



IT'S OK TO  
NOT FEEL OK:  
SAMEERA  
10 VIVACITY

# Amnesty scheme for small taxpayers

GST Council also exempts IGST on black fungus drug, Covid materials meant for donation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The 43rd GST Council on Friday took several important decisions, including an amnesty scheme for small and medium taxpayers to reduce late fee burden on them.

The GST Council, which is headed by the Union Finance Minister and comprises representatives of all States and Union Territories, exempted levy of IGST on import of Amphotericin-B, which is used for the treatment of black fungus. However, the GST Council left taxes on Covid-19 vaccines and medical supplies unchanged.

Currently, Covid vaccines attract 5 per cent GST.

A group of Ministers will deliberate on tax structure on the vaccine and Covid-related medical supplies. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told reporters after the meeting of the GST Council.

Sitharaman said the Council decided to continue



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman chairs the 43rd GST Council meeting in New Delhi. PTI

with the waiver of IGST on free Covid-19 related supplies imported from abroad.

"The Council has decided to exempt the import of relief items even if they are purchased if they are meant for donations to State Governments. This exemption has been extended till August 31. So far, the IGST exemption was available only when you were importing free of cost," said FM.

"The ad hoc exemption has been extended till August 31. While that applied to imports received for free for donation, the decision is that if somebody wants to purchase these things from abroad and donate them in the country,

they can also avail the exemption," said Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj.

The Centre will borrow ₹1.58 trillion in FY22 to compensate states for loss of revenue from GST, added the Minister.

A special session of the Council will be held soon to consider extending the five-year GST shortfall compensation period to states beyond 2022, she said. "We are on the last of the five years of GST compensation to states. I have assured the members that there will be a special session only to discuss that one agenda on how long the compensation cess will be collected beyond July 2022," said the FM.

# Dominican court stops Choksi's repatriation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A top Dominican court has restrained repatriation of fugitive businessman Mehul Choksi from the Caribbean island nation to India to face legal proceedings in the over ₹13,500 crore PNB credit fraud scam.

According to media reports in the island country, the order came on a petition filed by the lawyers of Choksi, who was detained in Dominica for "illegal entry". Choksi had fled from the neighbouring Antigua and Barbuda where he was reported missing since Sunday.

Meanwhile, reports here said India's High Commissioner to Port of Spain, Arun Kumar Sahu, is likely to travel to Dominica next week to initiate a dialogue with the island country and explore Choksi's repatriation here.

Choksi is wanted here for trial before respective courts in a criminal as well as a money laundering case by the CBI and ED respectively.

Earlier on Thursday, Dominica Government had officially contacted High Commissioner Sahu to inform him about the arrest of Choksi by the CID.

# Most States OK Class XII Board exams after shots

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A majority of the States and UTs — barring Delhi, Maharashtra, Goa, and Andaman & Nicobar — have supported the CBSE's proposal to go ahead with the Class 12 Board examinations. They have reportedly opposed the offline mode examinations but suggested that the students and teachers should be vaccinated before the conduct of the examinations.

Education Ministry sources said of the total 36 States and UTs, 32 have agreed to hold the board examinations either as per the Centre-issued guidelines or the common understanding between the Centre, State and CBSE.

The same is likely to be adopted with regard to another national board, ICSE.

Several States like Kerala, Assam, Delhi, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Meghalaya have urged the Centre to vaccinate teachers and students on priority to ensure their safety during their time at the test centres.

The Education Ministry after a meeting on Sunday chaired by Union Minister Rajnath Singh had asked all the States and Union Territories to send their suggestions on Class 12 Board examinations by May 25. The meeting was also attended by Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal



Nishank, along with two of his predecessor Smriti Irani and Prakash Javadekar besides the Chief Ministers and State Education Ministers and Education Secretaries.

The CBSE has proposed two options to the Education Ministry for evaluation of Class 12 students — first, conducting exams in the existing format only for around 20 major subjects, and second conducting a one-and-half-hour objective type exam of major subjects for students in their own schools.

Sources in the Education Ministry said Rajasthan, Tripura and Telangana have backed the first option of the existing format. Under option A, exams for the 19 major subjects will be held in the "existing format" at designated examination centres, while marks for minor subjects are to be calculated based on performance in major subjects.

The three States that opted for this format are learned to have justified their choice on the ground that students may not be comfortable with last-minute changes in the examination format.

# SC to hear on May 31 plea to cancel exams

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday said it would hear on Monday a plea seeking directions to cancel Class 12 examinations in the wake of the surge in Covid-19 cases across the country.

Around 300 Class 12 students have also petitioned the Chief Justice of India urging him to quash the CBSE decision to conduct physical examination amid the pandemic.

# State reports 33 more Covid deaths

TOLL MOUNTS TO 2,651  
NEW +VE CASES DIP TO 7,216; MAX 1,091 IN CUTTACK

BHUBANESWAR: Even though the State witnessed a significant dip in the Covid-19 positive cases for the second day on Friday, the number of deaths continued to be high at 33 deaths, with which the total toll mounted to 2,651.

Angul district recorded the day's maximum five deaths followed by Sundargarh with four. Boudh, Khordha, Kalahandi and Keonjhar three each, Gajapati, Jharsuguda, Kendrapada, Koraput and Rayagada two each and Dhenkanal and Nabarangapur one each.

On the day, 7,216 new positive cases were reported in the 30 districts and the State pool. The comparative fall in the cases was attributed to a decrease in the number of testing. Of the new infections, 4,041 were detected from quarantine while 3,175 were local contacts.

Out of the new cases, Cuttack district reported the maximum 1,091 cases followed by Khordha with 809, Kendrapada 487, Dhenkanal 428, Angul 409, Bargarh 331, Bhadrak and Rayagada 246 each, Nabarangpur 242, Sambalpur 241, Koraput 220, Baleswar 215, Sundargarh 184, Jagatsinghpur 183, Nayagarh 164, Malkangiri 135, Balangir 130, Puri 110, Subarnapur 74, Nuapada 66 and Mayurbhanj 27. Besides, 146 cases were reported from the State pool. PNS

# CM seeks expert advice to tackle future Covid waves

1st Covid Advisory Committee meeting held

We are focussing on vaccination and to utilise all resources to quickly inoculate our people: CM

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at the first State Covid Advisory Committee meeting on Friday sought advice of top health experts of the country on the strategy to tackle the future waves of the pandemic and on how to strengthen the healthcare system further.

He said the second Covid wave has caused so much turmoil that people are very scared about the future. They fear more variants and more waves. On top of it, the lockdowns and its effect on the economy has caused great financial pressure on many families and businesses. Patnaik said that currently, of

the Covid cases is on the decline across the State except in a few districts. "We are focusing on vaccination and intend to utilise all resources to quickly vaccinate our people," he conveyed the resolve.

"All of us are concerned about the next wave and if it's going to affect the children. If it's true, then we will have to be better-prepared since taking care of the children in the hospitals is a big challenge," he said.

Eminent health experts and doctors, Dr K Srinath Reddy (Committee Chairman), D. Devi Shetty, Dr Ramakanta Panda, Dr Subrat Acharya, Dr Lalit Kant, Dr Mrudula Phadke, Dr Subrata Acharya, Dr Dattaswar Hota, Dr E Venkat Rao, Dr Sanghamitra Pati, Dr MR Patnaik Dr Ajay Parida and Dr CVK Mohanty (Convener) attended the meeting.

# Snubbed by Mamata, Centre recalls Bengal Chief Secy

BJP blasts Didi for not taking part in cyclone meet with PM

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Even as Bengal Chief Minister made a hurricane visit to Kalaikunda airbase where she met Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a few minutes to place a claim of ₹20,000 crore for reconstruction of cyclone hit areas of coastal Bengal, Central Government sources termed the her absence from the main review meeting with the Prime Minister as "callous", "arrogant" and "unmindful" of the welfare of the people of Bengal.

Expressing shock at the conduct of the State Government, the Centre on Friday recalled West Bengal Chief Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay and asked the West Bengal Government to relieve him with immediate effect and direct him to "report



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee takes stock of damage due to Cyclone Yaas in Digha on Friday. PTI

to the DoPT by 10am on May 31, 2021."

Central officials alleged the Chief Minister's "arrogance" prevented her from allowing senior officials like Chief Secretary or Home Secretary to make a presentation.

"The entire presentation was loaded on the screen. However, her pettiness prevented officers from presenting it to the PM," it was said. The day for Bengal was, however, saved by Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and

Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari who made a case for his State asking for Central support, sources said.

Officials said though the Prime Minister, Union Ministers and the Governor waited "patiently" for half an hour, the representatives of the Bengal Government did not show up and then "suddenly Mamata, in her haughtiness, stormed in and handed over a bunch of papers on the cyclone impact to the PM and said that she is leaving as she has other visits lined up."

# India will be vaccinated by year end, says Govt

Health Ministry has prepared a blueprint with 216 crore doses

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Even as various States are reporting acute shortage of Covid-19 vaccines, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar on Friday declared that India will be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 by the end of 2021.

The Minister's statement came hours after Congress MP Rahul Gandhi took a swipe at the Modi Government pointing out that less than three percent of the country's 130 crore people had received both doses of a vaccine.

Javadekar drew Rahul Gandhi's attention to a Union Health Ministry "blueprint" that, he said, would ensure the vaccination of 108 crore people by December, and reminded him "India is the second-fastest in vaccinating its peo-



ple" and over 20 crore doses have been administered so far.

"India's vaccination will be completed before 2021. The Health Ministry has given a blueprint. 108 crore people — with 216 crore doses — will be vaccinated by December, Rahulji... if you're concerned about vaccination then pay attention to Congress-ruled states... there is a mess. They are not taking the quota given to them for 18-44 year old beneficiaries from May 1," Javadekar said.

He also accused State Governments, many of which have frantically red-flagged low vaccine stocks over the

Covid-19 IN INDIA	
TOTAL CASES:	2,77,18,520 (+1,64,275)
DEATHS:	3,22,364 (+3,440)
RECOVERED:	2,51,68,616 (+2,71,470)
ACTIVE:	22,16,425
MAHA:	56,92,920 (+20,740)
K'TAKA:	25,46,821 (+22,823)
KERALA:	24,70,873 (+22,318)
UP:	16,86,138 (+2,276)
DELHI:	14,23,690 (+1,141)

past weeks, of "not taking the quota for 18-44 age group given to them from May 1".

The Union Minister also criticised Rahul Gandhi and his party colleagues for questioning Covaxin — the vaccine developed and manufactured by Bharat Biotech — efficacy against Covid-19.

# Naveen sets an example: Disaster-resilient power infra, permanent coastal protection demanded

In view of current crisis the country is facing due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Odisha Government on Friday set an example for others seeking no immediate financial assistance from the Centre for the State's losses due to Cyclone Yaas.

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Following a review meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on damage assessment caused by the Yaas in Bhubaneswar on the day, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik informed that the State Government would manage to overcome the post-cyclone challenges without putting additional burden on the

# No instant financial aid sought from Centre for Yaas



Union Government. However, the State Government urged the Centre for two long-term measures for Odisha, which is facing natural disasters every year. The State demanded disaster-resilient power infrastructure and coastal protection with storm surge-resilient embankments, Patnaik tweeted. At the review meeting dur-

ing PM's visit to Odisha in aftermath of Yaas, Patnaik apprised Modi about the large-scale devastation caused by the cyclone and steps taken by the State Government ahead of the disaster as well as the ongoing restoration efforts in the affected districts. Speaking to media after the meeting, Special Relief Commissioner

Pradeep Kumar Jena said, "We have not demanded any kind of assistance from Centre for this year's cyclone. The Union Government will be informed about damages due to cyclone after reports are submitted by district authorities in a week." Prime Minister Modi visited the State to review damages caused by Yaas in as many as 10 coastal districts on May 26. Chief Minister Patnaik, Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Pratap Chandra Sarangi, Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, SRC Pradeep Jena and DGP Abhay were present at meeting. Later, PM undertook an aerial survey for damage assessment.

# 747 new Covid cases in BBSR

995 Covid +ve recover

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

State capital city Bhubaneswar on Friday registered 747 new Covid-19 positive cases, with which its total tally rose to 73,101. Out of the new cases, 626 were local contacts and 121 were quarantine cases.

The local contacts included 30 cases from Dumduma, 28 from Khandagiri, 27 from Mancheswar, 18 from Baramunda, 16 each from Chandrasekharpur and Jharpada, 12 from Laxmisagar, 11 from Jayadev Vihar and nine from Jagamara.

Currently, the active cases in the city stood at 11, 846. However, 995 patients recovered on the day, taking the total recoveries to 60,903. Till now, 331 persons have succumbed to the disease in the city.

# Yaas: PM announces ₹500-cr immediate aid

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday announced an immediate Central assistance of Rs 500 crore for the State's Cyclone Yaas-affected areas. He also declared an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 to the seriously-injured ones each.

Modi visited the State to review the situation arising out of the Yaas. He undertook an aerial survey of the cyclone-affected areas in Bhadrak and Baleswar districts. The Union Government would send an inter-Ministerial team to visit the State to assess the extent of damages, based on which further assistance would be given, according to the PM's Office. Earlier, the PM chaired a meet-



ing at the Bhubaneswar airport to review relief and rehabilitation measures being undertaken. Governor Prof Ganesh Lal, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and top State officials were present. Modi said that focus should be on more scientific management of disasters. As frequency and impact of cyclonic systems are increasing in Arabian Sea and the Bay

of Bengal, communication systems, mitigation efforts and preparedness have to undergo major changes. Modi appreciated the preparedness and disaster management activities by the State Government resulting in minimal loss of lives. He also noted that the State has embarked on long term mitigation efforts for dealing with such natural disasters.

# Govt extends vax global bid period to June 4

**In view of vendors' request, for greater participation**

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Government on Friday extended its Covid-19 vaccine global tender period by seven days in view of the requests from many prospective suppliers, said ACS, Health & Family Welfare, Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra.

He said the Odisha State Medical Corporation (OSMCL) has notified the end of date and time of online bid submission till June 4 keeping in mind the vendors' request and the Cyclone Yaas and also for greater participation in bidding. The earlier-fixed last date

was May 28. In a bid to inoculate the State's entire population, the Government had on May 14 floated the global tender to procure 3.8 crore doses of vaccines from the world's leading manufacturers.

The OSMCL tender notice stated that the qualified bidders can supply vaccines in four phases; and the State Government will issue separate purchase orders for each.

As per the provisions of the tender, the selected bidder would have to deliver the first 75 lakh doses in 30 days from the date of the purchase order and complete the supply of 3.8 crore vials in 120 days.

The first pre-bidding consultation meeting was to be held through a virtual mode at 11 am on May 19 and the tender was to open at 5 pm on

May 28. Now this period is extended to June 4. Earlier, the OSMCL had clarified that order of half of the total quantity would be awarded to the L1 (lowest one) bidder.

The Government would offer advance payment up to 30 per cent of the value of each purchase order. The final payment would be ensured within two working days from the date of receipt of each consignment.

The State Cabinet had on May 10 approved the proposal to float the global tender. Later on May 21, the State Cabinet in an effort to facilitate more bidders to take part in the tender relaxed certain terms and condition in the tender documents for a better competitive bidding, an official said.

# CM managed Yaas efficiently: Amar

**'Exact planning, preparedness led to zero casualty'**

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Rajya Sabha BJD member Dr Amar Pattnaik has come with full-throated praise for Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in managing the cyclone Yaas with exact planning and preparedness, along with the mission of zero casualty.

This is not the first time that CM Patnaik has shown his adroitness in managing a disaster but the role of the CM was a time tested success, while managing the previous cyclones like Titili, Hudhud,



Amphan and Fani, he said. Recounting the horror of the killer Super Cyclone of 1999, Dr Pattnaik, who was a bureaucrat then, said that Odisha has emerged as a master of managing the cyclones under Naveen's stewardship.

Eulogising CM Patnaik's patriarchal role, he said that Naveen took care of the cyclone

ravaged people of Odisha as a father takes care of his own progenies. Leaders and planners from across India have expressed their unequivocal appreciation over the tough leadership of the CM of Odisha in resolving the natural disaster, he emphasised.

Earlier Dr Pattanaik also vindicated the stand taken by the Odisha CM in his letter addressed to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman for waiver of GST from the vaccine.

The former Accountant General, Dr Pattnaik also commended the role of Naveen Patnaik in demanding the State's share from the Centre relating to cess and surcharge which would amount to a whopping Rs 6,500.00 crore, that could be utilized for Covid management of Odisha.

# 'Odisha Union Ministers violate Federal norms'

**Niranjan comments on Central grants for Yaas cyclone**

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

PCC president Niranjan Patnaik on Friday expressed concern over continuous twitter statements of the two Union Ministers from Odisha regarding utilisation of Central grants after Cyclone Yaas.

Patnaik alleged that these statements violate Federal norms as they go against the spirit of Centre-States relations. According to Patnaik, whatever the Centre gives a State, it is the latter's share and

it is the States which contribute to the Central revenue. The Centre has nothing to take credit for these grants.

He said the claimed grant of Rs 64.6 crore to Odisha was actually provided on May 1 as advance by the Union Finance Ministry as the Centre's share of State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF); and the letter clearly mentioned that this amount should be used for Covid management of purchasing ventilators and medicines and arranging beds.

"It is quit disheartening to learn from the Union Ministers' statements that without any delay the Modi Government granted money for cyclone and flood compensations," Patnaik remarked.

# S'garh lad gets 2nd slot in IMO, 7th in NSO

MALAY RAY ■ SUNDARGARH

A lad of Sundargarh district is known as a shining star. He has brought laurels for his school, for the district and also for the State, after securing 2nd rank in International Mathematics Olympiad (IMO) and also for securing 7th rank in National Science Olympiad (NSO), the result of which was declared recently. Last year, he had also won the first position in Discovery School Super League Championship and had made Odisha proud.

IMO and NSO is organised every year by Science Olympiad Foundation, New Delhi. Hariom Gautam, who is now a student of Class XI of Dalmia Vidya Mandir, Rajgangpur, had registered his name for appearing in IMO and NSO for the year 2020-2021 while he was in Class X. The online exam of IMO and NSO were held on different



dates during January 2021 and Hariom had appeared both the exams. The results of IMO and NSO were declared recent-

ly in which Hariom has secured 2nd international rank in IMO and 7th international rank in NSO. He has secured 59 marks out of 60 marks in IMO examination and 57 marks out of 60 in NSO examination.

Hariom had appeared in Indian Olympiad Qualifier in Junior Science (IOQJS) during January 2021 in a centre at Rourkela, which is a three-hour two part examination which is jointly organised by the Indian Association of Physics Teacher and Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE).

The IOQJS is a combination of two examination (Part I: National Standard Examination-NSE & Part II: Indian National Olympiad). The result of part I was declared recently and Hariom has been among national top 100 in IOQJS part I and the result of part 2 will be declared in July, 2021. During April

2021, Hariom had also participated in Ganga Quest, a national online quiz on Ganga and environment. He has also been declared as winner of Week 3 of Ganga Quest 2021.

Significantly, Hariom alongwith another student of Delhi Public School, Rourkela, had gone to the final of the Discovery School Super League (DSSL) quiz competition last year and had represented Odisha and had brought laurels for Sundargarh district and for the State after winning the first position. The first prize winners also qualified to go for NASA trip in US.

"I will give credit for my success to my parents, principal and teachers of school," said Hariom. "After completing my XII class, I want to crack NEET and want to become a doctor. Thereafter, I want to crack UPSC examination and would like to become an IAS officer," said Hariom.

# 'Covid or Yaas, common man is always ignored'

**PDHRI demands package**

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Protection for Democratic Human Rights of India (PDHRI) demanded that both the Central and State Governments provide assistance to the middle class, when the corona crisis is underway and lakhs have lost their livelihood. Besides, the cyclone Yaas has worsened their situation further.

PDHRI national secretary Lingaraj Sahoo and State president Gadadhar Das said during the corona time, it is the middle class which has been left in the lurch. The people in this category have been suffering like anything having lost



their jobs and other sources of income. But they can neither see nor show the wound to anybody due to their social position. Like the poor sections who are getting aids from Government, NGOs and other humanitarian bodies, the middle class is just suffering silent-

ly, they said. "The middleclass people suffered from inequality in access to such facilities in times of trouble, but when they pay taxes to the Government, they have to pay the same taxes as everyone else. Yet these are the most neglected in society," they lamented.

# Youth's death: Kin seek probe

**His family on Friday lodged an FIR**

PNS ■ JAGATSIINGHPUR

A finance company employee, Pradip Mohanty alias Nilu, hailing from Rasalpur village under Jagatsinghpur block had succumbed to his injuries in the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack two days ago.

His family on Friday lodged an FIR at the Jagatsinghpur police station alleging that Nilu was murdered and sought a proper investigation into the incident.

Nilu with multiple injuries had been spotted on May 24 on the village outskirts. Meanwhile, the police have registered a murder case and a scientific team was sent to the deceased's village for further investigation, police said.

# KIIT Univ architecture school ranked 4th

**By GHRDC**

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The School of Architecture & Planning, KIIT University, has been ranked 4th nationally by the Global Human Resource Development Centre (GHRDC), New Delhi.

The KIIT School of Architecture & Planning (KSAP) is at present offering a five-year degree course in Architecture. There is a proposal to start the Master Degree Programme in Urban Planning in the coming years.

KIIT founder Dr Achyuta Samanta congratulated KIIT School of Architecture & Planning Director Prof SS Ray for this success.

He also appreciated the faculty, staff and students of KSAP for their dedication and passion to strive towards excellence.

# ICSI BBSR wing ex-chief dies



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) Bhubaneswar Chapter former chairman Debadatta Mohapatra passed away here on Thursday.

Mohapatra was the chairman of the chapter in the year 2015. Earlier, he also served the chapter as its secretary and vice-chairman. During his chairmanship, the chapter organised various activities for the welfare of the students and members of the fraternity.

He also helped several young company secretary professionals in Odisha for their development.

The chapter has lost one of its illustrious members. The chapter's office-bearers conveyed their heartfelt condolences to Mohapatra's family members and prayed for eternal peace of departed soul.

# Mohapatra new CBDT Member

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Appointments Committee of the Union Cabinet has appointed three Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officers as Members of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). Odisha-born IRS officer Dr Jagannath Bidyadhar

Mohapatra is among the three members. He is a 1985-batch IRS officer. As per a notification issued by the Department of Personnel and Training under the Ministry of personnel, Public Grievance and Pensions, the two other new Members of the CBDT are Anu J Singh and Anuja Sarangi.

# In Baleswar

# Policeman held for raping junior

**BALESWAR:** The In-Charge of the Gopalpur police outpost under the Khantapar police station in Baleswar district was arrested on Friday on the charge of raping a subordinate woman staff.

The accused cop was identified as Basidhar Pradhan. A woman Constable had alleged that she was sexually assaulted by Pradhan several times. Later, the victim lodged a complaint



with the Eastern Range IG Diptesh Pattnaik praying for justice. Following a probe, the IG suspended the accused and got him arrested. PNS

# Road contractor cuts NH to release storm water

**Traffic hit between K'jhar, Joda**

**RAJENDRA K SAHU ■ CHAMPUA**

Since Wednesday, communication between Keonjhar and Joda has been disrupted as the NH-520 has been cut at Bilaipada near Joda to release the heavy rain water caused by cyclone Yaas.

Generally, rainwater of the catchment area of Bilaipada and its surrounding villages is drained out through Murganal - a perennial water flow which joins with nearby Sona river.

But this time, as the construction of NH - 520 is going on, a service road has been made over by dumping the Murganal with the support of just three huge pipes beneath it. So as the mining area reported heavy rain due to the effect of Yaas, water couldn't be

released and inundated the locality. It entered into the houses of the nearby areas also. It is alleged that not only was there inordinate delay by the contractor in completing the work that led to such a situation, the contractor also did not follow a right work plan.

Without any option in hand, contractor Monte Carlo cut the NH- 520 to allow the water to drain out due to which

road communication was affected. As there is a deep cutting across the NH, traffic has been totally paralysed. Barbil Tehsildar Alok Patel revealed that maintenance work was going on and the road would be ready by Friday morning to resume traffic. Besides, an assessment has been made of the damages. The affected people will be compensated accordingly, he added.



# Why Giridhar Gamang had Covid twice



SHISHIR GAMANG

When my father Giridhar Gamang, former Chief Minister, got re-infected even after taking the second dose of Covid-19 vaccine, I got shocked as I had thought he

## Your antibodies & immunity are as good as the food you eat

must have already developed antibodies (vaccinated 2nd dose on April 7). While getting his RTPCR test done I asked the sample collector to take samples for antibody test also. I still can't figure out how & why it occurred to me to ask for antibody test.

On April 30, the results for both the tests came out. He was Covid positive and had developed zero antibodies. So, I immediately got him admitted to AIIMS Bhubaneswar. Out of curiosity, I started reading articles across newspapers, social media, views expressed by experts, WHO advisories and Union Ministry of Health guidelines. After my intensive

research, it was safe for me to conclude that food eating habits play a major role in developing immunity (antibodies) to fight the virus.

My father is a teetotaler and a pure vegetarian and hates milk and milk products with an exception to sweets. He has been a diabetic for the last 13 years. He only used to eat rice, potato and lots of sugar, three things not advisable for diabetic persons which do not have any nutrition.

With this kind of food intake, his body didn't have enough energy to develop antibodies to fight Covid-19 because all the energy was being used by the body to keep

the organs safe from effects of diabetes. The Indian Government has been advising people to eat healthy and highly nutritious food consisting of green vegetables, milk and milk products, pulses, eggs, fish, fruits and dry fruits, etc. My father never eats all this. Our body's needs are different according to the works we do and so do the calorie requirements.

Some foods give us strength to do physical activities but may not help boost our immune system. So, we need to eat different varieties of food for this. Some medical experts say alcohol reduces immunity to fight Covid. If it holds any

truth, my father would have never been infected. When my mother got her 1st dose of Covid jab, she got swelling on the injected hand, fever for two days, body ache for 15 days and weakness for 24 days. Nothing such happened after her 2nd dose.

She constantly feared for getting infected. Seeing her go through this, my father started making fun of her by saying all her nutritious food eating habits were of no use and was a complete waste of money. On the other hand, my father didn't even go through what mother went through even for a single minute. All the armchair doctors and medical experts

had declared my father as the healthiest and strongest person in India and also concluded that coronavirus can never infect him; and that's exactly where he stopped using the mask or didn't wear mask properly which ultimately led to his infection.

After my 1st dose, I experienced pain on the injected hand on the fourth day and thereafter felt weakness five times on different days. In fact, I was suffering from weakness when I got vaccinated for the 2nd dose.

Apart from me and my parents, our cook, peon and driver stay at our home. It's not because of corona but due to our necessity as politicians as we never know when we might

need them. Tea never stops flowing as there are numerous visitors. My staffs also eat the same food as I do, I love eating non-veg; and prawns are my favourite. I eat a very balanced and a nutritious diet.

All of us got exposed to the coronavirus twice due to papa and, that too, in an indoor environment. We followed all the home isolation guidelines, but I believe our food habits also played a role in not getting us infected.

The important issue which I want you to know and the Central and State Governments to understand is that the vaccines may not be of any use if the people do not eat at least one nutritious meal a day and specially two meals if a person

is diabetic. There are lakhs of cases of malnutrition across all the Indian States in different age groups; and I fear that the vaccine may not work for them and eventually lead to their deaths. There has been a lot of blame games due to shortage of vaccines and oxygen between the Centre and the States. It should end.

Immunities in a human body do not build in a single day; it takes time. Take the example of vaccine which take two doses and around 51 days to boost immunes or create antibodies. What the governments can do is ensure that the needy and BPL families get free nutritious food till time they get vaccinated and at least till the time they get their 2nd dose.

Baitarani in spate

Flood-like situation in J'pur, K'pada after Yaas

PNS ■ JAJPUR/ KENDRAPADA

Swelling of river Baitarani caused by heavy rains under the influence of Cyclone Yaas has led to a flood-like situation in three blocks of Jajpur district.

As per reports, floodwater has gushed into the low-lying areas of Jajpur and Dasarathpur blocks as well as Mukundapur and Bandala panchayats of Korai block in the district. Agriculture lands in all the three blocks have been submerged in the floodwater.

The district administration has asked people residing in low-lying areas to get shifted to safer places. The river was flowing at a height of 13.68 metre at the Vallabhi Ghat on Friday morning as against the



danger level of 13.34 metre. At Dasarathpur, the water level of the river was 11.58 metre as against the danger level of 9.52 metre.

However, the water level of the Baitarani at Akhuapada in Bhadrak district was gradual-

ly reducing though the river was still flowing above the danger mark.

The water level, which stood at 18.98 metre on Thursday night, dropped to 18.90 metre on Friday morning as against the danger mark of



17.83 metre, sources said. The Baitarani water level was also on the rise at Kanika tehsil of Kendrapada district. The district administration has identified 13 villages under five GPs of Rajkanika block as vulnerable keeping in mind possible

flash floods. About 16,000 people of Rajkanika block were going to be affected. District Collector Amrut Rituraj and Rajkanika BDO Ashok Kumar Mohanty on Friday visited the villages to take stock of the situation.

Evacuees from cyclone shelters to have Covid test in Baleswar

1,89L lodged at 1,340 centres for Yaas

UBACHAK MOHANTY ■ BALESWAR

The district Health Department has taken an initiative to carry out health check-ups of all evacuees who were lodged in different cyclone shelters and other safer places. The primary objective is to detect if they contacted the coronavirus.

CDMO Dulajen Jagdeo said that teams had been engaged for health checkups of the returnees by making door-to-door surveys.

Those found with symptoms would be kept in isolation and those detected would be given treatment, he said. It may be noted that prior to striking of cyclone Yaas, over 1.89 lakh people across all 12 blocks were shifted to 1,340 safer places which

included 144 multipurpose cyclone centres. Although advisories were issued to adhere to Covid protocol, be it during shifting and in lodging, yet they were violated due to some reason or other. Since there is a fear of contamination during

the exercise, the health check-ups are being carried out, said reports. Meanwhile, several Ministers including Ranendra Pratap Swain, Naba Kishore Das, Dibyashankar Mishra, Susanta Singh and BJD organisational secretary and Jajpur MLA Pranab Prakash Das were camping in district and overseeing various relief and restoration works.

Senior bureaucrat Vishal Dev was also monitoring the restoration works, including electricity, water supply, free kitchens and distribution of relief materials.

The reports of losses and damages while still under assessment, a preliminary estimate said that about 219 hectares of crop area was affected by cyclone. While no human casualty was reported, livestock casualty is pegged at over 16,000.

12 veterinary teams were deployed in various blocks to look after health of livestock. Similarly, number of house damages, including kutchha and pucca, was pegged at 4,808.

The works for restoration of electricity and water supply were still in progress, added reports.

In Bhawanipatna

Architect Ravi Kumar passes away of corona

Wife, daughter too infected; parents succumbed earlier

PNS ■ BHAWANIPATNA

People from cross sections of the society mourned the death of well-known architect GS Ravi Kumar, who succumbed to Covid on Thursday at the Kamthana Covid Hospital here.

A native of Visakhapatnam, Kumar was famous for his house designing. He is survived by his wife and a daughter, who had also tested positive for Covid-19.

His wife has been shifted to a Barghar hospital after her condition became critical and his daughter is in home isolation. Kumar's parents and brother-in-law had died of Covid-19 a month ago in Visakhapatnam.

SUM surgeons perform rare surgery

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Surgeons at the Institute of Medical Sciences and SUM Hospital here performed a rare surgery on a 41-year-old man on Tuesday to remove a six-cm-long cystic mass found on the left adrenal gland.

The patient from Kharagpur in West Bengal, complaining of abdominal pain, had been admitted into the hospital on Saturday last while investigations revealed

the tumour. Dr Satya Mohapatra, HOD, Radiology, detected the tumour through CT scan.

A team of surgeons, led by Dr Jitendra Narayan Senapati successfully conducted the laparoscopic adrenalectomy, a complex procedure in which the abdominal cavity is approached through a small incision to extract mass. The patient Sanjib Kumar Singh is recovering well and would require a shorter hospital stay.

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420 of State's 816 corona-infected prisoners recover

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

As many as 816 prisoners lodged at 33 jails in the State have so far been infected with Covid-19 in the second wave of the pandemic. Of them, 420 have recovered from the infection, according to the Prisons department.

However, 54 jails have not reported a single Covid-19 positive case. The State Government has been trying to minimise the number prisoners in jails during the Covid crisis. According to reports, a total 20,150 prisoners were lodged at 87 jails, including the Jharpada Special Jail, by May 1, which was above the capacity. By May 26, the number dropped

to 18,580 after many prisoners were released on parole as per the decision by the State Home Department. Meanwhile, more prisoners have been transferred to other jails. As many as 658 inmates were relocated during the period of Covid crisis.

Official source said that the prisons have been provided financial assistance for treatment of the inmates diagnosed with Covid-19.

The Sub-Jails and Special Jails have been provided financial aid amounting to Rs 15,000 and Rs 25,000, respectively. The prison wards and campuses are regularly sanitised with help of firefighters, the department said.

Yaas: Bhitarkanika suffers huge damages

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

The severe cyclonic storm "Yaas" has left its trail of devastation at the Bhitarkanika

National Park as two animals were killed in the storm whereas several thatched roofs of forest cottages, doors and windows of tourist cottages and



water pipes were damaged. Besides, a portion of a concrete jetty was damaged at Habalikhati.

Meanwhile, the favourite nesting place of Olive Ridley sea turtles, Nasi-2, the world's largest rookery of sea turtle, is now under tidal water whereas tidal water is yet to recede from Habalikhati, informed Rajnagar Mangrove and Wildlife Division DFO Bikash Ranjan Dash.

According to Dash, the Dangamala Crocodile Research and Breeding Centre, Habalikhati, Ekakula, Agarnashi, Nasi-2 suffered damages worth Rs 10 lakh, as per preliminary reports.

According to DFO Dash, two spotted deer died in the Dangamala Crocodile scheme. Besides this, the wildlife museum of Bhitarkanika National Park, that is located within

Odisha jails decongested; Covid-hit get due care

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A decongestion management drive in the prisons across the State has yielded better results. Thanks to a decision of the High Powered Committee, it was decided to decongest the prisons, as number of inmates stood at 20,150 as on May 1, while schedule capacity of all prisons in the State is 19,824.

DG Prisons Santosh Upadhyaya carried out the meticulous decongestion programme for which the prison population has come down to 18,580 as on May 26, said sources.

Latest statistics revealed that 816 inmates have been detected with Covid-19 symptoms during May, out of which 420 have already recovered till May 26, said sources in the Directorate of Prisons and Correctional Services. Other prisoners are undergoing treatment as per the protocol of Department of Health and Family Welfare.

As on May 26, 658 prisoners have been shifted from over congested prisons with permission of trying courts. There has been no reporting of any incidence of Covid-19 in 54 jails out of 87 during the second wave.

The Directorate of Prisons and Correctional Services has taken precautionary and preventive measures in all sub jails, while providing Rs15,000 each towards procurement of Covid preventive medicines and kits. Similarly, all district and special jails have been provided with Rs 25,000 each for the purpose exclusively, said sources.

Prison management is emphasising on regular sanitisation, cleaning and disinfection of wards of the prisons. Critically ill patients are being sent to Covid Care Hospitals as per protocol of the Department of Health and Family Welfare. In the meantime, the Directorate of Fire Services has extended assistance to all prisons by supplying Sodium Hypochlorite Solution towards disinfection of the jails.

INBRIEF

HEALTH MIN VISITS BALESWAR CYCLONE-HIT AREAS

Bhubaneswar: Health and Family Welfare Minister Naba Kisore Das on Friday visited different cyclone-affected areas under Sadar block of Baleswar district. He took stock of the situation and discussed with the people about the damages caused. He also distributed dry foods, biscuits, masks, soaps, sanitisers, blankets to the affected families. Many people alleged before the Minister regarding mismanagement in cyclone shelter homes.

UTKAL SAMMILANI MOURNS AMARENDRA DAS' DEATH

Bhubaneswar: The Utkal Sammilani Mancheswar Industrial Estate Branch mourned the demise of Amarendra Das, who died recently at the age of 92. Das was the State general secretary of Utkal Sammilani from 2002 to 2008. During his tenure, the Utkal Sammilani was permitted to teach Odia alphabets in border areas and princely States. Das had laid the foundation of Sammilani Mancheswar Branch. Branch president Dillip Dash Sharma recalled the great contributions of Das in strengthening the organisation.



BARIPADA MAN GETS INT'L MARWARI FORUM POST

Baripada: Baripada's Marwari youth leader Hemant Bhai Shah has been elected vice-chairman of the Forum of Marwari Yuva Manch International. This is for the first time that a Marwari leader from Odisha has been honoured with such an international post. Shah was earlier the national vice-president of Marwari Yuva Manch.



BLAST AT K'HANDI STONE QUARRY DAMAGES BUILDING

Bhawanipatna: The Karlapada police in Kalahandi district on Friday registered a case in connection with a blast at the Mankadpada stone quarry under Kundamal gram panchayat of Kesinga block. The owner of the stone quarry had filed a complaint against another contractor alleging his involvement in the blast, which caused complete damage of the office of the quarry. Eyewitnesses said the impact of the blast was so severe that big stones rolled down from the quarry site and damaged the office building and a stone-weighting machine worth Rs 10 lakh besides furniture and computer accessories.

At Khariar

Marwari Yuva Manch has 9 more oxygen cylinders

PNS ■ NUAPADA

The Marwari Yuva Manch, Khariar, in a formal inaugural ceremony on Friday inducted nine more oxygen cylinders to its oxygen bank. "The total number of oxygen cylinders with us is 33 at present," informed Manch oxygen convenor Abhishek Agrawal.

The induction was formally inaugurated by Khariar MLA Adhiraj Mohan Panigrahi in the presence of Manch president Kaushik Saraf, secretary Manish Bansal, ambulance convenor Nikhil Tayal and advisers Bajrang Agrawal, Dinesh Agrawal, Radheshyam Goyal and Arun Garg. Manch secretary Bansal informed that the oxygen bank was started

in the year 1999 with five cylinders. "It has come a long way and we are trying to strengthen it further for the benefit of the public," said he, further informing that the cylinders have been used by 20 persons in March, 84 in April and 77 people till now in May this year. "Over 200 people benefited during 2020," he further informed.

At a meeting held on the occasion, office-bearers informed that the Manch has two ambulances at present which are of immense help for the public.

MLA Panigrahi praised the efforts of the Manch for public service and assured to provide funds for another ambulance to it as well as fund for construction of a Banik Bhawan.



Time to zero in on a cyclone-mitigation plan in Odisha



LALIT MOHAN MISHRA



The landfall of Cyclone Yaas near Bhanaga of Baleswar district on May 26 has made the cyclone management experts to think on redrawing the existing cyclone-hazard map of the State, prepared by the Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA).

The behaviour of the Bay of Bengal cyclones is changing with regard to their strike rate and strike regions in Odisha. The Amphan, though made landfall in West Bengal on May 20, 2020, had affected Odisha. Similarly, in an unusual manner, the extremely severe cyclonic storm, Fani, made

landfall at Puri on May 3, 2019. Earlier, cyclone Phailin had made landfall near Gopalpur on October 12, 2013. Cyclone Phailin had killed 23 people and affected about 9 million residents. The increased frequency of the visit of the high-intensity cyclones to Odisha has become a matter of worry.

The disaster map of Odisha has changed over the century. During the pre-independence period, Mahatma Gandhi was worried about the misery of the people of the State due to hunger, draught and floods. He was kind enough to arrange

flood relief for the people of Odisha through the first State Congress president and social worker Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das.

Today the situation has changed. Odisha floods have reduced due to drying of rivers. The effect of draught has been minimised due to irrigation, non-farm employment, migration, MNREGA and subsidised food schemes like NFSA and SFSA. On the other hand, the rate of cyclone has increased. The challenge is wind and storm surge. We are able to reduce the risk of high-speed cyclone wind, but the risk of

storm surge looms large. During the 1999 Super Cyclone, the major cause of 10,000 deaths was thesea-water which entered into the habitations in Erasama block of Jagatsinghpur district. The situation was not repeated since 1999. But the risk of such incidence is there.

In addition to the cyclone seawater surge, there is risk of tsunami inundating the coastal villages. The second risk is that the cyclone has been hitting the coastal points at random. For example, Puri or Bahanga were never traditional points of landfall. During Phailin, a tribal village of Gajapati district, was hit badly causing landslide and deaths. Therefore, there is combined or individual risk of high speed cyclonic wind and sea water incursion to all the coastal districts, starting from Gajapati to Mayurbhanj. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik came to power in 2000 just after the Super Cyclone.

During his consecutive terms, he has been building the cyclone management capacity of the State. Now, Odisha is able to help other States during

floods and cyclones. The Naveen Patnaik Government has been awarded by the UN for its excellent management of Phailin cyclone.

The Chief Minister has managed all the previous cyclones well including last cyclone Yaas and there is zero-causality. One aspect where the State Government is lauded is its ability to use the IMD weather-warning and evacuate large numbers of vulnerable people from the low-lying areas. Odisha has to move to the next stage of disaster management from the preparedness stage to the mitigation stage. Of course, Odisha has been working in this sphere but more intensive work is needed.

Cyclone disaster mitigation measures are those steps that eliminate or reduce the impacts and risks of cyclone related hazards through proactive measures. It may be structural (pucca-housing to all) or non-structural (e.g. land-use zoning). Mitigation activities should incorporate the measurement and assessment of the evolving risk to environment. Activities may include the cre-

ation of comprehensive, proactive tools that help decide where to focus funding and efforts in risk reduction.

Other examples of mitigation measures include hazard mapping, adoption and enforcement of land use and zoning practices, implementation of building codes, flood plain/ storm surge mapping, creation and management of cyclone shelters, burying of electrical cables, raising of homes in flood-prone areas, public awareness programmes, panchayat-level action plans, agricultural and forestry plans, insurance programmes and so on. As all the coastal districts of Odisha, which are thickly populated, get more exposed to severe cyclones, the life and property of the poor and the farming community gets more vulnerable.

The first structural intervention in cyclone mitigation sphere should be ensuring Pucca-housing for all. The State Government has to mobilise resources to make all the coastal districts Kutcha-house free in five years. The Union Government should give additional finance alloca-

tion in this sector. The second structural intervention for life safety is to build and manage the cyclone shelters.

The Bangladesh model had its success due to the cyclone shelters. This was the country where more than lakhs of people had died in 1971 due to Su shelters should not be managed by department people or supervised by fat-salaried consultants but should be handled by panchayats and women SHGs.

The third but most important structural intervention should be to identify the villages vulnerable to sea water inundation in all districts such as the slums on the Puri-beach and rehabilitate them in safer places. The fourth aspect is the building codes and banning construction on storm surge pathways.

The fifth domain involves thick plantations including mangroves on coastlines, storm surge pathways and in villages which shall moderate the wind speed and speed of inundation. Similarly, mitigation measures in power sector, alternative roads and medical systems should be engineered so that there is no problem in cyclone-

recovery. What about livelihood? Livelihood modification shall be a major mitigation challenge. High cost economic activities like culture-fishing, prawn-cultivation, beetle vine cultivation and so on, have to be stopped or allowed with insurance protection.

Cyclone seasons are pre-monsoon and post-monsoon. Keeping this in view, the cultivation, harvesting and procurement by the FCI should be adjusted to ensure the least damage.

Repeated cyclones on coastal areas shall also discourage high-value corporate investors to set up plants in this region. The perishable product industries shall be discouraged.

It is important that the cyclone expert State Government re-drafts its hazard maps and enters into the next level of disaster management regime i.e. the mitigation regime to become a role model for the south Asia. As disaster management involves saving the public life and property, it is always an evolving process and there is nothing called the final benchmark.

# PM's nautanki is behind Covid 2nd wave: Rahul



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In one of his sharpest direct attacks on Narendra Modi, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday said the Prime Minister's "nautanki" (drama) is the reason behind the second wave of Covid-19 in India. "He did not understand Covid-19," Rahul charged.

Rahul warned that given the way the Modi Government handled the second wave of pandemic crisis, India will witness a third, fourth and fifth wave of the disease if the Government did not change its vaccine strategy.

He said he had "directly" told the PM that India will witness multiple waves as the virus will mutate and adapt. "I, along with several other people warned the Centre over the Covid-19 pandemic multiple times. The Centre made fun of us. The Prime Minister declared victory against Covid-19. The problem here is neither the Prime Minister nor the Centre has understood the viral disease till now," Rahul said addressing a virtual press conference.

"You're creating a liability for the whole planet. Why?" Rahul questioned the Centre and Modi.

"There are three to four ways to stop Covid-19. Of these, the permanent solution is vaccination. Lockdown is a weapon but people suffer and hence it is a temporary solution. Social distancing and wearing of masks are also temporary solutions against Covid-19," he added.

He targeted the Centre over its vaccine strategy and the decision to export doses to other countries by saying that only 3 per cent of India's population is vaccinated and the remaining 97 per cent is

## Mins term Rahul's remark against Modi 'mindless blabbering'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The vaccination slowdown jibe by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday invited a determined counter from the Centre with two Union Ministers describing his "mindless blabbering" as waste of bandwidth and a confirmation that the tool-kit was a brainchild of the Congress.

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said, "The Prime Minister is fighting Covid with the people of the country. And he uses words like nautanki, which is an insult to the nation and the people. The people have long put an end to their nautanki," he asserted.

"It has been confirmed, and there is no need for any evidence. It is clear that the toolkit was produced by you. The kind of language you used and the way you tried to stoke confusion and fear among people is part of that politics," Javadekar said.

If Rahul was worried about vaccines he should focus on the Congress-ruled States which are "not using 25 per cent of free vaccines given

free by the Centre for people in 18 to 45 age group," he charged.

Javadekar said the Indian vaccination programme will be completed by December end with the health ministry giving detailed programme of 216 crore doses.

Another Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan remarked that Congress leaders' "mindless blabbering" was a waste of internet bandwidth.

"While the responsible citizens of India are using the precious internet bandwidth to keep the wheels of economy churning by working from their homes, the only tangible outcome of senseless, mindless and meaningless blabbering by Rahul Gandhi is the wastage of this precious resource," Pradhan tweeted.

Pradhan slammed Rahul saying at a time when all the countries in the world are fighting the menace of Covid-19 in unison, there has been no visible signs of sense of responsibility from Opposition parties, majority of which are nothing but family enterprises indulged in securing the future of their princes.

still prone to Covid-19. He said if the vaccination rate continues at the present pace, the entire population will be only inoculated by 2024.

"The Centre is lying about the death rate due to the virus. This is not the time to lie," he said even as the Government has strongly refuted a report by *New York Times* about the death figures in India. On a question about a tweet he had posted earlier

this month, calling the crisis a 'Movid' pandemic, he said, "If Modi's action would have been different, then we would have had Covid only. But his action gave scope to Covid... My message was that PM of India made space for Covid through his actions, whether it was banging thaalis... the gathering in West Bengal, all gave Covid space to flourish. Modi helped Covid, that's why I called it Movid."

## In first, black fungus invades skin of Covid recovered 3-yr-old kid



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Covid-19 may be causing immunosuppression resulting in black fungus even in kids, as small as three-year-old. Probably, in a first of such case, a mucormycosis or black fungus associated with skin was detected by a team of doctors from Fortis Memorial Research Hospital in Gurugram in a three-year-old Covid recovered girl child.

Hailing from Iraq, the kid was admitted a few weeks ago at the hospital at Gurugram for Bone Marrow Transplant for treatment of her thalassemic condition, a blood disorder. "As per our protocol, we conducted RT-PCR tests on the child after her parents were found to be Covid-19 positive.

The baby was found to be an asymptomatic carrier, i.e. suffering with Coronavirus but showing no sign of infection. She was quarantined as per the medical guidelines and then BMT was successfully conducted on her ten days back," shared Dr Vikas Dua, Director, Hematology, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurugram.

However, as she was stabilizing, five days back we detect-

ed huge black patch on the skin of her back near abdomen. After investigation it was found to be cutaneous mucormycosis, called as black fungus of skin. "We had been detecting black fungus in many paediatric cancer and blood disorder cases. But this is for the first time that a case of Covid with skin fungus (cutaneous mucormycosis) has been found," he added.

The doctors are now investigating the cause for the trigger of such fungus. Dr Dua added that it is yet to be known from where the girl acquired the fungus.

At present we are not sure whether it is Covid-induced fungus infection or she got it during transplantation, though massive immunosuppression is usually seen in high-end transplantation. "This is something new which we have seen for the first time as skin fungus is very rare. Skin mucor is not common even among the full match transplant.

No steroid was given as the kid is very small. After the transplant the patient got mucor. She was not given any major drugs during quarantine," Dr Dua pointed out.

## IT Min accuses Twitter of adopting double standards



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reiterating that microblogging site Twitter cannot "dictate laws" in India, Union IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Friday accused it of adopting "double standards" and claimed that the new IT rules were to protect people.

The Union Minister also accused Twitter of differential rules.

Prasad said people would continue to use Whatsapp and government is only concerned about messages relating to national security, terrorism and those concerning well-being of children and women.

He said Twitter cannot dictate laws to India and accused it of adopting double standards- blocking accounts during Capitol Hill protests in the USA but bracketing farmers' agitation protest as "freedom of expression".

Speaking to a news channel, Prasad said that "these foreign companies cannot come to our country and dictate their terms".

He said while the Government was committed to "individual freedom", the social media intermediaries "will have to follow the new norms".

Alluding to freedom available in India, he said "during the Coronavirus period six crore messages" were sent on social media.

The Union Minister informed that the data protection law, which is currently with the select committee, would be brought in the next session of the Parliament.

## CRPF stops summer chain transfers of staff



RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has stopped the summer chain transfers of all its personnel owing to the disruptions caused by the ravaging impact of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"As desired by competent authority, transfer list of summer chain transfer of all personnel (ministerial/hospital staff/Signal personnel) may be released after August 2021 due to present situation of 2nd wave of Covid-19 in the country, direction in this regard will follow," reads an order sent to all the formations across the country.

The order will apply to operational as well as medical and signal or communications personnel, officials said.

The move follows continuing lockdowns in different States to check the spread of the coronavirus that has significantly impacted the CRPF.

As on Friday, 23,588 CRPF personnel have so far contracted the viral disease. Of them, 21,649 patients recovered while 121 personnel lost their lives. A total of 1,818 patients continue to suffer from the coronavirus infection.

From May 17 till now, the CRPF has recorded a surge in the tally of infected personnel from 22,216 to 23,588 and the spike in the death toll from 114 to 121 during the period in which the number of active cases has recorded a downward spiral from 2,867 to just 1,818, a decline of over 1,000 cases in the 12-day period.

The combined tally of infected personnel in the Central paramilitary forces--- CRPF, BSF, CISF, SSB, ITBP, NDRF and NSG as on Friday is 79,861 out of which 73,928 personnel have recovered from the disease and 5,973 personnel continue to be actively infected.

The combined toll of the paramilitary forces is 314 of which the CRPF has recorded the most number of deaths at 121. The forces recorded 283 new cases of infection during the last 24 hours.

While the number of infected personnel across the paramilitary forces has surged from 75,918 cases on May 17 to 79,861 as on Friday, the number of cured patients also jumped from 66,239 to 73,928 in the 12-day period. The number of active cases also dropped from 9,381 on May 17 to 5,973 as on date.

## EC defers RS bypoll from Kerala



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Citing the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Election Commission on Friday decided to defer a proposed Rajya Sabha bypoll for a seat from Kerala. The Commission said that Kerala Congress (M) leader Jose K Mani had resigned as a Rajya Sabha member from Kerala on January 11 this year. His term in the upper house was till July, 2024. The biennial elections to legislative councils of three seats in Andhra Pradesh and six in Telangana were also deferred by the Commission in a separate order.

"As per the provisions of Section 151A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the vacancy is required to be filled, through bye election within six months from date of occurrence of vacancy, provided that remainder of the term in relation to the vacancy is one year or more," it observed in the order related to Rajya Sabha seat from Kerala. The EC had not yet announced any date for the proposed bypoll.

The Commission said it reviewed the matter on Friday and decided that due to the outbreak of the second wave of COVID-19 in the country, "it would not be appropriate to hold the said by election till the pandemic situation significantly improves" and conditions become conducive to hold the byelection.

The poll panel said it will take any further decision in the matter at an "appropriate time in the future" after taking inputs from the state concerned and assessing the pandemic situation from mandated authorities like the national and state disaster management authorities.

## NCDC video guidance to help youth become cooperative biz leaders

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With its career guidance videos gaining popularity among the youth and farmers, encouraging them to venture into the profitable business of cooperatives, the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) has now launched another initiative to reach out to the youth of Andhra Pradesh. In Telugu language.

All the guidance videos in nineteen regional and Hindi languages are now uploaded on NCDC's YouTube channel, 'Sahakar Cooptube NCDC India' available in public domain for those having interest in cooperative sector.

Dr K Rajeswara Rao, Special Secretary, NITI Aayog, launched the guidance video at an online event here and said that such initiatives will go a long way in strengthening the cooperatives as well as helping the youth and potential cooperators to boost their income, thus contributing to the country's economy.

He also emphasised on making the videos popular among the potential cooperators in the rural and tribal areas.

These videos also aim to strengthen and deepen the major measures taken by the Government to promote and form 10,000 Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) in the country.

Last year, Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar, had launched the 'Sahakar Cooptube NCDC India', to encourage farmers and the youth to take the benefit of cooperatives. He had also rolled out guidance videos made by NCDC on 'Formation and Registration of a Cooperative' in 18 different States in regional languages including Odia, Bengali, Gujarati, Tamil, Punjabi and Mizo to name a few, besides Hindi.

Col (Dr.) Baljit Singh, Chief Director, LINAC-NCDC, hoped that the guidance video would go a long way in promotion and development of cooperatives while SK Tucker, teaching faculty at LINAC-NCDC, who guides the initiatives, said that the guidance videos aim to reach out to youth, women and all those who could be potential cooperative business entrepreneurs.

## Programme held to mark Menstrual Hygiene Day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To mark the 'Menstrual Hygiene Day', an outreach activity for adolescent girls was organised by Sulabh Sanitation Club at the resettlement locality in Delhi with an aim to create awareness among students about menstrual hygiene during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The basic idea was to underscore the importance of having open conversations about periods and offer educational guidance to facilitate discussions that help eradicate period stigma, said Rupak Roychoudhary of Sulabh WASH.

Further, there is a rumour circulating on social media that is triggering a lot many women into believing that the Covid-19 vaccine taken during their menstrual periods isn't fully safe for them. The Sulabh Sanitation Club team said that women do not need to schedule their Covid-19 vaccine around their menstrual cycle.

Jack Sim, Founder, World Toilet Organisation, Singapore, Indian Ambassador to Cambodia, Dr. Devyani Khobragade, Additional Chief Secretary of Sikkim GP Upadhaya and other experts also addressed a webinar.

## CPI(M) asks Centre to refrain from implementing new IT rules

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CPI(M) polit bureau on Friday asked the Central Government to refrain from implementing the new IT Rules and condemned the BJP Government for using Delhi Police to trample the social media companies by raiding offices.

"Facebook/WhatsApp has pointed out that this means breaking the security of the existing messaging protocol, and therefore of all those who use WhatsApp. This has been

endorsed by technical experts. Weakening security protocols violate user privacy and increase vulnerability to hacking for criminal purposes as well.

"The Government of India is using the Delhi Police to intimidate Twitter for flagging various BJP leaders' Tweets as manipulated media. The CPI(M) condemns the BJP government's partisan use of the IT Ministry and the police raids on Twitter's offices as acts of blatant intimidation," the CPI(M) said in a statement.

## Dowry deaths case: SC concerned with 'casual approach' of trial courts

IANAS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday expressed concern on the "casual" and "cursory" attitude adopted by trial courts while recording the statements of accused under Section 313 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) in dowry death cases.

A bench of Chief Justice NV Ramana and Justice Aniruddha Bose said, "It is a matter of grave concern that, often, trial courts

record the statement under Section 313, CrPC in a very casual and cursory manner, without specifically questioning the accused as to his defence."

Undoubtedly, the menace of dowry death is increasing day by day, it said, but also observed that sometimes, family members of the husband were roped in, even though they have no active role in commission of the offence and are residing at distant places.

## UGC issues list of 83 UG, 40 PG courses via SWAYAM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The University Grants Commission (UGC) on Friday issued a list of 83 undergraduate (UG) and 40 post-graduate (PG) courses that can be offered through the SWAYAM platform for the July 2021 semester. The courses offered on the education ministry's e-learning platform are all non-engineering ones.

The UGC (Credit Framework for Online Learning Courses through

Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) Regulations, 2021 allowed institutions to offer up to 40 percent of the total courses in a particular programme in a semester through the SWAYAM platform.

In the current scenario of the second wave of the Covid-19, the UGC has urged universities and colleges to make optimum use of the SWAYAM online platform and popularise SWAYAM courses amongst students and faculty through

websites and various social media handles.

"The list of 83 UG & 40 PG MOOCs courses are ready to be offered on the SWAYAM platform in July-October Semester 2021," reads the UGC letter.

"SWAYAM Courses may be approved and adopted on the recommendation of Dean Academics/Heads of Department for credit transfer and ratified by the Academic Council," said the UGC to Universities.

## Area under cultivation of summer crops goes up

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The area under cultivation of summer crops like pulses, paddy, oil seeds, coarse cereals have gone up to 80.46 lakh hectare till May 28, an increase of 21.10 per cent over the last year's 66.44 lakh hectare. The rise is primarily due to sharp increase in pulses area, which has gone up by almost 67.48 per cent to 17.82 lakh hectares over previous year's 10.64 lakh hectare, raising hopes of a good harvest and extra income for farmers.

The higher acreage at the initial stage growth during summer crops sowing, seems to

have been unscathed during the second national wave of Covid-19 infections just as it was during the first outbreak in 2020.

The planting areas have gone up despite hundreds of farmers of Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh protesting against the farm laws from the last six months. The Met Department has also forecast that monsoon will hit Kerala on its scheduled date of May 31, a day before the official arrival of the onset date.

Although the main kharif or summer-sown season will start in June, with the arrival of the monsoon, the data of the Ministry of Agriculture showed that summer crops sown up to 80.46 lakh hectare till May 28,

an increase of 21.10 percent over the last year's 66.44 lakh hectare.

Throughout the peak pandemic months, the farm sector was the only bright spot in the Indian economy.

The farm and allied sector is expected to grow at 3.4% in real term in 2021, remaining the brightest spot in an otherwise gloomy year, as overall gross value added in the economy is projected to shrink by 7.2%.

The country's real GDP is estimated to contract by as much as 7.7% in 2021, thanks to the Covid-19 outbreak.

during 2019-20, according to May 2020 estimates of national income released by Central Statistical Office.

With the procurement of 400.45 lakh metric tons, all time high as against previous high of 389.92 lakh metric tons, in the ongoing rabi crop season is continuing smoothly in the procuring States of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir at MSP.

About 42.36 Lakh farmers have already benefited from the ongoing RMS procurement operations with MSP value of Rs. 79,088.77 Crore.

# MSY asks Akhilesh to patch-up with Shivpal

VIRENDRA NATH BHATT ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav has again initiated unity efforts among the family by asking his son Akhilesh Yadav to bury the hatchet with his uncle Shivpal Yadav.

"Sort out the ruinous family feud or be ready to perish," Mulayam Singh is believed to have told party president Akhilesh Yadav, who was present at a meeting also attended by Shivpal Yadav earlier this

week. The meeting assumes significance in view of the 2022 UP Assembly elections. The SP has suffered three back-to-back defeats at the hands of the BJP in 2014 Lok Sabha polls, 2017 UP Assembly elections and 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

SP sources said that while nothing tangible was achieved in the meeting, both sides agreed to meet again soon. Earlier this year, Akhilesh Yadav had given hints to accommodate his estranged uncle by not fielding party



candidates against him from Jaswant Nagar Assembly seat in Etawah. He had also announced to give him a berth in the Cabinet if the SP Government came to power in 2022.

Mulayam Singh Yadav is also said to have advised his son to work for enlarging the electoral base of the party beyond the traditional Muslim-Yadav constituency. A senior SP leader, close to the Yadav family, said: "Mulayam Singh Yadav had realised the limita-

tions of the M-Y combine during his active days in politics and had groomed leaders from non-Yadav communities in the OBCs to enlarge the base of the party."

Akhilesh's estranged uncle Shivpal Singh Yadav proved his damage potential in 2017 Assembly elections and 2019 Lok Sabha polls that cost the SP seats in the home turf of the Yadav belt Agra-Etawah region. Soon after the 2017 UP Assembly polls, Shivpal Yadav floated his own party - Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party

(Lohia), after his fallout with Akhilesh and fought the SP to a bitter finish.

"If Akhilesh doesn't make up with Shivpal, it can adversely impact the SP's prospects again on home ground. Unlike Akhilesh's other uncle and Rajya Sabha MP, Ramgopal Yadav, who spent the better part of his political career in Delhi, Shivpal rose through the ranks and created a niche for himself. To that extent, he's more of an asset for the SP than Ramgopal," the SP leader said.



A woman carries buckets filled with marigold flowers in a field, near the international border at Suchatgarh on the outskirts of Jammu on Friday

## Cyclone Yaas: PM visits Odisha, Bengal, announces financial aid

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday visited Odisha and West Bengal to review the situation arising out of Cyclone 'Yaas' and announced a financial assistance of ₹1,000 crore for immediate relief activities.

He undertook an aerial survey of the cyclone affected areas in Bhadrak and Baleswar districts of Odisha, and Purba Medinipur in West Bengal.

In Bhubaneswar, the Prime Minister chaired a meeting to review the relief and rehabilitation measures being undertaken, said a statement from the Prime Minister's Office.

Modi announced a financial

assistance of ₹1,000 crore for immediate relief activities. ₹500 crore would be immediately given to Odisha. Another ₹500 crore has been announced for West Bengal and Jharkhand, which will be released on the basis of the damage.

The Union Government will deploy an Inter-Ministerial Team to visit the States to assess the extent of damage, based on which further assistance will be given.

The Prime Minister was briefed that maximum damage due to Cyclone 'Yaas' happened in Odisha, and some parts of West Bengal and Jharkhand have also been affected.

Prime Minister assured the people of Odisha, West Bengal and

Jharkhand that the Union Government would closely work with the State Governments at this difficult time, extend all possible assistance for restoration and rebuilding of the infrastructure in the affected areas.

Prime Minister expressed his complete solidarity with all those who suffered due to the cyclone and expressed deep sorrow to the families who have lost their kin during the calamity. He also announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased and ₹50,000 to the seriously injured in the cyclone.

Prime Minister said that all have to continue the focus towards more scientific management of disasters.

As the frequency and impact of cyclonic systems are increasing in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, communication systems, mitigation efforts and preparedness have to undergo a major change.

Modi appreciated the preparedness and disaster management activities by the Government of Odisha which has resulted in minimal loss of lives. He also noted that the state has embarked on long term mitigation efforts for dealing with such natural disasters.

He informed that Disaster Mitigation has been given emphasis by the Finance Commission to buy provisioning for mitigation funds to the tune of ₹30,000 crore.

## Bombay HC directs Maha to shift Stan Swamy to private hospital for 15 days

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Friday directed the Maharashtra Government to shift ailing octogenarian priest and accused in the Elgar Parishad-Koregaon-Bhima case moved from JJ Hospital to a private hospital for 15 days in view of his deteriorating health.

Hearing an application for temporary bail on medical grounds, a HC division bench comprising Justice S. S. Shinde and Justice N. R. Borkar ordered that Fr. Swamy was transferred from the State Government-run JJ Hospital to

Holy Family Hospital at Andheri in north-west Mumbai, as it was not feasible for the current hospital to give him proper attention owing to the influx of the Covid-19 patients.

The HC bench directed the State Government to shift Fr Swamy to Holy Family Hospital to itself for a 15-day stay there. Fr. Swamy - as per the undertaking given to the court by his senior counsel Mihir Desai, would bear all his medical treatment expenses. The court directed the hospital to provide an attendant to Fr Swamy in view of his advanced age, besides a policeman for his security.

The HC bench passed the orders to transfer Fr Swamy while hearing a temporary medical bail plea filed by Fr. Swamy challenging two earlier orders rejecting his bail application by a Special NIA court.

When the high court heard the matter last week, Dr Swamy had steadfastly refused to get admitted to any hospital and requested for release on interim bail.

Mihir Desai, representing Swamy, had asked the Court to grant him some time to confer with Swamy before taking a decision on proceeding with the hearing on interim bail.



Agricultural labourers work at the Boro paddy field, damaged by heavy rains and strong wind triggered by the Cyclone 'Yaas', in Birbhum district, on Friday

## UP Govt aims to vaccinate 1 crore people next month

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In what could be touted as the biggest vaccination drive in the world, the Uttar Pradesh Government will initiate an extensive vaccination campaign to cover around one crore people of the state in a month beginning June 1. The ambitious programme will be conducted in all 75 districts of the State to prepare them to combat the raging wave of coronavirus and focus on beneficiaries of both 18+ and 45+ age groups.

At a high-level meeting in Lucknow on Friday, the Chief Minister stressed, "Our goal is to administer one crore doses in the month of June for which a detailed plan has been chalked out. We have an adequate amount of vaccines available relative to the target in the state. Health officials must keep in constant touch with the Union Government and vaccine manufacturing companies."

Currently running a vaccination drive for 18 plus category in 23 districts, the government aims to spread the drive to all 75 districts of the State in three days.

## 2,803 new cases in J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir on Friday reported 56 deaths due to Covid-19, 30 from Jammu and 26 from Kashmir division, while 3,637 patients were discharged and 2,803 were tested positive recording an overall positivity rate of 6.25 percent in the region.

Meanwhile, three districts of Jammu, Shopian and Ganderbal have so far achieved the target of vaccinating 100 percent of the population over 45 years of age with a single dose of vaccine.

In Jammu district, 4,98,185 persons above 45 years of age have been vaccinated till May 28.

On May 19, when 4,53,856 persons were vaccinated the district administration claimed to have achieved 100 percent vaccination above 45 years of age. In the last 10 days more than 44,000 people have received the first jab while the drive for the age group of 18-44 has been intensified by first covering the targeted groups.

In Jammu region eight districts Friday reported less than 100 fresh cases while Jammu district reported 320 fresh cases and Rajouri recorded 107 news cases. In Kashmir division, Srinagar district on Friday reported 382 new cases while four districts of Baramulla, Budgam, Kupwara and Anantnag reported more than 200 fresh cases.

According to the media bulletin, "2,803 new positive cases of novel Coronavirus (Covid-19), 1,009 from Jammu division and 1,794 from Kashmir division were reported. The Active positive cases across J&K stood at little over 41,000 while 3,795 patients have died; 1838 in Jammu division and 1,957 in Kashmir division.

Moreover, 3637 more Covid-19 patients were discharged from various hospitals including 1,741 from Jammu Division and 1,896 from Kashmir Division.



A medic gives a dose of a Covid-19 vaccine at a camp for differently-abled, at the SMRV School vaccination centre, in Kanyakumari on Friday

## SSR DEATH-RELATED DRUG CASE

# Mumbai court sends Pithani to NCB custody till June 1

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Two days after he was arrested in Hyderabad, a Mumbai court on Friday remanded late Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput's friend and accused Siddharth Pithani in the custody of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) till June 1, in connection with a drug case linked to the actor's death.

After obtaining a transit remand from a Hyderabad Court, the NCB brought Pithani to Mumbai and produced before the Chief

Metropolitan Magistrate at Esplanade Court which sent him to NCB custody for five days. The court sent Pithani to NCB custody till June 1, after its lawyer told the court that the investigating agency wanted to probe his role and nexus with others accused in illicit drug trafficking case linked to the Sushant Singh Rajput's death and his alleged links with contraband dealers to bring out the full truth in the case.

Official sources said that the investigators had found documents and electronic evi-

dence at his Hyderabad home. Pithani's arrest came more than two and 3/4 months after the NCB filed a 11,700-page charge sheet against Rhea Chakraborty, her brother Showik Chakraborty and 31 others by a Special NPDS court here on March 5, 2021.

During the interrogation, other accused in the case Samuel Miranda and Dipesh Sawant had spoken Pithani in their statements, alleging that the latter was in direct touch with Suishant, Rhea Chakraborty and her brother Showik Chakraborty.

## Swamy urges TN Govt to take action against attacks on Brahmin priests by DMK, DK, LTTE activists

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The increasing number of physical and verbal attacks on 'poor and hapless Brahmin priests' by activists of the ruling DMK and its ally DK has forced Subramanian Swamy MP to write to Governor Banwarilal Purohit asking him to put the M K Stalin-led Government on notice.

Dr Swamy's letter to the Governor comes within days of the Dravidian political parties launching a diatribe against two popular educational institutions in the State for alleged misconduct by some teachers towards girl students. A teacher by name Rajagopal from one of the school network has been arrested by State Police over complaints by students who alleged that he was behaving in an improper manner with them.

Interestingly, the arrested teacher is a close relative of a senior parliament member of the DMK. Neither the MP nor the DMK has responded to the reports. The Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Sekhar Babu

warned the members of the Rajasthan community in Tamil Nadu for not voting for the DMK in successive elections. He reportedly told the community members that the DMK knows well for whom they are voting because of the EVM has the facility to find out who voted for whom.

"The targeting of Brahmins in the State and verbal terrorizing of this hapless disorganized community is today much like as happened during the early period of the Nazi Government led by Adolf Hitler in Germany. I am getting reports from persons living in the State of Tamil Nadu, that Pujaris and Teachers are specially targeted because they are Brahmins," Dr Swamy said in his letter. He further stated in the letter that a pall of fear of terror has descended in Tamil Nadu let loose by the DK, rogue elements of the DMK and rump elements of the LTTE.

The MP said that it was too early for him to suggest the application of Article 356 since these were the early days of the Stalin Government that was sworn in the first week of May.

## Kerala HC declines to stay Lakshadweep Regulation 2021, issues notice to Administrator

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Friday declined to stay the Draft Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation 2021 (LDAR) as desired in a public interest litigation filed by a local Congress activist.

The draft regulation issued by the Lakshadweep Development Authority proposes to modernise the islands and transform it into a global tourism hub. But all political parties in Kerala, barring the BJP, has come out against the LDAR 2021 alleging that the draft proposals would destroy the culture, tradition and lifestyle of the island's predominantly Muslim population. The last few days have been witnessing unprecedented protests and rallies in mainland Kerala against the move by Praful Patel, the administrator of the Union Territory, to bring in reforms and modernisation in the atolls.

A Division Bench of Justices K Vinod Chandran and MR Anita issued notice to the Lakshadweep Administration and asked it to respond to the PIL in two weeks. "Nothing doing...it's a



Lakshadweep Guest House, Kochi

policy matter...let them file a response in two weeks time and then we will see," said Vinod Chandran when the petitioner pleaded again and again for a stay order.

The petitioner had challenged the LDAR and the Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act introduced in the island. The plea challenged the illegal interference with the social, political, and cultural realities in the island of Lakshadweep by the Administrator.

The petitioner avers that the same has been widely resented by the residents of the island because it gives the respondent powers to remove or usurp the small holdings of property owned by the islanders belong-

ing to the Scheduled Tribes.

Arguing that the powers vested in the Authority violates Article 21 of the Constitution and several other strict Rules, it is also contended that the inhabitant tribes' right to livelihood is affected by the new regulation.

On Thursday, activists belonging to the CPI(M) and the Congress had waved black flags at Lakshadweep Collector Ashgar Ali who had come to Kochi to brief the media. Collector Ali had dismissed all charges raised by the member of Save Lakshadweep committee and said that measures like PASA and Goondas Act were need of the hour as many crimes in the island go unreported.

## 1 terrorist killed in Shopian

Jammu: Two back to back encounters erupted in the South and North Kashmir districts of Shopian and Baramulla on Friday in which one unidentified terrorist was neutralized by the joint team of security forces in Ganapora area while gunfight was going on till the time of filing the report in the Sopore town.

According to a spokesman of Jammu and Kashmir police, "The first firefight broke out this afternoon after police and security forces cordoned the area following specific inputs about the presence of terrorists in the Ganapora area of Shopian". In the ensuing gunfight, "an unidentified terrorist had been killed while searches were going on in the area".

## Treat all minorities equally, Kerala High Court tells State Govt

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Friday quashed a Kerala Government order issued in 2015 announcing scholarships to Muslim students and Latin Catholic/Converted Christians in the ratio 80:20 and asked the Government to treat the minorities equally.

This order has been the reason for heart-burning among the Christian community in the State which said that the scholarships should be apportioned as per the population of the communities.

"The order by the Government of Kerala in this regard is not legally sustainable.

The State should provide merit-cum-means scholarships to members of notified minority communities equally," said a Division Bench consisting of Chief Justice S Manikumar and Justice Shaji P Chali while disposing a petition filed by Justine Pallivathukkal, a lawyer who complained that the Kerala Government was giving undue preference to the Muslim community over members of other minority communities in the State.



Clouds hover over Kanpur Central Railway Station due to the weather changes induced by the Cyclone 'Yaas', in Kanpur on Friday

## 'Govt is sensitive to the needs of weaker sections of society'

New Delhi: Union Minister of State of Social Justice and Empowerment, Rattan Lal Kataria welcomes the latest directions issued by Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for provisioning "near to home" vaccination centers for Senior citizens and Divyangians

The move is expected to benefit around 10.40 Crore Senior citizens and around 2.2 Crore Divyangians across the Nation.

**GUJARAT WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD.**  
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**BRIEF SHORT NOTICE INVITING ON LINE TENDER FOR FIXING RATE CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF C.I.D. JOINTS WITH EPDM RUBBER RING FOR THE YEAR 2021-22**

GWSSB invites online tender through e-tendering for Manufacture, Supply & Delivery of C.I.D. Joints with EPDM Rubber ring (80 to 700mm Dia.) with IS1 Mark/Confirming to Relevant IS from Indian Manufacturer only. Interested bidder who wish to participate in above tender may view the detailed tender notice & download the Tender documents at free of cost from website. <https://www.nprocure.com>

The last date of submission of online tender is 1-7-2021.

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Indira Circle, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, Jaipur-302004

No.: JDA/EE & TA to Dir. Engg.-II/2021-22/D-55 Dated: 28.05.2021

**NOTICE INVITING BID**  
NIB No.: EE & TA to Dir. Engg.-II/06/2021-22

Bids are invited for works given below in various zones as per details given :-

Sr. No.	Zone	UBN No.	Cost of Work (Lacs)	A&F	Nature of Work	Last Date
1.	EE-08	UBN : JDA2122WLOB00074	944.32	04/2021-22	Remaining Development Work	18.06.2021

Details are available at Procurement Portal website [www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in](http://www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in), [www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in](http://www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in) and [www.jda.urban.rajasthan.gov.in](http://www.jda.urban.rajasthan.gov.in)

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PAPER WITH PASSION

## No child's play

India, like the world, is gearing up to protect its children from the next wave of COVID-19

Children are the last human frontier COVID-19 threatens to engulf. The second surge has seen quite a number of children infected. Even deaths have been reported, including one of a day-old infant in eastern Uttar Pradesh. Most of these patients were asymptomatic or with mild symptoms; they recovered within a week. A small percentage of cases needed hospitalisation and intensive medical care. India, like the rest of the world, is now gearing up to prepare to save children in the next surge, whenever that is. Lessons from the first two surges have chastened the Government and steps are already afoot to provide separate neonatal and paediatric wards in hospitals. Contingency measures are on for oxygen, monitoring equipment, ventilators and medicine. Medical and paramedical staff are undergoing re-orientation to handle young patients. Bharat Biotech of Covaxin fame is also ahead of the curve in coming up with a vaccine for the two to 18 age group. In fact, it has got approval for stage 2 and 3 human trials already. With 40 per cent of the population in this age group, vaccination becomes imperative. But tackling child COVID-19 is a matter not merely of logistics. It will be fought largely in the arena of the mind; a seesaw between the panic of parents and patience of doctors.

For instance, the question is: Are the hospital wards children-friendly? If a discernible part of the scarcity of beds and oxygen in the second surge was owing to panic among adults, imagine what parents can go through if their children become infected. Rationality will become scarce. The social media will press a panic button of its own, mostly of the illegal variety. Should the location and names of the infected children be revealed on social media posts for help? Should pictures be circulated? How will these violations of privacy be checked? There are many NGOs handling awareness campaigns to keep children safe. Apart from safety measures, there is the need for a healthy diet, mental agility and physical exercise, particularly when schools are closed and they are stuck at home. But what about the rural areas? Nearly half of the population below 18 lives in the countryside. There are issues with hygiene, availability of potable water and nutritious diet. Malaria, dengue and pneumonia are rampant. A large section of the rural parents is aware of their responsibilities, but hands of most would be tied by their economic situation. As yet, no data shows that the third surge will affect children, but it is equally important they be immunised. It is more important to inoculate their parents first. Both medical workers and parents need to realise that most children may not be able to recognise COVID-19 symptoms; how then to diagnose at the earliest? A beginning has been made, but it has to be seen to be real. The UNICEF web advisory on child protection, for example, is begging updation since September 2020.



## PICTALK



Cyclists during the 19th stage of the Giro d'Italia race, from Abbiadegrasso to Alpe di Mera, Italy

PTI

## Regional cooperation

The pandemic is an opportunity for the member nations to revive the SAARC spirit

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), after 35 years of its existence, has almost become a relic of the past. An organisation that was launched for regional cooperation has been dying a slow death ever since its inception on December 8, 1985. It was to bring together the 21 per cent of the world's population living in South Asia. The idea was to help the region by economic cooperation. It, however, did not go beyond declarations that were never implemented by the member nations. South Asia remains one of the most impoverished regions in the world. The interaction among SAARC nations, which share a common heritage and history, is dismally low. The grouping was mooted on the lines of ASEAN, which would provide a common economic zone that would help trade and make people prosperous. It was supposed to increase people-to-people contact. To build a framework for economic cooperation, it contemplated the South Asian Economic Union (SAEU) to promote Free Trade Area, Customs Union, a Common Market and a Common Economic and Monetary Union.

The idea was indeed very promising, yet it never took off as it was defeated by regional politics. Pakistan's obsession with Kashmir made it impossible to make it a workable entity. The result was that no SAARC leaders' meeting took place after Kathmandu in 2014 till 2020. The 2016 meeting was, though, boycotted by India due to the Uri attack. A ray of hope for regional cooperation came in the form of the Corona pandemic. Just like elsewhere, the pandemic affected the people of this region as well. This was the time when regional cooperation could have helped the member countries in terms of medicine, medical facilities and other necessary equipment. Though some positive trends emerged but they had limited scope. Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the initiative on March 15, 2020, as India led from the front. It hosted a virtual meeting of the SAARC leaders; India pledged \$10 million to a fund to fight Corona and other nations followed suit. India also donated vaccines to the member nations. This meeting was indeed path-breaking. At the ground level, the SAARC Disaster Management Centre has set up a website (<http://www.covid19-sdmc.org/>) for SAARC countries. A special cell in the Ministry of External Affairs is coordinating and monitoring with SAARC countries. Hope this revives SAARC and regional cooperation gets a new lease of life.

# Restoring sanity in national narrative

Despite the Corona setback, the motivation to overcome hardships shall emerge simply from the spirit of serving fellow human beings



JS RAJPUT

The true character of a people and nation reveals itself only in the toughest of times. India is going through such a phase and, sadly enough, instead of presenting a picture of national unity and socio-religious cohesion, the political class that had tasted power in the past and has been unseated by the electorate, is using the Corona crisis as an opportunity to reverse its fortunes. Those in power are, obviously, busy managing this crisis of unprecedented measure and magnitude; all they are getting from their political opponents is ridicule, allegations and accusations. The political scenario is indeed depressing for the common people who are suffering on so many counts due to the epidemic and its impact on practically every sector of human activity.

This has attracted international attention and painted Indian democracy in poor light. The Corona crisis, particularly in April-May 2021, weighed very heavily on India and its people. The inadequacies of the health infrastructure, as also the systems of public service and governance, have revealed distressing deficiencies. There were heart-wrenching reports of people dying in ambulances and even outside hospital gates. In the 21st century, should even a single life be lost simply because of non-availability of medical oxygen? It certainly was serious mismanagement, lethargy and lack of commitment.

But the extra efforts put in at every level to tide over the crisis also deserve to be noticed. We have the ingenuity to produce medicines and vaccines, distribute better and ensure adequate availability. If the mishap was an outcome of systemic complacency and unconcern, these shall have to be wiped out completely from the work culture in future. The Corona crisis shall certainly transform human approach to life, the nature of human interactions and re-establish the criticality of man-nature relationship. The economic, social and cultural implications of the pandemic are being assessed all around.

The motivation and the will to overcome the impediments shall emerge from numerous instances, initiatives, acts and actions that



were ignited simply by the spirit of serving fellow human beings, in the realisation of the "essential unity of all human beings". As one looks around, one finds great examples of courage, dedication and commitment to the cause of helping the needy. Working in conditions of severe deficiencies, they are great examples of human empathy and compassion. Think doctors, paramedics, police personnel, railways, teachers and other public servants, they all rose to the occasion, at the cost of grave personal risk, and hundreds of them sacrificed their lives.

Democracy depends on the dexterity-imbuéd dialogue. Unfortunately, all this unequivocally emphasises the need for continuous, productive dialogue among the political parties, among those in powers, and out of it. There ought to be no hesitation in mid-course correction. The absence leads to instances of political immaturity, which are injurious to the polity. One of the former Chief Ministers, a fairly well-educated young person, thundered he would not get vaccinated since it was a party vaccine! Now, he is among those demanding free vaccine to all. Apparently having realised his folly, he could

THERE WERE HEART-WRENCHING REPORTS OF PEOPLE DYING IN AMBULANCES AND EVEN OUTSIDE HOSPITAL GATES. IN THE 21ST CENTURY, SHOULD EVEN A SINGLE LIFE BE LOST SIMPLY BECAUSE OF NON-AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL OXYGEN? IT CERTAINLY WAS SERIOUS MISMANAGEMENT, LETHARGY AND LACK OF COMMITMENT

have been advised by someone that consistency is not a value that must be adhered to, even if the fallacy becomes obvious.

On April 29, 1933, MK Gandhi in an article in the *Harjan* stated: "I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent. In my search for truth, I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things...when anybody finds any inconsistency between any two writings of mine, if he has still faith in my sanity, he would do well to choose the later of the two on the same subject." He said so as he had "not ceased to grow inwardly". This instance has great relevance not only for the particular person indicated, but also to all other ambitious young persons in politics.

Indian politicians must realise that elections are important, that winning is important, but this alone is not democracy. Most important is the public acceptance of its credibility. This they could comprehend if they practice *aparigraha* and, for that, the guiding light could come from Gandhi: "All humanity is one undivided and indivisible family, and each one of us is responsible for the misdeeds of all of the others." A person becomes a

personality only when he moves out of his own self and starts internalising his obligations to others. It was beautifully articulated by Einstein: "A person starts to live when he can live outside himself".

Corona has clearly established before every human being and every nation that, for it, every human being is just one more target. And therefore, it could be confronted only through coordinated global efforts; no nation, no race, no religion can do it in isolation. It is so succinctly articulated in the words of HH Dalai Lama: "In human societies, there will always be differences of views and interests. But the reality today is that we are all interdependent and have to coexist on this small planet. Therefore, the only sensible and intelligent way of resolving differences and clashes of interest, whether between individuals or nations, is through dialogue. The promotion of a culture of dialogue and non-violence for the future of mankind is thus an important task for the international community." Hope our politicians are listening!

(The author works in education and social cohesion. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### TWITTER MUST ABIDE BY RULES

Sir — The freedom of expression has its own limitations. It can neither be overstepped nor does it act as a threat to the security of any nation. The standoff between the Twitter management and the Government is unwanted. As Twitter is a foreign entity, it has the obligation to abide by the rules and regulations of India if it wants to play here.

A part of Ladakh was shown as part of China by Twitter not too long ago. This is absolute mockery of the laws of the land and it is a shame on the nation, which needs to be condemned. It acted similarly in the aftermath of the Delhi violence though a social platform should not be instrumental in creating hatred, chaos or violence. Vaccine hesitancy too was professed, which was totally uncalled for. So the Government's move in this direction is absolutely right and necessary. Even in many European nations, there are watertight rules for social media.

The freedom of speech and working against national interests are two different issues. Twitter must obey the laws of the land, not join hands with the Opposition and the so-called liberals whose only aim is to dislodge the democratically elected Modi Government.

Sravana Ramachandran | Secunderabad

### RAMDEV IS FEELING THE PINCH

Sir — The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has served a defamation notice on Baba Ramdev for making disparaging remarks against allopathy and allopathic doctors, and demanded an apology from him within 15 days failing which, it said, it will demand a compensation of ₹1,000 crore from the yoga guru. Around 2,000 allopathic practitioners are part of the association. As Ramdev's comment is a criminal act under Section 499 of the IPC, the notice demanded a written apology from him. The notice has also asked Ramdev to make a video clip contradicting all his "false and defamatory" allegations and circulate it on all social media platforms where he had uploaded his earlier video clip levelling the allegations. It has also asked the yoga guru to withdraw all misleading "advertisements" from

## Unbecoming of a doctor



Instead of being India's Health Minister, Harsh Vardhan should have been the brand ambassador for Patanjali. Otherwise, as the son of a doctor, let me tell Harsh Vardhan that giving the "vultures" metaphor to foreign media is highly unprofessional and unbecoming of a doctor. It smacks of fascist and totalitarian tendencies.

We know that it is problematic for Harsh Vardhan and the BJP's top brass to read Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's tweets or speeches, but that does not also mean that the *am aadmi* would start believing his facts and figures over the COVID-19 death count. Because hardly any statistics put out in the public domain by the Modi Government in the

last seven years is authentic. Harsh Vardhan must admit that he has never been open, transparent, sensitive or honest.

The way he attacked Rahul in his tweet, it wasn't the language of a cultured person: "Politics on corpses, INCIndia Style! Although vultures are disappearing from trees, it seems their spirit has been absorbed by vultures of the earth. @RahulGandhi ji trusts #NewYork more than #Delhi. One should learn to play politics on corpses from the vultures of the earth." No doubt Harsh Vardhan attacked Rahul on behalf of the Modi Government but people eagerly want to know from the Government that how would they silence people's belief, as Gujarati poetess Parul Kakkar said in her *shav vahan* poem: "Ek saath sab murde bole, 'sab kuch chhanga-chhanga', saheb tumahre Ramraj me shav vahini Ganga (Don't worry, be happy, in one voice speak the corpses; O King, in your Ram-Rajya, we see bodies flow in the Ganges)."

Had Harsh Vardhan worked harder for India, he would not have been in this pitiable condition.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

all platforms endorsing the Coronil kit, a product of his firm, as an effective medicine against COVID-19, failing which an FIR and a criminal case would be lodged against him by the IMA. Ramdev, therefore, is in a soup and feeling the pinch.

CK Subramaniam | Navi Mumbai

### LOCKDOWN IMPACTED MENSTRUAL HYGIENE

Sir — Periods don't stop just because there are lockdowns, cyclones or any other form of a calamity or the pandemic. However, the manufacturing units that are in the business of making affordable sanitary pads are facing disruption as the successive lockdowns have slowed down, almost halted in fact, the process of importing raw materials.

The sorry development has led to the shortage of availability of affordable sanitary

nappkins across the country. This has caused millions of menstruating women to suffer, especially those belonging to the rural areas of India, as they could not access sanitary pads during the lockdowns.

It is forcing many women to adopt unhygienic methods of managing their monthly periods, which may give rise to other diseases. Therefore, both the Centre and the State Governments should act swiftly to restore normalcy in the production of affordable sanitary pads. Otherwise, the gains made over the last decade in improving menstrual hygiene and empowering women in this field may be reversed.

PS Swagatika Sahoo | Jagatsinghpur

## SOUNDBITE

From Monday, two activities will be open — construction and factories. We will take further decisions considering the COVID situation in Delhi.



Chief Minister — Arvind Kejriwal

To the men and women who were taken to prisoner of war camps or jail without charge, people who are no longer with us to hear this apology...we are sorry.

Canadian Prime Minister — Justin Trudeau

Our hearts go out to thousands of people who have suffered the impacts of #CycloneYaas. So many lives and homes affected.



Actor — Dia Mirza

India look a superior batting side. How they tackle the conditions is important. To me, India's batting will hold the key.

Former India captain — Kapil Dev

Such five-star politicians (Akhilesh Yadav) are responsible for the fall in level of politics because of their senseless comments. They should have actually been serving people of the State in such troubled times



Uttar Pradesh Minister — Sidharth Nath Singh

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)



## FIRST COLUMN

### POWERING THE GROWTH IMPETUS

How India should ensure sustained economic recovery post-pandemic



HIMANSHU RAI

The global economic slowdown caused due to the pandemic has been an eye-opener for various economies chasing growth. They have realized the importance of sustainable growth and contingency planning to cushion deep shocks. Although the scale of the spread of the pandemic was not foreseeable, a resilient and robust underlying policy framework has enabled many nations to get on their feet again. Notwithstanding the unique challenges that countries faced, let us attempt a comparative analysis of economic metrics to understand the hits and misses in terms of economic policies and practices and eventually help policymakers to replicate the successful ones. Australia and New Zealand got the basics right



early and concentrated efforts on health infrastructure to minimize the impact of supply shock and subsequent demand shock due to lockdowns. Spending on goods and services grew by 7.9 per cent in Australia for Q3 2020. In New Zealand, industrial production decreased by two per cent in Q4 2020 while the unemployment rate was 4.9 per cent. The GDP growth rate has been projected within the range of 4 - 5 per cent for 2021, while the IMF projects a GDP growth of three per cent % for 2021 for Australia.

Industrial production decreased by 1.9 per cent in January, 2021 in Europe. New job postings reduced by around 40 per cent in food and beverages sector, indicating challenges of employment. A report by McKinsey estimated that around 59 million jobs may be at risk. The GDP growth rate of the US economy for 2021 was projected earlier to be around 3.08 per cent. The recovery is slow but steady. The industrial production index decreased by 4.2 per cent in the last year, but the increasing market confidence due to ongoing vaccination drives is raising hopes for normalcy. Joblessness is still a major concern with a February, 2021 McKinsey report saying only 60 per cent of job losses have been recovered.

India has been on the path of recovery since Q4 2020, when the GDP increased by 0.4 per cent and GVA by one per cent. The GST collection and eWay bills generation have reached a high, signifying a boost in domestic spending. The share market also recorded significant growth. Indian Forex reserves have become the fourth largest in the world, surpassing Russia.

Though the economy is projected to contract in 2021, there is a 12.6 per cent projected economic growth by OECD for 2022. The Index of Industrial Production shrank by 12 per cent in the period April, 2020-January, 2021. The contraction in January, 2021 has been around 1.6 per cent, indicating slow-paced recovery. The unemployment rate increased from 6.53 per cent in January, 2021 to 6.9 per cent the next month and the major contribution to unemployment has been from the rural areas.

Thus, India needs to focus on the rural sector and boost employment opportunities and stimulate rural markets to develop a solid base for recovery. An important element in this would be the communication to remove skepticism and fear over vaccines, and chart out a robust vaccine-coverage strategy. Sustenance and empowerment of rural and local economies and strengthening the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative will go a long way in helping us recover and reinvigorate.

The author is Director, IIM-Indore. The views expressed are personal.

## The dragon's footprint in selective spread of Covid?

Surprisingly, the virus affects only the countries that may have a capacity to control China's hegemonist ambitions and not those securing aid and assistance from it



VINAI KUMAR SAXENA

It is widely suspected that the COVID-19 virus was manufactured in a laboratory in China and was let loose on the world. It is China which is thus claimed to be largely responsible for the loss of more than 3.3 million lives and causing untold suffering to a far greater number of people.

If we look at the list of death by countries, we will see that over half a million died in USA, the biggest trade and military rival of China. Brazil and India, which are the two major members of the BRIC countries that together could make a formidable power of challenge to China have collectively recorded over another half a million deaths. Western European countries, which are allies of US and are power partners in the UN and NATO and dominate the world of commerce and military under the patronage and partnership of US, have collectively seen another half a million deaths.

Actually, a laboratory manufactured agent of death has allegedly been unleashed into countries that are the major threat and hurdle in China's marathon 100-year run to finish as the world's largest super power. In about a year, not just death, the health and hygiene framework and the economic fabric of these countries have been damaged to such an extent that the recovery could take years. On top of that, these nations, mostly democratic, are now facing people's ire due to unquantifiable suffering, and very stable political governance systems have been shaken to the core. This kind of warfare has never been witnessed before in human history.

From the same list of countries, one may observe that countries in the neighbourhood of these strategic nations have not been so much affected by the Chinese virus at all.

Is it a coincidence or a conspiracy that nations like Pakistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan, most of which have societies that are closely linked to India's in trade, cultural exchange, familial relations and interactive through our perforated borders do not have the viral infection anywhere near to the proportion in India? Is it a coincidence or conspiracy that a similar disparity in the viral spread happens across Europe and only NATO countries get severely affected and not the eastern nations on that continent? Why and how is that the Chinese virus affects only countries that may have a capacity to successfully control the hegemonistic ambitions and not the countries that secure aid and assistance from China and remain subservient to the growing power of the dragon?

This is only possible with the help of a laboratory generated virus and not through an organism spun out of organic evolution. For this very reason, India should never accept the vaccine, medicines or any material of mass consumption originating from China, because we could just become sitting ducks for a conspiracy that is deep and wide and is brought out through a careful fusion of science, technology and hegemonistic strategy.

We are living in times when completely unthinkable and what we thought as impossible have begun to happen. This month, a rocket launched by China fell back into sea and space agencies have wondered what might have fallen from it into the Indian Ocean. We all remember not many years ago, across the world, unsolicited packets of seeds arrived at people's doors from China and agriculture experts warned people not to sow them, for they might be seeds that will destroy the native species and obliterate our food



IS IT A COINCIDENCE OR A CONSPIRACY THAT NATIONS LIKE PAKISTAN, MYANMAR, BANGLADESH, SRI LANKA AND BHUTAN, MOST OF WHICH HAVE SOCIETIES THAT ARE CLOSELY LINKED TO INDIA'S IN TRADE, CULTURAL EXCHANGE, FAMILIAL RELATIONS AND INTERACTIVE THROUGH OUR PERFORATED BORDERS DO NOT HAVE THE VIRAL INFECTION ANYWHERE NEAR TO THE PROPORTION IN INDIA?

The author is Chairman, Khadi and Village Industries Commission, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.



security.

Australia is in the eye of the storm of the dragon because of its developmental position in south east and scientists wonder if there is any Chinese connection to the devastating wildfire of last year that burned for weeks on end. For scientists, the devastating glacier burst in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, which lies in proximity to China, is also an unusual and rare occurrence in the peak winter months when the Himalayan glaciers remain in deep frozen state.

Technology companies in the Silicon Valley are increasingly being established and led by people of Chinese origin, which might help in global surveillance and information collection. Zoom, the leading Video Conferencing facility has been blamed on that count and nations have suspected that information from secretive and strategic video conferences may have already reached Chinese information archives.

A recent publication of NITI Aayog has elaborately traced the character of India's rural economy and put into perspective the importance of rural sustainability of the nation. Although India is in a transitional state of economic resurgence, 68.8 per cent of the nation's population and 72.4 per cent of nation's workforce are from rural areas. Nearly half of India's National Domestic Product (NDP) is still rural. While 96 per cent of agricultural employment is rural, 48.6 per cent of non-agricultural employment too is rural. Because of this, sustain-

able development of India depends predominantly on rural industriousness, productivity, dynamics and livelihood quality. The efforts of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) are intricately linked to this horizon of rural sustainable development of India through nearly 100 different kinds of rural industrial entrepreneurship and handholding activities. KVIC has been sustaining a major part of village industries in India through over 40 offices spread across the nation, around 5,000 aligned institutions, 23 departmental sales outlets and around 8035 Khadi sales outlets /Khadi Bhavans run by Khadi Institutions. The direct beneficiaries organized through this mechanism exceed 15 million people, while indirect beneficiaries run into several additional millions. If you put together the direct, indirect associated and familial beneficiaries of this carefully hand raised and sustained sector, it could well over be a billion people in the lifeline of village industries sustainable development programmes. China understands the socio-economic and socio-political power of this community and its influence on the mainstream life of our nation. And it engages itself in a calculated and consistent manner in which this delicate balance could be obliterated, so that the nation can be hollowed from within.

In taking some examples of this phenomenon, the 'agarbatti' (Incense stick) industry stands out. Out of the half-a-million-metric-ton 'agarbatti' requirement and production in

India annually, over 80 per cent raw material come from China and Vietnam.

Even the national flag of India that is only made with Khadi cotton or silk fabric was not spared by Chinese invasion. Counterfeit national flags made of plastic and other artificial material from China flooded Indian markets forcing the current government to place the National Flag under prohibited category of import in October, 2019.

Similarly, the traditional Indian Silk Industry, the heritage art of clay pottery, handmade paper and leather industry were driven to the verge of extinction. Imagine, the idols of Indian deities were made in China and worshipped in Indian households. Toys, honey, minerals, and dozens of other natural-resources-based village industries have been rendered unproductive due to Chinese economic aggression of pushing through our market a subsidized and quality-compromised product till recently, until the present government made corrections by imposing higher import duty and import restrictions on such Chinese products. It will, however, take years for the Indian village industries to recuperate from the Chinese intrusion and be self-reliant in all respects.

One can imagine the invasion of the dragon. The fire is not in the borders that guard the nation. The fire is burning the nation to its core and is devouring the integrity, national character and our very ways of existence. And we have unconsciously allowed that.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

THIS IS THE FOURTH DAY; NO VACCINATION FOR YOUTH BETWEEN 18 AND 44 IN ANY OF THE GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS OF DELHI IS DONE. — AAP LEADER ATISHI



THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO PLAY POLITICS. BUYING VACCINES INTERNATIONALLY IS NOT SIMILAR TO BUYING OFF-THE-SHELF ITEMS. — NITI AAYOG MEMBER VK PAUL

## Super inflation and income loss thaw India

The crisis is national and the country has to take prudent steps, prune expenses and not do politicking on issues of benevolence

Multiple Taxes, unemployment, high 10.49 percent wholesale price index (WPI) rise and severe income losses are thawing the nation amid high Covid-19 deaths.

The six-month high WPI figures in April would be straining the economy. Actual price rise at the retail level would be a minimum of 10.49 per cent plus 4.29 per cent CPI inflation, not less than 14.78 per cent. The super inflation in 1974 was at 28.66 per cent, and 16.94 per cent in 1973. Those days purchasing power of the people had collapsed and protests marked the national scenario. It may not look serious but if income losses of 84 per cent of the people are added it appears grim. As per a study of the Azim Premji University study, the pandemic has led to worsening in quality of employment, with a



SHIVAJI SARKAR

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

number of salaried employees joining the ranks of precariously self-employed.

"The annual rate of inflation in April 2021, is high primarily because of rise in prices of crude petroleum, petrol, diesel and manufactured products as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year," the Commerce and Industry Ministry (CIM) said.

As most rise in prices, fares, freight are due to the CIM stated factors, the economy is slowing down, indicating a lower GDP as well. It is being further complicated by rising joblessness at 8 per cent in April amid the second covid19 wave from 7.4 per cent in March 2021. A CMIE study - Consumer Pyramids Household Survey (CPHS) - observes weekly unemployment rate touched 14.5 percent on May 15. The CMIE says



that 84 per cent households have suffered a decrease in monthly income and that more than one-fourth of the country's working-age population is unemployed.

World Bank warns 70 per cent of employment and about a third of GDP comes from the 'informal' workers. They are likely to lose their jobs or suffer severe income losses during Covid-19 lockdowns and

they tend to be largely excluded from social safety nets. Informality has made eight lakh migrant workers move out of Delhi, according to the state government. No nation, World Bank says, could have actual recovery unless these 'informal' people, particularly women, are taken care of.

RBI governor Shaktikanta Das says that manufacturing and services PMI along with

inflation would continue the price pressure. It may aggravate because global prices continue to rise.

Amid such scenario it looks strange that RBI, itself in crisis, approves a dividend payout bonanza of Rs 99,122 crore for July, 2020-March, 2021. It is 73 per cent higher than the entire previous year's Rs 57,126 crore. It is time for austerity not only in the debilitated public sector units but also in its expenses on many real estate and cosmetic projects.

The country is avoiding discussing such criticality that leads to impasses. The recent farmers' stir against the three draconian laws is the result of the 'partyocracy'. The nation does not want to discuss the irrationality of multiple taxes and the woes of the people. They are paying taxes on taxes - on old cars, multiple taxes on

petrol, bank deposits, vaccine, coffin, Rs 25 per km road toll and also a GST on that, junking their own cars and even on oxygen - that thankfully was done by Delhi high court, and irrational atrocities and penalties on masks and Covid-19-related issues. A senior political observer and journalist, Ajai Setia, comments that even in government "ministers don't know what is going on in their ministries".

The discriminations are not being discussed. The Serum Institute of India is stated to have made profits of Rs 59,000 crore (\$8.2 billion) in 2020 and Rs 85,000 crore (\$12.7 billion) in 2021. Similarly, some select corporates are making tons as edible oil, fruit and gas prices are soaring apart from their international and national business. The concern of rising monopolies that are checked in

the US through anti-trust laws remains missing. The PSUs that are sustaining the nation are designed to become junks.

The second wave or spurt in cases of Covid-19 since April has not only caused loss of lives but has cast its shadows on growth prospects. A third wave has been warned. Downward revision of tax revenue and GDP projections are realities. The central government's gross tax revenue in Budget 2020-21 estimates was reduced by more than 20 per cent in 2021-22 Budget.

The governance method has to change with the participation even the opposition. The crisis is national and to surpass Bangladesh, the country has to take prudent drastic steps, prune expenses and not do politicking on issues of benevolence. One step would go through long chain of changes.

# Oli calls upon parties to form all-party Govt and hold elections

**Kathmandu:** Embattled Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on Friday urged all political parties to form an all-party Government and hold fresh elections, as he tried to justify the controversial dissolution of the House of Representatives twice by the President, saying a "functionless" Parliament turned out to be the main source of instability in the country.

"Going for an election can never be a regressive act," Oli said in a televised address to the nation, a week after the House was dissolved by President Bidya Devi Bhandari.

The president dissolved the 275-member House of Representatives on Saturday for the second time in five months and announced snap elections on November 12 and November 19 on the advice of Prime Minister Oli, who is heading a minority government.

Oli, 69, called upon the political parties to form an all-party government and hold elections, My Republica.com portal quoted him as saying.

Addressing the nation as the chief executive of the country, Oli took most of his time to criticise the moves taken by the Opposition parties and his fellow party leaders.

He blamed the Opposition parties and dissident faction of the ruling CPN-UML for the dissolution of Parliament. He blamed his party's rival group for blocking his attempts to consolidate democracy and to take the nation to the path of socio-economic transformation.

Oli said Parliament could not ensure stability in the country even after it was restored on February 23 through judicial intervention.

"Though it was reinstated through the Supreme Court's verdict, it turned out to be func-

tionless and the main source of instability in the country," said Oli.

He claimed that he tried to prevent the lower house of Parliament from being dissolved.

"I made my last ditch effort to form an alternative government as per Article 76 (5) after being assured of support from the Janata Samajbadi Party (JSP). However, Opposition parties, who played a dirty game of politics, forced the president to dismiss their claim for a new government," he said.

"Due to their erroneous claim, I was the victim and Parliament was dissolved as per the constitutional provisions," he said.

Hinting at the support extended to Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba by more than two dozen lawmakers of UML and a dozen others belonging to the JSP, he warned of not accepting party-

less character in the multiparty system adopted by Nepal.

President Bhandari dissolved the House and rejected the bids of both Prime Minister Oli and the Opposition alliance's claims to form a government, saying the "claims were insufficient."

Nepal's Opposition alliance on Monday filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court demanding restoration of the House of Representatives and appointment of Deuba as the Prime Minister. Others had also filed petitions against the dissolution of the House of Representatives.

The next hearing in the case will be held on Sunday, the government-run Rising Nepal newspaper reported.

Earlier on December 20, the President had dissolved the Parliament and called snap polls on April 30 and May 10. However, two months later, the Rana-led Constitutional Bench on February 23 over-

turned the decision and reinstated the House.

Constitutional experts have criticised Oli and Bhandari for their complicity in trampling upon the Constitution. In his address Oli also discussed the government's efforts to combat the coronavirus pandemic and claimed that his government made big achievements, including controlling the pandemic, during his three years tenure.

Oli expressed gratitude to China, India and other friendly countries for helping the government in its attempt to control the spread of the coronavirus by providing necessary medical supplies.

He informed that the Nepal government has received 3.2 million doses of vaccines against coronavirus in grants from friendly countries and purchased one million additional vaccines to start the drive against spread of the coronavirus. **PTI**

## Nepal's Supreme Court starts hearing 30 writ petitions against House dissolution

**Kathmandu:** A Constitutional Bench of Nepal's Supreme Court on Friday heard 30 writ petitions against the dissolution of the lower house of Parliament and fixed Sunday as the next date of hearing, according to media reports.

Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher Rana formed the bench earlier in the day with justices Deepak Kumar Karki, Dr Ananda Mohan Bhattarai, Tej Bahadur KC and Bam Kumar Shrestha alongside him, the Kathmandu Post newspaper reported.

There is a provision of a five-member Bench to settle disputes over constitutional matters. Currently, there are 13 senior justices, besides chief justice, in the Supreme Court.

"The hearing took place till 3:00 pm on Friday afternoon and it will continue on coming Sunday (May 30)," Devendra Dhakal, Information Officer at the Supreme Court, was quoted as saying by the official The Rising Nepal newspaper.

As many as 30 writ petitions have been registered at the apex court against President Bidya Devi Bhandari's May 22 move to dissolve the lower house of Parliament on the advice of Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli, who is heading a minority Government.

The initial hearing on 19 of such petitions was conducted by the CJ Rana-led bench on Thursday. The single bench, however, forwarded the writ petitions to the Constitutional

Bench for further hearing.

Some of the petitioners had demanded an interim against the dissolution and calling of the House meeting to present the national budget. Rana, however, refused.

According to the provision, the government must present the federal budget at the federal Parliament by May 29. Since there is no Parliament, the Government is planning to bring the budget through an ordinance.

President Bhandari dissolved the 275-member House of Representatives on Saturday for the second time in five months and announced snap elections on November 12 and November 19 on the advice of Prime Minister Oli. **PTI**

## Man killed after stabbing, shooting 3 French cops

**Paris:** An unidentified assailant stabbed a police officer at her station on Friday in western France then shot two other officers before being killed in a shootout with police, authorities said. The motive for the violence is unclear.

The slain suspect's identity is being verified, France's national gendarme service told The Associated Press.

The three officers were wounded but none is in life-threatening condition, the gendarmes said. After stabbing the first police officer in her station in the Nantes suburb of La Chapelle-sur-Erdre, the assailant took her gun and

fled, according to the gendarme service.

French police deployed helicopters, search dogs and more than 200 officers to find the suspect, and closed nearby schools and stores. When he was located, he fired on officers trying to arrest him, the gendarme service said.

He was gravely wounded in an ensuing shootout, and died Friday afternoon of his injuries, according to a police official. The official was not authorised to be publicly named.

Police and ambulances blocked roads in the normally quiet, residential area after the stabbing. **AP**

## Iraq looks to new pier to boost oil product imports, exports

**Basra (Iraq):** Iraq is building a new oil pier off its southern coast, financed by Japan, that's expected to boost exports and imports of crude-derived products and increase revenue, officials said Friday.

The construction within the port of Khor al-Zubair — Iraq's main fuel export and import facility — is over 70 per cent complete and should be finished this year, said Farhan Fartousi, the director-general of the General Company for Ports in Iraq, a state company responsible for Iraq's southern ports.

It marks the latest project undertaken by port officials and investors to modernize the port and boost revenue in the wake of government plans announced last year to clamp down on border corruption that significantly skims off state revenue.

Iraq's two largest and key commercial ports — Umm Qasr and Khor al-Zubair — have come under scrutiny amid anti-corruption measures to tackle widespread graft.

Fartousi said Khor al-Zubair is now bringing in 10 billion Iraqi dinars a month (about USD 6.8 million), a significant jump from 8 billion Iraqi dinars a month earlier this year (approximately USD 5.4 million). **AP**

## Belarusian leader heads to Russia amid showdown with EU

**Moscow:** Belarus' authoritarian leader heads to Russia on Friday to seek assistance amid a bruising showdown with the European Union over the diversion of a flight to arrest a dissident journalist. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko is set to meet with Russia's Vladimir Putin at his Black Sea residence in Sochi for talks on closer economic ties, according to the Kremlin.

Belarus provoked the EU's outrage when Belarusian flight controllers on Sunday told the crew of a Ryanair jet flying from Greece to Lithuania there was a bomb threat and instructed it to land in the Belarusian capital, Minsk, where 26-year-old journalist Raman Pratasevich was arrested along with his Russian girlfriend.

The EU responded by barring Belarusian carriers from its airspace and airports and advising European airlines to skirt Belarus. The bloc's foreign ministers agreed Thursday to ramp up sanctions to target the country's lucrative potash industry and other sectors of the Belarusian economy that are the main cash-earners for Lukashenko's Government. **AP**

## UN envoy says he held talks with Yemen's rebel negotiator

**Cairo:** The UN special envoy for Yemen said on Friday that he met with a top rebel negotiator to discuss the roadmap for the resolution of the impoverished Arab country's six-year conflict.

Yemen has been embroiled in a civil war since 2014, when rebels known as Houthis swept across much of the north and seized the capital, Sanaa, forcing the government into exile.

A Saudi-led coalition entered the war the following year on the side of the government and has been fighting the Iran-backed Houthis since. The war has spawned the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

According to the U.N. envoy, Martin Griffiths, his meeting with the chief Houthi negotiator, Mohammed Abdul-Salam, took place in Oman's capital of Muscat on Thursday. Last week, U.N. Envoy to Yemen Tim Lenderking had criticized the Houthis for refusing to meet with Griffiths during a previous visit.

Griffiths' statement says the two discussed U.N. plans to reopen Sanaa's international airport, the lifting of restrictions on Yemen's port of Hodeida, and a cease-fire to relaunch negotiations. Griffiths urged the warring sides to "seize this opportunity and make a breakthrough towards resolving the conflict." **AP**

## Hong Kong tycoon gets 14-month jail term over 2019 protest

**Hong Kong:** Hong Kong media tycoon and outspoken pro-democracy activist Jimmy Lai was sentenced to more jail time on Friday over his role in an anti-government protest in 2019, as authorities step up a crackdown on dissent in city.

Lai and nine others were charged with incitement to take part in an unauthorised assembly when they walked down a road with thousands of residents on Oct. 1, 2019, to protest against dwindling political freedoms in Hong Kong. All 10 pleaded guilty to organising an unauthorised assembly.

Lai, 73, was sentenced to 14 months in prison. He is currently serving a separate 14-month jail term for other convictions earlier this year also related to unauthorised rallies in 2019, when hundreds of thousands repeatedly took to

the streets in the biggest challenge to Beijing since the city was handed from British to Chinese control in 1997. Beijing promised that the territory could retain its freedoms not found on the mainland for 50 years.

With the two sentences combined, Lai will serve a total of 20 months behind bars.

The founder of The Apple Daily, a feisty pro-democracy tabloid, Lai is also being investigated under the city's sweeping national security law, imposed last year, on suspicion of colluding with foreign powers to intervene in the Hong Kong affairs.

Also receiving jail terms of 18 months each were former lawmakers Albert Ho and Leung Kwok-hung, as well as Lee Cheuk-yan, a pro-democracy activist. **AP**

## Pak Hindu lawmaker submits bill seeking religious minorities be referred to as 'non-Muslims'

**Islamabad:** Hindu lawmaker in Pakistan has submitted a bill in the lower house of Parliament seeking that religious minorities in the country be constitutionally referred to as "non-Muslims" to end the discrimination and establish equality and justice for every citizen.

Keeso Mal Kheal Das, a member of the National Assembly from the Opposition Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party, approached the National Assembly with a private member bill under rule 118 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, 2007.

Called as the Constitution Amendment Act, 2021, the bill aims to end discrimination against Pakistani non-Muslims who have been also referred in the constitution as minorities.

He suggested that the bill should be adopted and brought into effect immediately.

The government has not opposed the bill so far and the matter has been referred to the relevant standing committee. **PTI**

the streets in the biggest challenge to Beijing since the city was handed from British to Chinese control in 1997. Beijing promised that the territory could retain its freedoms not found on the mainland for 50 years.

With the two sentences combined, Lai will serve a total of 20 months behind bars.

The founder of The Apple Daily, a feisty pro-democracy tabloid, Lai is also being investigated under the city's sweeping national security law, imposed last year, on suspicion of colluding with foreign powers to intervene in the Hong Kong affairs.

Also receiving jail terms of 18 months each were former lawmakers Albert Ho and Leung Kwok-hung, as well as Lee Cheuk-yan, a pro-democracy activist. **AP**

## Erdogan opens landmark mosque at Istanbul main square

**Istanbul:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was set on Friday to inaugurate a landmark mosque in Istanbul's Taksim Square, fulfilling a long-time ambition to build a Muslim house of worship at the city's main public space that has become an emblem of the modern Turkish Republic.

Erdogan was scheduled to join a group of worshippers for the first prayers at the towering 3,000-capacity mosque on Taksim which was also the site of the mass anti-government protests in 2013 sparked by the government's construction plans at the adjacent Gezi Park.

## US taking 'very close look' at vaccine passports

**Washington:** Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas says the Government is taking a very close look at the possibility of vaccine passports for travel into and out of the United States.

As head of the Department of Homeland Security, Mayorkas oversees the Transportation Security Administration, which safeguards the nation's transportation systems.

Mayorkas told ABC on Friday that one of his guiding principles throughout the coronavirus pandemic has been the value of diversity, equity and inclusion and making sure that any passport that we provide for vaccinations is accessible to all and that no one is disenfranchised.

The European Union, some Asian governments and the airline industry are scrambling to develop COVID-19 vaccine passports to help kickstart international travel. They're working on systems that would allow travellers to use mobile phone apps to prove they've been vaccinated, helping them avoid quarantine requirements at their destinations.

Mayorkas says the underlying point is: Everyone should get vaccinated. **AP**

## 'China has no allies, US has many around world'

**Washington:** China, which is currently and will remain America's pacing challenge going forward, has no allies, while the United States has many allies around the world, which gives it greater capacity and greater capability, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told lawmakers on Thursday.

"China is currently and will remain our pacing challenge going forward," Austin told the members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense during a hearing on the fiscal 2022 Budget Request for the Defense Department.

The Biden administration, he said, has established the China task force that is about to complete its work and will inform about its efforts going forward and help them create synergies, eliminate duplication and more efficiently focus on the China challenge, he said.

"China has no allies. We have many allies around the world. And we certainly have some strong allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region. And that gives us greater capacity and greater capability," Austin said responding to questions from the lawmakers. **PTI**

## UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General Public is hereby informed that an one male person was found dead by train accident at Platform No. 3, Pillar No. 26, Anand Vihar Railway Station, Delhi dated 26.05.2021. In this regard a DD No. 25A, dated 26.05.2021 has been registered at P.S. Anand Vihar Railway Station, Delhi. The description of the person is given as under Name: Unknown, S/O: Unknown, R/O: Unknown, Age: About 27 years, Height: 5'6", Complexion: Wheatish, Build: Thin, Face: Long. Wearing : Upper body naked and Grey Colour Pant and bare footed.

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

SHO  
P.S. Anand Vihar  
Railway Station, Delhi  
Ph: 011-22145601, 22145602,  
8750871314, 9311350017

DP/147/RLY/2021

Public notice to be known to all that I Surinder Mohan Chowdhry S/o Late Sh. Sat Dev Chowdhry along with my wife Shashi Chowdhry both R/o 96 Paschim Vihar Extension, New Delhi-110063, are the owners of shop no. 7 DDA Market Paschim Vihar Extn in record CSC 7 Paschim Puri DDA Mkt., New Delhi-110063. Has applied for conversion of aforesaid property from lease hold to freehold in DDA. The Original 1. Allotment Cum Demand Letter 2. Original Possession Letter 3. Original Site Possession Slip 4. Original Paid up DDA Challans 5. NOC of Water and Electricity Issued by DDA of the above shop have been lost. An FIR/NCR to this effect has been lodged in CR BRP Station New Delhi Vide FIR /NCR No LR 360419/2021 Dated 27th May 2021. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No. 9999994315 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this property can personally inform or write to Dy. Director (CE), A Block, Second Floor, or Director (CE), Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

**INFORMATION**

We (Vinayak Hospital, Noida) are going to discard our in-patient file record from VH-0013327 to VH-0032105 as per the protocols.

If anyone required their related records then you can collect records from the medical record department with 15 days i.e., till 13 June, 2021.

**GUJARAT WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD.**  
SECTOR-10/A, GANDHINAGAR

**BRIEF SHORT NOTICE INVITING ON LINE TENDER FOR FIXING RATE CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF C.I. SLUICE VALVES FOR THE YEAR 2021-22**

GWSSB invites online tender through e-tendering for Manufacture, Supply & Delivery of C.I. Sluice Valves (50 to 1200mm Dia.) only from Approved vendors of GWSSB as per new vendor Selection policy as on last date of online Bid submission. Interested bidder who wish to participate in above tender may view the detailed tender notice & download the Tender documents at free of cost from website. <https://www.nprocure.com>

The last date of submission of online tender is 1-7-2021. **INF/271/21-22**

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The Biden administration, he said, has established the China task force that is about to complete its work and will inform about its efforts going forward and help them create synergies, eliminate duplication and more efficiently focus on the China challenge, he said.

"China has no allies. We have many allies around the world. And we certainly have some strong allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region. And that gives us greater capacity and greater capability," Austin said responding to questions from the lawmakers. **PTI**

**KAMA HOLDINGS LIMITED**  
CIN : L92199DL2000PLC104779  
Registered Office: The Galleria, DLF Mayur Vihar, Unit No. 236 & 237, 2nd Floor, Mayur Place, Noida Link Road, Mayur Vihar Phase I Extn, Delhi - 110091  
Corporate Office: Block C, Sector 45, Gurgaon-122003, Tel. No (Regd office) : (+91-11) 49482870 • Fax : (+91-11) 49482900  
Email : info@kamaholdings.com; website : www.kamaholdings.com

**AUDITED STANDALONE AND CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED 31TH MARCH 2021** (Rs. in Lakhs)

Sl. No.	Particulars	STANDALONE				CONSOLIDATED			
		Quarter ended		Year ended		Quarter ended		Year ended	
		31-Mar-21	31-Mar-20	31-Mar-21	31-Mar-20	31-Mar-21	31-Mar-20	31-Mar-21	31-Mar-20
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)		
1	Total Income from Operations	5709.40	2103.43	7212.09	4206.86	262310.10	186935.14	846755.24	726947.44
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (including discontinued operations)	5643.64	2048.87	6994.87	4031.79	50997.90	20615.99	161153.79	107381.31
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (including discontinued operations)	5807.15	2055.03	6986.38	4037.65	38025.08	18282.25	119631.27	101657.93
4	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	5807.35	2054.98	6986.05	4037.33	40185.89	3971.21	138274.91	88026.74
5	Paid up Equity Share Capital	645.26	645.26	645.26	645.26	645.26	645.26	645.26	645.26
6	Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) -								
	(a) Basic :	90.00	31.85	108.27	62.57	298.38	145.95	939.10	821.74
	(b) Diluted:	90.00	31.85	108.27	62.57	298.38	145.95	939.10	821.74

Section 115BAA of the Income Tax Act, 1961 was introduced by the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019. The group had re-measured its deferred tax balances. Consequently, tax credit of Rs. 13,610.53 Lakhs (net of MAT adjustment) was recorded in the Statement of Profit and Loss during the year ended March 31, 2020.

**Note:** The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly/Annual Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly/Annual Financials Results are available on the Stock Exchange websites ([www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com)) and the Company's website ([www.kamaholdings.com](http://www.kamaholdings.com)).

For and on behalf of the Board  
**Eakta Maheshwari**  
Whole Time Director, CFO & Company Secretary  
(DIN: 02071432)

Place : Gurugram, Haryana  
Date : 28th May 2021

**BSES** BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi

**TENDER NOTICE** Date: 29.05.2021

Sealed tenders under Two Bid System (Unpriced & Priced) are invited for following job from all bidders.

NIT No.	Brief Item Description	Estimated Cost (₹)	Cost of EMD (₹)	Due Date & Time of Submission	Date & Time of Opening
CMC/BR/21-22/RS/MS/928	SURVEY, DESIGN, SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING, COMMISSIONING & INTEGRATION WITH SCADA OF FAULT PASSAGE INDICATORS AT SUBSTATIONS IN BRPL, NEW DELHI (INDIA)	4.20 Crores	8.40 Lacs	21/06/2021 15:30 HRS	21/06/2021 16:00 HRS

Cost of each Tender Document: ₹ 1180/-  
For any query call on 011-4920 7235 or e-mail on [brpl.eauction@relianceada.com](mailto:brpl.eauction@relianceada.com)  
For details in respect of Equipment/BOM/Services, Qualifying requirements, Terms & conditions, purchase/submission of tender documents etc, please visit our website [www.bsesdelhi.com](http://www.bsesdelhi.com)

Head (Contracts & Materials)  
Regd. Off. : BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019 | Corporate Identification No.: U40109DL2001PLC11527  
Telephone No. : +91 11 4920 7235 | E-mail : [brpl.eauction@relianceada.com](mailto:brpl.eauction@relianceada.com) | Website : [www.bsesdelhi.com](http://www.bsesdelhi.com)

# Govt borrows 55% more so far this fiscal

## AS LOCKDOWNS HIT REVENUE COLLECTIONS

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Indicating a massive revenue crunch due to the second wave of the pandemic that has forced many states to declare full lockdowns for almost two months now, the Centre has borrowed ₹2.1 lakh crore so far this fiscal - a whopping 55 per cent more than what it was a year ago.

But thanks to the deft yield management by the central bank, the only saving grace has been the low cost of the money raised so as despite the steeply higher drawdowns, the average cost of the money for the government has been under check and at the Friday's auction, it is paying only 6.08 per cent, much lower than last year and the same as last week, chief economist of Care Ratings Madan Sabnavis said on Friday.

The market borrowing of



₹2.1 lakh crore is 17.5 per cent of the budgeted debt creation of ₹12.05 lakh crore for the full year and 30 per cent of the first half borrowings calendar of ₹7.24 lakh crore, he said.

He further said total borrowings by the Centre so far this fiscal is a whopping 55 per cent more than the same period last year and attributed it to the lockdowns in most states and the resultant impact on revenue collections.

At the latest borrowing on Friday, the government borrowed only ₹26,550 crore of the ₹32,000 crore notified. Of the total bids worth ₹19,114 crore were accepted by the RBI while bids for ₹7,437 crore were devolved

to the primary dealers.

However, the total borrowing for the week is ₹550 crore more than the notified amount but is 30 per cent lower than the previous week. Total market borrowings are in May climbed to ₹1.1 lakh crore, ₹6,545 crore more than in April. The amount exercised under the green shoe option so far this year rose to ₹23,398 crore while total amount devolved to the primary dealer is ₹18,363 crore.

The weighted average yields in this auction remained unchanged at 6.08 per cent, same as last weeks.

Of the total borrowing this fiscal, 24 per cent is via 14-year GSecs, 17 per cent via five-year bonds and around 15 per cent via the 10-year bonds. For the 2-year bonds maturing in 2023, there was an over-subscription of ₹550 crore.

# Forex reserves hit lifetime high, rise \$ 2.8 bn to \$ 592.894 bn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The country's foreign exchange reserves rose by USD 2.865 billion to a record high of USD 592.894 billion for the week ended May 21, boosted by gold and currency assets, RBI data showed on Friday.

The previous all-time high for the forex kitty was USD 590.185 billion for the week ended January 29, 2021.

For the previous week ended May 14, the reserves had increased by USD 563 million to reach USD 590.028 billion.

Foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves, swelled by USD 1.649 billion to USD 548.519 billion for the reporting week, the RBI said.

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

After remaining

**For the previous week ended May 14, the reserves had increased by USD 563 million to reach USD 590.028 billion**

unchanged in the previous week, gold reserves rose by USD 1.187 billion to USD 36.841 billion, the apex bank said.

The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) increased by USD 7 million to USD 1.513 billion.

The country's reserve position with the IMF too increased by USD 22 million to USD 5.021 billion in the reporting week, as per the data.

# Bank credit growth decelerates to 5.6 pc in March

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Bank credit growth decelerated to 5.6 per cent in March 2021 from 6.4 per cent a year ago, the Reserve Bank said on Friday.

On the other hand, aggregate deposits growth accelerated to 12.3 per cent in March 2021 from 9.5 per cent in the same month of the previous year.

Lower growth in credit vis-a-vis deposits led to decline in the all-India credit-deposit (C-D) ratio to 71.5 per cent in March 2021 from 76 per cent a year ago.

Combined credit by bank branches in top six centres (Greater Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kolkata) declined marginally during 2020-21. These six centres together accounted for over 46 per cent of total bank credit.

"Bank branches in urban, semi-urban and rural areas, on the other hand, recorded 9.4 per cent, 14.3 per cent and 14.5

per cent credit growth, respectively, during the year," the RBI said while releasing the 'Quarterly Statistics on Deposits and Credit of SCBs: March 2021'. Public sector and private sector banks recorded 3.6 per cent and 9.1 per cent credit growth, respectively, whereas lending by foreign banks declined during 2020-21.

The central bank further said aggregate deposits growth accelerated to 12.3 per cent in March 2021 from 9.5 per cent a year ago. Metropolitan branches, which account for over half of total deposits, recorded nearly 15 per cent growth during 2020-21.

The share of current account and savings account (CASA) deposits in total deposits increased to 44.1 per cent in March 2021 from 42.1 per cent a year ago.

"The share of private sector banks in total deposits and credit by SCBs (Scheduled Commercial Banks) increased during 2020-21 at the cost of public sector banks," it said.

# 'Govt should focus on converting 30 cr on-road vehicles to clean fuels'

New Delhi: The Government should focus on converting around 30 crore vehicles currently running on petrol and diesel to clean fuels in a bid to improve the air quality, said Indian Auto LPG Coalition, apex body of Auto LPG stakeholders. In a statement, the industry body said that with mass adoption of electric vehicles still a distant future, an absence of a near term strategy to convert existing vehicles to cleaner alternatives is a crucial policy oversight. Indian Auto LPG Coalition has said that Govt's indifference towards immediately available clean alternative fuels is proving to be a major health bane for the country. "Electric Vehicles are still in very early stages of adoption and even the most optimistic projections suggest that a mass adoption is not likely to begin at least till another decade. Meanwhile, around 300 million vehicles including two wheelers continue to produce toxic emissions," said Suyash Gupta, Director General, Indian Auto LPG Coalition. IANS

# DoT allocates spectrum for 5G trials to telecom operators



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Department of Telecom (DoT) has allocated spectrum to telecom operators to start 5G trials in the country, sources said.

The trials will be conducted at various locations including Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Gujarat, Hyderabad, among others, according to industry sources.

"Telecom operators have been allocated spectrum in 700 Mhz band, 3.3-3.6 GHz band and 24.25-28.5 GHz band across various locations," a telecom company official said.

On May 4, DoT had approved applications from Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and MTNL for conducting 5G trials without using technologies from Chinese companies.

DoT had approved trials of 5G with Ericsson, Nokia, Samsung and C-DOT. In addition, Reliance Jio Infocomm will be conducting trials using its own indigenous technology.

According to DoT, 5G technology is expected to deliver ten times better download speed than that of 4G and up to three times greater spectrum efficiency. During the trials, application of 5G in Indian settings will get tested.

This includes tele-medicine, tele-education and drone-based agriculture monitoring etc. Telecom operators will be able to test various 5G devices on their network.

The duration of the trials, at present, is for a period of 6 months. This includes a time period of 2 months for procurement and setting up of the equipment.

# Markets maintain momentum; Nifty hits fresh record as RIL zooms

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rising for the sixth session on the trot, the NSE Nifty closed at a fresh lifetime high on Friday, powered by a robust rally in index heavyweight Reliance Industries.

The rupee's rising streak and daily Covid-19 cases falling below the 2-lakh mark also spurred bullish sentiment, traders said.

The Nifty surged 97.80 points or 0.64 per cent to finish at 15,435.65, closing at a record high for the second straight day.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 307.66 points or 0.60 per cent higher at 51,422.88.

Reliance Industries hogged the limelight in Friday's session, topping the Sensex gainers'

chart with a jump of 5.90 per cent.

M&M spurted 2.13 per cent after the homegrown auto major swung into black in the March quarter with a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 163 crore.

HDFC twins, Kotak Bank, IndusInd Bank, TTC and Bharti Airtel were among the other gainers, climbing as much as 1.47 per cent.

On the other hand, Sun Pharma, Bajaj Finserv, Nestle India, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank and Dr Reddy's were among the laggards, tumbling up to 4.30 per cent.

During the week, the Sensex rallied 882.40 points or 1.74 per cent, while the broader Nifty surged 260.35 points or 1.71 per cent.

# Tata Group acquires majority stake in BigBasket

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi: Tata Group has acquired a majority stake in online grocery seller BigBasket for an undisclosed sum of money, pitting it against the likes of billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance and Amazon.

The stake was bought by Tata Digital Ltd, a unit of Tata Sons, a joint statement by the two firms said on Friday. It neither disclosed the quantum of stake bought nor the deal size. In March, Competition Commission of India (CCI) had approved the acquisition of up to a 54.3 per cent stake in BigBasket by Tata Digital. It was previously reported that Tatas was in talks to buy close to an 80 per cent stake in the online grocery seller, that is backed by Alibaba Group, for USD 1.3-1.6 billion.

PTI

# Indian Bank posts ₹3,005 crore net profit for FY21

IANS ■ CHENNAI

State-owned Indian Bank on Friday said it closed last fiscal with a net profit of ₹3,004.67 crore on a total income of ₹45,185.04 crore, said a top official. The bank had earned a total income of about ₹44,099 crore and a net loss of ₹4,643 crore for 2019-20. Last fiscal was the first full year of operations after the Allahabad Bank was merged with the Indian Bank. According to the Indian Bank, the figures for 2019-20 were arrived at by totalling the numbers of the two banks. Addressing reporters, Managing Director and CEO Padmaja Chundru said the bank's Board of Directors have recommended a dividend of 20 per cent for FY21.

# Govt to look into builders' demand to boost realty sector amid Covid-19 pandemic: Housing secy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary Durga Shanker Mishra on Friday said the government will look into various demand of the real estate industry, including an extension of timeline for completion of projects by 6-9 months.

He highlighted various initiatives taken by the government in the past seven years such as development of 1.12 crore houses under the Prime Minister Awas Yojana (PMAY), launch of the Affordable Rental Housing Complex scheme for migrant workers, 'infrastructure' status to affordable housing, and 100 smart cities.

Mishra was addressing a webinar organised by realtors body NAREDCO.

NAREDCO's representatives made several demands before the secretary to revive

both demand and supply in the sector that has been badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The association sought extension of timeline for completion of projects by 6-9 months under the realty law RERA, extension of all building permissions till March 2023, rationalisation of government taxes on real estate, and control of rising prices of cement and steel. It also sought reintroduction of interest subvention scheme, grant of input credit tax on GST paid in leased commercial real estate, suspension of insolvency law for some more period, and an online environment clearance system. Responding to the demand of extension of timeline for project completion, Mishra assured that he will "go in detail" to understand the matter.

## BRIEFS

### VIRTUAL VENDORS MEET ORGANISED BY CLW

Chittaranjan: A virtual Vendors Meet was organized online by Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW) in association with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on 28th May 2021 with participation of over 200 vendors. The objective of the meet is for development of new vendors especially for imported items as well as enhancing the existing vendor base. The meet was started with introductory welcome remarks by the CII team. The meet had a full fledged discussion touching various points such as eligibility criteria & conditions; supplier on boarding process overview; product & service requirements; procurement policies & procedures; delivery/ payment terms; documentation required etc.



### 67 TH MEETING OF STF HELD

The 67 th meeting of STF was held on 28.05.2021 wherein officers from all the local bodies and other concerned agencies were present. The progress of the complaints received up to 15 th May was reviewed. In total 83566 complaints have been received in STF till 15th May 2021 and action on 79821 complaints has been initiated. 3258 ATR were received during the period from 01.04.2021 to 15.05.2021. Since the constitution of STF in 2018, 3621 unauthorised constructions have been demolished and more than 2423 properties have been sealed. Chairman, STF directed the ULBs to take the matter seriously and expedite the action on the pending cases.

### DEFENCE SECY AJAY KUMAR LAUNCHES NCC TRAINING APP VERSION 2.0

Defence Secretary Dr. Ajay Kumar launched the Directorate General National Cadet Corps Mobile Training App Version 2.0 here today. The App will assist in conducting countrywide online training of NCC cadets during the pandemic conditions. In view of the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 in March 2020, a need was felt that training to NCC cadets should be imparted utilising the digital medium. In order to assist online cadet training, a DGCC Mobile App Version 1.0 for training was developed and launched by the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri on 27 Aug 2020.



# Reliance Infra net loss narrows to ₹47 cr in Jan-Mar quarter

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Infrastructure Ltd on Friday reported narrowing of consolidated net loss at Rs 46.53 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2021. The company had reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 153.84 crore in the year-ago period, it said in a filing to the BSE. The company's consolidated income during the January-March quarter increased to Rs 4,610.72 crore over Rs 4,012.87 crore in the year-ago period, the filing said.

PTI

# ₹ rises for 3rd day in a row, up 15 paise at 72.45 against \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Indian rupee clocked its third straight session of gains on Friday, firming up by another 15 paise to end the session at 72.45 against the US dollar amidst improved risk-on sentiments. At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 72.46 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 72.31 and a low of 72.49 during the session. It finally ended at 72.45 against the American currency, registering a rise of 15 paise over its previous close.

# IAMAI announces setting up of Digital Publisher Content Grievances Council

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) on Friday announced the formation of the Digital Publishers Content Grievances Council (DPCGC).

Over the past two years, the IAMAI has worked collectively with its members towards establishing a self-regulatory and grievance redressal framework for Online Curated Content (OCC) Publishers, it said.

In light of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, the IAMAI is establishing the DPCGC as the level-II self-regulatory body for publishers of OCC as required under Rule 12, with the intent to empower consumers to make informed viewing choices.

The DPCGC will have an OCCP Council composed of publishers of OCC as members and an independent Grievance Redressal Board (GRB) -- consisting of a chairperson and six members.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is notified for the information of rail passengers that the East Coast Railway has decided to cancel/reduce the frequency of the following Rajdhani Special Trains due to low occupancy as per the following details:-

CANCELLATION/REDUCTION IN FREQUENCY OF SPECIAL TRAINS				
Train No. & Name	Existing Frequency	Revised Frequency	Dates of Cancellation	Days of Cancellation
02823 Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Special	Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri	Tuesday	03, 04, 07, & 10.06.2021	Mon, Thu, Fri
02824 New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Special	Tue, Wed, Thu & Sat	Wednesday	03, 05, 08, & 10.06.2021	Tue, Thu, Sat
02825 Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Special	Wednesday & Sunday	Sunday	02.06.2021 & 09.06.2021	Wednesday
02826 New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Special	Monday & Friday	Monday	04.06.2021 & 11.06.2021	Friday
02855 Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Special	Saturday	---	05.06.2021	Saturday
02856 New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Special	Sunday	---	06.06.2021	Sunday

**These Special Trains will be having Fully Reserved Service.**

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

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

Visit RailMadad website:- [www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in)  
Download RailMadad app.  
RailMadad Helpline No.: 139  
Please join us on **NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
Your Convenience - Our Concern  
Visit us at : [www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in)  
"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

**NEW OKHLA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida G.B. Nagar, (U.P.)  
Website : [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com)

**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors/firms for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com) & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these website for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

S.No.	Job No.	Name of Work	Amount (Rs.)
(1)	06/SPE/PE (PH-01) 2021-22	Supply of Labour and Machinery for Cleaning & Desilting of drain of Various Location in PH-1 Area, Zone-III, Noida.	6579368.64

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 07.06.2021 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-Qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 08.06.2021 at 11.00 AM. Sr. Project Engineer (Public Health) Noida  
Office Sector-39

**CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA**

**Notice Inviting Tender**  
Office of District Magistrate / District Disaster Management Authority Haridwar  
Email: [ddmoharidwar@gmail.com](mailto:ddmoharidwar@gmail.com) / [ivrnodalharidwar@gmail.com](mailto:ivrnodalharidwar@gmail.com)

Office of District Magistrate / District Disaster Management Authority, Haridwar invites following short term tender from eligible bidders for the following work :-

**01-Implementation of IVRS & Analytics System to Monitor and check Spread of Covid-19 in Haridwar District.**

Tender documents can be purchased from office of "ADM(F&R)/DDMA Haridwar" between 29/05/2021 to 03/06/2021 (12:00 pm). Information in this regard with all details-detailed eligibility criteria and other terms & conditions of the tender document can be downloaded from [www.haridwar.nic.in](http://www.haridwar.nic.in). It is also to be informed that any amendment in future against the tender shall be uploaded on [www.haridwar.nic.in](http://www.haridwar.nic.in).

Document Purchase Start Date	29.05.2021 at 10:00 AM
Proposal Due Date	03.06.2021 at 12:00 PM
Opening of Technical Bids	03.06.2021 at 01:00 PM
Tender Document Price	Rs 2000 (GST Extra)

No.10765/DDM/IVRS/2021-22 Dt.28.05.21 **ADM (F/R), Haridwar**

**GUJARAT WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD.**  
SECTOR-10/A, GANDHINAGAR

**BRIEF SHORT NOTICE INVITING ON LINE TENDER FOR FIXING RATE CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF C.I. AIR VALVES FOR THE YEAR 2021-22**

GWSSB invites online tender through e-tendering for Manufacture, Supply & Delivery of C.I. Air Valves (15 to 200mm Dia.) only from Approved vendors of GWSSB as per new vendor Selection policy as on last date of online Bid submission. Interested bidder who wish to participate in above tender may view the detailed tender notice & download the Tender documents at free of cost from website. <https://www.nprocure.com>

The last date of submission of online tender is 1-7-2021.  
INF/27/21-22



**SONAKSHI SINHA**

We end up in the environment we create for ourselves, and we must make sure that it's beautiful. The current situation around us is making us think hard about climate change, and the kind of effect it has on our planet. As responsible individuals, if we make small sustainable changes, we can create a healthier environment.



**SAMEERA REDDY**

We've all been shamed at some point in our lives. Sometimes by society and at other times we do it to our own self. Loving your flaws and imperfections is your ticket to move towards a happy you. It's ok not to feel ok all the time. We are all imperfectly perfect.



**ILEANA D'CRUZ**

It (the film industry) is brutal, of course, but it comes down to the audience. If people like you, that is all you need. You just want them to like watching you. The minute you are not liked, you sort of lose the mark.



**SUNNY HINDUJA**

We should never let success and fame overwhelm us so much that we lose touch with our roots. When I say roots, I mean staying connected with people you have grown up with, who stood by you when you were starting out because they do not judge you.

**SIMON COWELL**

After I lost my parents, I genuinely felt I would never feel that kind of love for anyone ever again. I thought that was it, until I saw the scan of my son for the first time. Now I just cannot imagine my life without him. He's the most amazing thing that ever happened to me. I adore him.



**SHORTCIRCUITS**

**IMMERSIVE 15 MINUTES**

**SEARCHING FOR THE ELUSIVE**

Love can be many things – sometimes intimidating, frustrating, and often exhilarating. From ghosting, polyamory, love in the times of social media to dealing with heartbreak, infidelity and getting out of a toxic relationship, author AASTHA ATRAY BANAN's latest book, *The L Word: Love, Lust and Everything in Between*, is a guide. By AYUSHI SHARMA

**◆Love. What exactly is it?**

Love is a many splendored thing  
 It's the April rose that only grows in the early spring

Love is nature's way of giving a reason to be living

The golden crown that makes a man a king  
 Once on a high and windy hill, in the morning mist

Two lovers kissed and the world stood still  
 Then your fingers touched my silent heart and taught it how to sing

Yes, true love's a many splendored thing...

Isn't it? Well, every single person in the world understands love and expresses it differently. When author Aastha Atray Banan found herself getting questions asked about the daily struggles of love, she decided to start a podcast, *Love Aaj Kal*, which facilitates non-judgmental and candid conversation on topics like love, sex and relationship. From ghosting, polyamory, love in the times of social media to dealing with heartbreak, infidelity and getting out of a toxic relationship, she knew what were the problems people were facing these days. So she worked up from dating to marriage, which led her to write — *The L Word: Love, Lust and Everything in Between*. The book is a guide to love, dating and relationships in the modern world.

It wouldn't be wrong to say that technology has superseded human interaction today, and has elevated the desire for quick hookups. However, ask Aastha, 'what does she think about modern relationships?' 'Are they fundamentally the same as they were in prior generations?' She tells us that modern relationships are 'transient.' 'They are not about commitment but the illusion of choice. People think the next best thing is always waiting somewhere around the corner and don't want to put in any work. People move on too quickly and everything is based on shallow interactions. It's all about how you look and come across. Nobody wants to actually commit or even adjust. They just feel like moving on, instead of meeting the other person halfway,' she says.

Everybody seems to be obsessed with the notion of love these days. It might be because we are conditioned to believe that we



need to find another person to complete us. That's what Aastha has tried to convey in the book: Love is great but it's not 'be all and end all.' 'Build your relationship with yourself first. I think we need to start finding love in different ways and not just romance,' says the author, who has previously written *His Monsoon Bride* and *Games Girls Play*.

It's true that in a never-ending quest for 'the one,' people risk losing the one they should care about the most: Themselves. Aastha completely agrees and says, 'Yes, we do! We don't prioritise ourselves, and we spend years in toxic relationships just because we want someone. The book talks about 'self-love' as the most needed criteria. We need to never underestimate who we are, and what we stand for.'

After comprehending and exploring the idea so much, what can love stand for Aastha? Well, she tells us that she believes love is being consistent, being present, and being completely involved in another's life. She says, 'It's all about choosing to settle for someone while being aware of their pros and cons. Nobody is perfect. We have to eventually settle for someone who has flaws. And we should understand this soon. We need to only enter relationships that provide comfort and peace. But be ready to accommodate and adjust. We need to meet people halfway.'

The book has some hard truths about love. 'Some will help you become aware, some will show you the truth, some will say it's okay if you are alone, and it's okay if it didn't work out, life moves on. Love makes you grow in many ways,' she says. Certainly, love is a many splendored thing.

**CONVERSATION 30 MINUTES**

**Behind the scenes**

Sharing memories of the shoot from the film *Wrath of Man*, actor JASON STATHAM says that it is always a challenge to bring a sense of spontaneous realism to the sets but Guy Ritchie, the director, is an ace at it



**◆How does it feel to be working with Guy Ritchie again?**

It's the greatest thing in the world. We have both come a long way since we started working together over 20 years ago. And what you really want to do in a situation like this is see whether anything has changed, but the truth is that nothing has. I fell in love with this profession, thanks to a lottery ticket that Guy handed me called *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*.

**◆What are your memories of that shoot, which marked your debut in Hollywood and Guy's first film behind the camera?**

It was a bunch of lads running around spitting out this incredible dialogue in a crime caper that turned out to be a big smash hit in the UK. I think they were the best six weeks I have ever had.

**◆And here you are, more than 20 years later, working on another Guy Ritchie film, *Wrath of Man*. How do you see H, the character you play?**

I see him as a complicated guy who above everything is a father. And even though I became one quite late in the game, I feel everything rotates around that in my life. So, to have it removed is an unimaginable sort of horror to deal with, which can spiral into an obsession with finding the culprit.

**◆Is H a mysterious man?**

Yes, and I think that is necessary for the interest of the story. So, it's better not to know too much about him (and wait) for the plot to unfold. That aspect about him makes the role very internal, and especially when he goes for a job in the cash truck business. My character has to keep his cards very close to not let anyone know who he really is or what he is capable of doing. And I do quite like playing such mysterious characters.

**◆So, *Wrath of Man* is much more than just an action film, as the dramatic component to it is quite significant.**

It gets very dramatic because of the stakes at hand. H is forced to play people a certain way to figure out who they really are, but in the end someone is going to pay a hefty price.

**◆And would you say that being a father has helped you understand this man?**

Oh yes! And then you wonder how you would have to come back from losing a son or a daughter, as it seems unimaginable. These are conversations I have shared with Guy, for my character.

**◆What else did you do to prepare for the role?**

When I work with Guy I try not to get too ahead of him, which would be impossible anyway, because he has the whole film in his mind. So I didn't meet people who worked at cash truck companies or anything like that precisely because my character is not too proficient at his job.

**◆And when it comes to the action, the film also feels very real and gritty.**

Yes, Guy wanted to keep this very real and not have me do cool, slick movements. And his way of achieving that is with an on-the-day type of organic approach, where you kind of get into the space and figure out what the character is going to do in the specific situation he is in...as the tension builds.

**◆What does it feel like to shoot a film this way?**

Like a breath of fresh air! And in



hindsight, I believe it helps create the sense of realism we are after. I think it's very hard for a director to provide that nowadays unless you are so confident that you know exactly what you want to capture through the camera lens; but Guy does.

**◆And is there any room for humour?**  
 Well, we are trying to avoid it because it's quite a dark story. But Guy is so good at humour that it is almost impossible for him to not write interesting and funny dialogue. He will probably be incapable of not letting some humour into the film.

**◆Your character reminds us of those down-to-earth antiheroes from the '70s.**

I think Guy likes to write characters like that. I remember when we were shooting our first film together and he pulled me into his room and told me to stop acting and just focus on saying my lines. He has this real way of dealing with any bad habits that an actor could have. So, sometimes you feel you are not doing much, but it's what he wants. And it's a great thing to do when you have just come out of doing a 250 million dollar film like the one I just shot with Dwayne Johnson, where everything is so big.

**◆Do you like mixing it up then in your career?**

Yes, because *Wrath of Man* is the complete polar opposite of that film, and I am portraying a very real, intense guy.

**◆And what can you say of Holt McCallany, who stars opposite you as Bullet.**

I think Holt has pulled this film together better than any of us, and especially considering that sometimes he gets dialogue only a few minutes before we say it. But he is certainly more verbal than anybody else, and he never drops a line. Holt is a tremendous actor, and he is so good in this likeable character he plays. Actually, to be honest, I think Bullet is my favorite character in the story.

**◆What should we expect from *Wrath of Man* then?**

I think you are going to get a very stylish yet tense type of film that will keep you guessing. And, whether you like it or not, I am sure it will be memorable, because Guy isn't capable of making one that isn't.

**◆So, your mind is already made up if Guy Ritchie knocks on your door again to offer you another role, right?**

If all I did for the rest of my career was work for Guy Ritchie, I would be a very happy man.

—JANS

**EXPRESS 45 MINUTES**

**Speaking up for the cause**

Actor WAYNE BRADY collaborates with GLENN CLOSE for her spoken word jazz album to release a life's worth of thoughts and feelings in *A Piece by the Angriest Black Man in America (or, How I Learned to Forgive Myself for Being a Black Man in America)*



In the background of his career as an actor, singer, comedian, game show host and television personality, Wayne Brady had been working on a one-man show about being a young Black man growing up in Orlando for a long time, but he could never finish the project.

That's until acclaimed actor Glenn Close asked him to participate in her spoken word jazz album.

"To be honest with you, the reason it took me a couple of years was that it was so painful. Every time I'd go to it, I would start a draft and it got a little too real. I felt myself wanting to do the thing that you can do — whether you're talking to a group of friends or whether you're on a stage — I'm going to now make this funny and I'm going to deflect. Or I'll sidetrack or I'll do something that takes away the weight because I don't want to remember this," Brady recalled. But some things are meant to be. "Glenn coming to me, that was the impetus of me saying, 'You're going to finish this and you're going to finish this now. You've got to talk about this. You've got to share this,'" he expressed.

That's when the actor-comedian-singer crafted *A Piece by the Angriest Black Man in America (or, How I Learned to Forgive Myself for Being a Black Man in America)*. It appears on *Transformation: Personal Stories of Change, Acceptance, and Evolution*, Close's new album which was released this month.

"My heart was going a mile a minute... It's the first time that people will be hearing this piece of Wayne, this struggle of Wayne, that some people know and some people don't," said Brady, who recorded the track in front of a live audience at New York City's Jazz at Lincoln Center.

"What I'm trying to do is move the needle a little bit because there is someone who may sit down and know Wayne Brady from *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* or looked at *Let's Make a Deal* or 'I loved him on that sitcom' — they don't know this story of pain is lurking there because I don't share it. Well, I have decided to share it to let you know maybe you're skewed

mother(expletive)." "It was just a fact. There was Black and then there was Blaiaaaaaaaack... I fit into the latter, dark as Black matter and hearing you pair Black and ugly together in that manner, made me feel like my type of Black life didn't matter," says Brady, as heard on the spoken word track.

On the poignant, eight-minute song, the performer continues to break down his life's experiences, touching on topics like his hair and not wanting to play outside in the sun because he didn't want to get darker to being called 'one of the good ones' by white people.

Close shared that she was moved by what Brady wrote. She invited him to work on two more songs on her album, a collaborative project with Grammy-winning jazz musician and Jazz at Lincoln Center orchestra player Ted Nash.

"I had tears in my eyes," Nash said, after reading Brady's original piece. "I had tears in my eyes for several reasons — first of all, that he was willing to share this with us and allow us to have him participate. One of my band members, who is Black, came up to Wayne after we did one of the performances and he expressed that Wayne had spoken about things that he had been feeling for a long time," he shared.

"Sometimes you don't realise how people interpret what's put to them, and that was a very profound moment for us," Nash added. Brady said he forgives Tessa Grady for the ill words she spoke as a child and he

to what Black is or what Black isn't," he went on to say. In *Angriest Black Man in America*, Brady begins telling his Black experience by what a lighter-skinned Black person, Tessa Grady, had told him when he was younger, "You's a Black, ugly

—AP

**DEEP DIVE 45 MINUTES**

# UNSEEN PLACES, UNSCRIPTED STORIES AND UNFILTERED ADVENTURES

Travel enthusiasts, dog parents and hosts, TANVEER TAJ and PRIYANKA JENA set out on an epic escapade of a lifetime in the show — *Life Off The Leash*. By AYUSHI SHARMA

Travelling to 20 states across the periphery of India in 120 days, adventure junkies and dog parents, Tanveer Taj and Priyanka Jena set out on an epic escapade of a lifetime — with Frodo, a Golden Retriever and Cruise, a Labrador — in the forthcoming show *Life Off The Leash*. They cover the epic four-month-long trip in a self-shot travel journal. Excerpts:

**How did the idea of travelling with pets come about?**

**Tanveer:** I'm from Muscat. I came to India in 2009. After which I started working here in an advertising agency. I've always wanted a dog as a kid, so I finally got one after coming to India. Also around the same time, my interest in travelling and motorcycling was gradually increasing. So after becoming a parent of a dog, I realised that I have a huge responsibility towards him. I started taking Frodo (my dog) along with me to nearby places and realised it's not as difficult as it may seem.

Later, I moved to Mumbai and met Priyanka, she was into travelling and adventure space as well. Both of us have been travelling for quite some time now, and apart from that, both of us are animal lovers. A few months after we met, she also got a dog (Cruise), after which there was no looking back. We started taking trips together. Both Cruise and Frodo were keeping up and started having great fun outdoors. We started documenting and posting our adventures on our personal social media handles. After which both Frodo and Cruise became quite popular in our circle. A lot of questions started flooding about how we were travelling with dogs.



This gave us an idea that we should give ourselves an identity online. Everything just kept happening organically from there. We realised that we were breaking our own limits in terms of how far we can go with them. We started with a trip around Maharashtra, it became a trip to Goa and then we headed to Karnataka. We kept expanding our reach. I can still recall it was in 2018 when both of us made a bucket list of travelling to all the places in the country with our dogs. It has been an amazing journey since then.

**What kind of planning and research went behind planning 120 days of adventure?**

**Priyanka:** If we talk about our personalities, I am more of an organised traveller, whereas Tanveer is very spontaneous. Well, I can expect him to be that because he's a rider. He approaches every day with a fearless attitude. He is super quick with his decision of where and how he wants to travel. However, I am just the opposite of that. I really love planning everything from the start.

But we both knew that this trip was going to require a lot of preparations, especially because it was not just us, human beings, travelling. We knew that not all places on such a long trip would be pet-friendly and it might be difficult for us in some States. As we started

planning this journey, it took us about a year and a half, as there were a lot of different factors we had to look into. In terms of our work, we had to adjust our business, such as finish the projects that we were working on and be free for four months straight. We also had to arrange the finances and do budgeting, so we worked backward in terms of how much dog food we will need, cost of petrol, equipment, stay and much more. Also, there were not many references for such travels in India because we were basically the first. If we talk about the locations, we had a wish list in place but we had to map our route according to the pet-friendly areas.

Finding places to stay along our route took us a lot of time. So when we left for the trip, we had planned until Odisha, which was about two and a half months of planning. We had booked with tentative dates till then. Thankfully, all the places that we had booked knew that we were on this crazy escapade and were very excited to host us. Another major thing was packing because we basically had to have a mini house in the car, including medical kits for everyone, all kinds of clothes for different terrains and equipment. So it took a long time, but finally, I am proud that we did it. I would say 90 per cent of the trip was planned.

I remember just the

day before we left, I said, "This preparation part seems to be never-ending. When are we going to get into the car and leave?" And it happened. Planning really helped. I would say that being prepared is better than running into something that you don't know how to deal with.

**If you had to narrow it down to the top five places to visit with pets, which would those be?**

**Priyanka:** Top five places would be — Cherrapunji in Meghalaya, Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu, Palakkad in Kerala, Manali in Himachal Pradesh and Goa. They all are pretty pet-friendly.

**How would you describe the experience for the dogs? Has any adventure gone bad?**

**Tanveer:** It was one hell of a holiday for them. They just had to get into the car, enjoy the ride. They were getting fed, were experiencing new terrains, meeting new people, seeing new places every day.

As the journey went ahead, they became quite strong in terms of travelling. Whenever you put a bag down for more than 10-15 minutes, they knew that this was home for the night. They were adjusting to the lifestyle really well. However, Cruise got really unwell in Cherrapunji. He hurt himself while getting down the stairs in the mountains. That was a bit of a scare; we had to rush him to a vet. So that almost put us 10 days behind our schedule. Also, in the mountains, we had to make sure that we get the dogs on the leash to keep them safe from the mountain dogs, which are extremely territorial and huge in size. In Mussoorie, Dehradun, we faced some trouble with one of the mountain dogs. He attacked Frodo and it was quite a messy scene. Other than that, it was smooth sailing.

**What were some of the major obstacles while travelling with dogs?**

**Tanveer:** Yes, as Priyanka mentioned, it was a bit difficult to find pet-friendly places in cities such as Lucknow and Chennai.

So while crossing these locations, it was a nightmare to figure out a place, which is perfect for all four of us. At times, we almost thought that we would have to sleep in the car overnight... But thanks to social media, we asked online what to do and quite a few times people opened their doors, allowing us to stay with them. That was quite heart-warming to see. Apart from that, we had an amazing time.

**Can you share basic tips that one should follow, but tend to forget while travelling with pets?**

**Priyanka:** It's really important to have a good medical kit. You should have medicines and equipment for everything; from cuts and bruises to an upset tummy. Keep it all handy because it's not easy to find a good vet everywhere. So it's best to be prepared. Take basic training from your own veterinarian so that you know what to do in a situation of distress. Apart from that, always pack extra leashes and bowls, they tend to always get lost somewhere, somehow. Another thing, I would say that keep your dogs in your sight at all times, if you're leaving them off-leash. They are just like kids. Also, always do a quick scan when you reach a new place, whether the place is safe to leave your pet or not.

**There have been many travel shows. How do you think this one is different?**

**Tanveer:** I think the charm of the entire show is that it's four individuals on an adventure across India. It's completely self-shot. It's raw and candid. There was not any production team travelling with us. It's not scripted at any level. All the drama that you will see in this series is real. Also, this is the only travel show in India that features dogs in it. It is the first of its kind.

**Priyanka:** I would say that we have captured India in all its quirkiness. We have covered different cultures and folks, from cities to rural villages, to even the indigenous tribes of India.

We have tried to capture the country in all its glory.

**Did you at any point feel like giving up and returning home?**

**Priyanka:** No, not really. What kept us going was the joy of every day being different. There were no two days that were the same. It was very addictive; you wake up in a new place, what you experience, whether it is good, bad, boring or exciting, it's different every day. We were very sad that the trip was coming to an end. We did not want to go back. However, we had already extended our trip by 20 days. Initially, we were supposed to finish it in 100 days but we took 120 days. Even though we wanted to extend it badly, we were running out of funds and had to get back to our work commitments.

**What change would you like to see in India to make things better for people travelling with pets?**

**Tanveer:** I think the change has already started happening. A lot more people are going out with their pets and experiencing extremes. Many people have opened pet-friendly resorts and homestays are, of course, a great idea. However, if we had to change one thing, I would ask people to be more comfortable with pets being around. The more people travel with their pets, the more businesses and the hospitality industry will accommodate us. I am not boasting but a lot of people have been inspired by our journey and a lot of people keep updating us on a daily basis that they've started travelling with their pets, especially dogs. Slowly and steadily, we will make India a pet-friendly country.

(The show will premiere on May 31 on Sony BBC Earth at 10 pm.)



**CELEB TALK 30 MINUTES**

Playback singer SHALMALI KHOLGADE's foray into independent English music has proven fruitful so far. Her song with SUNIDHI CHAUHAN, *Here is Beautiful*, was nominated to the Vh1 Summer League 2021 and is in the fray to be declared 2021's Summer Anthem by Vh1. TEAM VIVA caught up with Shalmali for a quick chat

**What got you into music?**

There is so much I could say, but I will try to keep this short. I love being on stage and I love singing. That feeling when I get on stage, in front of people, that's the reason why I'm a singer. I like being on the stage more than I like being in a studio. I knew I had to be in the performing arts, since when I was little, but it was in college that I realised I'm going to be a musician.

**Which song has been the most challenging one for you and why?**

I would say *Here is Beautiful* has been the most challenging one for me, yet. It was challenging in terms of the arrangement of the song since it's not just something that I sang. I composed and wrote it independently. There was a certain maturity that came with this experience since I didn't approach it as I would usually do, as a playback singer. *Here is Beautiful* had a very different sonic soundscape. When I composed it, it was

## Make it big



just on the piano, now it has a totally different avatar from when I first envisioned it.

**Tell us about your song — Here is Beautiful? How was it working with Sunidhi Chauhan on this?**

My love for my partner was what inspired the song. I wrote it as a gift for him, on a special occasion. I thought having Sunidhi sing it with me would really be the cherry on the cake. She was kind enough to agree and that's how we got down to doing the track, with no intention of releasing it. We had no idea that it would turn out to be so big and that it would be on the Times Square Billboard one day! No, we didn't have any such aspirations in mind, but working with Sunidhi to do something as organic and honest as *Here is Beautiful* made me really happy. Nothing comes close to the experience of working

with your idol. The kind of energy she brings into a room is unparalleled. It is well known how crazy she is about music, she simply can't see anything beyond it. Words fall short in describing the experience of working with her but it's been like a dream come true.

**What were your feelings when Here is Beautiful appeared on the Times Square Billboard?**

The first time I came across those pictures, I thought for a moment that these were photoshopped; it almost seemed like someone was playing a massive prank on me. When my team called me and said that it was true, that it was actually happening, I was taken aback. I hadn't even dreamt of being on the Times Square Billboard. Not so early into my stint in the independent English music scene, at least.



**How do you feel about the song competing with Olivia Rodrigo's Driver's License at Vh1 Summer League 2021?**

I'm not a competitive person at all, to begin with. That is why I haven't been on any reality shows or competitions, except for the competitions I signed up for when I was in college. I think this is the first time I'm part of a serious competition and it is making me feel very funny inside. For me, it's a big win just to be on the same page as these incredible artists and I have immense respect for every one of them. To hear my song being talked about in the same vein as Olivia's, I still can't get over this giddy feeling. To be a part of Vh1 Summer League, a platform graced by superstars such as Ariana Grande, The Weeknd and Bruno Mars, in itself is a big win for me.

Having said that, while I am not

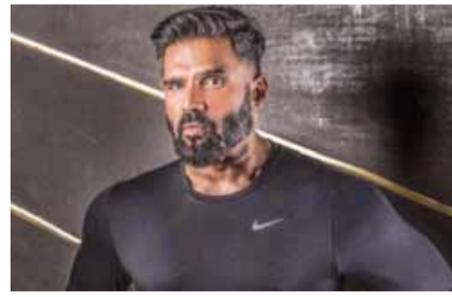
very competitive, I would be bringing everything I've got to the table with this League and I won't give up without a fight!

**What's next for you?**

*Here is Beautiful* is a single from my album *2X Side A*. Currently, I am working on my next album *2X Side B*, which will be released later this year. A couple of years back, I composed music for a Marathi film and it is releasing this year. Apart from that, I am really excited that I have several album releases lined up for this year. I'm not satisfied with releasing just one song and talking about that song incessantly. I want to give people an album to listen to because that's how I grew up, listening to albums. I love listening to the entire discography or the complete album that an artiste puts out. I want to be that artiste for others like me.

## Family man

Actor SUNIEL SHETTY says that it is tough to take out time for your loved ones when you are part of showbiz. However, it isn't impossible



Suniel Shetty was treated to a performance depicting his relationship with his wife Mana Shetty by contestant Amit Kumar and super guru Amardeep during the dance-reality show *Super Dancer: Chapter 4*.

Looking back at his relationship with Mana, Suniel said, "This brings back so many memories. We have been together for nearly 40 years, nine years of seeing each other and 30 years of marriage. Being in this industry, balancing your family life and work is quite difficult and it's not possible unless you have a partner who is strong and believes in you 100 per cent. Hats off to her."

Actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra, who is a judge on the show, shared that she has known Suniel for many years

and has always been impressed with the relationship he shares with his wife.

"I have known Suniel for many years. I had attended his wedding as well, in an attempt to see the famous actor but he wasn't aware of me back then. This was in 1991, before I made my debut. He was a new actor and I felt proud because he belonged to our community and he was the first man from the bunt community to become an actor. That was really inspiring for me. Today also when I see Mana and Suniel, it is very inspiring because they still behave like friends. Mana is an incredible person, and I truly believe that they both are soulmates. She truly is the strength behind him," Shilpa shared on the show.

# IND, NZ TO SHARE TROPHY IF WTC FINAL ENDS IN DRAW

PTI ■ DUBAI

India and New Zealand will be adjudged joint winners of the inaugural World Test Championship if their final clash in Southampton ends in a draw or tie, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Friday.

According to the playing conditions unveiled by the global body, "a draw or a tie will see both teams crowned as joint winners..." The ICC has also allocated a Reserve Day to make up for any lost-time during the regular days of the Final, scheduled to be played from 18 to 22 June, with 23 June set aside as the Reserve Day.

"Both of these decisions were made in June 2018, prior to the commencement of the ICC World Test Championship."

The Reserve Day has been scheduled to ensure five full days of play, and it will only be used if lost playing time cannot be recovered through the normal provisions for each day.

"There will be no additional day's play if a positive result is not achieved after five full days of play and the match will be declared a draw in such a scenario," the ICC stated.



In the event of time being lost during the match, the ICC match referee will regularly update the teams and media about the way in which the Reserve Day may be used.

**There will be no additional day's play if a positive result is not achieved after five full days of play and the match will be declared a draw in such a scenario**

The final decision on whether the Reserve Day needs to be used will be announced at the scheduled start of the last hour on the fifth day.

While India play at home with SG Test and New Zealand use Kookaburra at home, the final will be played with Grade 1 Dukes balls.

The final will also feature the implementation of three changes to international playing conditions, which were brought into effect with the ongoing World Cup Super League series between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka:

**Short Runs** — The Third Umpire will automatically review any call of a 'short run' by the on-field umpire and communicate the decision prior to the next ball being bowled.

**Player Reviews** — The fielding captain or the dismissed batsman will be able to confirm with the umpire whether a genuine attempt has been made to play the ball prior to deciding whether to initiate a review for LBW.

**DRS Reviews** — For LBW reviews, the height margin of the wicket zone has been lifted to the top of the stumps to ensure the same Umpire's Call margin around the stumps for both height and width.

## 'I didn't realise importance of adding pace to my bowling'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar says he never realised the importance of adding pace to his bowling in his formative years but once he did, it helped him "maintain that swing" which keeps batsmen guessing.

"To be honest, first couple of years I didn't realise pace is something that needs to be added," he said in a video posted by his IPL team SunRisers Hyderabad on its twitter handle.

"As I kept playing, I realised with swing I need to improve my pace because bowling in late 120kph or just 130kph, batsmen were adjusting to the swing. So, I wanted to increase the pace, but I didn't know how to do it..."

The 31-year-old has so far taken 63 wickets in 21 Tests, 138 and 45 scalps in 117 ODIs and 48 T20Is. "Fortunately, I was able to improve the pace and that



really helped me in the later stages. So yes, when you have pace, not the express 140-plus, but bowling in the mid-130kph helps maintaining that swing and keep the batsman guessing," he said. Bhuvneshwar has been

troubled by injuries and was not considered for the upcoming World Test Championship final against New Zealand in Southampton and the five-match Test series against England.

## Allegri In, Pirlo Out

HARSHIT BISHT ■ NEW DELHI

Serie A giants Juventus on Friday reappointed former manager Massimiliano Allegri as new head coach hours after parting ways with Andrea Pirlo.

The former AC Milan and Juventus midfielder Pirlo was sacked as *Bianconeri* failed to retain the *Scudetto* and finished fourth in the Serie A table.

Even though he won Coppa Italia and Supercoppa Italiana in his first job as a manager, a failed bid to win 10th consecutive Serie A title and another disappointing exit from the Champions League (R16 loss against FC Porto) led to his dismissal.

The club released a statement headlined "Good Luck, Andrea Pirlo".

"Pirlo has just begun the first steps of what will no doubt become a brilliant career as a coach," Juventus' statement read.

He followed Maurizio Sarri, who was also sacked last year after the club suffered a shock defeat against French side Lyon in the Champions League round of 16.

"My first season as a manager has ended," Pirlo said on Instagram. "It has been an intense, complicated but in any case wonderful year."

After Pirlo's departure, Juve turned back to serial winner Allegri, who won five straight



Serie A titles between 2014 and 2019 with The Old Lady, including four Serie A and Coppa Italia doubles (2014-2018).

He also reached two Champions League finals in 2015 (vs Barcelona) and in 2017 (vs Real Madrid) but Juve ended up losing both of them. He was fired by the club two years ago. "WELCOME BACK HOME, MAX! Massimiliano Allegri is the Juventus manager once more," Juventus said in a statement.

"Allegri finds a bench that he knows very well, a club that he loves and that loves him back, as today a new journey begins together, towards new goals."

The 53-year-old has reportedly signed a three-year deal with the club.

## Konaté joins Liverpool

HARSHIT BISHT ■ NEW DELHI

Premier League club Liverpool FC on Friday completed the first summer signing after they snapped up young French centre-back Ibrahim Konaté from Bundesliga side RB Leipzig.

The Reds triggered the reported £36 million (\$50 million) release clause in his Leipzig contract.

The France Under-21 international has signed a five-year deal with boss Jürgen Klopp believing him to be the ideal long-term defensive partner for Virgil van Dijk.

Speaking to the club's website, Konaté said: "I'm really happy to be joining such a massive club like Liverpool."

"It's a really exciting moment for me and my family and I am really looking forward to meeting my new teammates, the staff and getting started on this new chapter."

The centre-back, who can also play right-back joined Leipzig in 2017 and made 95 appearances for the club. He was an integral part of the side which reached the Champions



League semi-finals in 2020. "I'm really pleased we've been able to add a player of Ibrahim's quality to our squad and he is someone I've admired for a long time, ever since I first became aware of his potential," Klopp told the club website.

"After the problems we had with injuries in the centre-half position last season, there's no doubt it was clear it was an area of the team we needed to strengthen."

Klopp believes Konaté's physical qualities

make him ideally suited to the Premier League.

"In Ibrahim we are signing a player who will add to the quality we already have here. His physical attributes are very impressive; he is quick, he is very strong and he is dominant in the air."

The 2019-20 Premier League champions had suffered last season due to season ending injuries to Van Dijk, Joe Gomez and Joël Matip and Konaté's addition is part of a new long term project for the Merseyside club.

## Tokyo hopes over for Saina & Srikanth

HARSHIT BISHT ■ NEW DELHI

2012 London Olympic Bronze medalist Saina Nehwal and former world number one Kidambi Srikanth hopes of qualifying for the Tokyo Olympics ended on Friday after Badminton World Federation (BWF) announced there will be no change in the current ranking list and no further tournaments will be played inside the Olympic qualification period.

"The Badminton World Federation (BWF) can confirm no further tournaments will be played inside the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games qualifying window," the sport body said in a statement.

"As such, while the qualification period officially closes 15 June 2021 as per the Revised Tokyo 2020 Qualification System, the current Race To Tokyo rankings list will not change."

Because of the ongoing health crisis, BWF on February 19 had decided to extend the qualification period to June 15 after postponing Malaysia Open Super 750 and Singapore Open Super 500 tournaments to a later date.

But with no improvement in the situation after a brief period too, the tournaments were



shelved, which dashed Saina and Srikanth hopes to earn a chance for qualification.

"The Olympic qualification process is in effect closed as there are no additional opportunities for players to earn points," BWF secretary general Thomas Lund said.

According to the qualification rules, the top 16 players — a maximum of two players each in men's and women's singles from a country — as on June 15 will gain direct entries.

## Perera, Chameera star for Lanka

AP ■ DHAKA

Sri Lanka avoided being swept by Bangladesh in their one-day international series when it won the third match by 97 runs with a Kusal Perera century and Dushmantha Chameera's maiden five-for on Friday.

Perera struck a 122-ball 120, including 11 fours and one six, to lead Sri Lanka to a respectable 286-6. The fast bowler Chameera then took 5-16 to undermine the reply by Bangladesh, which was all out for 189 in 42.3 overs.

The victory marked Sri Lanka's first in the ODI Super League.

Perera and Danushka Gunathilaka opened with an 82-run stand after they won the toss.

Bangladesh fast bowler Taskin Ahmed, who claimed 4-46, brought the home side back in contention with a double strike, dismissing Gunathilaka for 39 and Pathum Nissanka for 0.

Perera drove Taskin to sweep-er cover for a single in a bullet-proof 50 off 44 balls, but the skipper needed luck three times to reach his sixth ODI century.

He was dropped on 66 by Mustafizur Rahman at short third man, dropped on 79 by Afif Hossain at long on off left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan, and dropped on 99 by Mahmudullah at mid on off fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman.

## Panghal cruises into final



PTI ■ DUBAI

The defending champion Amit Panghal punched his way into the men's 52kg final at the 2021 ASBC Asian Boxing Championships after outpunching Kazakhstan's Saken Bibossinov in the last-4 clash in Dubai on Friday.

During an intense battle between World Championships Silver medalist Panghal and Bronze medalist Bibossinov, the Indian made a cautious start and tried to keep a distance from the opponent. He looked more aggressive later in the second round and hit some clean punches to put pressure on Bibossinov.

Panghal carried on the momentum throughout the match and stamped his authority over Kazakh boxer to secure a commanding 5-0 win. Aiming to win second successive gold, the Indian boxer will take on Rio

Olympic champion Zoirov Shakhobidin of Uzbekistan in the gold medal match on Monday.

India is now assured of at least five Silver medals with four women already making their way into the finals earlier on Thursday at the prestigious event which is jointly hosted by the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) and UAE Boxing Federation. With 15 medals confirmed, Indian contingent also achieved their highest medal haul, surpassing the previous best of 13 (2 gold, 4 silver and 7 Bronze) from the 2019 edition in Bangkok.

On Thursday six-time World Champion Mary Kom (51kg) alongside three more Indian women pugilists-Pooja Rani (75kg), Anupama (+81kg) and Lalbuatsahi (64kg)-progressed into the finals. The defending champion Pooja received a walk-over against Mongolia's Munkhbat.

## Our preparation far from being ideal: Stimac

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Livid with the strict quarantine arrangements in Qatar, Indian football team head coach Igor Stimac on Friday said their preparation is "far from being ideal" for the upcoming World Cup and Asian Cup Qualifiers.

Already out of contention for a World Cup berth, India will face Asian champions Qatar on June 3 before taking on Bangladesh (June 7) and Afghanistan (June 15) in their remaining group E matches, with an aim to qualify for the 2023 Asian Cup in China.

The Sunil Chhetri-led Blue Tigers, who were originally slated to reach Qatar on May 30, advanced their arrival to May 19. As per the strict quarantine, they are not allowed to train in gym, use the meeting hall or even eat together.

"If I knew that everything will be like it is today, I would never accept to be honest. We could organise such games in such way in India also. At the end we lost possibility of playing two home games," Stimac told reporters during a virtual interaction.

"Here we are now, not in great conditions. This is far away from a proper preparation for the World Cup qualifiers, but it is what it is. This is not a proper football work which needs to be obtained before the World Cup qualifiers."

Frustrated with the arrangements, Stimac continued: "I'm well aware that Qatar is future host of the World Cup, and we all know about the great facilities for football teams."

"But, as a coach, personally I expected a lot more from this organisation. I know that we changed all our plans due to the pandemic. I say a big thank you to Qatar government for allowing us to come over here."

Under the current circumstances, the Indian players are forced to practice on the corridor, in front of their respective rooms, the 53-year-old Croatian World Cupper said.



"I didn't expect this. I expected as a coach that we're going to have a possibility of using the gym."

"We are doing our morning sessions in the hall in front of our rooms, and our players are eating delivery food, which is left in front of our rooms."

"That's not proper preparation for a football players, I'm quite sure that the Qatari team is not in the same position," Stimac said they are forced to go through all this despite being tested COVID-19 negative three times.

"We were tested three times already, all the tests are negative. Why we don't have a proper meeting hall, so we can discuss and analyse our opponents, why we don't have a possibility of spending more time together, eating together."

"Instead of that we have one chance

## Mental fitness is as important as physical fitness'

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Indian men's hockey team defender Jarmanpreet Singh on Friday stressed on the importance of mental fitness as they prepare for the Tokyo Olympic amid a raging COVID-19 pandemic.

The 24-year-old has been training at SAI centre in Bengaluru as part of the Senior Core Group ahead of the Olympics. "I feel mental fitness is as important as physical fitness to deal with the current situations. A player needs to be mentally strong,

and for that, we have been helping each other," said Jarmanpreet in a release issued by Hockey India.

India were supposed to play their FIH Pro League away matches against Great Britain, Spain and Germany this month but the ties were postponed due

to travel restrictions imposed in the wake of a surge in COVID-19 cases.

"We communicate with each other, we try to create a positive environment around so that everyone stays in a happy zone. I feel because of this, there's a very good team bonding, which has been helping us with our preparations for the Olympics," he said.

Asked how he is preparing for the Tokyo Games, Jarmanpreet said, "My focus remains only on giving my best, with the full energy, and trying to improve each and every day at the training. "I put on a challenge to myself that, I should keep reducing my margin of error." "I am very fortunate and thankful to all senior players as well as coaches because they knew my past (the two-year doping ban in 2015), they knew I was returning after a long time.

**Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice Bid**  
**Identification No.07/2021-22** C-321

1.	Name of the work	: 1 No. of work
2.	Estimated cost	: Rs. 15.03 Lakhs.
3.	Period of completion	: One month.
4.	Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	: From 11.00 AM. of 01.06.2021 to 5.00 PM of 16.06.2021
5.	Last date / time for receipt of bids in the portal	: 5.00 PM of 16.06.2021
5.	Name and address of the Officer inviting Bid	: Executive Engineer, P.H. Division, Bhubaneswar

Further details can be seen from e-procurement portal in the Website (<http://tendersorissa.gov.in>)  
 OIPR : 13021/11/0003/2122  
 Sd/- Executive Engineer, P.H. Division, Bhubaneswar