensing Device	506 Nos.	02.06.2021
420	PU Paint -Gentian Blue.	22600 Nos.	03.06.2021
421	193 sq mm Catenary Wire	4 KM	03.06.2021
422	Rubber Buffer Spring	451 Set	03.06.2021
423	Intermediate Longitudinal Beam	100 Nos.	03.06.2021
424	Air Spring Assy 180 KN Capacity	14 Nos.	03.06.2021
425	Axle Box Helical Spring for Milk VAN	65 Nos.	03.06.2021
426	POH Kit	594 Nos.	03.06.2021
427	Isolating Cock without Vent	131 Nos.	03.06.2021

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Mr. Desh Deep Chawla & Mr. Sumit Chawla were joint owners of Property No. 154, area measuring 112.50 sq. mtrs. in Block-A, Sector-48, Noida, "the said property" by virtue of Transfer deed dated 15.10.2011. Further Mr. Sumit Chawla became the owner of 1/2 share of his late father Mr. Desh Deep Chawla vide a mutation letter dated 21.02.2019, in the record of Noida Authority. All persons including other legal heirs of late Mr. Desh Deep Chawla are hereby informed that above mentioned owner want to sell the said property to someone who is taking loan for purchase the said property from ICICI Bank Ltd., if anybody has any objections upon the ownership of Mr. Sumit Chawla in respect of the said property to sale / mortgage, and any kind of objection kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present. (Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants) 203, 1st Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Meti Nagar, Delhi-15. Ph. 011-41112272-28. kumarassociatesadvocates@gmail.com)

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY	
E-Tendering Tender Notice No. 19/2021	
Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.) N.E. Railways IZatnagar For and behalf of president of India invites "OPEN" e-tender through on Line (E-tendering) for the following work. S.N.: 1, Description of Works: Zone No. 1. MQP to LC No. 250 A (Both In.) Chapra colony, Bareilly city colony, station front colony at Bareilly city. Approx. Value: Rs. 52,25,017.00, S.N.: 2, Description of Works: Zone No. 2. IZLN/2 L.C. No. 250 A (Ex) to L.C. No.244 B (In) Station Colony, Loco sheds Station Bareilly City. Approx. Value: Rs. 34,85,772.00, S.N.: 3, Description of Works: Zone No. 3. L.C. No. 244B to BPR (Both ex.) Loco Colony, station colony, S.E./works /P. way/Sig., ADEN/Line office/IZN, SMG Line, station colony, CBJ Line plant & colony / IZN. Approx. Value: Rs. 57,40,561.00, S.N.: 4, Description of Works: Zone No. 4. Divisional Hospital and medical colony (north of IVRI road) IZatnagar. Approx. Value: Rs. 49,28,974.00, S.N.: 5, Description of Works: Zone No. 5. Divisional office, BRI office etc. including office colony IZatnagar. Approx. Value: Rs. 43,26,021.00, S.N.: 6, Description of Works: Zone No. 6. Mech. Workshop. Including workshop administrative building and store Depot. IZatnagar. Approx. Value: Rs. 70,94,625.00, S.N.: 7, Description of Works: Zone No.7. Officers colony Road no.1 to 7 (Kaliwan) all inclusive at IZatnagar. Approx. Value: Rs. 87,11,938.00, S.N.: 8, Description of Works: Zone No. 8. Kaliwan (Ex.) to New modal colony & DSL shed at IZatnagar. Approx. Value: Rs. 70,84,063.00, S.N.: 9, Description of Works: Zone No. 9. Bhojipura (In.) to Lalukan (Ex.). Approx. Value: Rs. 59,22,550.00, S.N.: 10, Description of Works: Zone No. 10. Makrandpur (Ex) Ujhayani (In). Approx. Value: Rs. 48,05,742.00, S.N.: 11, Description of Works: Zone No. 11. Ujhayani to Kasganj (Ex.Both). Approx. Value: Rs. 45,68,883.00, S.N.: 12, Description of Works: Zone No. 12. Kasganj (In.) to MHA (Ex.) up to km.253/0, KSIJ(In)up to km.417/0 and Jafan colony. Mal godam colony at Kasganj. Approx. Value: Rs. 63,53,674.00, S.N.: 13, Description of Works: Zone No.13. Kasganj L.xing no. 310 to PTL. (In.) upto km. 204/0. Approx. Value: Rs. 38,90,700.00, S.N.: 14, Description of Works: Zone No. 14. PTL. (Ex.) to FGR (Ex.). Approx. Value: Rs. 69,20,305.00, S.N.: 15, Description of Works: Zone No.15.	

FGR (In.) to KLJ (Ex.) up to Km.132/0. Approx. Value: Rs. 52,22,384.00, S.N.: 16, Description of Works: Zone No.16. FGR (EX) Km.132/0 to ARL (EX). Approx. Value: Rs. 74,90,845.00, S.N.: 17, Description of Works: Zone No. 17. CPA (EX) up to km. 2/2 and BRT branch line to ARL(In). Km.65/0. Approx. Value: Rs. 79,37,728.00, S.N.: 18, Description of Works: Zone No. 18. MHA (In.) Km.253/0 to MSN (EX.). Approx. Value: Rs. 49,67,482.00, S.N.: 19, Description of Works: Zone No. 19. MSN (In.) to MRT up to L.xing no.357 (In). Approx. Value: Rs. 70,67,353.00, S.N.: 20, Description of Works: Zone No. 20. MRT up to L. xing no.357(Ex) to MTJ (EX) including R.E. colony & Delhi Lajpat nagar officer's rest house. Approx. Value: Rs. 53,55,664.00, S.N.: 21, Description of Works: Zone No.21. Pillibhit station yard and all Pillibhit colony. Approx. Value: Rs. 1,15,44,000.00, S.N.: 22, Description of Works: Zone No. 22. Bhojipura (EX.) to Mallani (EX.) & Pillibhit (EX.). Approx. Value: Rs. 43,03,000.00, S.N.: 23, Description of Works: Zone No. 23. PBE (Ex.) to TPU (In.). Approx. Value: Rs. 54,29,950.00, S.N.: 24, Description of Works: Zone No. 24. PBE (ex.) to SZP (In.). Approx. Value: Rs. 26,28,800.00, S.N.: 25, Description of Works: Zone No. 25. MB (EX.) to RMR (In.). Approx. Value: Rs. 88,76,100.00, S.N.: 26, Description of Works: Zone No. 26. LKU (In.) to KGM (In). Approx. Value: Rs. 99,12,335.00, S.N.: 27, Description of Works: Zone No. 27. Holy day home at NNT & RKT & other rail establishments of hill area under SE/works/NNT. Approx. Value: Rs. 43,18

# RAMAN ALLEGES SMEAR CAMPAIGN

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sacked as women's cricket team coach, WV Raman has alleged that a "smear campaign" against him has gained unwarranted traction and urged the BCCI president Sourav Ganguly to stop it.

In a mail that has also been marked to National Cricket Academy head Rahul Dravid, Raman wrote it will be "extremely disconcerting" if his candidature was rejected due to reasons other than "my incompetency as a coach".

In a surprising move, Raman was not retained as the head coach of the senior women's team by the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) which picked Ramesh Powar for the top job.

It was under Raman that Indian team cherished a runner-up finish at the women's T20 World Cup last year.

"I presume you might have been told different views about my style of functioning and work ethic. Whether those views conveyed to the officials of the BCCI had any impact on my candidature is of no consequence now," Raman wrote in the letter.

"What is important is that the smear campaign seems to have gained some unwarranted traction with some BCCI officials which needs to be halted permanently. I am prepared to give an explanation should you or any of the office bearers require it."

He said he was not used to "moaning and whining" but was bringing up the issues in case the BCCI president wishes to do a course correction.

"If I were to be rejected due to my incompetency as a coach, there is no argument on a judgment call at all. But what will be extremely disconcerting is if my candidature was rejected due to any other reasons," said the former India opener who played 11 Tests and 27 ODIs between



1988 and 1997. "Especially if it was due to allegations from people who were more focussed on achieving their personal objectives at the expense of the overall hygiene and welfare of the Indian women's team and the pride of the country."

The stylish former left-handed batsman's letter to the two former captains is sure to ruffle a few feathers given that it has always been the coaches who have either stepped aside or sacked following fallout with players, most notably ODI captain Mithali Raj.

While Raman's letter didn't name anyone, it is understood that he was writing about the star culture that prevails in the team, which he said is probably doing more harm than good. "If some people in the sys-

## Sthalekar slams BCCI over Veda's treatment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Australian captain Lisa Sthalekar has claimed that the BCCI neither checked on Veda Krishnamurthy after the twin tragedies in her family nor communicated to the bereaved India cricketer its decision to not consider her for the upcoming tour of England.

Earlier this month, the flamboyant middle-order India batter lost her elder sister Vatsala Shivakumar to Covid-19, two weeks after her mother succumbed to the dreaded virus.



On expected lines, she was not included in the Indian Test and ODI team for next month's tour of the United Kingdom, but ICC

Hall of Famer Sthalekar was not convinced with the BCCI's handling of the whole episode.

"Whilst not selecting Veda for the upcoming series may be justified from their point of view, what angers me the most is that as a contracted player she has not received any communication from BCCI, just to even check how she is coping," Sthalekar said in a note on her Twitter handle.

She added, "A true association should deeply care about the players that play the game... Not focus solely on just the game at any cost. So

tem have been highly accommodative to the extent of being seemingly obsequious to an accomplished performer for years on end and if that performer feels constrained to adhere to the culture, then I would leave it to you to decide if the coach was asking for too much.

"In a coaching career spanning 20 years, I have always created a culture in which the team always comes first and insisted on no individual overriding either the game or the team."

He said "paying heed to only one individual's views while disregarding everyone else's over a long period of time has resulted in gaping holes in the process and the system."

"The time has come for you two accomplished former legends to salvage women's cricket falling which things could gather momentum in the wrong direction," he warned.

"I have some suggestions that might help in the improvement of women's cricket. I will be delighted to share those if you are interested," he signed off.

## Shafali gets maiden ODI, Test call-ups

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rookie wicketkeeper-batter Rndrani Roy was rewarded with maiden Test and ODI call-up for India's tour of England next month but senior left-arm spinner Rajeshwari Gayakwad missed out as she is recovering from Covid-19.

The 29-year-old Gayakwad is also nursing an injury.

The Neetu David led selection panel made a course correction with teen batting sensation Shafali Verma and seasoned pacer Shikha Pandey making it to all three squads after their South Africa home series snubs.

"This time Neetu and her colleagues didn't go for any outrageous experiments. Shafali and Shikha were two of the earliest names listed in all three squads. There was one Swetha Verma of UP whose name was discussed but it was found that she hasn't even scored 200 runs in a season," a source close to development said.

Sneh Rana and Indrani were two stellar performers in the National One Day competition and thus got their call-ups. The controversial picks of the last time like Monica Patel, C Prathusha have been dropped from the squad altogether in the team selection meeting which was keenly followed by BCCI president

Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah.

Indrani was rewarded for her string of scores which included 103 against Chattisgarh, 86 against Karnataka and 49 against Railways in the final.

Rana on her part was the Player of the Final for her all-round show while representing Indian Railways.

As expected Mithali Raj will lead the team for the one-off Test and three ODIs while Harmanpreet Kaur will take over the reins during the three T20 Internationals.

SQUADS

Test & ODI: Mithali Raj (C), Smriti Mandhana, Harmanpreet Kaur, Punam Raut, Priya Punia, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Sneha Rana, Taniya Bhatia (wk), Indrani Roy (wk), Jhulan Goswami, Shikha Pandey, Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy, Poonam Yadav, Ekta Bisht, Radha Yadav.

T20I: Harmanpreet Kaur (C) Smriti Mandhana, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Richa Ghosh, Harleen Deol, Sneha Rana, Taniya Bhatia (wk), Indrani Roy (wk), Shikha Pandey, Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy, Poonam Yadav, Ekta Bisht, Radha Yadav, Simaran Dil Bahadur.



## shortpasses

**LIFTERS TO LEAVE ON MAY 18**  
NEW DELHI: A two-member Indian team, including Youth Olympics Gold medalist weightlifter Jeremy Lairrinnunga, will leave on Tuesday to take part in the World Junior Championship in Tashkent from May 23 to 31.

**SURINDER EYE JR SELECTOR'S JOB**  
NEW DELHI: Former India batsman Surinder Amarnath has applied for the post of national junior cricket selector, and is banking on his Morocco experience as a coach and selector in early 2000s to get the job.

**JEJE PATROLLING RIVER**  
NEW DELHI: Away from the football field, India striker Jeje Lalpekhlua has been patrolling a long stretch of Tuichang river in Mizoram to prevent "overfishing" and help sustain the livelihood of local fishermen.

**INDIA OFF TO QATAR ON MAY 19**  
NEW DELHI: The Indian football team will leave for Qatar on May 19 after the Gulf country, in a big relief, accepted AIFF request to allow its players to train there ahead of the 2022 World Cup Qualifiers next month.

**HOLDER TO MISS INITIAL WI CAMP**  
ANITGUA: All-rounder Jason Holder, who was part of the postponed IPL with SunRisers Hyderabad, has been rested for the first part of West Indies' three-week high-performance camp that begins on Sunday in St Lucia.

**MCKEOWN MISSES SMITH'S WR**  
SYDNEY: Australian teenager Kaylee McKeown fired a warning shot on Saturday ahead of the Tokyo Olympics, swimming the second fastest women's 100 metre backstroke ever to narrowly miss Regan Smith's world record.

**MARY'S QUARANTINE OVER**  
NEW DELHI: Olympic Games-bound MC Marykom has completed her seven days quarantine period at the national boxing camp in Pune, but will still train in isolation to stay safe, says a coach associated with the camp.

**WFI CANCEL SONEPAT CAMP**  
NEW DELHI: The planned camp for eight Olympic-bound Indian wrestlers in Sonapat has been cancelled due to hard quarantine and they will instead train in multiple European cities, with the national federation allowing each of them a sparring partner of their choice.

**IPL BEST IN WORLD: RIAZ**  
LAHORE: Pakistan pace bowler Wahab Riaz has called IPL incomparable and the No 1 T20 franchise league in the world, but added that bowling standard of the PSL is the best.

**OMAR BANNED FROM OLYMPICS**  
GENEVA: American triple jumper Omar Craddock was banned for 20 months over missed doping tests and will miss the Tokyo Olympics and 2022 world c'ships in Oregon.

**AUSSIES MAY LAND IN SYDNEY**  
MALE: The Australian contingent that was part of the IPL will return home within a day or two and quarantine in Sydney with BCCI likely to foot the bill for travel & quarantine. Agencies

## Silverwood will skip Pak, SL series

Thorpe, Collingwood to take reins during busy summer

PTI ■ LONDON

England head coach Chris Silverwood will take a break after his team's two Tests against New Zealand, handing over the reins of the ODI side to his assistants for the home series against Sri Lanka and Pakistan, starting late June.

Having been part of England's tours of Sri Lanka and India earlier this year, Silverwood said he will take a break to refresh himself before returning at the helm for the marquee Test series against visiting Indians, starting in August.

In Silverwood's absence, his assistants Paul Collingwood and Graham Thorpe will take charge of the ODI team for one series each in the home



matches against Sri Lanka and Pakistan from late June to mid-July.

"I'll be passing the reins on for the ODI series. It's not fair on the players if I am operating at less than 100% and it is not fair on myself either," Silverwood was quoted as saying by

the British media. "Thorpe will do one and Colly will do the other and I'll use it as my break to refresh and get ready for what is ahead of us," he added.

After the two-match home Test series against New Zealand, starting on June 2, England will play 12 white-ball Internationals at home. Their limited overs home series against Sri Lanka begins on June 23 with the first of the three T20Is, followed by three ODIs.

Then, Pakistan's tour of three ODIs and as many T20Is begins on July 16. This will be followed by a five-match home Test series against India beginning August 4, when Silverwood will return at the helm of affairs.

After hosting seven Tests as well as the 12 white-ball Internationals, England is scheduled to tour Pakistan and Bangladesh ahead of the T20 World Cup scheduled for October.

Joe Root's Test team then travels to Australia for the Ashes series, followed by a tour of the Caribbean at the start of next year.

## Bowlers were aware of ball tampering: Bancroft

PTI ■ LONDON

Cameron Bancroft, one of the three central figures in the infamous ball-tampering scandal, says it is "self explanatory" that apart from Steven Smith, David Warner and himself, Australian bowlers were also aware of the illegal tactics during the Newlands Test.

Bancroft was caught on camera using sandpaper on the ball in the third Test against South Africa in 2018, a scandal that had rocked Australian and world cricket.

In an interview with *The Guardian*, asked if some of the bowlers knew what he was doing, Bancroft replied: "Yeah, look, all I wanted to do was to be responsible and accountable for my own actions and part."

"Yeah, obviously what I did benefits bowlers and the awareness around that, probably, is self-explanatory," he added.

The Australian bowling attack in the Newlands Test had comprised pacers Mitchell Starc, Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, Mitchell Marsh and spinner Nathan Lyon.

Bancroft, who is currently playing for Durham in the County Championship, said he wanted to be "liked" by his team-



mates and in turn "lost control" of his values.

"I invested too much to the point where I lost control of my values. What had become important to me was being liked, being well valued, feeling really important to my teammates, like I was contributing something by using sandpaper on a cricket ball."

"That's something I don't think I even understood until that mistake happened. But it's part of the journey and a hard lesson I needed to learn."

The 28-year-old rued that he was not able to make a better decision at that time.

"I guess one thing I learnt through the journey and being responsible is that's where the buck stops (with Bancroft himself). Had I had better awareness I would have made a much better decision," said Bancroft.

## Conway warms up for India with kitty litter on pitch

Auckland: New Zealand batsman Devon Conway is sprinkling kitty litter on practice wickets to simulate spin bowling on the rough, hoping this will help him counter the likes of Ravichandran Ashwin during the World Test Championship final against India next month.

The 29-year-old has been named in the 20-member visiting NZ squad for the two-match Test series against England. The squad will then be trimmed to 15 for the WTC Final in Southampton starting on June 18.

Conway, who impressed in his first International season for his adopted home country last summer in ODIs and T20s, says he has been sprinkling kitty litter on practice wickets to simulate spin bowling pitching in the rough created by bowlers' footmarks.

"Basically the idea is to get the ball to sort of spit out of the rough," Conway, who has featured in three ODIs and 14 T20Is for New Zealand, told *Spark Sport*. Kitty litter is granulated clay which absorbs waste products of pets like cat or dogs.

"It's a bit harder to play, but good practice. It's about finding a gameplan to combat that and just practice how you're going to play in the game," said the left-handed batsman.

"When it does roughen up and the ball does spit and turn a lot, it's all about being positive."

Conway said he didn't want to rely on just defending against spinners. "If you're going to look to just defend throughout, at some point there might be a ball that's going to have your number."

PTI

## Eng IPL stars likely to miss NZ Tests

PTI ■ LONDON

England are unlikely to rush their Indian Premier League players straight from quarantine to the Test squad against New Zealand as they would be lacking red-ball practice, according to reports.

This will mean that the likes of Jos Buttler, Jonny Bairstow, Chris Woakes, Sam Curran and Moeen Ali, who are serving a mandatory 10-day quarantine after returning from the currently-suspended IPL, are likely to miss the two Tests against NZ, starting on June 2.

Their isolation period expires at the weekend, leaving little more than two weeks before the first Test at Lord's. "The timeline is considered too tight for the (IPL)

returning players, meaning calls up are expected for the likes of Ollie Robinson, Craig Overton and James Bracey," according to a report in *BBC Sport*.

"While fitness levels could be managed, the lack of red-ball practice could be a concern — particularly with other options having spent several weeks competing in the County Championship," said another report in *The Independent*.

Head coach Chris Silverwood on Tuesday will convene his first selection meeting since taking full control of the process from Ed Smith.

England men's cricket managing director Ashley Giles had earlier hinted that players who returned from the suspended IPL are unlikely to feature in the Test series against New Zealand.

## Batra in favour of conducting Olympics despite virus fears



People against the Tokyo 2020 Olympics protest around National Stadium AP

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition to the Olympic Games will be there amidst a raging Covid-19 pandemic but conducting the biggest sporting spectacle in Tokyo will send out a strong message that the world is moving beyond the catastrophic situation, IOA President Narinder Batra said on Saturday.

The Tokyo Olympics, which was scheduled to be held last year, was postponed because of the pandemic. The Indian Olympic

Association (IOA) President, who is also an International Olympic Committee (IOC) member, is hoping that the Games will be held as scheduled, from July 23.

"Life has to move on and conducting the Olympics will give a strong message that we have moved beyond the Covid-19 pandemic," Batra said.

"Opposition to the Games will always be there but it is now up to the organising committee of Japan and IOC to decide."

"But as far as Indian athletes are concerned we are taking all necessary precautions and have

been preparing to the best of our abilities to put up our best-ever performance in the Olympics," the IOA chief added.

Batra's comment has come after critics from Japan on Friday submitted a petition, calling for the Games to be cancelled as the host nation fights a fourth wave of coronavirus infections.

The IOA chief assured that the travel ban imposed on India by Japan wouldn't affect country's participation in the Games. Japan on Thursday suspended entry of foreign nationals from 153 nations, including India in the wake of the recent surge in Covid cases across the globe.

"This is a temporary travel ban which has been issued by many countries but when it comes to Olympics, there are different protocols in place which a member nation has adhere to," Batra said.

"I assure all the accredited Olympics-bound Indian athletes that they will face no problem in entering Japan. There are enough guarantees being ensured by the Organising committee and IOC," he said.

"There will be no restrictions for them."

MOTION PICTURE



The New Zealand men's cricket team departed for England on Saturday night to play a two-Test series, followed by the ICC World Test Championship final against the Virat Kohli-captained India. NZC posted pictures of the departing team on Twitter and Instagram

# the pioneer agenda

You are only as beautiful as the many beautiful things you do for others without expectation  
— Janelle Monae



FROM THE INSIDE

## The potency of sound

A mantra is an instrument of the mind that helps us to concentrate, intensify and spiritualise our consciousness



## The tale of Ganapati

Be it an animal or a human existence, their dynamic existence is rooted in a common factor — the consciousness element

The impact of the pandemic on the youth is disruptive. While they are actively helping others, they are also simultaneously dealing with immense emotional turmoil of their own, writes Dr CHANDNI TUGNAIT, as she suggests ways to move beyond it to create a life outside of it

# THE FIGHT FOR SANITY

The present scenario, with the rise in Covid-19 cases and deaths, is nothing short of a nightmare. Most people are experiencing mixed emotions and a lingering feeling of, "I don't feel like doing anything". This is not only because of the news and information overload on social media, but also the fact that people are losing their near and dear ones without as much of a hint.

The pain, overwhelm, fears, anger, social isolation and uncertainty are not only impacting the youth but even the kids. The years 2020 and 2021 have changed not just how we live or work but also how our children study and play. While the working youth seem to be grappling with the situation, whether it is loss of a job, business, medical facility, or life, the kids are a witness to it all. The impact is much more than what meets the eye. The confused feelings, unprocessed emotions, unclear thoughts and panicky actions are leaving a deep impact on our mental and emotional health as well.

The immediate and the long-term mental health impacts of the pandemic on the kids is difficult to estimate. However, the cases of anxiety, stress and depression amongst children between the age group of 5-16 years has seen a huge spike in the last one year. While initially they felt relieved with the online classes, the severity of the pandemic and the impact of the changes in their lives (and that of their parents) soon began to dawn upon them. The common complaints that I get from parents these days is lack of focus, lack of physical exercise, over-eating, irritability, anxiety, bouts of anger, fears and sadness in kids.

Ironically, all this is being experienced by the parents as well. No matter how we conduct ourselves in front of our children, they know exactly what is happening around us. The TV, news, social media, conversations on phone and with each other, the quarantine of a family member, life-threatening situations, the panic on our faces — they can sense it all.

The schools are rushing with the syllabus online because the education of the child is important but are we considerate towards their mental health? How are the current experiences and unprocessed emotions going to impact these children as adults?

Our mental health impacts how we respond, feel, think and act. Our behaviour, decision-making and physical health is all linked to our mental health. Hence, it is essential to give love and assurance and impart coping skills to not only the adults but also to the children.

The pandemic has reshaped the world beyond imagination. The suffering in India has gone to the level of basic requirements of food, shelter, medical facility and transport not being met for a large part of the population. The situation is grim with high levels of insecurity and chaos.

Of late, there is propensity for blame towards the authorities. It's never easy to lose a loved one, never. The fear, anger, blame, guilt — the whole gamut of emotions is all justified. But what is also important is to pause for a moment and accept all these emotions and begin to process them. Situation is grim for everyone (in some way or the other). What we need in today's times is prayer, compassion, love and gratitude.

The impact of the pandemic on the youth is disruptive. While they are actively helping others, they are also simultaneously dealing

with immense emotional turmoil of their own.

The fact is that as a country we do not have a strong medical infrastructure *vis-à-vis* our population. We all know this (we knew it all along). But what we didn't know is the severity of the virus and how it could take away our loved ones away from us, forever, in a matter of hours. We are all guilty at some level. We all have to take the ownership for the present situation in order to change it. Despite knowing the safety protocol, a large part of the population didn't follow it. Do we always need a lockdown to exhibit appropriate behaviour? Do we know someone who doesn't wear masks, someone who went for the Diwali party at a friend's house with 20 others, someone who couldn't wait to travel to Goa, Kerala, Maldives, someone who refuted the existence of covid all together?

Now is not the time to find faults with self or others but to change the focus to what good is happening around us and how can we make it better. The brain is extremely powerful in amplifying whatever we focus upon. Till we keep complaining about our present circumstances, our mind will focus on it. The more we talk about it, write about it or feel negative about it, the more we reinforce the same neural pathways in our brain that keep adding to the misery. To change this, let's focus on the good around us.

Look around, there are many people trying to help with oxygen cylinders, connections in hospitals for beds, arranging plasma, food, support, counselling, therapies and more. Not everyone is trying to bribe, blackmail or take advantage of the situation. It is commendable how the youth is also coming forward to offer assistance, structure communities and make a difference.

Research shows that over 70% of the youth is deeply traumatised with the uncertainty the pandemic has created whether it is with respect to life, relationships, social interactions, forms of expression, health and lives of their loved ones or the disruption in future prospects for education and employment for the youth.

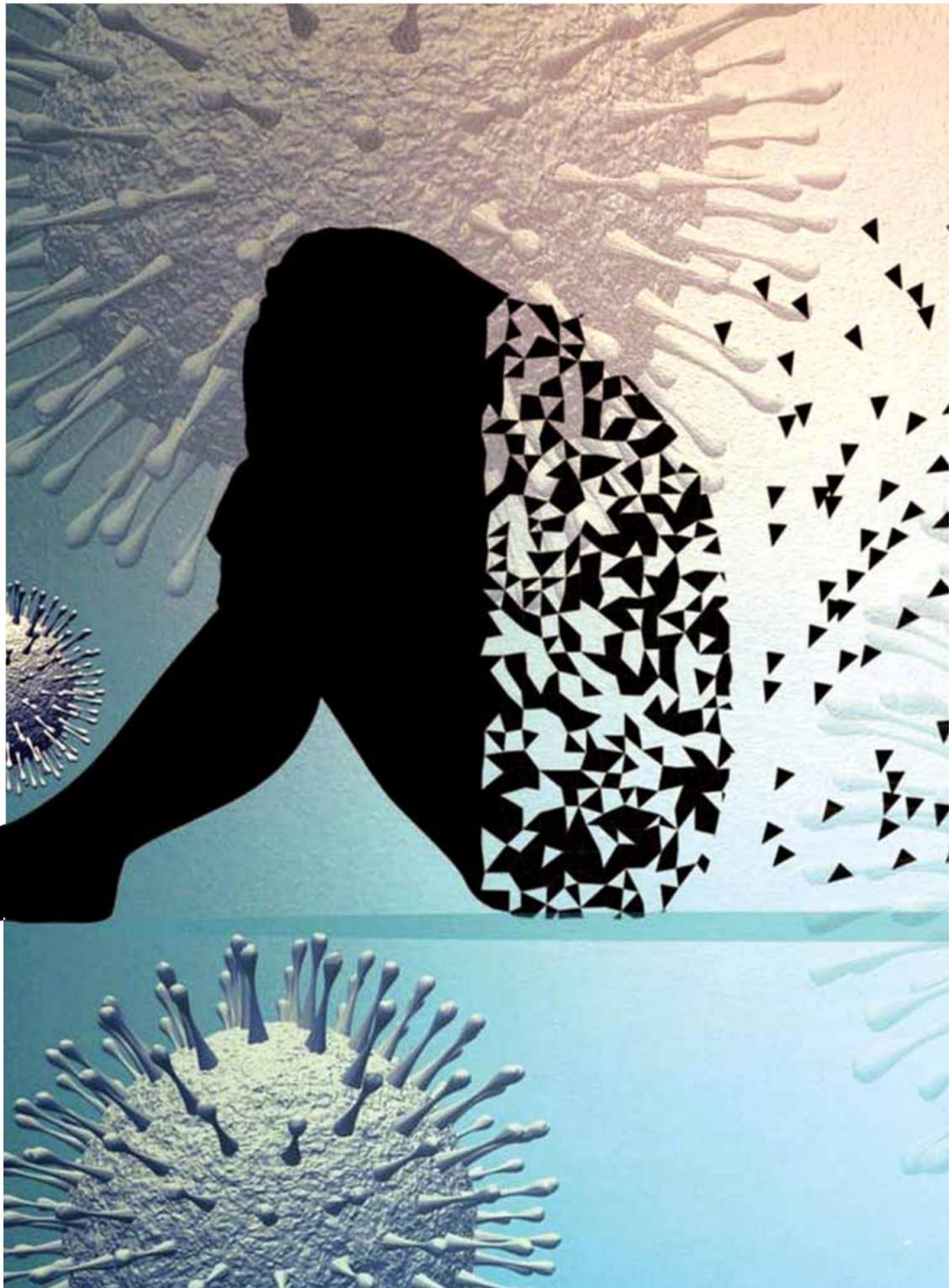
In addition to the grief and loss, there is an impending feeling of doom as over 43% of youth are uncertain about their future career prospects. Many even contemplate suicide. This darkness remains unnoticed as we are fighting to survive this situation.

Despite all odds, the youth is stepping up, raising their voice, offering support, structuring communities, enabling groups and volunteering in ways more than one to fight the situation.

While we should offer them social and psychological support to deal with all this, we should also come up with measures to protect this generation from being permanently scarred by this crisis — physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, financially and behaviourally. Initiatives by the government as well as private sector organisations will help in the long run though immediate support in the form of counselling, therapy, and open communication can go a long way.

The future of our nation lies with our youth and it's of grave importance that we do not take this lightly by letting their life be in a quandary.

There are many people bracing and surviving the virus amidst all the deaths, there



RESEARCH SHOWS THAT OVER 70% OF THE YOUTH IS DEEPLY TRAUMATISED WITH THE UNCERTAINTY THE PANDEMIC HAS CREATED WHETHER IT IS WITH RESPECT TO LIFE, RELATIONSHIPS, SOCIAL INTERACTIONS, FORMS OF EXPRESSION, HEALTH AND LIVES OF THEIR LOVED ONES OR THE DISRUPTION IN FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT FOR THE YOUTH



are many who are offering relentless care and prayers for humanity at large. There is help and compassion in many places, if not all. Hold onto that and allow yourself to be a conduit for more compassion, gratitude and assistance in any way possible instead of fear and uncertainty.

Coronavirus is probably going to be here for a long time. But we have to move beyond it to create a life outside of it, responsibly.

### Some points to take into consideration are:

- **Process emotions, don't vent nor bottle them up:** Allow open communication to address the stressors. Listen and express deeply without judgments and in case of chronic stress or anxiety, seek support from an expert.
- **Respond, don't react:** There is already a lot going on in everyone's lives. Don't snap at people at home or even on other people's social media feed. We can share our views without attacking others.
- **Operate from love and compassion and not fears and anger:** Say a kind word, offer support, just hold the space for others to be themselves and accept the situation but do not cause panic with minute-by-minute update of statistics.
- **Be responsible, not reckless:** Follow the safety protocol. Even if you have recovered from Covid, do not act as if all is well. Our actions inspire many others and by being responsible we save not just ourselves but many people around us. The parties, social gatherings, important meetings, can all wait or be done online. Life is precious.
- **Help in any way possible, don't panic:** When someone you know is in a crisis, get valid connects, check the sources, be mindful, take precaution, help in every way possible and pray for the best. This is all we can do

currently. Also, limit the news and social media intake to up to 15-30 minutes a day to be well apprised of the situation and not be engulfed by it.

● **Do your bit, refrain from judging self and others:** Judgment only takes us away from action thereby delaying results. Be proactive and sensitive to the battles everyone is going through.

● **Take care of yourself:** You can't pour from an empty cup. So, take care of yourself — eating habits, sleep, exercise, breathing and mindfulness practices, get vaccinated and be in the attitude of gratitude.

● **Ask:** "What can I do today to make a difference?" instead of complaining.

It's imperative we come together from the space of love, compassion and gratitude to fight the pandemic. There's no other way.

No act is small. No prayer is negligible. No support is trivial. Looking around and complaining and blaming will only cause more pressure on our emotional, mental and physical well-being.

Operate from awareness and take care of self and others. We are undeniably in a crisis and there are faults at every level — from the root to the top. However, this is not the time to find faults and indulge in blame-game.

It's time to focus on "what can I do to make a difference today?" and then purely from a space of compassion, ACT; without worrying about the results.

Will we be able to save the world? I don't know. But what I do know is that with that one act a day, and thirty acts a month, we all can create ripples of change. It all matters. Choose change over complaints. We always have a choice.

The writer is a renowned Psychotherapist & the founder of Gateway of Healing and Life Artistry



THE PRACTICE OF  
FORGIVENESS IS OUR MOST  
IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO  
THE HEALING OF THE WORLD  
— MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

# THE POTENCY OF SOUND



A *mantra* is an instrument of the mind that helps us to concentrate, intensify and spiritualise our consciousness, writes HINGORI

**M**antra is a sound, a certain utterance or a syllable. Today, modern science sees the whole existence as reverberations of energy, different levels of vibrations. Where ever there is a vibration, there is bound to be a sound. That means, the whole existence is a kind of sound, or a complex amalgamation of sounds — the whole existence is an amalgamation of multiple *mantras*. The yogic scriptures often compare mantras to a boat or a bridge that an aspirant can use to cross the sea of delusion created by the external world, which we call *Maya*, and to reach the centre of consciousness within. Yogis say that a *mantra* is like an eternal friend who accompanies the meditator even after death, lighting the path in the realm where the light of the sun and the moon cannot penetrate.

In understanding what a *mantra* is and how a *Mantra* works, it is helpful to look at its translation. The word *mantra* is derived from two Sanskrit words, the first part is *man*, which means mind; and the second part is *tra*, which is the root of the Sanskrit word meaning tool or instrument. A *mantra* is therefore literally, an instrument or tool of the mind that helps us to concentrate, intensify and spiritualise our consciousness.

#### MANTRA VIDYA AND AURA

Chanting silently in the mind in a meditative pose helps increase the aura.

At *gurukuls*, students were taught higher-order *mantras* that were specifically created by sages of ancient India. *Mantras* generate sound vibrations that add to the aura or energy levels of those who recite them. The *mantras*

of the Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, Jain and other faiths, also fall into this category. However, *mantras* can be used positively as well as negatively. Positively, they can be used to heal, defend against spiritual attacks and strengthen one's aura. They also form a telepathic connection between the seeker and the collective power of the deity or concept to which they are attributed. If the *mantra* is attributed to planets, it will connect to their rays as well. For example, the *guru mantra* will connect to the power and concept of *guru*, including the rays of Jupiter. If the *mantras* are attributed to a deceased saint, they will home in to his energy field, which exists in an ethereal dimension.

*Mantras* would be used in specific circumstances and were to be recited while sitting in a specific *asana* or seat. For example, the *Gayatri Mantra* was best recited while seated on a *kusha* grass mat or deer-skin. The more advanced version of the *mantra*, known as the *Mahagayatri Mantra*, was to be recited while immersed in water. Several such permutations and combinations are usable in *mantra vidya* (the science of *mantras*). The intent of such technicalities is to ensure that the energy vibrations of the *mantras* are optimally absorbed by the human body and little is dissipated into the atmosphere. A part of the dissipation adds to the aura or energy of the location. Some of it would be absorbed by the *asana* or seat. It is for this reason that *asanas* are bad conductors of electricity, that neither absorb nor discharge it quickly. As it is not possible to perform all the suggested *asanas* on animal skins, we use blankets, pure cotton sheets or cotton mattresses, instead.

“THE MULTIPLICITY OF MANTRA RECITATION ENABLES ONE TO CONNECT TO THE RELEVANT POWER AT THE MACROCOSMIC LEVEL AND AWAKEN THE REPRESENTATION OF THAT POWER IN THE MICROCOSMIC SELF. THEREBY CONNECTING THE OUTER AND INNER SOURCES OF THE SAME POWER WITHIN ONE'S SELF”

#### MANTRAS AND THE DIVINITY OF SOUND

A Japanese scientist, Dr. Masaru Emoto, conducted an interesting experiment on the effect that sound vibrations had on water. Emoto observed that when water was exposed to music from Bach and Mozart, beautiful crystals formed in it. But when negative intentions were directed its way, the water formed malformed crystals. He concluded that sound is vibration; and positive sounds have healing energy. His research also showed that thoughts emit vibrations at frequencies we are yet to determine, and they too have the power to heal. The question that begs an answer is: 'How do *mantras* work?'

The knowledge of sound affecting matter is not new. Chanting *mantras* has been a part of Indian spiritual practices for thousands of years. The ancient *rishis* (sages) of India had a deep awareness of the potency of sound.

According to Quantum Physicists, whether audible or not, everything has a sound, a distinct and unique vibration. This sound is called resonance, the particular frequency at which an object naturally vibrates. In his book 'Silent Pulse', George Burr Leonard writes, "At the heart of each of us, whatever our imperfections, there exists a silent pulse of perfect rhythm, made up of wave forms and resonances, which is absolutely individual and unique, and yet which connects us to everything in the universe."

Sanskrit, the language in which many powerful *mantras* are composed, is described as a vibrational language. The ancient Indian spiritual masters devised *mantras* to vibrate

at particular frequencies. Each *mantra* is composed to have a distinct effect. When you chant a *mantra*, you send vibrations into the universe which creates a powerful ripple effect. *Mantra* recitation also helps you tune in to the universal sound that began creation and is still vibrating — the *Anahat*. Scientific research suggests, chanting *mantras* causes the left and right hemispheres of the brain to synchronise. It also helps oxygenate the brain, reduce our heart rate, blood pressure and assist in creating calm brainwave activity.

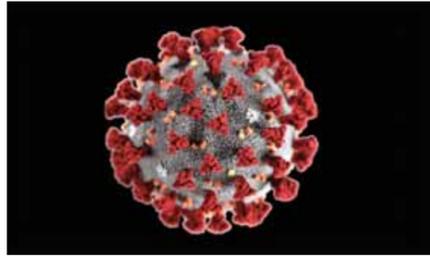
*Mantras* can rearrange your molecular structure and adjust your experience through the subtle vibrations the chanting causes in your being. This re-alignment allows you to experience the benefits of the vibration. The more focused you are in chanting a *mantra*, the greater will be its impact on your consciousness. When you think negatively, you create a subtle vibration with the negative thought. The longer you think negatively, the more damaging it is for your mind and body.

With every passing day, there is more scientific data to corroborate what the ancient *rishis* had a deep understanding of — sound has power. Words and thoughts, spoken and unspoken, are potent tools. Being aware of this will allow you to pay close attention to the things you say and think of yourself, and how these words and thoughts, especially the negative ones, impact you. This awareness may serve as a trigger to change the negative patterns into positive ones. It may also help you to let go of habits that impede your spiritual growth.

The writer is the author of Hingori Sutras series of spiritual books



**HIDDEN SOULS**  
PRAMOD PATHAK



## Time to be honest

Let's be honest to admit that we have not been able to handle the pandemic as effectively as we should have and perhaps could have. While citing reasons may produce long list of responses that were found missing, if we try to get to the roots, we may come to just one conclusion. More than anything else it was a failure of character. Character of those responsible for policy making that is the political class. But the bureaucratic machinery was also equally responsible for not applying their mind, the job they are supposed to do. It was also the failure of character of the common people who acted irresponsible enough to let Corona flourish the second time. What an irony. We knew what was required. Yet, we did what was not required. The point is that this is not the first time a pandemic like this has dealt a bloody blow. When are we going to learn? Maybe not as long as we are not honest to admit our mistakes, learn from them and let those who know the job do it. This is a typical Indian scenario. We always find the wrong man for the right place. You need nothing else to invite a disaster. And so, it was. Saying that the common man erred may pass on some portion of the blame to the scapegoat but that does not absolve the political class of their sin. Governance was more important than forming governments but people preferred the latter. It took a higher judiciary to point out how callous some institutions have become. If people are honest to admit mistakes and learn from them things could improve in the future. But hoping this is a tall order. The chaos that has set in reminds of an old Gandhian quote — When wealth is lost nothing is lost, when health is lost something is lost, but when character is lost everything is lost. The point he wanted to emphasise was that character is the all-important attribute. Character can help regain health and wealth even if we lose these. But the present times have no room for character, as wealth and health occupy the front seat. The results are there to see. We still can make up for the lost ground if we pick up the moral courage to own our mistakes. But for that there is need to shed the ego, the king size ego that always tells us that we are infallible. As the political class continues to pat its own back, situation is going from bad to worse. Time for some soul searching. Gandhiji had talked about seven social sins in his weekly newspaper Young India on October 22, 1925. It would be worthwhile recollecting them, which were — Wealth without work, Pleasure without conscience, Knowledge without character, Commerce without morality, Science without humanity, Worship without sacrifice and Politics without principles. While all those sins are responsible for the present-day situation, it may be prudent to identify the deadliest of the sins talked by Gandhi 95 years ago. It is politics without principles that has become the biggest curse of the present times. It is politics that is at the helm of everything. Though many definitions of politics are there power is Central to all of them. It is obsession with power that is the root cause of all evil. While thinking of principled politics may sound utopian only that can lead us out of the morass we are in.

Pathak is a professor of management, writer, and an acclaimed public speaker. He can be reached at ppathak.ism@gmail.com

## KRISHNA'S CONSORTS

*Param Purusha* Krishna's multiple wives are symbolically viewed as the different forms of *Prakriti*, writes DR. ASHA GOSWAMI

The sources of Krishna saga contain varied accounts that speak of his multiple marriages. It is said Krishna was married to 16,100 damsels. Most of these marriages were a consequence of his military expeditions in the far-east of India, the modern Assam. Krishna's eight other marriages are referred to in the *Puranas*. While most sources are silent over Krishna's other marriages, his marriage to Rukmini, his chief queen, is cited in almost all the sources of Krishna-saga — an argument cited by many scholars to bracket him with the popular monogamists of the age like Shri Rama, Nala, Satyavan and the others.

These scholars, to prove their view, quote a verse from the Mahabharata, which equates Shri Krishna with the famous monogamists of the age. It is said, Krishna carried away Rukmini moved by her deep love and desire to marry him. Later, they duly wed at Dwarka. Next, during the *syamantak-gem* episode Krishna is cited to have married Jambhavati and Satyabhama. Thereafter, it is said Krishna married Kalandi, River Yamuna-incarnate. His marriage to four maidens — Shrutakeerti, Bhadra, Madri and Hemavati is mentioned next.

The river goddess, Kalindi, had begged to marry Krishna, which reflects his influence and power during the *Dvapara*-age. Philosophically interpreting Krishna's personae, it may be stated that Lord Krishna with this bounteous grace undertook the role of a husband to all women, who looked upon him to be their guardian and saviour. At the same time, he is perceived to be the father to all the men of the world [the second role makes the first role of the Lord inevitable].

According to the Yoga system, there are sixteen thousand one hundred nerves which get united at a prime-place near the *Sushma* nerve, and a Yogi has to hold full



control of them for exercising and carrying out some specific *Yogic sadhanas*. Shri Krishna being an excellent Yogi used to inculcate such austere *sadhanas* by exercising full control over his body with all these nerves. He was styled as the Lord or the *Swami* [husband] and master of these nerves, which probably was taken to imply his wives.

In the symbolic context, his so many wives also imply his innumerable *Vibhutis* in this world, reference to which is made in the *Vibhuti* — Yoga of Gita (when Krishna tells to Arjuna about this "na asti anto me divyam vibhutanam"). Likewise, his eight chief queens including Rukmani are symbolically treated as implying three qualities of *Sattva*, *Rajas*, *Tamas* (in human body); the river Ganges, presiding goddess of the Himalayas, *Samaveda-mantras* personified, soul and the personified [Krishna] patients virtue in itself.

Mythological, the multiple wives of

Krishna represent the *Apsaras* of Heaven in their former lives with as well as the multiple incarnation of goddess Lakshmi. The *Apsaras* assumed their next birth on earth to attain Lord Krishna as their sole husband. Besides, *Param Purusha* Krishna's multiple wives are also symbolically viewed as the different forms of *Prakriti*. In this context, the relation between *Param Purusha* and *Prakriti* corresponds to that between husband and wife. So, Krishna, the god has sixteen thousand one hundred eight forms of *Prakriti* as his wives. Likewise, his eight chief queens are symbolically represent major energies of *Prakriti* known as *Mula* (primary) *Prakriti*, namely — *Tattva*, *Mahat*, *Ahamkara*, *Akasha*, *Vayu*, *Tejas*, *Apas* and *Prithvi*.

The writer, a noted Indologist and authority on Krishnaitic Studies, was a regular contributor to Agenda, The Pioneer. She recently lost her to the pandemic. Her presence in the form of writings will be missed

## Thank God, there's God!

God is there to discipline any soul, that does not toe the line. We should be grateful for his protection, writes AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Imagine a world without God. Everyone is on their own. There is no *karmaphala* principle. Everything is happening by chance, because with no God, who will enforce the cause and effect rule which is also known as the *karmaphala* principle. Some people get together like in a dictatorship and control the masses by terrorising them.

You might say that this is happening in several countries, as in the past. But you must remember that the fiercest of the dictators eventually bit the dust. So what does one make of that? Simple, there is someone far superior than any dictator howsoever powerful he/she may be. That is God. We are blessed to have God oversee everything.

Regarding their life span, no dictator could survive for long. However, there are souls who live much beyond hundred years. One of these special souls live even beyond that. To my knowledge there is a saint who is said to be five hundred years plus old. He comes to attend the 'Kumbha Mela' every twelve years. That is how they have estimated his age. He lives in the Himalayas. He is one example, I know of. But, there must be others who have lived for longer years. How does it happen? Because God allows them this privilege. They may wish not to be liberated just yet, having qualified for such a privilege. God can allow them; and only God can, because such souls benefit the mankind by their presence.

To understand this phenomenon, we must get the hang of the cosmic design. There is God, who is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. He is the basis of everything. Everything revolves around Him. He is the one who creates, sets rules ('*maryadas*'), which everyone is expect-



ed to follow. Those who do are rewarded and those who do not, get punished.

These rewards and punishments are not instantaneous. The Lord Himself sets the example of following all *maryadas*. Then, there are all of us, souls, all equal. Yes, our material or otherwise bodies differ as also where we are placed in the hierarchy which is based upon our '*karmas*', good or bad. Our smallness is intrinsic, but this does not prevent us from achieving very big tasks like some scientists do or enlightened saints do. Our smallness also does not prevent some of us from becoming despots, for which we are punished in due course. As the arrangement is eternal, there is no rush for anything. All divine actions are well thought out and absolutely fair.

Back to some souls turning rogue and causing mayhem with assistance of some other willing souls, their smallness comes in the way and they are helplessly punished. Therefore, there is no scope of any soul becoming big at any time;

God is the only big soul, and will eternally remain so. This uniform smallness of all souls also excludes giving unfair advantage to any particular soul based on different sizes of their bodies, they being temporary.

God is there to discipline any soul, that does not toe the line, and we should be grateful for the protection granted by the all-powerful God. The system is not complicated. You have done pious deeds and earned privileges. You are expected to make good use of them to make progress in the eternal journey. If these are misused, punishment is on the way once the good deeds have run out. We shouldn't get fooled by some years of someone's reign of terror; punishment is coming but in a logical way — the *karmaphala* way.

In conclusion, we can state that there is the omnipotent God to both protect us and reward us, some rogue souls notwithstanding.

Bishnoi is a spiritual writer and can be reached at spiritual@ajitbishnoi.com

# Hawks cash in on Israel-Hamas war

Gaza has once again grabbed the headlines. In East Jerusalem, blood-stained streets and smoldering tyres are telltale signs of a gory fight between the Israeli security forces and the Hamas. The region is witnessing the worst violence since the 50-day war that took place in 2014. Today, the bitter truth for Israel is that Hamas, an Islamic militant group, controls the sensitive Gaza region.

Palestinians live under Israeli settler colonialism. Their fear is based on experience of torture, daily bout of humiliations, constant denial of basic freedoms, absence of dignity of life, living and labour, imprisonment and finally maiming and killing. So it is very natural that every Palestinian born there will have the basic instinct to fight against the Israeli occupation. The hatred is growing towards Israel and its security forces. And if it goes like this for any longer, war-like situation will be a daily affair.

The moot point is what Israel wants? Israel wants total control over East Jerusalem. The current conflict has emerged because of the forced expulsion of Palestinian families from the occupied East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah. Some sources say the lands occupied by these families were originally under Jewish ownership. But the Palestinians see this as an extension of an Israeli policy to displace as many Palestinians as possible from Jerusalem. The final aim is to reclaim and retain a majority Jewish identity in the city.

Will Palestine ever get the desired independent land? No, at least for the foreseeable future. It must be said here that the struggle and jihad for Palestine will continue. The Islamic resistance movements like the Hamas, meaning strength, will keep challenging the very identity of the Israeli state. In fact, the Hamas Covenant which consists of 36 articles clearly highlights how the group will take the Islamic movement further. Article 15 of the Covenant says that the jihad for the liberation of Palestine is an individual duty.

It says, "The day that enemies usurp part of Muslim land, jihad becomes the individual duty of every Muslim. In face of the Jews usurpation of Palestine, it is compulsory that the banner of jihad be raised. To do this requires the diffusion of Islamic consciousness among the masses,



Smoke rises following Israeli airstrikes on a building in Gaza City on Friday

AP

both on the regional, Arab and Islamic ummah levels. It is necessary to instill the spirit of jihad in the heart of the nation so that they would confront the enemies and join the ranks of the fighters."

Palestinians have resisted Israeli occupation and colonisation for decades now. Anger on the Palestinian street has grown. People are raising the banner of protest against Israel. They claim that Israel is making concerted efforts to erase the Palestinian identity from the land.

For now, Tel Aviv has rebuffed any discussion for ceasefire. It vows to continue the offensive. Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel, is in favour of stepping up its Gaza strikes. He said, "At the conclusion of a situational assessment, it was decided that both the might of the attacks and the frequency of the attacks will be increased."

He also commented that "Hamas and Islamic jihad paid... and will pay a very heavy price for their beligerence... their blood is forfeit". This indicates that Israel will continue its offensive. There is a possibility that this will add fuel to the fire over the decade's long crisis in West Asian region.

The spokesman for UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said he is saddened by the increasingly large number of casualties, including children, from Israeli air strike in Gaza and of Israeli fatalities from rockets launched from Gaza. He called for maximum restraint by the Israeli security forces. The UN has warned that the planned expulsion of the Palestinian families from East Jerusalem by Israel could amount to war crimes. But it also lashed out at the Hamas for the indiscriminate launch of rockets and mortars towards Israeli population centres.

Meanwhile, the US postponed a UN Security Council meeting on the ongoing flare-up between Israel and the Hamas for the next week. The discussion was supposed to take place this week, but the US is trying to make room for diplomacy so as to avert the worst situation in the contested Gaza territory. The US, a key ally of Israel, has confirmed on multiple occasions that the latter has the full right to defend itself as the terrorist groups from Gaza have launched about 1,750 rockets into its territory. However, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has brushed aside all speculation that Washington

is trying to torpedo the crucial talks altogether. President Joe Biden said, "One of the things that I have seen thus far is that there has not been a significant overreaction."

Around the same time, Israel has been pummeling Gaza with air strikes, levelling buildings leading to killing of dozens of people. Biden has already touted Israel's right to self-defense amid rocket attacks from the Hamas that have killed dozens of people. Thus the White House clarified that Jerusalem must be a place of co-existence.

The European Union, a group of 27 nations, too has criticised the Hamas for the war, by saying that Palestinian rocket attacks on Israel were totally unacceptable. And the EU called on all sides to aim for de-escalation and to prevent more civilian casualties. At the same time, EU foreign policy chief Joseph Borrell condemned eviction of Palestinian families in East Jerusalem. He also called the evictions illegal, saying it only serves to fuel tensions.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson aired his view that "the UK is deeply concerned by the growing violence and civilian casualties and we want to see urgent de-escalation of tensions". Arab League chief

Ahmed Aboul Gheit called the Israeli air strikes indiscriminate and irresponsible.

However, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, a known bete noire of the Israel state, said "Zionists understand nothing but the language of force, so the Palestinians must increase their power and resistance to force the criminals to surrender and stop their brutal acts." Meanwhile the 57-member group of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation voiced its concern over the deteriorating security scenario in East Jerusalem.

Now, an international call for restraint has been raised, both the Hamas and Israel must understand that they are simply killing innocent civilians. War is not the solution to the land problem. The current crisis is only offering the radical elements on both sides a chance to advance their agenda.

The massive deployment of ground troops by the Netanyahu Government on the border signals a broader offensive in the coming days. Moving armed forces near Gaza raises the possibility of an invasion and a bloody war. The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) is preparing for all kinds of eventualities and an esca-

lation at the moment. Such deployment of forces took place only in 2014.

As the war continues, global media reports that most of the rockets fired by the Hamas are being blocked by Israel's Iron Dome Defence System. However, some of the rockets that got through the superior defence circuit killed only a few people on the side of Israel. On the other hand, the attacks launched by Israel through its air force over Gaza have been more deadly, with a reported death toll over 90 so far. The Iron Dome is designed to selectively deal with rocket attacks. And also this system intercepts those enemy rockets that head for populated areas. The IDF claims that the Iron Dome is around 90 per cent effective. However, the sources say even a high probability intercept rate can make the Hamas efforts to destroy populated areas purely ineffective. It is to be noted here that the Iron Dome system was made with American finance.

The constant struggle for Palestine to establish its sovereign identity has become a permanent irritant for Israel. On the other hand, Israeli attempt to maintain its status quo and further expand and also to evict illegal Palestinian occupants (according to Tel Aviv) from East Jerusalem foment an ever greater war in the region. The Hamas wants the Jews dead and the state of Israel eliminated. For them, it is not about Israel, but this is ultimately about the Jews.

Today, situation in East Jerusalem is terribly unnerving. It is time for the Israeli garrison state to talk peace. The Hamas, only by working as a proxy, will find it really difficult to bring a solution to the Palestinians. Only result would be death of civilians. And the hawks will be happy. When the deadly, Covid-19 is killing millions across the globe, Tel Aviv and the Hamas must not venture out to take more lives anymore.

(Dr Makhan Saikia has taught political science and international relations for over a decade in institutions of national and international repute across the country after specialisation in globalisation and governance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He is the chief editor of the Journal of Global Studies, an international research journal)

**Tel Aviv's concerted efforts to evict 'illegal' Palestinian settlers from East Jerusalem and Hamas' ceaseless attempts to destroy Israel and Jews are the biggest hurdles in arriving at a peaceful solution. The ongoing war offers the hawks from both sides the much sought-after opportunity as they have some political axe to grind**



MAKHAN SAIKIA

## PERSPECTIVE

# Systemic flaws in Indian health sector exposed

**The biggest problem, more relevant to India, is the presence of an extremely high educational hierarchy, which places MBBS course at the top while degrading all other health professionals and scientists. However, when it becomes difficult for qualified doctors to treat patients with the existing knowledge, the role of virologist, geneticist, veterinary doctor, microbiologist, pharmacologist and immunologist becomes crucial to understand the properties and origin of the new virus to develop medicines and vaccines**

The second wave of Covid-19 has exposed our lack of preparedness for any medical emergency as India has not been able to meet any basic medical requirements that do not need complicated technology or high investment i.e. medicines, oxygen, ventilators, PPE kits, vaccine, etc. Had we faced any other medical emergency related to a virus deadlier than SARS-Cov or some other deadly radiation (as faced by Japan after nuclear attack), probably Indian population would have halved by now.

Covid-19 has provided the nation an opportunity to introspect problems in our health-care system to effectively deal with the ongoing pandemic (which doesn't seem to get over before 2022), and any potential health emergency in the future. Rather than squarely blaming any past or present government at the Centre or State, the purpose of this column is to shake our policy makers to realise the systemic flaws and bottlenecks in the way of development of robust and inclusive health infrastructure in India.

First, we need to recognise that the human health is interconnected with his surrounding environment, including living species i.e. various animals, birds, etc. Rudolf Virchow, a famous German physicist and pathologist, also known as Father of Modern Pathology, coined a term called Zoonosis to refer to any infectious disease which is transmitted from animals to humans. A zoonotic disease is caused by virus, bacteria, fun-

gus, etc, and travels from animals to human. He asserted that there are no dividing lines, nor should there be between animal and human medicine.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization's report "World Livestock 2013" states an important fact that 60 per cent of all new infectious diseases that emerged in last three decades are zoonotic diseases. Viral outbreaks in recent years like nipahvirus, ebola virus, swine flu (H1N1) virus, avian influenza (H5N1) virus, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS CoV) are all zoonotic viruses. According to World Health Organization (WHO), zoonotic pathogens represent a clear threat to global health. The entire world is at higher risk of future pandemics, primarily of animal origin and combating it would require good co-ordination among medical science, veterinary science, environmental science and other biological sciences.

Realising the importance of this coordination, William Osler, the father of modern medicine and founder of the discipline of veterinary pathology, and Calvin Schwabe (chairperson of a new Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine at the University of California) advocated "one medicine" for all.

The second systemic flaw is more relevant to India. It is the presence of an extremely high educational hierarchy, which places MBBS course at the top while degrading all other health professionals and



Photo: Ranjan Dimri

scientists. This mindset is so deep rooted that any talented student pursuing a course in virology, immunology, nursing, physiotherapy or non-allopathic medical courses, etc, is considered inferior because of his/her inability to secure admission to an MBBS course. On the one hand, this hierarchy demoralises other allied fields, and on the other, it paves the way for undue interference by MBBS doctors in the other fields. This leads to a barrier in the development of these fields. Moreover, Indian doctors despite their huge potential, rarely take up medical research as it is less remunerating compared to consultancy, which is highly paid.

A lot of services that can be taken care of by these professionals cannot be performed by MBBS doctors. When a new and unknown disease first hits

a country, the role of doctors/nurses becomes vital. They are expected to treat/care patients with the existing medications/knowledge. When it becomes difficult to treat patients with the existing framework, then the role of virologist, geneticist, veterinary doctor, microbiologist, pharmacologist and immunologist becomes crucial to understand the properties and origin of the new virus to develop medicines and vaccines. After developing vaccines, nurses play an important role in vaccinating the people. Depending on the kind of disease, if it causes complications relating to mobility, muscular contractures, etc, among patients, then the role of physiotherapist becomes important; and if complications make the patient physically disabled or orthopedically handicapped

then begins the role of prosthetist and orthotist to figure out devices to help them.

The risk of zoonosis has increased due to the present human activities such as demographic alterations, increased movement across various continents, disturbing natural phenomenon and over exploitation of the environment. It brings the environmentalist into the picture. Thus, it is clear that an integrated approach toward a public health emergency is an effective way to deal with the unknown disease. Creating a hierarchy between the professions of the same sector can weaken our fight against any disease.

Moreover, these professionals (virologists, immunologists, orthotics & prosthetics, physiotherapist, occupational therapist) could have played a very crucial role during the

ongoing pandemic to meet the shortage of health workers, by being given a very short training. It is worth mentioning here that the educational courses studied by these professionals have a lot of syllabi common with MBBS course. Unfortunately, we have failed to utilise their huge potential.

Thirdly, India has a huge shortage of doctors which is reflected by the indicator of population served by a doctor, which is one of the highest in the world. Despite availability of huge talent, this artificial shortage is due to unnecessary stringent rules to establish a medical college and limited medical seats. Devi Prasad Shetty, one of the leading cardiologists in India, suggested that the Government can build around 300 new medical colleges without any cost which can offer 30,000 new seats. He argued that medical education can be provided to the students even in a single building and for practical training they can be taken to hospitals. According to him most governments refrain from creating new medical colleges since it requires an investment of around ₹450 crore and a time span of around 5 years. Further, the annual maintenance cost of a medical college is also around ₹150 crore. Educating medical students in a simple building without health infrastructure and training them practically in hospitals is the simplest and most cost-effective way of meeting the current demand for doctors.

Lastly, gradual withdrawal of most successive govern-

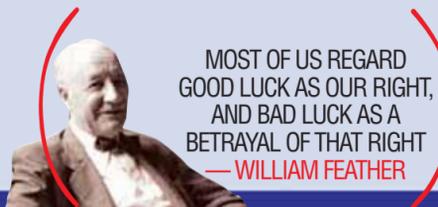
ments from health infrastructure has resulted in the shortages of hospital beds, oxygen, ventilators, etc. We can clearly notice an obsession of all governments with health insurance schemes especially for the last two decades, rather than expanding existing public health infrastructure. It is worth mentioning here that health insurance generate additional burden on the existing health infrastructure rather than creating any new health infrastructure. If the same amount that has been spent on health insurances by all governments in last two decades had been used to expand health infrastructure, it would have expanded our medical facilities by around 10 per cent, which would have not only provided a lot of jobs but also saved the lives of lakhs of people. Moreover, we can find numerous reports of misuse of insurance schemes by private hospitals by inflating bills through unnecessary medical testing. This has depleted most of the insurance coverage.

It is high time when all Governments in India (Centre or State) should come together to prepare a roadmap to abolish all systemic flaws in our health system. Let us learn from this pandemic and prepare ourselves better for any other such threat to human life in the future.

(The writer is currently pursuing masters in prosthetics and orthotics from Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyay National Institute for Persons with Physical Disabilities, New Delhi)



NIKITA RAWAT



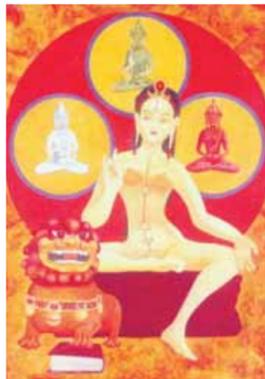
**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19  
This week keep your stress level under check to stay in good health. Deal with any problems that come up physically, don't try to avoid them. Be sure to get enough rest. If you need healing, ask for it. Sensitive people need caring, nurturing, massage, and hugs from friends to stay healthy. On the career front, other people may oppose your new ideas or proposals, but if you know that you're right to go ahead. You are enthusiastic, full of energy and want to put your best, but others are not taking it positively. Leave your simplicity behind, be smart and a little articulate. On the personal front, your relationship will move into a lighter, easier, and more balanced phase when you are sure of yourself.

**Lucky number 20**  
**Lucky colour Silver**  
**Lucky day Wednesday**



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22  
Tension and depression might take a toll leaving you an exhausted and under-confident. Reading, meditation and light exercises will bring relief, and good sleep will help to improve your state of mind. Uncertainties and confusion in life will melt away if you have a positive and creative mind. On the work front, you need to make quick decisions. Use your intelligence and logic for good cause, do not waste your time in disputes. The solution to the problem is already there or will come soon. On the personal front, work with cool mind than the raging heart. If in a relationship, this can be a make-or-break period. This is the time to be clear about what you want out of your relationships, and then take steps accordingly.

**Lucky number 8**  
**Lucky colour Orange**  
**Lucky day Saturday**



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21  
On the health front, you decide to self-validate and believe in yourself as well as your talents. Your motto for a disease-free happy family will keep you busy. It is time to imagine how totally different and wonderful things can be. Professionally, you are positive and try to bring love and compassion to your work. You are highly intuitive too. People are amazed to see this side to you. Focus on your goals and targets. Be firm and determined. Those in business need to be tough in the money transactions. On the personal front, mind, heart, and emotions are going in different ways. This is a highly emotional time in love relationships. Things can quickly become heated. Treat your lover like a friend. Don't be in a hurry to end or to begin a relationship.

**Lucky number 10**  
**Lucky colour Yellow**  
**Lucky day Sunday**



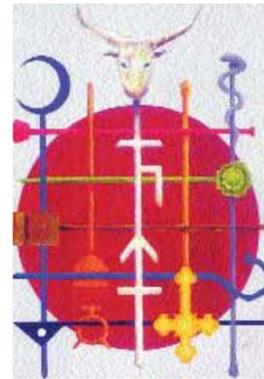
**TAURUS** April 20-May 20  
This week is a good time to enjoy your health and add extra charm to your persona. You are cheerful, hopeful, and full of life. You take good care of yourself, and the people you are concerned with. Compromising on health issues is not advisable. Balancing your work and relations is important. On the career front, be cautious if you are in a job, follow the discipline and set rules for the organisation you are working with, else be ready to face displeasure of your seniors. Businessmen should be careful in money transaction. There appear to be conflicts and confrontations which may make you lose your calm. On the personal front, you may get involved in a great relationship. Romance is in the air.

**Lucky number 18**  
**Lucky colour White**  
**Lucky day Wednesday**



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22  
You will be positive, creative, and happy go lucky this week. This is an excellent time to flaunt your charm and enjoy the path of personal development. The completeness, sense of vitality and peace of mind will make you a very efficient person. On the career front, you are confident and ready to face any challenges. You will win and attain accolades for your performance this week. You will be in your senior's good books. Do not let this success get into your head. On the relationship front, be careful as there are chances of counterfeit love. Investigate before you take any final decision. Existing relations should clear the doubts and confusions if any to avoid misunderstanding in future.

**Lucky number 19**  
**Lucky colour Mustard**  
**Lucky day Sunday**



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19  
You are likely to change your mind radically about something that you think is wrong with you physically. Do not ignore everything your doctor has told you, rather give it deep thought. Those suffering from serious ailments need to be under the constant observation of doctors. On the work front, getting confused about whether to leave the present job, starting a business, or some undesirable circumstances is likely to take place. Changing subjects or field often gets you nowhere. Find out your interest and potentials. This is the time to be firm in your decisions and keep your eyes and ears open. On the personal front, there are hope and happiness on an emotional level, along with a new sense of security, protection and recovery.

**Lucky number 13**  
**Lucky colour Grey**  
**Lucky day Tuesday**



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20  
This week you need a break from normal life. There is a need to slow down the hectic work pace and relax. Do not push yourself when you are tired, it may cause illness and injury. On the career front, you have the benefits of your communication, both verbal or written, and will get a good news regarding your career. Businessmen could acquire a secure position monetarily. Those in service will get the support of their seniors and boss, which is likely to prove a stepping stone in their career. Be cautious, stay focused on what you want to achieve. On the personal front, a new beginning and higher expectations are on the cards. This is the time when you need not put extra efforts into the relationship area.

**Lucky number 12**  
**Lucky colour Grey**  
**Lucky day Saturday**



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22  
This week, work on balancing your chakras or your body, mind, and spirit. Pay adequate attention to all three. Meditation and Pranayam will work wonderfully. The benefits are far greater than any effort you can put out. Professionally, connections with new people, especially people from other lands, will be beneficial. This is the time for making new business deals, signing new projects and assignments. Crack your potential. Stars are favouring you. Creativity, change, and development are the themes of the week. On the personal front, new ideas and plans will certainly help you to revitalise your relations with loved ones. Love is in the air and you are in full mood to express your feelings. This is a good time to make relations.

**Lucky number 7**  
**Lucky colour Green**  
**Lucky day Friday**



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18  
This week take some time out for yourself. Healthwise, you are on the right track. Keep doing what you are doing. Learn more about rituals from the past. They will deepen your spiritual understanding and practice and help you to bring balance. On the career front, lots of activity, getting things accomplished are on the cards. You may make your peers look bad. You don't feel tired; being a workaholic is your passion. Keep your behaviour in check, there are chances of using harsh words that create a hostile situation around you. Maintain your cool and equilibrium whatever the situation, that quality will add a feather to your career. On the relationship front, if you are currently committed, it may well rise to new and better heights soon.

**Lucky number 15**  
**Lucky colour Black**  
**Lucky day Saturday**



**CANCER** June 21-July 22  
Listen to your body with great care and attention. You are either overeating or starving yourself to lose weight. Both situations are bad for health. Bringing balance in food habits not only helps you to maintain your weight but it gives you a confident mindset. You are otherwise hale & hearty, enjoy the week. On the work front, investment done in the past is coming to fruition this week. This can be literal such as a bank account returning money to you. You will be reaping what you have sown. You are in the good book of your senior and soon there will be rewards. On the personal front, love and emotions are taking a back seat, you prefer isolation. Those committed must stay connected with their time to keep the spark alive.

**Lucky number 4**  
**Lucky colour Indigo**  
**Lucky day Tuesday**



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21  
You need to balance your health efforts with your personal and professional responsibilities. Be sure that you are taking time for rest and healing. If you put yourself last on the list of things, your health will suffer. Make sure you are taking adequate sleep too. On the professional front, if you are looking for a job, you have the ability and the skill to find it. If you are already employed, you will find a better position. If there's no room for a promotion at your current job, give serious thought to finding something where there is a possibility. On the relationship front, if you are committed, don't hesitate to speak your mind to your beloved. You stand with pride and express your feelings. This will only improve your relationship.

**Lucky number 16**  
**Lucky colour Purple**  
**Lucky day Thursday**



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20  
This week you are likely to feel stressed out. You may be suppressing your emotions, and this will impact your body negatively. Be careful how, when, and where you vent your emotional reactions. Anything that reduces your stress level will be helpful. Think positive. Stay calm and connected. Anger is a silent killer. On the career front, tension is indicated. Be positive, this is a temporary phase. Those looking for a job change, this is the right time. Execute plans with sincerity. You have the potential to achieve the desired position. On the personal front, the time is right for soul-searching and discovery of the inner realms. It is a very positive time for you and an excellent opportunity to strengthen relationships of all kinds.

**Lucky number 22**  
**Lucky colour Brown**  
**Lucky day Friday**

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



# The tale of Ganapati

The Ganapati imagery and the story line running around makes out an interesting reading. He is perceived as having the head of an elephant with a single tusk. He has a small mouse as his mount. Animal forms have been extensively used in Indian tradition to enlighten us on one or the other virtue, vital to qualitative existence, evident in the particular animal's behavioural pattern. The fact that animal behaviour is in public knowledge, it provides easy ground to make an analogy.

Let us first have a brief run into the legend pertaining to his origin. It is believed that Goddess Parvati, Lord Shiva's consort, made a beautiful clay idol in human form. She then infused life into it. He was named *Ganesa*.

The story suggests that our gross bodies are made of earthly matters. When the fundamental element of consciousness becomes available to the form-body, it becomes alive. It implies that left to itself, the gross body made of earthly matter would remain a dead matter. The paradox, however, is that most of us just identify oneself with the gross body, seldom realising that our dynamism is actually rooted to the con-

sciousness element. This eternal truth needs to be understood and acknowledged, is what comes out of this story.

In the above context, it is worth mentioning here once again that as per ancient India's perception, Lord Shiva symbolises the transcendent consciousness — the seed-potential to create life. His consort Parvati, by Herself no different from Lord Shiva, serves as His kinetic side, the immanent consciousness, the power by which She makes life flow. The above legend needs to be understood in this background.

The legend further states that once Ganesa stood guard with the instruction that he should ensure that no body disturbs Parvati while bathing in her private chamber. Meanwhile, Lord Shiva comes to join His consort. Ignorant of the fact that Lord Shiva is his mother's spouse, Ganesa did not allow Him access and rather stood firm in His path. When all persuasions failed, a battle followed in which, enraged Lord Shiva chopped off Ganesa's head. When Parvati learnt of Ganesa's death, her ire got aroused. In a fit of anger, having lost her sensibility, She could have destroyed the whole Universe. Everybody got alarmed.



To pacify Parvati, Narada was sent to her as a messenger. Parvati agreed to relent on two conditions: (a) that Ganesa had to be brought back to life and (b) he should be granted Godly status with all divine rights. In deference to Her wishes, first Ganesa's headless body was bathed and cleaned. Meanwhile, the head was lost in the din of battle. Shiva then sent out his companions with the instruction to kill and bring the head of the first living being in sight. That happened to be an elephant with one tusk. The elephant's head was transplanted on Ganesa's body. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, the God trinity personified, respectively assigned with the functions of creation, sustenance and recycling life, joined hands and brought back the dead Ganesa to life. Shiva accepted Ganesa as His son. He also made Him the lord of His companions (the *ganas*), and so is also called Ganapati (the lord of *gana*-s).

Here, how true is the story, is not the point of deliberation. It is actually suggestive of the fact that be it an animal or a human existence, their dynamic existence is rooted in a common factor — the consciousness element. Second, it is only when all constituents of a form-

body are in place that the consciousness element would be manifest. But for a form-existence in place, the consciousness element would not be in reckoning.

Let us now look at the educative import inlaid with this particular symbolism. Elephant is one animal which has sensibilities and emotions akin to a human being. It lives in herd where the order of their leader is strictly obeyed. They remain as possessive of their mates as human beings. They can be seen weeping following death of their fellow being. They are even believed to dig ground and bury their dead. They get enraged if ever their privacy is ever encroached upon. And since they have longest memory, the elephant hits upon the person who encroached his privacy, if ever noticed much later. The elephant exactly remembers the track it followed in the past in search of food or water and will try that option when faced with scarcity. Thus, goes the proverb: "elephantine memory" to mean infallible memory.

The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Connect with him at Tel: 91-11-9818037273/9871037272 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com