THE ENDGAME

IN AFGHANISTAN

WORLD 8

PALESTINIANS FLEE AS ISRAELI

ARTILLERY POUNDS GAZA

SPORT 12

HUSSEY RECOVERS FROM

COVID, SAHA +VE AGAIN

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BE THERE FOR ONE ANOTHER:

JACQUELINE

10 VIVACITY

CHANDIGARH, SATURDAY MAY 15, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹2 le plone





(+3,14,381)DEATHS: 2,65,976 (+3,623)

RECOVERED: 2,04,08,080 (+3,34,607)

ACTIVE: 36,76,436

MAHA: 52,69,292 (+42,582) K'TAKA: 20,88,488 (+35,297)

KERALA: 20,50,890 (+39,955)

UP: 15,80,980 (+17,745)

DELHI: 13,72,475 (+10,489)



MONSOON TO MAKE EARLY ARRIVAL OVER KERALA

monsoon is likely to arrive over Kerala on May 31, a day earlier than its normal onset date, the India Meteorological

Department (IMD) said on Friday. The normal onset date of monsoon over Kerala is June 1.

NO DECISION ON PENDING CLASS XII EXAMS: CBSE

New Delhi: The CBSE said on Friday that it has not taken any decision yet on Class XII board exams even as a section of students and parents have been demanding cancellation of exams in view of the Covid-19

BSF RECOVERS AK-47 RIFLE DROPPED BY PAK DRONE

Jammu/New Delhi: The BSF or Friday recovered an AK-47 rifle a pistol and some ammunition dropped by a Pakistani drone from the border belt of Samba district in Jammu & Kashmir. officials said. The drone is suspected to have flown back into the Pakistani territory after it dropped the consignment,

Goa still gasps for oxygen, 13 deaths raise toll to 75

The horror at the Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), the State's largest Covid-19 facility continued as oxygen shortage killed 13 more Covid-19 patients in the dark hours (between 1 am and 6 am) of

Friday, taking the tally to 75 in the last four days.

As per the State Government statistics, 26 patients died at the GMCH during the wee hours of Tuesday, followed by 21 on Wednesday, 15 on Thursday, and 13 on Friday (total 75).

Even as hospitals in Goa see a surge in Covid-19 cases, the scenes at crematoriums in the coastal State are equally grim as bodies continue to line up for last rites. Goa's coronavirus caseload rose to 1,32,585 after 2,455 patients tested positive for the infection on Friday.

According to a resident

sure in the central pipeline started falling around 1 am on Thursday, and three patients in his ward succumbed to the fluctuations, despite their attempts to revive them.

"Relatives called us franti-

"Relatives called us franti-cally saying patients were gasp-ing for breath and their satura-tion levels (SPO2) had dropped to 40-50," the resident doctor said, adding, on the night of Wednesday-Thursday, there was a drop in oxygen pressure at least five to six times.

A three-member panel has been formed under the chairmanship of Indian Institute of Technology-Goa director Dr BK Mishra. The committee will find out whether the oxygen supplied to the medical facility was adequate and check the efficiency of the supply chain. The panel will also examine how oxygen was administered in the hospital and suggest ways for its improvement.

The worst affected Kangra district reported the highest

724 fresh infections. 342 positive cases were reported in Bilaspur, 313 in Solan, 299

each in Mandi and Sirmaur, 265 in Una among other cases.

Out of total active cases in the

state, Kangra reported the highest number of 12272 active

cases. Till now, 17 lakh samples have been tested for Covid-19

Himachal reports

fatalities in a single-day

highest ever 67

S ixty seven deaths, highest in a single day, were reported

in Himachal on Friday taking the Covid-19 related death toll to 2185 in the state.

More number of recoveries i.e. 3362 were reported in

the last 24 hours as compared to 3044 fresh Covid-19 cases.

According to the health bul-

letin, the state's cumulative tally has reached 153717.

There were 39623 active cases

PNS SHIMI A

They drank, danced while enemy crept in

7hen the first Covid-19 W waves swept through the country last year, Goa remained largely unaffected. Of course, tourism, the main source of livelihood, took a serious hit, but Goans were able to keep both infection and fatality at the low end of the scale on a national basis.

The Goans threw caution into the sea and celebrated Christmas and New Year as if corona were a long forgotten tale of horror. Few wore masks or took any precaution as they drank and danced and kept alive the spirit of Goa.

But the recklessness of the past few months has now come to haunt Goans. The State with just around 1.5 million population sparsely scattered settled along the Arabian Sea has emerged as one of the worst affected places in India in



terms of positivity rate. Only Rajasthan and Sikkim are ahead of Goa's positivity rate of around 40-50 per cent over the

Goa now has a fatality rate of 1.5 per cent which is much higher than the national average of 1.2 per cent, and for every 100 confirmed cases, 25 are currently infected.

The situation is so grim that Goa's total death count more than doubled from 964 to 1,937 in just three weeks. Nearly ten per cent of the current casualties are those who were suffocated to death for

Swiss to give India key to Anil Ambani treasure trove

Swiss court agrees to share with Indian **Govt details of bank** accounts of wife Tina, 2 sons also

PNS NEW DELHI

In more troubles for the debt-ridden industrialist Anil Ambani, Swiss Federal Court has agreed to share information with the Indian authorities about the bank accounts of him, his wife Tina Ambani, and their two children Jai Anmol, and Jai Anshul, according to the Swiss media.

Swiss media.
Swiss newspaper Gotham
City on May 12 reported that
Indian Finance Ministry's
Foreign Tax and Research Division filed a petition in the Swiss Federal Court for getting details of the bank accounts



operated by Anil Ambani. According to *Gotham City*, the court's order came on April 29. The newspaper confirmed from the registrar's office that the order directed to banks named Anil, Tina, Jai Anmol, and Jai Anshul Ambanis,

A, B, C, D due to privacy issues.

Gotham City's reporter Francois Pilet reported that

though the order available in the public domain shows only

allowed him to see the actual names. "As court reporters, we are allowed to see the names of the parties in every decision on the Swiss Supreme Court," he explained to news portal News Laundry.
Another international

investigative portal Global Investigative Review (GIR) on Friday reported in detail about the Swiss court's direction to banks to disclose the details of bank accounts of Anil Ambani and their family. According to Swiss media reports, earlier an Indian whistle-blower approached the Swiss courts seeking Anil Ambani family's bank accounts. Later the Indian Government too filed the petition, they said.

Recently, in a case filed by Chinese banking consortium, Anil Ambani deposed in a London court that he has no money and is living with brother Mukesh Ambani's help

INSIDIOUS BLACK FUNGUS

appears that Covid-19 is not the only calamity that India may have to deal with in the coming days. There are people who are still trying to deal with the chaos, destruction and death that the second wave of Covid-19 has brought. The next punch comes to hit the country is black fungus or mucormycosis. The rising number of black fungus patients, especially in Maharashtra where 111 patients, all Covid-19 survivors, are undergoing treatment according to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, is a cause of worry. Mucormycosis, also referred to as zygomy-

cosis, is a serious but rare fungal infection caused by a group of molds called mucormycetes. These molds live throughout the environment. When someone breathes in these spores, infection in the sinus or lung can occur. It primarily affects people who have health problems or take medicines that lower the body's ability to fight germs and sickness. It is affecting Covid patients more because of prolonged administration of steroids and sub-

sequent immunocompromised state.

Dr Monalisa Sahu, Consultant Infectious Diseases, Yashoda Hospitals, Hyderabad shares dos and don'ts to follow to prevent black fungus.

Sputnik V's first dose administered in Hy'bad

Third Covid vaccine in India priced at ₹995.4 a dose

PNS NEW DELHI

In a first in India, Pharma Company Dr Reddy's Laboratories, the Indian partner of Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), said it has commenced Sputnik V's India rollout with the first dose being administered in Hyderabad on Friday as part of

a pilot project.
Sputnik V, which has an efficiency of 91.6 per cent, is the third vaccine to be approved for use in India, the other two being Covishield and Covaxin. The vaccine is expected to fill the supply side to give a fillip to halted inoculation drive in

many States. around ₹995. The soft launch took place, ₹1,000 a dose.



the vaccine is likely to be available in the market from next week. The first consignment of imported doses of the Sputnik V vaccine had landed in India

The company also said the imported vaccine has been priced at ₹948 per dose plus an additional 5 per cent GST to be charged on it, putting the price around ₹995.4, just under

on 1 May.

Innumerable bodies float

Count likely beyond thousands; locals say at least 10 bodies are found everyday

RAMESH K SINGH WARANASI

It all started with the recovery of a handful of bodies from rivers across Uttar Pradesh. The small count increased to hundreds and now it is esti-mated that thousands of bodies were recovered and then buried in the sand across the State and the river highlighting the devastation corona has unleashed on the rural parts of

The people living along the rivers like the Ganga and the Yamuna recount that not a day passes when they do not come cross 10-12 bodies floating in the river.

"If you take the full stretch of the Ganga which is around 1,100 kms, then thousands of bodies have been found in last fortnight either floating or



Police and Administration officers walk past hodies buried under sand on the bank of the Ganga at Rautapur Ghat in Unnao on Thursday

buried in the sands across the two main rivers," Sanjay Dutta, a volunteer of Bondhu Mahal Samiti, a philanthropic organisation, said. The organisation is helping Covid positive peo-ple and their family members and even cremating unwanted bodies, he said in Kanpur.

There is little doubt the abandoned corpses could be those of Covid-19 patients. "This is unparalleled situation where highly decomposed and bloated corpses are being fished out regularly from the rivers

Many of them are in such a bad shape that one cannot recognise them," he said.

The recovery of bodies has started a war of words between Bihar and Uttar Pradesh Governments After 71 bodies were recovered from Buxar in Bihar early this week When 45 bodies were found floating in Ballia and Ghazipur region, the SP, Ballia, Vipin Tada said that seeing the wind direction it seems that the bodies are com-

DOS:

bloody nasal discharge Facial pain, numbness or swelling I Headache I Pair

in the eyes and orbit I
Toothache, loosening of

with pain I Tingling

tooth or jaw involvement Blurring or double vision

sensation on face | Fever

and blackish skin lesions

Fever | Cough | Chest

pain | Blood in sputum

after cough | Worsening

3) Diabetic patients with

Covid should target

strict glycemic/glucose

control, as uncontrolled

factor for mucormycosis

4) Patients should monito

their blood glucose

from hospital, and

post Covid discharge

respiratory symptoms

Pulmonary

1) Keep high index of mucormycosis in the below mentioned group of patients, as they are at high risk of

developing the disease The Covid-19 patients with uncontrolled diabetes and diabetic ketoacidosis Those who have received high dose of intravenous or oral steroids for prolonged period or those who have received

immunomodulators 2) Patients with Covid-19, active/recovering/ post-discharge: These symptoms should be immediately intimated

mucormycosis:

to the treating doctor Rhino-orbito-cerebral

Nasal blockade or congestion | Blackish or

The most common type of mucormycosis is rhino-orbitocomprising around

70-75% of the cases, pulmona mucormycosis seen in 15-20% of the cases and rarely has also been detected

The cases of Mucormycosis

8-10 days after detection of

Don't neglect the signs and symptoms mentioned above which gives a clue to early diagnosis

Don't hesitate to approach your doctor with the above signs and symptoms, thinking it to be a mild bacterial sinusitis, and the suspicion of fungal infection should be high on the cards

The treatment of the mucormycosis requires aggressive management and don't hesitate to undergo the aggressive management or lose the crucial window period of early diagnosis and treatment, as early suspicion, early diagnosis and aggressive management are the keys to success in the management of this

For the hospitals, treating centres and physicians: Use of clean and sterile water for humidifiers during oxygen therapy is very essential to prevent mucormycosis

Judicious use of steroids, avoiding high doses and for prolonged durations needs to be considered. Judicious use of antibiotics and antifungals is very essential to avoid the surge of

more so in diabetics Covid-19 in a few cases, to as debridement of the involved late as about 60 days after Covid tissue along with intravenous

detection of Covid Cases of Mucormycosis are to be treated as fungal emergencies (Medical and surgical emergency)

being two-six weeks after

☐ All of the presentations of the

disease require aggressive management, including extensive surgical

> antifungals for a period of at least six weeks to three months ☐ The antifungals being used to manage the disease include liposomal Amphotericin B.

Amphotericin B deoxycholate

antifungals followed by oral

PM, Opp leader, CJI to meet on May 24 to pick CBI chief

Post is lying vacant for more than 3 months

.I GOPIKRISHNAN - NEW DELHI

The three-member high-level selection committee comprising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Opposition leader Adhir Ranjan leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, and Chief Justice of India NV Ramana will at last sit together on May 24 to decide the next CBI Director. The post is vacant for more than three months.

The shortlisted names are from the 1984 to 1986 batch IPS officers, including BSF



DG Rakesh Asthana and NIA Chief YC Modi. According to highly-placed officials, more than 13 names are shortlisted and their resumes are already sent to the selection committee members for perusal.

Senior police officers like ITBP chief SS Deshwal, CISF chief Subodh Jiaswal, Kerala DGP Loknath Behera, Gujarat ACB chief Keshay Kumar and Uttar Pradesh DGP HC Awasthy are also short-listed

Government may bring the name of some non-controver sial officers as surprise as it did the last time by making RK Shukla CBI Director in January 2019 after the removal of Alok Verma. Some officials said the Government may also consid-

er officers from 1986 batch as

all officers from 1984 batch are

retiring from service in May,

June and July. CBI Director is

selected for two years. The Modi Government is already facing a case filed by lawver Prashant Bhushan in Supreme Court for not appointing CBI Director

The yogi on mission to sanitise the poor

PNS NEW DELHI

Moved by the suffering of the Covid-19 patients, an astrologer turned himself into a "sanitizer man" to save lives in the national Capital.

He calls himself b name of "Yogi" and is devoted to containing coron avirus in his own "small way" by sanitising all lastmile vehicles, including or rickshaws and autos, in the West Delhi

Yogi wanted to ensure vehicle seats were disinfected after the passengers step out from them and used by the new ones.

"Most of owners of these vehicles are either careless or simply not aware about the cleanliness," he said.

also cleans and sanitises spaces around small-time earners like "rediwalas", "patriwalas" and areas under the flyovers inhabited by the homeless. "I realised that though the

Government is asking people to sanitise but how would these people with no water or soap do that?", he He decided to start his sani-

tising mission by, to begin up, picking-up a six-liter cane of liq-

Boycotted after infant son tests Covid +ve, IIT officer kills self

PNS NEW DELHI

Enveloped by the multitude of complexities involving contraction of Covid-19 by his one-and-a-half-year old son, a stressed Assistant Registrar of the A resident of Vishnu Garden, Yogi Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur hanged himself.

Surjit Das, 40, originally hailing from Karimnagar district of Assam, was apparently stressed due despair to the neighbours

distancing them selves from him and his fam ilv after they came to know of his toddler son's infection from coronavirus.

Das was employed with IIT, Kanpur in 2015 resided in the residential campus of the prestigious institution along with his wife Bulbul Das, eight-year-old son Shobhit and Suniyojit (one-and-a-half-year old) and his mothèr-in-law.

According to the police, he was undertaking treatment of his infected son at his home. Following this, the Health Department officials pasted a notice mentioning "corona infected area." Due to this, the neighbours maintained a safe distance from him and his family. Possibly, Das was perturbed over this stigmatisation.

Reports quoting his wife suggested he took dinner with the family and went to his room to sleep. However, he was found hanging from the ceiling fan in the dining hall. After the victim's wife raised

the alarm, neighbours and security guard lowered him from the fan and rushed him to a nearby hospital where he was declared

COVID-19 –

HP launches 'Ayush Ghar-Dwar'

Wellness program for home isolated patients

Timachal Government has launched 'Ayush Ghar Dwar' program to keep the home isolated Covid-19 positive patients healthy by prac-

ticing Yoga. Health and Family Welfare and AYUSH Minister Dr Rajiv Saizal on Friday launched the program and also unveiled a booklet related to the pro-

This program has been started by the Department of AYUSH in collaboration with the Art of Living organisation. Yoga Bharti's instructors would provide their services in the program. During the launch, about 80 home isolated Covid positive patients from all over Under the program,

forms like zoom, WhatsApp and Google meet will be formed to connect with COVID positive patients in home isolation.

The Minister said that this program would benefit approximately 30,000 Covid positive patients who are in home isolation and the patients who are hospitalised. Program aims to reduce the disease burden of recovery rate, improved qual-

Classifieds

PUBLIC NOTICE

House -1296, Phase-1, Ramdarbar Chandigarh. My son Rakesh Kumar out of my control. I Disown him from my moveable/ immovable properties. Anybody deal with him at their own

I, Manju W/o Naresh Kum R/o 7C, Nishat Bagh,Behind BD Flour Mill, Ambala Cantt declare that Son Vishal and his wife Chanderkanta are out of my Control. So i disown them from my all movable Properties

We, Harinder Singh S/o Rajender Singh & Vandana W/o Harinder Singh R/o H.No. 805/1, Rajender Nagar, Sonipat, Haryana have disowns our own son Kaustubh from our all movable-immovable property as he is out of our control. In future, if anybody deals with him, he/she will do at their own risk.

I, Omparkash Gupta S/o Sh. nagwan Dass, R/o H.No. 51/11, Badwali Dhani, Hisar declare that my son Umesh Gupta, Daughter in law Geeta Rani and Gavin S/o Geeta Rani are out of my control. I disowned them from my all movable and immovable properties. In future they will be responsible for their ctions and behaviour. I and my nily will not be responsible for it.

I, Jaspal S/O Late Sansara, R/O #67, Ward No. 4, Sec- 5 Chajju Majra Colony, Tehsil Kharar, Distt Mohali Declared My Son Jaswinder Bali (Govinda) And His Wife Damini Is Out Of My Control. So I Disown Both From My Movable Or Immovabl Proreties. Any Body Dealing With Them On There Own Risk.

L Bhim Sen S/O Ram Chander Cheeka Tehsil Guhla Distt. Kaithal Declared My Son Rajat Kumar Is Out trol So I Disown Him From My All Movable Or Immovable Properties. Anybody Dealing With His On There Own Risk.

I, Gurnam Singh S/o Darshan Singh R/o Basti Nizamdin Wali Tehsil & District Ferozepur declare that sometime back I had disinherited my daughter Satwant Kaur from my movable immovable properties. Now she is obedient towards me and takes care of me, so I take my Disinherit notice back. Now she is equal partner

ਮੈਂ ਪਰਮਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਹਜਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਸੀ ਸਟਾਫ ਰੋਡ ਸਿੰਬਲ ਬਟਾਲਾ ਤਹਿ: ਬਟਾਲਾ ਗੁਰਦਾਸਪੁਰ) ਬਿਆਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਮੇਰੀ ਲੜਕੀ ਸਿਮਰਜੀਤ ਕੌਰ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਹਿਣੇ ਤੋਂ I, Onkar Singh S/o Kehar Singh ਬਾਹਰ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਚੱਲ-ਅਚੱਲ R/o H.No. 77A Sahibzada Jujhar ਜਾਇਦਾਦ ਤੋਂ ਬੇਦਖਲ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਮਰੀ ਜਾਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਤਾਲੁਕ ਵਾ ਵਾਸਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Manjari Sinha Spouse of Anuj Sinha R/O Indira Vikas Nagar, Behind Marwari Collage, Lake Road South PO/PS Hindpiri,Ranchi 834001 (Jharkhand) Have Changed My Name From Manjari Sinha To Manjari Rani Vide Affidavit 13-05-2021 Before Notary Public Pathankot.

I, Vijay Pangasa W/o Kamal changed my name from Vijay Pangasa to Vijay Pangara.

I, Neelam Ahuja wife of Arun Kumar Ahuja House number 43 Model Town Tehsil Samalkha district Panipat, I have changed my name Neelam Rani to Neelam Ahuja, In future all government or non government places known me Neelam Ahuja, All concerned note

I, JC245541X Rank:RIS, Name Govinda Samy M Unit: 94(I) Recce Sqn. C/o 56 APO have changed my KANIMOOLI to KANIMOZHI. G in Program would benefit approximately 30,000 **Covid positive patients**

the state were also connected

approximately 1000 virtual groups on social media plat-

Tehsil-Khanpur Kalan, Tehsil-Gohana, Pin Code-131305, Distt-Sonipat(HR). Have changed my name to Rakesh to Rakesh Kumar for

all future purposes.Now I will be known as Rakesh Kumar in future. I, Mamta Nayak Spouse o Service No.14627870p Rank J.C, Balaram Nayak R/O Village Sundarapala, PO- Sri Baladevjew, P.S-Kendrapara Town, District Kendrapara, State- Odisha PIN 754212, have changed my name Mamta Nayak is wrong, but my name Mamata Nayak is correct. Vide Affidavit No.784, Dated 14-05-2021, before notary public Gurdaspur

I Charne Wife Of Simru R/O Vpo. Palli Uchi Tehsil Nawanshahr Distt S.B.S. Nagar 144512, Punjab Have Changed My Name From Charno To Charan Kaur.

I Prabhjot Kaur Alias anchaldeep Kaur W/O Prabhjit Singh R/O H.No.395 New Azad Nagar Sultanwind Road Amritsar Have Changed My Name Prabhjot Kaur Alias Chanchaldeep Kaur To

Namdhari Dharamsala Partap Nagar Ludhiana Have Changed My Name To Radhika Kehar. I, Parwinder Singh S/o Ajit

Kehar R/O H.No.10978 St.No.6 Near

I Radhika Atri W/O Gaurav

Singh R/o Jujhar Nagar, Street No.6, House No. 445 B, Patiala declare that I have changed my religion from Sikh

I, JC245541X Rank:RIS, Name Govinda Samy M Unit: 94(I) Recco Sqn. C/o 56 APO have changed my Daughter's name from G. ABINAYA to ABINAYA GOVINDA SAMY in

I, Ravinder Sapra S/o Amir Singh R/o # 1243 Sec-9 Ambala City have changed my Minor daughter's name from Manya to Manya Sapra.

I, Adhiraj Gandhi son of Shri Vijay Gandhi, Indian inhabitant called Rajeev Gandhi alias Adhiraj Gandhi R/o H. No. 68, Kamla Nagar, Hisar Distt Hisar, Haryana hereby declare that I have changed my name from Rajeev Gandhi to Adhiraj Gandhi for all future purposes.

I, Gagandeep Kaur Jhajj W/o Jagmeet Singh Sidhu R/o Vpo. Dhanetha Teh-Samana (Patiala)

Singh Avenue Ajnala Road (Amritsar) changed my name to Onkar Singh

I, Kamaljit Kaur Sidhu W/o Baldev Singh Dhaliwal R/o Vpo. Kaunke Kalan Teh-Jagraon Distt Ludhiana Punjab, India, have cha my name to Kamaljit Kaur Dhaliwal.

I. Kajal Chopra W/o Nitan Kumar R/o H.No. 41 St.No. 7 New Moti Nagar (Ludhiana) changed my name to Kajal Thakur after marriage

I, Gurwinder Singh S/o Kulwant Singh Vpo Goindwal Sahib Tehsil Khadur Sahib (Tarn Taran) ,Dhariwal (Gurdaspur) have changed my name Gurvinder

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ity of life, equitable healthcare facility and to ensure better rehabilitation post Covid-19

The initiative intends to provide a holistic healthcare approach through AYUSH to ensure not only physical but also mental, social and spiritual

wellbeing, he added.
Dr Saizal said that basic Yogic techniques like Pranayama help a person to heal from Corona infection. Yoga also provides mental support to the patients and motivates them to live a healthier life, he said.

VACCINATION FOR 18-44 AGE GROUP TO BEGIN IN HP FROM MONDAY

Vaccination against COVID-19 for the 18-44 age group will begin in Himachal Pradesh from May 17, officials said on Friday. The state recently received 107,620 doses of Covishield vaccine from the Serum Institute of India, Pune for this category, Special Health Secretary Nipun Jindal said.

Vaccination for the 18-44 age group will be given only on Mondays and Thursdays, and slots will be visible on the COWIN portal two days prior to each scheduled session. The state has already placed an order for more vaccines for this

WE WOULD LIKE TO INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT MY PROPERTY PAPER ORIGINAL SALE DEED DATED 23-8-2018 DETAIL :-KHATA NO. 242/306 KHASRA NO. 8/23/2/1 (2-0) VILLAGE CHHOTI HAVELI HADBAST NO. 48, MOUZA RUPNAGAR TEHSIL RUPNAGAR (DISTT. RUPNAGAR), KANWAR PAL SINGH S/O RAGHUBIR SINGH, HOUSE NO. 371, GIANI ZAIL SINGH NAGAR, RUPNAGAR (PUNJAB) - 140001

स्ट्रार /सयुंक्त सब रजिस्ट्रार , मीरनी जिला पंचकुला सर्व साधारण को साहित किया जाता विश्व है देन राज पुत्र भी बुध शाम पुत्र भी बीरू राम कियारी वाज आजनपुर जालोड़ा, तहसील वा जिला जेवाला छाल आजाव गांव मांवमा, तहसील मोरणी, जिला पंचवुत्ता, हरियाणा में इस कार्यालय में एक वसीयराजामा विज्ञात 10/11/2017 भीमति कार्योख राम प्रमी राम करमोरी मांवा पात्र मांवा कर मी साम उत्तर मांवा किया करमोरी 10/11/2017 शीमोरी कम्मील राजी पासी रच. करामीची राला पुत्र मंत्रण कम की मुख्य उत्तर पंजीवरूप रेष्ट्री प्रस्तुत किया है कि शीमारी कमारोश राजी पासी रच. क्रश्मीकी राजा पुत्र सी कांगर राजा का वेहाजा किताक 15/02/2018 को हो नावा है, वाबि किया सी शाकि, संबंधी या रिशेवर को इन वसीवराजामां के प्रणीकरण होने के की की राजाचा हो, तो बाह हत नाविद्य के पासी होने के 50 बिला के अन्वदर-अन्वदर असावताल या वकाराता उपासा सरकार हरा कांग्रस्थ में बाहित्य करावा सरकार है, बाद गुजरूनी मिताब कोई सरकार मानवा सरकार है, बाद गुजरूनी मिताब कोई सरकार विद्या वारोगा । उपास्त्रकार प्रणीकर निकार कोंग्रस्थ हरा की विद्या वारोगा । उपास्त्रकार प्रणीकर बारिकर की किया



CHANGE OF NAME

I, GS-163554H, MT/DVR Harcharan Singh S/o Sardar Singh of Unit 852 DMP/69 RCC C/o 56 APO have changed my wife's name from Sarvjit Kaur to Sarabjit Kaur and her Correct DOB is 07-July-1962 vide affidavit no. AT488887 dated 11-05-2021 before Executive

Magistrate, Pathankot. PD(8991)A

Oct-21

G-12528/21

Public Notice

Subject :-Transfer of ownership in respect of constructed Property no.1795 built or old Plot no 1795, Sector, 4 (Extension) Rohtak in respect of 100% share upon the intestate of Sh. Ram Sarup Bhoria S/o Laje Ram. Sh. Ram Sarup Bhoria who was/were the ownership of the subject cited property to the extent of 100% as per record has/have died on 15/08/2017 and has/have no registered or un-registered will 1. Smt. Rajwati W/o Late Sh. Balbit Singh 2. Tilak Raj S/o Late Sh. Ram Sarup Bhoria 3. Sunheri Devi D/o Late Sh. Rar Sarup Bhoria 4 Ram Murti D/o Late Sh Ram Sarup Bhoria 5. Rajbala D/o Late Sh. Ram Sarup Bhoria 5. Rajbala D/o Late Sh. Ram Sarup Bhoria 6. Kuldeep S/o Late Sh. Balbir Singh 7 Mithelesh D/o Late Sh. Balbir Singh 8. Upnesh Kumar S/o Late Sh.Balbir Singh R/o V.P.O Khubru, Tehsi Ganour, Distt. Sonipat Intends to apply for the transfer of the said property in his/her/their favour being the legal heirs. If any person is having objection against the transfer of ibid plot/house he/she can submit objection in writing to the Estate Officer HSVP Rohtak, along with supporting documents within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice otherwise the Estate Officer may sanction wise the Estate Officer may sa mutation of the property as per HSVI policy and may not entertain subsequen claim if any Legal Heirs- Rajwati Slight dip in cases in Punjab; 650 Covid-19 8,068 new cases, 180 deaths

age group, Jindal added.
All the eligible persons will have to register them-

selves and schedule their

appointment for vaccination on

the COWIN portal. The available slots will be visible on the

COWIN portal from May 15. HRTC conductors and dri-

vers, fuel pump operators, PDS depot holders, teachers on COVID duty, banks and finan-cial services, chemists, staff of

Lok Mitra Kendra, employees

in childcare institutions under the WCD department and the

workers of pharma industry

who are engaged in manufac-

turing process have now been declared as prioritised group

for the anti-coronavirus vacci-

These persons should get themselves certified from the

departments concerned and

they can avail vaccination in

the priority group, he added.
Meanwhile, a total of
21,08,857 people in the state

have already been vaccinated

till May 13. While 16,89,496 persons have been given the

first dose, 419,361 persons have been administered the

second dose. Of them, 81,822

healthcare workers got the first dose, while 68,608 HCWs

were administered the sec-

ond dose. Similarly, 53,761

frontline workers got the first dose, while 41,322 FLWs

dose.

second dose.

administered the second

In the same way, 8,61,509 persons between 45 and 60

years of age were administered the first dose while 63,939 got

the second dose. Besides

6,92,404 persons above 60

years were given the first dose, while 2,45,492 got the

Approximate area is 30,000 Sft.

society. Detail of address is as under:-

प्रशिक्षण सत्र एवं वर्गवार उपलब्ध स्थानो की संख्या :-

Sealed Tenders

Sealed tenders are invited for Labour work including tools &

plants for the construction of cement concrete roads including

preparation of foundation bed of road of this society

Last date for submission of tenders is 31.05.2021.

Interested contractors are requested to obtain tender forms

and complete information regarding work, from office of this

The Wembley's Co-operative House Building Society Ltd.

nation, he added.

Giving a sigh of little relief, Punjab on Friday witnessed a slight dip in daily positive cases, and also in its positivity rate. The state recorded 8,068 fresh cases at the positivity rate of 11.29 percent against 8,494 new infections reported at the positivity rate of 12.85 percent a day before.

The state's COVID-19 infection tally now stood at 4,83,984, of which

79,359 are active cases (accounting for 16.40 percent). Among these, 9,820 patients are on oxygen support while 421 are critical and on ventilator support 421. Besides, a total of 180 casualties were reported from the state with maximum 23 reported from Amritsar; followed by 19 from Ludhiana; 18 from Bathinda; 13 each from Patiala and Jalandhar; 11 from Muktsar; 10 each from Gurdaspur and Mohali, among others.
Among districts, Ludhiana report

ed the highest number of cases in the past 24 hours with 1320 fresh cases (at the positivity rate of 9.32 percent; followed by Bathinda with 988 (21.60 percent); Mohali 661 (17.90 percent); Patiala 570 (11.98 percent); Jalandhar 551 (10.27 percent); Pathankot 486 (18.38 percent); Fazilka 451 (14.92 per-(18.38 percent); Faziika 451 (14.92 percent); Amritsar 408 (9.29 percent); Muktsar 403 (16.11 percent); Hoshiarpur 358 (8.77 percent); Gurdaspur 258 (7.83 percent); Mansa 258 (12.61 percent); Sangrur 236 (6.69 percent); Ferozepur 229 (16.12 percent); Faridkot 176 (12.58 percent); Ropar 167 (12.62 percent); Kapurthala 166 (6.44 percent); Fatehgarh Sahib 135 (8.63 percent); SBS Nagar 112 (5.27 percent); among others.

HAND OVER COVID CENTRES IN MAJOR CITIES TO ARMY: SAD TO GOVT

SAD's senior leader and former MP Prem Singh Chandumajra on Friday demanded that Punjab Government should hand over its COVID centers at Mohali, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Amritsar, and Bathinda to the Army's Western Command as people's faith in the State Government's ability to run medical facilities had

G.H 5 & 6, Sector- 91, Mohali.

यष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन

स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विश्वाग

मध्य प्रदेश शासन

बैकलॉग रिक्त पदों के विरूद्ध 2850 कम्युनिटी हैल्थ ऑफिसर की भर्ती

राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन मध्यप्रदेश द्वारा बैकलॉग रिक्त पदो के विरूद्ध संबंधित वर्गों के उम्मीदवारों से 6 माह के सर्टिफिकेट इन कम्युनिटी हेरूथ प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम में चयन हेतु मध्यप्रदेश राज्य के मूल निवासी अम्यर्थियों से आवेदन आंमत्रित किये जाते हैं। चयनित उम्मीदवारों को उक्त प्रशिक्षण सफलता पूर्वक पूर्ण करने के पश्चात् ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में स्थित उपस्वास्थ्य केन्द्र स्तरीय संस्थाओं पर कम्युनिटी हेल्थ ऑफिसर के पद पर संविदा नियुक्ति दी जायेगी।

चयन परीक्षा हेतु सामान्य दिशा-निर्देश, श्रेणी और प्रशिक्षण बैच वार स्थान, लिखित परीक्षा तिथि और ऑनलाइन एडिमट कार्ड/हॉल

आयु सीमा :- 21 से 40 वर्ष (दिनांक 01/05/2021 की स्थिति में)। अनुसूचित जाति/जनजाति/अन्य पिछड़ा वर्ग/शारीरिक रूप से दिव्यांग तथा महिला अभ्यर्थियों को 5 वर्ष की छूट।

Jun-21 585 494 49 24 89 45 129 65 36 18 26 13 0 0 10 0 Jul-21 1680 1420 139 70 256 128 372 186 105 53 74 37 0 0 29 0

 Oct-21
 585
 495
 49
 24
 89
 45
 129
 66
 36
 18
 26
 13
 0
 0
 10
 0

 Total
 2850
 2409*
 237
 118
 434
 218
 630
 317
 177
 89
 126
 63
 0
 0
 49
 0

ारा-1– उक्त अन्य पिछड़ा वर्ग की कुल 630 सीट में से 441 सीटों का आवंटन आखाण संबंधी विद्याराधीन प्रकरण में मान. उच्च न्यायालय के निर्णय अनुसार किया जायेगा। 2– प्रत्येक वर्ग में 33 प्रतिशत सीटें/पद महिलाओं के लिये आरक्षित रहेंगी।

मानदेय एवं कार्यं आधारित प्रोत्साहन राशिः— कम्युनिटी हेल्थ ऑफिसर (संविदा) के पद पर नियुक्ति पश्चात् मानदेय रू. 25000/— प्रतिमाह एवं कार्यं आधारित प्रोत्साहन राशि अधिकतम रू. 15000/— प्रतिमाह

महत्त्वपूर्ण निरंक:—
1) केवल ऑनलाइन आवेदन स्वीकार किये जाएंगे। किसी अन्य स्रोतों/माध्यम से प्राप्त आवेदनों मान्य नहीं किये जायेंगे।
2) रिक्त स्थानों विरुद्ध चयन एवं पदस्थापना मध्य प्रदेश की राज्य आरक्षण नीति के अंतर्गत नियमों के अधीन किये जायेंगे।
3) अपूर्ण जानकारी या फोटो, हस्ताक्षर/आवश्यक दस्तावेजों के बिना भरे गये आवेदन को अस्वीकृत कर दिया जायेगा।
4) यदि भर्ती के किसी भी वरण में, यह पाया गया है कि उम्मीदवार पात्रता को पूरा नहीं करता है और उसने गलत सूचना/प्रमाण पत्र/ दस्तावेज प्रस्तुत किए हैं या किसी भी भीतिक तथ्य को खुपाया गया है, तो उसकी उम्मीदवारी निरस्त कर दी जायेगी।
5) भर्ती प्रक्रिया के किसी भी चरण में भर्ती से संबंधित किसी भी मामले में एनएचएम, मध्य प्रदेश का निर्णय अंतिम और उम्मीदवारों पर

्र न है। तर जिल्लाम हिल्ला प्रतिकार प्रतिकार कराना विशास गृरे सर्टिकिकेट इन कम्युनिटी हेल्य प्रशिक्षण (CCH) में 6 महीने के प्रमाण पत्र के लिए आवेदन करने वाले उम्मीदवारों को ऑनलाइन आवेदन पत्र जमा करने के समय किसी भी केंद्रीय/राज्य नर्सिंग परिषद या केंद्रीय/राज्य आयुर्वेद, यूनानी चिकित्सा प्रणाली और प्राकृ

आवदन पत्र जमा करन के समय किसा मा कदाय/राज्य नासने पारंषद या कदाय/राज्य आयुवद, यूनाना चाकत्सा प्रणाला आर प्राकृ तिक चिकित्सा बोर्ड से पंजीकरण होना चाहिए। 9) राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन के पास रिक्त पदों की संख्या में बदलाव, नियमों में संशोधन और चयन के किसी भी समय प्रक्रिया का अधिकार है। ऐसा कोई भी संशोधन मान्य और बाष्यकारी होगा। 10) उम्र गणना के लिए 01/05/2021 को संदर्भ तिथि के रूप में लिया जाएगा।

Email: - wembleymohali@gmail.com.

उपलब्ध स्थान :- लगमग 2850 (माह जून 2021 से अक्टुबर 2021 के मध्य चयन किया जायेगा।)

टिकट की विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए कृपया www.nhmmp.gov.in या www.sams.co.in पर जाएं।

अनिवार्य शैक्षणिक योग्यतायं :- बी.एससी. (नर्सिंग)/पोस्ट बेसिक बी.एससी. (नर्सिंग)/जी.एन.एम./बी.ए.एम.एस.।

ऑनलाइन आवेदन :- 15 मई, 2021 को सुबह 12:01 से 31 मई, 2021 को रात 11:59 बजे तक।

eroded completely. Chandumajra pointed out that doctors and medical staff from Western Command had done a good job handling 100 bed super-specialty wing of Patiala's Rajindra Hospital. "It should be hand-ed over COVID treatment facilities in other major cities of the State also on a similar pattern," he added.

CHANDUMAJRA DEMANDS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

SAD leader also demanded that financial assistance of Rs 5,000 should be extended to all truckers as well as taxi and auto owners, Rs 3,000 to rick shaw pullers as well as labourers and khet mazdoor. Similarly, a bonus of Rs 100 per quintal should be given on the recently harvested wheat produce. "Bi-monthly electricity and water bills should also be waived off immediately, and that the Government should extend this facility to the common man for the next six months," he added.

SET UP NODAL AGENCY TO CHECK PRIVATE HOSPITALS: AAP TO GOVT

AAP's Punjab unit president Bhagwant Mann on Friday demanded that the Punjab Government should set up a nodal agency to curb the looting of COVID patients by the private hos-pitals in the name of costly treatment and free treatment should be provided to the people of the State who were already suffering from economic downturn. "The treatment of COVID victims has turned into a business of looting by some private hospitals and they are charging Rs 10 to 15 lakh from the victims in the name of treatment. There are many cases where the private hospital treated the COVID victim for 15 or 20 days and also took Rs 15 lakh from the family but the patient still died," he added. Mann said that due to the rage of Covid, some private hospitals and other institutions in the state were also black marketing the essential medicines and medical equipment for treatment but the State vernment was in slumber.

UPSCALE L3 FACILITIES AT AIIMS BY PROVIDING VENTILA-TORS, ADDITIONAL O2: HAR-

SAD's Bathinda MP and former Union Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal on Friday requested Punjab Cabinet Minister OP Soni to upscale the Level III (L3) facilities at AIIMS-Bathinda by providing ventilators and additional oxygen supply to the institute so that it could provide quality affordable healthcare to more COVID patients. Harsimrat, in a letter to the Health Minister, also requested him to review the Congress Government's decision to establish a COVID Centre at the Advance Cancer Institute.

भोपाल दिनांक- 13/05/2021

fresh cases, 8 more die in Chandigarh

Chandigarh has been registering a decline in Covid-19 infections for the last four days in a row. The city's Covid tally increased to 54,043 as it recorded 650 new cases on Friday.

On May 9, 895 Covid-19 cases were reported while 863 on May 10, 787 on May 11, 776 on May 12 and 760 on May 13. However, there was no respite in the number of fatalities in the city as eight more persons lost their lives on Friday. The deaths took the toll to 617. The city now has 8158 active cases.
The total number of samples tested in the last

24 hours was 3361 while the overall number of tests conducted was 454,814. While cases were reported from all sectors, Manimajra reported 74 new cases and Mauli Jagran had 24 cases. As many as 925 people were discharged from various facilities of the city. Moreover, 4447 more people were vac-cinated, taking the total count to 273,475.

Meanwhile, the Chandigarh Administration said it was launching an online e-permit system to help COVID-19 patients access medical oxygen at home. Those who need oxygen cylinders could file an application for e-permits with a doctor's pre-scription and proof of address. The application could submitted

chandigarh.gov.in/health_covid19.htm . Once the application is approved, the applicant will get inti-

929 IN 18-45 AGE GROUP VACCINATED

With the Chandigarh administration launching the vaccination drive for the age group 18-45 on Friday, 929 people were vaccinated. Amandeep Kaur Kang, Director, Health Services, UT said only pre-booked appointment based-vaccinations took place. The vaccination booking slots for the 18 plus beneficiaries opened at 2:55 pm on Wednesday and in just an hour, 8,000 slots for Covid vaccination for eight day in the age group of 18-45 years were booked in the city. Kang said, "Now, there is no slot available on the CoWIN portal till May 22 for this

Farmers' leader hit out at Hry CM for blaming farmers for spread of Covid in villages

day after Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal AKhattar claimed that farmers' movements to and from dharna sites led to spread of COVID-19 infection in the villages, Haryana BKU leader Gurnam Singh Chaduni on Friday hit out at the Chief Minister saying that it is an attempt to defame the farming community.
"The State Government is conspiring to defame

the agitating farmers in the garb of COVID-19 infection. They (government) did the same with Tablighi jamaat last year," said Chaduni in a video

He claimed that the spread of infection in rural areas is due to movement of people from Delhi, Gurugram and other metro cities. People working in metro cities came back to villages and this led to spread of infection there... Farmers should not be blamed for this, he added. Chaduni said that the farmers have been

protesting in Kundli village since a long time but not a single death has occurred there due to COVID-19.

Legal opinion awaited in membership case of disqualified Cong MLA: Haryana Speaker

PNS CHANDIGARH

Haryana Assembly Speaker Gian Chand Gupta Mon Friday said that legal opinion is awaited on the issue of restoration of the membership of disqualified MLA Pradeep Chaudhary from the Kalka seat.

"We have sent the judgment copy of Himachal Pradesh High Court and letter received from Pradeep Chaudhary to the State's Advocate General for legal opinion. After receiving the legal opinion from the AG, we will take the next step accordingly, Gupta said while talking to the mediapersons here.

Hry, HP CMs thank PM for releasing 8th installment of PM-KISAN

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH/SHIMLA

 \mathbf{H} aryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and his Himachal counterpart Jai Ram Thakur on Friday welcomed the decision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to release the eighth installment of about Rs 20,000 crore under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana in the accounts of 9.5 crore farmers of the country.

The Chief Ministers said that the decision will benefit the farmers of Haryana and Himachal. Both the Chief Ministers attended the virtual function in this regard.

Khattar said that this scheme, launched 32

months ago, is a revolutionary step in the interest of farmers as it transfers Rs 2000 directly to the accounts of the farmer every four months so that they can make timely procurement of seeds and other agricultural inputs for sowing their

He said that today, an amount of Rs 19,000 crores has been transferred to the accounts of the farmers of the country. It shows that the Central Government is indeed moving towards realizing the vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' by uplifting the farmers, he added.

मिशन संचालक, एन.एच.एम, मध्य प्रदेश

राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन, मध्य प्रदेश लिंक रोड न.—03, पत्रकार कॉलोनी के सामने, भोपाल, म,प्र, (402016) हैल्पलाईन नम्बर 7428664124; 9650194092; ईमेल :mpcho

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COVID-19 -

Door-to-door screening in Hry villages from today

With the deadly second wave of COVID-19 spreading its tentacles to the rural areas of Haryana, the State Government will begin the door-to-door surveillance on May 15 to find out influenza like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections

(SARI) cases.
For this, villagers general health checkup scheme has been chalked out by the State's Health Department. Under this, a list of 7007 villages in 22 districts of the state has been prepared where two designated teams i.e. field team and the village headquarter team will be designated to carry out the surveillance work.

The State Government has allocated 5000 thermometers 5200 pulse oximeters, 20000 paracetamol tablets (500 gm), 20000 calcium salts plus vitamin D3 tablets, 20000 doxycycline capsules, 100000 B-complex tablets, 200000 vitamin c tablets and 200000 OPR to the

A letter from Rajeev Arora, Additional Chief Secretary was sent to all deputy commissioners and civil surgeons on Friday to start the health check up of people in rural areas from May 15.

The rural areas of Harvana were safe from the first wave of COVID but the second wave has reached many villages in Rohtak, Hisar, Bhiwani, Karnal, Panipat among other

"The health check up scheme will be rolled out in several parts of the state on Saturday. The village with high COVID load will be taken on priority during the survey by field teams. It was proposed to form 8000 teams. Teams are being formed accordingly and will be scaled up in the near future," said a senior officer of the Health Department while talking to The Pioneer.

The field team will have

four members including ASHA, anganwadi worker, school teacher, lady panchay-at member or gram sachiv of ber nominated by BDPO. The four members team will go house to house for a survey of ILI like symptoms and general check up of the population. This team will refer the selected cases to the village head quarter team at the village iso-

lation centre, he said. The field team will be provided with a triple layer or sur-gical mask for self use and distribution among the popula-tion, hand sanitizers, infrared thermal scanner and pulse

The officer said that the village isolation centres to be set up in villages will have 2 rooms, each with space for 5-10 beds with adequate ventilation, clean drinking water, fan and sepa-rate toilet facility.Buildings with the facility of toilets and electricity like schools, Panchayat Ghars or Community Centres are being converted into village isolation centres.

The rooms will be designated as a quarantine room (for suspected patients who have not been tested) and an COVID patients, he

The CEOs, Zila Parishads will be the nodal officer while DDPOs and BDPOs will assist the Deputy Commissioners in setting up these isolation cen-

Apart from this, a rapid antigen team is also constituted which will visit the village COVID Care Centre for sample collection and monitoring of admitted patients.

Notably, the Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar had a day before directed to get sanitization done in every village of the

HARYANA RECORDS

164 DEATHS, 10,608 NEW

CASES Harvana on Friday reported 164 fatalities and 10608 fresh COVID-19 cases. The state also reported 14577 recoveries, once again more than the fresh infections for the fifth consecutive day. A day before, 163 deaths, 12286 fresh

infections and 16041 new

Haryana.

According to the state's health bulletin, the death toll due to COVID-19 has reached 6402 while the state's cumulative caseload was recorded at 675636. The state's active cases declined below one lakh and was recorded at 99007.

In the last 24 hours, a maximum of 16 deaths were reported in Rohtak followed by 15 fatalities in Gurugram and 12 in Jind. A maximum of 2144 fresh infections were reported in the worst affected district of Gurugram followed by 1146 cases in Hisar and 826 cases in Faridabad. Till date, more than 81.82

lakh samples have been tested in Haryana. 64912 samples were tested in the last 24 hours, the bulletin stated. The state recorded a test positivity rate of 15.94 percent on Friday. The cumulative positivity rate was recorded at 8.30 while the recovery rate stood at 84 percent in Haryana. The fatality rate in the state was recorded at 0.95 percent.

Amid spike in rural areas, Amarinder asks villages to restrict entry to only Covid-free persons

Appeals to them not to delay going for treatment on first signs of disease

PNS CHANDIGARH

With rural areas, which were largely unaffected in the first wave, now showing a COVID spike, Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Friday urged villagers to restrict movement into their villages to only those persons who are free of the virus.

Addressing the people of the state in a live Facebook tele-cast, the Chief Minister called for strict measures in the rural areas over the next two months, which he described as "extremely crucial".

"Now the rural areas are seeing a surge in cases, so we need to be very careful," he said, urging the villagers to conduct 'thikri pheras' to keep outsiders away and allow only COVID-free people to enter.

Exhorting people to "save your mohallas and villages to save yourself, your families and Punjab", the Chief Minister asked them not to delay going to hospitals in time.

"We have teams of doctors everywhere, approach them if you feel unwell," he urged them, stressing that delay in going for treatment was leading to people ending up in Level-III (L3). While occupancy of Level-II (L2) beds is 50 percent, at the L3 level, around 90 percent of the beds are currently occupied, and the State Government is in the process of adding another 2,000, he pointed out, attributing this to the people not going for treatment in time.

Noting that there are three stages of the disease, of which the first can be managed at home, Capt Amarinder reiterated his plea to the people to go to the doctor at the first sign of symptoms. "Let the doctor decide the course of treatment, don't get into diagnosis and medication yourself,"

"I fail to understand why we are harming the interests of the State and your families in this manner," adding that "we do not want Punjab to go the way of Delhi and Maharashtra, which have experienced unprecedented problems amid the second vave." The disease was wreaking havoc the world over, with even the most advanced countries not immune to it, he said, urging people to help the Government save the

Underlining that the pandemic threat continues and some people are still not taking the pandemic seriously even after 14 months of its out-break, the Chief Minister said that Punjab has, so far, had 4.75 lakh plus cases, with Thursday's 24-hour case load

While the total deaths stood at 11,297, the state had lost 184 lives to COVID a day before, he added. As of date, there are 9,619 patients on oxygen and 429 on ventilator

Deadly black fungus finds its way in Punjab

MONIKA MALIK CHANDIGARH

The deadly black rungus non-found its way into Punjab, The deadly black fungus has ture of gloom in the already COVID-hit State.

Some cases of this rare but serious fungal infection mucormycosis or as popularly known as 'black fungus' — has been reported from Punjab's and Ludhiana districts.

Notably, this infection has been detected quite frequently among the COVID-19 patients, including those who have recovered, in some others states of the country. As per reports, it often manifests in the skin and also affects the lungs and even the brain, resulting in loss of organs — like eyes, or even death.

The cases of black fungus were found in Delhi in early December. After that, some cases were also reported in Ahmedabad (Gujarat), Bamglore (Karnataka), and Rajasthan also. The infection is dangerous because 54 percent of its patients have died.

"As of now we do not have any data or figures about the total cases of black fungus that SYMPTOMS

Swelling of the face Headache

Nasal congestion

Vomiting

Chest pain Congestion Black sores in the nose

There are a few. I have learnt that PGI is getting many cases but that were from many states, including Punjab, Harvana, and even Himachal," Punjab Government's health advisor Dr KK Talwar told The

Listing out the reasons for the fatal infection, Dr Talwar said that excessive use of steroids during treatment of COVID-19 patients is what causes this fungal infection, besides when contaminated water is used for hydrating oxy-

gen.
"We have all along been instructing the hospitals and doctors regarding the use of steroids during the COVID patients' treatment. But, some of the private hospitals give steroids to their patients, which may cause this infection...but as of now, there are not many cases of black fungus in the

Renowned surgeon Dr Arvinder Singh Soin maintained that the Black Fungus (mucormycosis infection) after COVID-19 can result in loss of vision, brain damage, and even "To prevent it, avoid steroid's overuse; control diabetes; no unnecessary antibiotics; and hygienic oxygen that is clean concentrators, clean water for humidifier, and

said. Alarmed, the state health authorities have decided to issue strict guidelines to all hos-pitals regarding use of steroids while treating the COVID patients, besides ensuring hygienic supply of oxygen by timely changing the water in humidifier among other

things.
"The cases of black fungus were being reported from other states, and now it has reached Puniab also. As of now, I am aware of one case from Mohali and nearly a dozen from Ludhiana. The Health Department is well aware of this and is cautious. We will soon be purchasing the injections and medicines used for its treatment," said a senior health official, who did not wish to be

It has been learnt that more than 10 patients, detected with black fungus, are undergoing treatment at Ludhiana's Davanand Medical College and Hospital. "A case of black fungus has been reported from Ludhiana, and the patient was referred to PGI-Chandigarh due to some complications,' said the official.

The new disease is being detected in patients recovering from the coronavirus. As per experts, if caution is not taken, it can happen to anyone. In fact, it is so dangerous that in some cases, the limbs of patients have to be amputated to save

"Patients have also died due to this, while doctors have to remove their eyes or other organs to save the lives of some patients. Black fungus is said to be extremely dangerous with such results so we need to be prepared for it also while continuing our fight with coronavirus," added the official.

KNOW BLACK FUN-GUS

Black fungal infection is caused when a patient inhales a group of moulds (mucormy-cosis) present in the air. The moulds then, spread into the

lungs, cavities, and chest cavities, making the condition of a patient serious and compli-

COVID-19 link: As per experts, the exact reason how mucormycosis is linked with COVID-19 is yet not disclosed, but some experts believe that it is being caused by high dependency on steroids used to treat inflammation or pre-existing disease such as diabetes. It happens MONG people who have diabetes, cancer or who have had an organ transplanted, who have been taking steroids for a long time, or who have a skin injury, it can also happen to a premature

Signs: The health experts says that facial deformity, impair sensory and vital organs, can be the sign of black fungus.

Symptoms: Extreme headaches; vision impairment like swelling in an eye, poor or hazy vision or bloodshot eyes; Swelling on face with swelling and pain in eyes, cheeks and other parts of the face can be warning signs. It can also affect the skin giving rise to multiple necrosis or lesions like symptoms. The infection can travel up to the brain

causing, symptoms like memory loss, altered mental state, delirium, or neurological impairment. The patients can also experience black patches around the nose and eyes, while it can also cause the loss of teeth.

Most Prone Category: It is more likely to occur in those people who are already suffering from some disease; or those taking medicines that reduce body's immunity or reduce the strength to fight other diseases of the body. It can occur in any part of the

body.

Where is it found?

Although it is a rare infection, it can live anywhere in the environment, it is found in the ground and rotting organic matter, such as leaves, rotten wood, and compost

How to avoid? Though there is not a fool proof way, but the experts have suggested staying away from the construction sites, not going to the dusty area, wearing full sleeves gloves while gardening or farming, wearing masks, avoiding going to places where there water leakage, where drainage

In election year, Captain declares Malerkotla as Punjab's 23rd district

PNS CHANDIGARH

With Punjab heading for the next State Assembly in early 2022, Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Friday fulfilled a long-pending demand by announcing Malerkotla as the State's 23rd district on the occasion of Eid-

The Chief Minister also announced a slew of projects announced a stew of projects for the development of the historic city, including setting up of a Medical College, Degree College, women police station, bus stand, among others, during the State-level celebration of Eidul-Fitr' held virtually in view pandemic the situation.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister underscored India's secular character, which he said was manifested in the defeat of communal forces in the recent Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu and

West Bengal.
Recalling the rich and glorious history of Malerkotla, the Chief Minister said that its conversion into a district, which was a long-standing demand of the local people, would ease the hardships of such people and enable them to resolve their administrative problems

more seamlessly.

Initially, said the Chief Minister, the sub-divisions of Malerkotla and Ahmedgarh, as well as the sub-tehsil of Amargarh, would be included in the newly-created district. The process of bringing villages under the jurisdiction of Malerkotla district would begin later, after the conclusion of the census operations, he added.

The Chief Minister directed Sangrur Deputy Commissioner to find a suitilding to immed start the functioning of the District Administration Deputy The Commissioner for the newly

carved out district would be appointed soon, he said.

Announcing various development projects for the Malerkotla, the Chief Minister said that a Government Medical College, in the name of Nawab Sher Mohammed Khan, would soon be set up at a cost of Rs 500 crore, and the State Government had already allotted 25 acres of land on Raikot road to enable the local boys and girls to pursue medical education. The first installment of Rs 50 crore for this purpose had already been sanctioned, he added.

The Chief Minister also announced establishment of a Government College for Girls to impart quality higher education to the local girls, who currently have to travel long distances for

A new bus stand will also be constructed at a cost of Rs 10 crore, he said, adding that Malekotla will also get a 'Mahila Thana', to be exclu-

sively managed by women.
To ensure holistic urban development of Malerkotla, the Chief Minister also announced a sum of Rs six crore under the Urban Environment Improvement Program (UEIP).

Further, to promote the cultural heritage of Malerkotla, the Chief Minister said that he had already written to His Highness the Aga Khan Foundation UK to undertake conservation and restoration of Mubarak Manzil Palace, occupied by Begum Sahiba Munawwar ul Nisa, the wife of Nawab Iftikhar Ali Khan, last ruler Malerkotla.

"Puniab Government has acquired the Mubarak Manzil Palace, and its restoration ting tribute to the Nawabs of Malerkotla to perpetuate the rich legacy of the historic

us for antifungal drugs as it is

not freely available and there is

a shortage because the demand

covid-19 patients take to avoid

People should maintain sugar level and basic hygiene

after recovering from Covid-19 to ensure that they do not get

any infections, and also get their blood sugar levels

cient specific anti-fungal med-icine used in treatment of

Does PGIMER have suffi-

What precautions should

has gone up again.

mucormycosis?

tested.

BLACK FUNGUS INFECTION -

Haryana Cong demands set up of State-level committee to monitor all districts

PNS CHANDIGARH

With cases of Mucormycosis or black fungus infection on rise in the State amid COVID-19 pandemic, Haryana Congress on Friday demanded constitution of a State level committee to monitor the situation in all districts of the State and provide free treatment to the affected patients.

The State has reportedly witnessed over 40 cases of black fungus infection in the month of May.

A study is also being coninfection and its association with Covid and other factors such as the administration of steroids and age-group of the



affected patients at Rohtak

Haryana Congress chief Kumari Selja said that a state level committee of doctors should be constituted to monitor the conditions of all the districts of the state and identify patients from black fungus disease and provide them treat-

ment as soon as possible. The State Government should bear the entire cost of treatment and medicines for the patients suffering from

black fungus, she demanded. Like other states of the country, cases of black fungus Harvana amid the Corona epidemic. Patients suffering from this disease are not getting

marketing of medicines used in the treatment of this disease has

started, she said. Selja demanded from the Haryana Government that people should be made aware of this disease. The senior Congress leader

said that more than 40 cases of black fungal disease have been reported in Harvana in the last few days. Cases have been reported in Faridabad, Gurugram, Karnal, Fatehabad and other districts.

It is even more serious that the Health Department of the state does not have any many black fungus patients have so far been found in Haryana.People are dying due to this disease, Selja

Since cases of black fungus disease have been reported in the last one week, black marketing of medicines used in its treatment has also started. An injection for the treatment of this disease available for around Rs 2250 is being sold for Rs 6,000, she claimed.

A day before, the Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar while commenting on black fungus infection had said that the Health Department is analyzing such cases. As per the initial observations in the country, Mucormycosis or have been rising among COVID patients with comor-bidities like diabetes who were treated with steroids.

About 3-5 post-Covid patients with mucormycosis being admitted at PGIMER on daily basis: Dr Arunaloke Chakrabarti



MANOJ KUMAR CHANDIGARH

Dr Arunaloke Chakrabarti, head of the department of microbiology, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh on Friday said that the city's premier medical institute is recording a spike in potentially deadly fungal infection, as the surge in COVID-19 cases has led many people to be prescribed

steroids and immunomodulators, which leave some peo-ple vulnerable to other pathogens. Dr Chakraborty, who is a

part of the Fungal Infection Study Forum and is one of the members who drafted the government advisory on mucormycosis, said that many Covid-19 patients either have underlying diabetes or their blood sugar levels became uncontrollable because of the excess steroids given for treatment. People should know symptoms of the fungal infection to avoid sericomplications. Mucormycosis has been seen among those who have uncontrolled diabetes, whose immunity is compromised or those who are given excessive

post-covid patients to get dia-betes under control to reduce

chances of infection, he

He said that the sudden increase has also resulted in a shortage of anti-fungal medicines used for treating the infection in many cities of the country. So far, there is no shortage of anti-fungal medi-

cines at PGIMER. In an interview with 'The Pioneer', Dr Chakraborty talks about the current status of mucormycosis cases in Chandigarh and neighbouring States, as well as an arrange ment, made at PGIMER for such patients: Excerpts from the interview:

What are the actual reasons for increasing mucormy-cosis cases in Chandigarh and neighbouring States Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh?

There has been a spike in cases of mucormycosis in the region. Many Covid-19 patients either have underlying diabetes or their blood sugar lev-

because of the excessive steroids given for treatment There are three known reasons for it. One, uncontrolled sugar in Covid-19 patients; Covid-19 patients who have diabetes may be at risk of contracting the infection (mucormycosis). Two, for those without diabetes, high use of steroids may lead to poor glycemic control after Covid-19, thereby leading to the fungal infection. Three, the ferritin levels go up during a Covid-19 infection. Ferritin is known to contain iron which is a good food for mucormy-

How to identify signs and symptoms of mucormycosis?
People should know symp-

toms of the fungal infection to avoid serious complications. The study found the infection usually happens 18 days after the onset of Covid-19. So people should look out for pain in

els become uncontrollable the left or right side of the face, nasal blockage, nasal discharge, especially black discharge. Loosening of teeth has also been seen this time. If a diagnosis is delayed and the infection enters the eye orbit, it causes double vision, blurring, or protrusion of the eye. It can also cause ulcers in the palate of the mouth. Paresthesia (altered sensation), swelling of eyes, numbness in cheeks, dryness of nose and severe headache, which do not come down with medication and nasal discharge with blood traces are some of the symptoms of Mucormycosis. The headache will give one sleepless

When should patients consult a doctor?

Patients having above symptoms should consult the doctor immediately. The toughest challenge with Mucormycosis is the need for

treatment at least within two days. If left untreated, it may kill those infected. If not detected early, it affects the orbit of the eye and the mouth, resulting in people losing their vision or jaw during debridement the process of removing dead tissue from an infection or wound. Checking blood sugar levels regularly and keeping it under control is extremely important. It is easy to put a check on Fungus if people monitor their blood sugar levels and do not neglect warning symptoms.

How many patients with mucormycosis are admitted at PGIMER?

About 3-5 post-covid patients with mucormycosis are being admitted at PGIMER on a daily basis over the last one month. Before Covid-19, very few fungal infection cases were being reported. For the first time, such patients were admit-

ted at PGIMER in September last year. In the second wave of the pandemic, many more post-covid patients are being admitted at the institute with mucormycosis as compared to the first wave of the pandemic. We are seeing a surge of such cases since April this year.

Which Covid-19 patients are having more threat of being infected to mucormycosis?

Mucormycosis has been seen among those who have uncontrolled diabetes, whose immunity is compromised or those who are given excessive steroids or immune-modulating drugs such as tocilizumab.

Has any doctor from Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh consulted PGIMER for treatment of such patients? Many doctors of neighMucormycosis, which is increasingly being detected among post-covid patients?
So far, antifungal medicine

used in the treatment of mucormycosis is available. But we may face a shortage of such medicines in near future as such cases are on the bouring states have approached

₹20,667 cr transferred to 9.5 crore farmers



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the eighth instalment of the financial benefit under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme via video conferencing on Friday. As part of this instalment, a total of ₹20,667 crore was transferred to more than 9.5 crore farmers across the country, including those from West Bengal. This is the highest amount paid by the Government under the scheme in a single instalment and for the first time, the scheme has reached farmers of West Bengal as about 7.03 lakh of them got their first instalment of ₹2,000 each. The scheme was not implemented till now in West Bengal as the State Government and the Centre were at loggerheads over various issues, including verified data of farmers.

As part of this scheme, the Government is working towards encouraging farmers to take up alternative forms of farming such as organic farming. These crop require less investment. They are good for health and for the soil too. It also sells for a higher amount," he said. All farmers, especially from Punjab, are satisfied with the scheme. I have seen many videos of farmers expressing their satisfaction on social media," PM Modi said.

The PM also interacted



with the beneficiaries of the scheme after releasing the amount. Talking to a farmer from Andhra Pradesh, who turned a piece of barren land into suitable land for organic farming, the PM said, "You have set an example for others. Your self confidence speaks for your ability and experience." The farmer from the southern state told PM Modi that she grows three crops on her land throughout the year.

Talking to a farmer from Meghalaya who has set up a business model for organic farming, PM Modi said as many as 10,000 Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) were being set up in the country and small farmers were also getting associated with them. Your confidence in what you do makes your model a sought-after one," the PM told the farmer. Talking to a farmer from Meghalaya who has set up a business model for organic farming, PM Modi said as many as 10,000 Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) were being set up in the country and small farmers were also getting associated with them.

Your confidence in what you do makes your model a sought-after one," the PM told the

Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar was also present at the event. "West bengal has joined the scheme with more than 7 lakh farmers of the state getting the benefit today," he said. Soon after win-ning the just-concluded West Bengal assembly elections, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had shot off a letter to the Central Government demanding release of ₹18,000 arrears to each eligible farmer from the State.

The scheme, launched in 2019, was a National Democratic Alliance (NDA) flagship project that aimed at providing financial support to the farmers of the country. Under the scheme, ₹6,000 is transferred to the beneficiaries bank accounts per year. This amount is paid in quarterly installments of ₹2,000 each. Until now, ₹1.15 lakh crore has been transferred to farmer families under the scheme, a

Militant who killed Assam Rifles jawan in 2017 arrested in ambush, says NIA

PNS NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday Said it has arrested a self-styled lieutenant of People's Liberation Army/ Revolutionary People's Front (PLA/RPF) in ambush He was involved in the killing of an Assam Rifles personnel in

Manipur in 2017.
The agency on Thursday
arrested Mayanglambam
Siromani, 32 of Kakching
Khunou Angom Leikai under Waikhong police station of Kakching district of Manipur.

The case was initially reg-istered on November 15, 2017 at Chakpikarong police station in Chandel district relating to an ambush on Road Opening Party of 4th Assam Rifle at Chamol-Sajik Tampak Road in the district resulting in the killing of one Assam Rifles personnel and severe injury to another soldier. Two terrorists were also killed in the

encounter. The NIA had re-registered the case on March 29 in 2018 under various Sections of the IPC, Arms Act, Explosives Act and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and took over

the investigation.

During the NIA investigation, it was revealed that Siromani was involved in the conspiracy for the attack on the road opening party of Assam Rifles. Based on the evidence, he was charge-sheeted while absconding. Further, he was declared a proclaimed offender and a cash reward of Rs 2 lakh was announced for information leading to his apprehension.

Plea in SC seeks probe into bodies in Ganga



IANS NEW DELHI

A plea has been moved in the Supreme Court to constitute a special investigation team (SIT) to conduct the investigation into over 100 corpses, found floating in the Ganga river in Bihar's Buxar, and Uttar Pradesh's Ghazipur and Unnao districts, amid the ongoing second wave of Covid-19 pandemic.

19 pandemic.
The plea, filed by lawyers
Pradeep Yadav and Vishal
Thakre, urged the top court to
issue direction the State Government cconcerned to conduct post-mortem of the dead bodies.

"The act of the states is inhuman as they failed to provide facilities for decent burial/cremation of dead bodies and to keep a check on pollu-

The petitioners emphasised that the recovery of decomposed bodies from the river is a matter of serious concern

tion of the holy river, Ganga, by such indecent act either of individuals or of authorities,"

the petition said.
The petitioners emphasised that the recovery of decom-posed bodies from the river is a matter of serious concern, noting that the river was a source of water for many areas, and if these bodies were of Covid-19 patients, then there is

a possibility of spread of infection through water in the villages of both Bihar and Uttar

The petitioners also cited the Pt Parmanand Katara case, wherein the apex court had held that the right to dignity and fair treatment under Article 21 of the Constitution, was not only available to a person during lifetime, but also to the body after death.

The plea also alleged that in the present case, the state has also failed to monitor the crematoriums, which exorbi-tantly charged people for last

rites during the pandemic.

The petitioners have claimed that the state govern-ments, till date have not taken any effective measure to puri-fy the water, and this was a vio-lation of Article 21.

Modi directs States to take tough action

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday directed all the States to take strict action against hoarders of concen-

tion came when he was addressing the nation after launching the eighth instalment of financial benefits worth Rs 19,000 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme to ben-

divisions-- the Indian Army, the Indian Navy, and the Indian Air Force -- have been engaged to serve the human being amid Covid-19 crisis.

"Our three armed forces are trying to serve the needy and oxygen trains are contin-uously dispatching oxygen cylinders amid the Covid crisis. But there are a number of people who are involved in hoarding of oxygen. States should take strict action against

Minister also warned the peo-ple residing in villages to be very alert and follow all Covid-19 measures without fail to avoid the spread of the deadly

spread awareness among others in the village to use "mask, take seriously to each symptom of Covid, go for Covid test, follow precautions until Covid report comes negative, and administer the vaccine".

"People's participation is essential to defeat Covid-19,"

of Covid-19 vaccine doses administered in the country is nearly 18 crore (17.93 Crore, said the Union Health Ministry's latest report received

Indian scientists discover better combo alternative to Remdesivir

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

At a time when people are desperately hankering for Remdesivir injections, paying exorbitant prices in black market too, a team of Indian scientists have found a combina-tion of easily available drug— Sofosbuvir in combination with Ledipasvir and Daclatasvir as better drug than Remdesivir and potential therapeutic agents for the coronavirus.

They had investigated 61 antiviral drugs and found that unlike Remdesivir whose route of administration is intravenous, Daclatasvir and Ledipasvir, are orally administered. Combinations of Ledipasvir and Daclatasvir with Sofosbuvir are clinically approved, said the scientists in a study published in the Current Science journal.
"The combined score sug-

gests that these combinations have superior anti-SARS-CoV-

2 potential than Remdesivir and other investigational drugs," said the scientists from Biochemical Sciences
Division, CSIR-National
Chemical Laboratory, India
Academy of Scientific and

Innovative Research (AcSIR), Pandit Bhagwat Dayal Sharma Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences, and INTOX Private Limited, Pune who worked on the efficacy of drug repurposing for treating

"Our analysis suggested Sofosbuvir in combination with Ledipasvir and with Ledipasvir and Daclatasvir as potential therapeutic agents for SARS-CoV-2. The combined score suggests that these combinations have superior anti-SARS-CoV-2 potential than Remdesivir and other investigational

drugs," they said.

They said the present work provides a rationale-based approach to select drugs

with possible anti-SARS-CoV-2 activity for further clinical evaluation. With the shortage of Remdesivir, the combination can be used to save the lives of severe Covid-19 patients.

"Drug repurposing has been utilized as the most preferred therapeutic intervention for Covid-19 mitigation due to its necessity and feasibility. To prioritize the therapeutic regime against COVID-19, we used 61 antiviral drugs and their combinations," said the

paper. Selected molecules were subjected to virtual screening against — human angiotensinconverting enzyme 2 receptor-binding domain (hACE-2) which serves as an anchor for virus attachment and entry, SARS-CoV-2 RNA dependent SARS-COV-2 RNA dependent RNA polymerase (RdRp) responsible for viral RNA replication, and SARS-CoV-2 main protease (MPro) needed The findings provide a scientific rationale for applying Ledipasvir and Daclatasvir in combination with Sofosbuvir for Covid-19 management

for viral polyprotein slab pro-

teolytic processing.
"Based on docking score,
pharmacodynamic and pharmacokinetic parameters, combinations of Daclatasvir, Elbasvir, Indinavir, Ledipasvir, Paritaprevir, and Rilpivirine were analysed further. Our analysis suggested Sofosbuvir in combination with Ledipasvir and Daclatasvir as potential therapeutic agents for SARS-CoV-2," it added.

The team said that the findings provide a scientific rationale for applying Ledipasvir and Daclatasvir in combination with Sofosbuvir for Covid-19 management.

"Recent initial clinical trial data from Iran with Ledipasvir and Daclatasvir in combination with Sofosbuvir against Covid-19 are encouraging. Based on our analysis and available pre-clinical and clinical data, we recommend prioritization and aggressive perusal of clinical evaluation of these drug com-binations," it further said.

Onset of southwest monsoon over Kerala likely on May 31

PNS III NEW DELHI

The onset of southwest monsoon over Kerala is likely to be on May 31, a day pefore the normal date of June 1, with a model error of ± 4 days. As a well-marked low pressure area over Lakshadweep area & adjoining southeast Arabian sea is all set to develop into a cyclonic storm along the west coast in the next 24 hours. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Tauktae, (meaning gecko (named by Myanmar), once formed is once formed, is Myanmar) likely to intensify into a 'very severe cyclonic storm' with wind speed of 150 to 160 kmph gusting to 175 kmph on May 17. This will be the first

cyclone of this year.

The red alert has been sounded in Kerala for several districts for Friday and Saturday. Kerala Chief Minister tweeted, "Red Alert!

14 May -Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam,

Pathanamthitta, 15 May -Malappuram, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur, Kasargod. Follow guidelines issued by @KeralaSDMA."

"This year, the onset of the southwest monsoon over Kerala is likely to be on 31st May with a model error of plus/minus 4 days," the IMD said. In the Indian monsoon region, initial monsoon rains are experienced over south Andaman Sea and the monsoon winds then advance north-westwards across the Bay of Bengal.
The normal onset date of

the monsoon over Kerala is June 1. Earlier the IMD has stated that monsoon is likely to make its onset over the Indian subcontinent at its normal date of June 1.
The IMD's operational

forecasts of the date of mon-soon onset over Kerala during the past 16 years (2005-2020) were proved to be correct except in 2015. According to the IMD, it is

cyclonic storm during the next 24 hours and is also expected to intensify further during the subsequent 24 hours. Tauktae is likely to move north northeastwards initially for some more time and then move north-north westwards and morti-north westwards and reach the Gujarat coast by May 18 morning. The depres-sion over Lakshadweep area has moved north-north-eastwards with a speed of about 19 kmph and is now centred over Lakshadweep about 30 km south southwest of Amini Divi, 320 km west-southwest of Kannur (Kerala), 1120 km south southeast of Veraval (Gujarat) at about 11.30 am on May 14.

very likely to intensify into

After the cyclonic warning the National Disaster Response Force has deployed several teams on ground. At least 24 teams are pre-deployed and 29 teams are on standby for Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, NDRF DG, SN Pradhan said.

Congress urges Palestinians, Israel to cease hostilities immediately

IANS IN NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday raised concern over the spiralling violence in the Palestinian territories and Israel and urged an immediate cessation of hostilities.

In a statement, Congress leader Anand Sharma said that the spiralling violence in East Jerusalem, Gaza and Israel, coinciding with the festival of Eid, is distressing and a matter of grave concern for the world.

He also said that the Palestinian peoples' right to pray at Al Asqa mosque with-out any restriction must always

be respected and not violated. "The orchestrated incidents in Jerusalem were outrageous and triggered tensions and violence," he said.

Noting that people of both Palestine and Israel "have a right to live with dignity in a secure environment, Sharma said that the escalation of conflict, air attacks on Gaza and the rocket attacks by Hamas have resulted in tragic loss of innocent human lives, especially the children and elderly and also injuries to many civil-

20 civil servants appointed to joint secretary-level posts Ministry of Culture; Mayank

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Tn a major bureaucratic Treshuffle, 20 civil servants were on Friday appointed to joint secretary-level posts.

A 2002 batch Indian

Administrative Service (IAS) officer, D. Senthil Pandiyan, was appointed as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of AYUSH for a tenure of five years, replacing Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer Roshan Jaggi, a 1988-batch J&K cadre officer.

Nirupama Kotru, a 1992 batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer, was appointed as Joint Secretary and Financial Advisor in the Ministry of Coal for an overall tenure of five years in place of Reena Sinha Puri, a 1987-batch IRS officer.

Bhaskar Verma, a 1995-batch Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS) officer, has been appointed as the Member Secretary, National Monuments Authority (NMA), Ministry of Culture, for five years replacing Navneet Soni.

Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the appointments that include the names of Lily Pandeya for the Joint Secretary's post in the Tewari for the same post in the Department of Defence; Nazli Jafri Shavin in the Ministry of Defence (Finance); Indira Murthy in the Ministry of Earth Sciences; Bhuvnesh Kumar in the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology; and Patibandla Ashok Babu in the Department of Health and Family Welfare.

Manisha Sinha, Ashish Vachhan and Sandhya Bhullar were appointed as Joint Secretaries in the Department of Economic Affairs.

Jeetendra Singh has been appointed as Joint Secretary in the Department of Heavy Industry; Sumant Singh in the Department of Home Affairs: Sanjiv Shankar in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting; Manoj Kumar

in the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management: and Sonmoni Borah in the Department of Land Resources. Indian Ordnance Factories Service (IOFS) officer Veena

Tamta Bhatia has been appointed as the Additional Central

Provident Fund Commissioner

(HQ), EPFO, under the

Employment.

Ministry of Labour and

Goyal discusses steps to raise **Covid vaccine** production



IANS I NEW DELHI

ommerce and industry uminister Piyush Goyal on Friday had a virtual meeting with United States Trade Representative (USTR) Katherine Chi Tai.

The meeting focused on increasing vaccine availability in an inclusive and equitable manner to combat the Global pandemic caused by Covid-19

The proposal of India on waiver of certain TRIPS provi-sions to increase global vaccine production in order to take on the challenge of vaccinating the poorest of the poor and save lives was also discussed.

Goyal thanked the USTR for the US announcing its support for India's proposal.

The minister mentioned the supply chains for the vaccine manufacturers must be kept open and unbridled as the entire world is in dire need of

Vaccine supply likely to increase sharply by June

ome June and supply of Covid-19 vaccines is likely to increase sharply, helping India get close to 300 crore doses in the seven-month period ending December, government officials said on Friday even as it announced of sup plying nearly 192 lakh Covid-19 vaccines to the states and the Union Territories (UTs) in the next fortnight from May 16 to 31, 2021. This will include 162.5 lakh of Covishield and

29.49 lakh of Covaxin. Estimates chalked out by officials suggested that the tentative supply figures in May (8.8 crore doses) could almost dou-ble by June (15.81 crore doses) and quadruple by August (36.6 crore doses). In December alone, 65 crore doses might be available, over a seven-fold jump from the May numbers,

Meanwhile, officials from the Union Health Ministry said that Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan will hold a meeting with Health Ministers of four states for Covid-19 vaccination and management on May 15. In addition, a total quantum of more than 4.39 crore doses was also available for direct procurement by the



States as well as private hospitals in the month of May 2021.

A total of 17,92,98,584 vac cine doses have been administered through 26,02,435 sessions, according to the provisional report till 7 am. These include 96,18,127 healthcare workers (HCWs) who have taken the first dose and 66,04,549 HCWs who have taken the second dose, 1,43,22,390 FLWs who have received the first dose. 81,16,153 FLWs who have received the second dose and 39,26,334 beneficiaries in the 18-45 years age group who have taken the first dose

Besides, 5,66,09,783 and 85,39,763 beneficiaries aged administered the first and second dose respectively, while 5,42,42,792 and 1,73,18,693 beneficiaries of more than 60 years old have taken the first and second dose.

The ministry said 4,40,706 beneficiaries in the age group of 18-44 years have received their first dose of COVID vaccine in the last 24 hours and cumulatively 39,26,334 across 32 states and UTs since the start

of phase-3 of vaccination drive More than 20 lakh vacci nation doses were administered in a span of 24 hours. As on Day-118 of the vaccination drive (May 13), 20,27,162 vaccine doses were given. Across 18,624 sessions, 10,34,304 beneficiaries were vaccinated for the first dose and 9,92,858 beneficiaries received their second dose of vaccine.

The Ministry also said that

a national tracking platform will be established soon to determine the impact of the jabs against CovidD-19 and the breakthrough infections that are likely to occur among those with complete and partial immunisation.

against O₂ hoarders IANS III NEW DELHI

trated oxygen cylinders.
The Prime Minister's direc-

efit more than 9.5 crore farmers that includes first-time beneficiaries in West Bengal. The Prime Minister expressed dissatisfaction against these hoarders for their indulgence in such acts at a time when even Indian Armed forces comprising all its three

such people," Modi said. Despite the acute shortage

of concentrated oxygen in var-ious states, several people have been caught hoarding the sup-ply of the life-saving gas. Meanwhile, the Prime

avoid the spread of the disease.

Modi appealed to the villagers as well as those united with Gram Panchayats to

Modi said.

The cumulative number

on Friday morning.
It said that the Covid-19 vaccination drive has successfully completed 118 days wherein 17.89 Crore doses have been administered to the identified beneficiaries through collaborative efforts of all states and UTs. India is the fastest country globally to reach the 17 crore target in 114 days. USA took 115 days and China took 119 days to administer the same amount of doses.

Kazakhstan extends humanitarian aid to India

IANS IN NEW DELHI

In accordance with instructions from President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and guided by nership between the two states. the Kazakhstan Government has provided humanitarian assistance to India during this serious epidemiological situation of Covid-19.

The first of the two Kazakh aircraft with the cargo landed at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi in the morning on May 14 with the second one expected to arrive several hours later

This humanitarian aid, weighing around 40 tons, includes medical masks, respirators, protective suits and portable artificial lung ventila tion devices from Kazakh manufacturers in the healthcare sector. This aid was officially handed over at the airport by Ambassador of Kazakhstan to India Nurlan Zhalgasbayev to Director, Eurasian Department of the Ministry of External Affairs, Bandaru Wilsonbabu. On May 4, President

Tokayev, in a telegram to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, expressed "deep solidarity with the Indian nation over the devastating Covid-19 surge in this country", and on May 7, instructed his government to provide and dispatch the necessary assistance to the Indian authorities.

by Pak drone in Samba

Aday after the Armies of India and Pakistan exchanged packets of sweets and demonstrated that the bonhomie was prevailing along the Line of Control as not a single incident of ceasefire violation was reported since February 24, the Indian border guards deployed along the International border on Friday claimed they have recovered a consignment of arms and ammunition dropped by a Pakistani drone in the Samba sector. The arms consignment was dropped approximately 250 metres inside the Indian territory. BSF officials also claimed

the consignment was recovered from the same area where BSF had earlier detected a cross border tunnel in the month of November 2020. The tunnel was used by the Pak rangers to push armed terrorists inside the Indian territory.

Recently a Pakistani



intruder was also shot dead by the BSF troops in the same area on May 5.

Last year on June 20, 2020

BSF troops had also neutralized a Pak Hexacopter in Samba/Kathua area and recovered a huge quantity of Arms/Ammunition & explosives. According to a state-ment released by the BSF spokesman in Jammu, "As per input, on 14 May 2021, troops of BSF carried out a search operation in the general area of Samba sector. At about 12.15 hrs, BSF troops recov-

rerd a wrapped item with a yellow colour polythene bag in a field. The wrapped packet contained 01 AK -47, 01 Pistol, 01 Mag, 15 rounds of 9 mm, 01 wooden frame (used to attach payload with drone) to attach payload with drone) wrapping

BSFspokesman said, "IG BSF Jammu N S Jamwal con-gratulated the alert BSF troops for this big achievement which again foiled the nefarious motive of Pakistan and said that BSF is ever alert and vigilant on International Border 24x7 to thwart away the nefarious designs of Pakistan".

BSF finds guns dropped | Be impartial, prompt, Didi writes to PM on O2 plants

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Continuing to drop letter bombs on the PMO one after the other, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi wondering why the Centre was not living up to its promises on corona specific equipment.

The Chief Minister wrote another letter to the Prime Minister requesting him to be evenhanded in allotting PSA plants (Pressure Swing Adsorption) plants — needed to generate oxygen — to the States, particularly Bengal.

Complaining that the Centre had promised 70 such plants for Bengal whereas it had only been allotted four in the first phase, Banerjee wrote, "We were told we shall get 70 PSA plants, now ve are told that we shall get four in the first phase with no clari-ty on the remaining plants."

This is her fifth letter to the

Prime Minister in the past two

She also complained in her letter, as to how "...Priorities are being fixed and re-fixed, imple-

menting agencies are being set-tled and unsettled, quota for West Bengal is being down-wardly revised and further downwardly revised every day," adding there was lack of clarity whether about State would get the remaining

The Prime Minister's Office had earlier approved allocation of funds from PM-CARES for installation of 551 PSA plants in across the country. Out of these Bengal was to get 70.

Mamata further wrote in

her letter requesting the Prime Minister "to kindly get the pri-orities, implementing agencies, and quota fixed, justly, fairly and quickly" as "our own supple-mentary PSA-installation plans by State agencies... are getting disturbed because of the indecisiveness at Delhi."

Pandemic issues apart, the Chief Minister also hit out at the Centre for making unnecessary delay over the transfer of PM Kisan Sanman Nidhi funds to the Bengal farmers. Mamata attacked the Prime

Minister on a day when the Centre transferred its first install-

ment of ₹2,000 to more than 7.5 lakh eligible farmers on Friday. In an open letter to the farmers the Chief Minister said that the first installment of the PM-Kisan fund was in fact a result of her continuous fight to get the central funds for Bengal farmers.

The Prime Minister on Friday released the eighth installment of over ₹20,000 crore to more than 9.5 crore farmers. About 41 lakh Bengal farmers had applied for the scheme.

In an open letter to farmers, Banerjee said "You all were sup-posed to get ₹18,000, but have received a very small amount. Even this sum would not have been transferred had we not fought for it. We will continue this fight till you get the entire allocation."

Her Trinamool Congress

also hit out at the Centre for releasing only ₹2,000 for each farmers whereas the Prime Minister had promised Rs 18,000 after the elections. "The PM spoke of ₹18,000 and here he has given only ₹2,000... where is the rest?" asked senior party MP Saugato Roy.

Several leaders' phones tapped during Fadnavis regime, alleges Cong

aharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) pres-Manarashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) president Nana Patole on Friday created a sensation in the State political circles by alleging that during the previous Devendra Fadnavis Government telephones of several leaders belonging to the Congress, NCP, Shiv Sena and BJP, and also some IAS and IPS officers, between 2016 and 2017 were tapped.

Talking to media persons here, Patole charged that he

had received information from a private television channel that his telephone was being tapped between 2016 and 2017 when the BJP-led saffron alliance Government ruled the state.

"In the name of busting a narcotics gang, the phones of mine as well as Amzad Khan were tapped during the

mine as Weil as Affiziat Khan were tapped during the Devendra FadnavisGovernment using false names. I urge the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government to conduct a high-level inquiry into the phone tapping indulged in by the previous BJP-led Government and bring the culprits behind it to book," Patole said.

The MPCC president also alleged that apart from his phones, the phones of Congress, NCP, Shiv Sena and BP leaders, and also some IAS and IPS officers were also being tapped. "In my case, the previous BJP government tried to link me to drug trafficking gangs and also project in an objectionable manner. While tapping my telephone, the people involved were using a fake name and address."

Patole demanded to know if requisite permission was

taken from the authorities concerned before tapping my tele-phone. "What was the purpose of tapping my telephone? Keeping an individual under surveillance without requisite permission is an offence and invasion into the privacy of the individual concerned," the Congress leader said.

UP records 15,747 new Covid cases, 312 deaths

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh on Friday recorded 15,747 fresh Covid-19 cases that took the infection count to 15,96,628 while 312 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 16,958, officials

In the past 13 days, the number of active cases in the state has come down by over 1.17 lakh. On April 30, there were about 3.10 lakh active cases and the number currently stands at 1,93,815, said Additional Chief Secretary,

Health, Amit Mohan Prasad.
As many as 1,57,257
patients are in home isolation, he said. While the state reportne said. While the state reported 15,747 fresh cases the previous day, 26,174 Covid-19 patients recovered from the disease. So far, 13,85,855 patients have recovered in Uttar Pradesh and the recovery rate stands at 86.8 per cent, Prasad

Among the fresh deaths, a maximum of 21 were reported from the state capital Lucknow, 20 from Kanpur, 16 from Bahraich, 15 from Meerut, 14 from Chandauli, 13 from Jhansi, 12 from Varanasi, 10 each from Gautam Buddh Nagar, Hardoi and Mathura, a health bulletin issued here said.

Among the fresh cases, 1,464 were reported from Meerut, 900 from Lucknow, 718 from Gautam Buddh Nagar, 587 from Varanasi, 567 from Gorakhpur, it said. So far, over 4.41 crore samples have been tested for COVID-19 in the state, including more than 2.63 lakh tested on Wednesday, he said. *PTI*



Deserted streets at the Ganeshouri flyover during Covid-induced curfew in Guwahati on Friday

Centre rushes team to J&K to study reasons for high Covid-19 mortality

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In the wake of the grim Covid-19 situation in Jammu & Kashmir, the Central Government has rushed a team of experts to study the reasons behind high mortality rate.

The region has witnessed more than 800 deaths in the last one month. The positivity rate is also hovering around 10 percent while the active positive cases stood at over

MoS PMO Dr Jitendra Singh, who is regularly tracking the Covid-19 management efforts on Friday tweeted, Central team of experts deputed to visit GMC and other health institutions in Jammu in view of COVID surge. Local authorities are advised to frankly point out constraints faced by them without mincing words, so that Centre can optimally step in to assist them".

On ground zero the Union Territory administration is racing against time to recruit doctors, nurses and other paramedics to utilise their services in the overall management of Covid-19 patients.

Meanwhile, there was no let up in the increasing number of deaths. On Friday 60 more patients succumbed to the virus while 3027 new cases were detected taking the tally of active positive cases to 52,001. The positivity rate dropped down marginally to 9.59 across J&K.

The National Health Mission, UT of J&k Friday released some statistics in order to spread awareness

According to the analysis of Covid mortality in J&K UT

between 15 Apr-12 May, the twitter handle of NHM said,1-93% of Covid +ve critical cases who died in this period were unvaccinated, 7% were partially vaccinated.
"46% of deaths occurred

within 3 days of testing +ve thus indicating that they were well into late stages of infection before they got tested".

patients not to remain in a denial mode NHM advocated the need for early testing so that treatment could start early.

Referring to self medication as another reason behind the high mortality rate, NHM data revealed, "49.37% of total deaths were those who arrived just <= 3 days before in the hos-

Kerala extends lockdown till May 23

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

 $S^{\text{ince the nine-day long total lock}}_{\text{down in Kerala which is in force}}$ since May 9 has failed to bring down the number of Covid-19 patients, the administration has decided to extend the lockdown to May 23.
The lock down declared on May

7 was for nine days which would have ended on May 16. The move th extend the lock-down was announced by Chief

Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in his daily press briefing on Friday.
Vijayan said that the total lock

down would be in force till May 23. Four districts have been brought under triple lock down measures. These are the districts of Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, Thrissur and Malappuram. The decinate have triple lock down in these sion to have triple lock down in these districts was in the backdrop of unabated hike in the number of

On Friday, the State diagnosed

34, 694 new persons with Covid-19 while 93 patients succumbed to the pandemic

The Test Positivity Rate in the State as on Friday was 26.41.

The Chief Minister asked the people in the State to be extra cautious as the India Meteorological Department has warned of heavy downpours, rains and high sea waves along the Kerala coast as a consequence of the low pressure developed in the Arabian Sea in the West Coast.

The failure of the administration to accommodate Covid-19 patients in First Line Treatment Centres came out in the open in southern Kerala as nearly 50 patients afflicted with the pandemic set up a tem-porary shed along the paddy fields in Thiruvalla as covid shelter.

An embarrassed administration

hushed up the issue by shifting the patients to the nearest FLTC but not before many people were seen run-ning helter-skelter in this predomi-nantly rural area.

288 more die in Tamil Nadu

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

amil Nadu is all set to extend the lock down period with more stringent measures as all measures to check the transmission of Covid-19 have come a cropper. There is no worthwhile change in the number of daily cases reported across the State as the second wave is causing

havoc everywhere.

On Friday, the pandemic claimed 288 lives across the State while 31, 892 new persons were diagnosed with Covid-19. The Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine said in its release that there were 1.95 lakh active Covid-19 patients in the State undergoing treatment in various hospitals.

More than 1.53 lakh persons were subjected to RT-PCR tests on Friday. The death toll in Tamil Nadu till date crossed the 17,000 on Friday. A meeting convened by Chief Minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi Stalin which was attended among others by legislature party leaders of all political parties with representation in the House decided unanimously to support whatever measures the Government takes to control the transmission and spread of the

pandemic in the State. The leaders of all political parties who took part in the deliberations assured the Government that they would not hold any public meetings or demonstrations anywhere in the State till the pandemic subsides. A high power committee was constituted with medical professionals, policy makers and leaders of various political parties to chalk out ways and means to control the spread of Covid-19.

In a camaraderie which is quite unusual in Tamil Nadu, the political leaders authorised the Chief Minister to take decisions which he feels apt and suitable to check the Covid-19.

Meanwhile, Sterlite Copper, owned by the Vedanta Group, has started despatch-ing tanker trucks filled with medical oxygen to various government owned hospitals in the State. A company representative said that from May 15, the plant at Thoothukudi would be able to produce 35 tonne medical grade oxygen per day and this would be gradually hiked.

53,249 patients discharged in Maha

TN RAGHUNATHA II MUMBAI

n some relief to the health In some rener to the heater authorities in Maharashtra, the daily Covid-19 deaths dropped to 695 in the State on Friday, while the infections came down to 39,923.

A day after daily deaths jumped from 816 to 850 and the infections dropped from 46,781 to 42,582, Maharashtra logged 695 deaths and 39,923 new cases.

With 695 new deaths, the otal number of deaths in the state climbed from 78,857 to 79,552. Similarly, with 39,923 new infections, the total number of cases climbed from 52,69,292 to 53.09,215.

As 53,249 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the State after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals last year went up from 46,54,731 to 47,07,980. The recovery rate in the state went up from 88.34 per cent to 88.68 per cent.

The total "active cases" in

the state dropped from 5,33,294 to 5,19,254. The fatality rate in the state stood static at 1.5 per

With 62 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai increased from 14,040 to 14,102, while the infected cases went up by a relatively low 1660 to trigger a jump in the infections from 6,83,185 to 6,84,845.

The situation in Pune improved a bit as the "active cases", which had come below one lakh mark early this week, improved once again as the "active cases" dropped from 1,01,181 to 96,028.

Nagpur with 40496 active cases stood second in the state. followed by Mumbai (35,843), Thane (31,526), Ahmednagar 111ale (31,326), Allinedinggai (27,573), Satara (21,927), Solapur (21,232), Nashik (18923), Beed (18806), Chandrapur (15,701), Jalgaon (11,193), Latur (10237), Aurangabad (8716), Jalna (7072), Parbhani (7060), Buldhana (6090).

Of the 3,06,02, 140 samples sent to various laboratories across the state so far, 53,09,215 have tested positive (17.35 per cent) for Covid-19 until Friday.

Currently, 34, 82, 425 people are in home quarantine while 28,312 people are in institutional quarantine.

AP records 22,018 new cases, 96 deaths

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh reported more than 20,000 fresh cases of coronavirus for the fourth consecutive day on Friday, while 19,177 patients had recovered and another 96 succumbed

The latest bulletin said 22,018 positive cases turned out from 89,087 tests in the 24 hours ending 9 am today, tak-ing the infection count to 13,88,803.

The number of active cases increased to 2,03,787 after a total of 11,75,843 recoveries and 9,173 deaths.

The overall infection positivity rate climbed to 7.81 per cent after 1.77 crore tests while the case fatality rate remained stable at 0.66 per cent.

The recovery rate was 84.6 per cent and the active case ratio was about 15 per cent.

reported the highest 3,432 fresh cases in 24 hours, followed by Chittoor 2,708, Anantapuramu 2,213 and Visakhapatnam 2,200.

While Srikakulam reported the lowest 695 and Vizianagaram 899, seven other districts added between 1,000 and 1,800 new cases each. *PTI*

Sea waves crash onto the shore amid cyclone warning, at a seashore in

Assam Minister orders probe into death of 18 elephants

Guwahati: Assam Forest Minister Parimal Suklabaidva on Friday visited Bamuni Pahar in Nagaon district, where 18 elephants died a day ago pre-sumably due to lightning, and ordered an inquiry into the

A panel, headed by Deputy Conservator of Forest K K Deori with seven veterinarians as members, has been instituted to carry out the inquiry, and file a preliminary report within three days and a detailed account in the next 15 days, an

Suklabaidya, who assessed the situation at Bamuni Pahar in Kothiatuli forest range along with top officials, said "no vis ible sign of any struggle" was found at the site and an initial probe into the incident suggested that the pachyderms were struck by lightning. The exact cause of death,

however, will be clear following the arrival of the post mortem report, and submission of details by the committee, the Minister said.

Steps taken to increase number of | With no let up in Covid-19 beds: Puducherry L-G

PTI ■ KARAIKAI

 $P^{uducherry\ Lieutenant\ Governor\ Dr\ Tamilisai}_{Soundarajan\ has\ said\ steps\ were\ underway\ to}$ increase the number of beds for Covid patients in Karaikal district of the Union Territory.

Speaking to reporters after holding a review meeting here with the District Collector Arjun Sharma, the Lieutenant Governor said considering the rise in the number of Covid cases in Karaikal, the Government has taken steps to increase the number of beds in hospitals.

In addition, privatemedical colleges have been asked to raise the bed capacity and appoint more doctors, she said. Stating that the district has adequate supply of oxygen, she thanked the fishermen who donated 40 oxygen cylinders in their boats for the benefit of patients in the government Karaikal

The Lieutanant Governor pointed out that it had been observed that late referrals for treatment at hospitals were often the reason for Covid deaths and askd the people to seek proper medical attention in the early stage itself. She said the district administration would con-

sider increasing the number of Covid care centres and alternative medicine centres. When her attention was drawn to volunteers who are involved in burying the Covid victims in the district, the Lieutenant Governor said she would initiate an inquiry as to why government staff were not involved in the activity and why it had been entirely left to volunteers.

She appealed to the people to cooperate with the government by staying indoors and thereby stop the spread of Covid. Health Secretary Arun and other officials were present at the review meeting.

coronavirus surge, lockdown extended by 7 days in Mizoram

Aizawl: The total lockdown imposed in Aizawl and other district headquarters from May 10 has been extended for another 7 days to flatten the Covid-19 transmission curve.

The government order issued on Friday said that the existing complete lockdown, which was scheduled to be lifted on May 17 (4 am) has been extended till 4 am of May

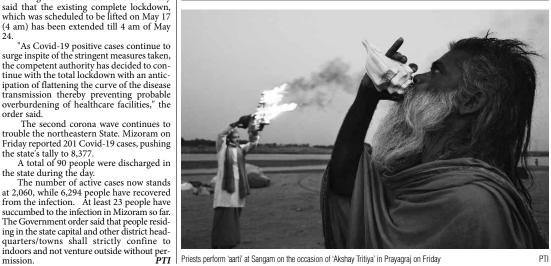
"As Covid-19 positive cases continue to surge inspite of the stringent measures taken, the competent authority has decided to continue with the total lockdown with an anticipation of flattening the curve of the disease transmission thereby preventing probable overburdening of healthcare facilities," the

trouble the northeastern State. Mizoram on Friday reported 201 Covid-19 cases, pushing

A total of 90 people were discharged in the state during the day.

The number of active cases now stands

at 2,060, while 6,294 people have recovered from the infection. At least 23 people have succumbed to the infection in Mizoram so far. The Government order said that people resid-



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PAPER WITH PASSION

High and dry

Herd immunity is one thing; India needs to do a lot more to protect its people from the pandemic

he COVID-19 vaccination drive in India appears to be wafting in the air with a mind of its own. Never an easy task, what with a billion people to be vaccinated in time to avoid a third surge of the virus, the exercise is taking time even to take off. Whether it is owing to gigantic nature of the task at hand or the scattered nature of the vaccination management plan, one is not sure. The bare facts of the case, if the pandemic is to be brought under control at the very least by the end of this year, are before us. Scientists believe a minimum of 70 per cent of the population needs to be vaccinated for the herd immunity to set in. In India, that means the immunity can be achieved if nearly 94 crore people receive both

doses of the vaccine. At two doses each, that calls for 188-odd crore doses. That is a tall order. Even if one were to scale down the vaccination to one dose under the assumption that it is better to give at least half protection to all than complete protection to only a few, even then, just under a 100 crore doses are needed. Where to get the doses from? How long will it take to acquire them? How long will it take to complete the vaccination process? If, at the end, it is only one dose that is given, an identical task stares at the country for giving the second dose.

Bear in mind that all this is for vaccinating only 70 per cent of the population. That means just about a third of the population will be left high and dry unless they largely constitute children who are yet to come under the purview of vaccination. The Serum Institute of India has said it will be in a position to produce 10 crore doses a month after July. One can assume that Bharat Biotech can produce anywhere between five and six crore doses a month after July. Zydus Cadila and Dr Reddy's Labs will be able to pitch in with threeodd crore doses a month. That can stretch the total figure of available doses per month close to 20 crore by August 2021 or thereabouts. That leaves five months till December to complete the task of giving around 100 crore doses. There are reports that are not so confident; they contend that the task may actually take over two or even three years. In any case, assuming the exercise ends by December, a population of 94-odd crore will receive one effective dose or half of them will get two doses each, as the case may be. The result is there for all to see: It is simply impossible to achieve herd immunity before the end of 2021 unless 188 crore doses are available at once and an unprecedented, organised, synchronised, national campaign is undertaken to complete the process in five months. The guestion to the Centre goes abegging: Where is the plan?



ITBP personnel share a friendly moment at a training centre near Mana, Uttarakhand

Hogwash

Amid the raging contagion, a handful of politicians are providing comic relief to citizens, albeit unintentionally

handler Muriel Bing of the *Friends* fame said in the series: "I'm not great at advice. But can I interest you in a sarcastic comment?" Something similar in the nature of an emotion has ostensibly stirred Uttarakhand's former Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat. The BJP leader, no less adept at stokg controversy as the incumbent Tirath Singh Rawat, has now taken to bat for the accursed Novel Coronavirus because, as it would appear, everybody is only hurling doses of vituperation at the poor pathogen. Choosing to look at it "from a philosophical angle", Rawat said that the virus is a "living organism which has



a right to live". In the same vein, he warned the human species that despite considering ourselves to be the most intelligent on the planet and out to eliminate the virus, the killer is sensible enough to keep mutating itself. Slipping into some sense midway, he also clarified, to his credit, that people need to outpace the virus to stay safe. So far. so good! By that logic, do we need to go and offer ourselves to a tiger just because it has a life and the right to life? If the virus has the right to live, as an organism, all of us don't?

And, as most of us would agree, the new-age politicians are nothing less than pernicious virus-

es. But do they really need to open their trap and prove it? As the old saying goes, it is better to keep your mouth shut and let the world think that you are a fool, rather than open it and remove all doubts! The unusual observation, as must have been the desired outcome of the former Chief Minister, went viral at a time when the entire country is battling a killer second wave of COVID-19. A Twitter user sarcastically said: "This virus organism should be given shelter in the Central Vista." Another said: "Shri Rawat should invite the virus home, feed it well and stay with it for at least 14 days." All done and dusted, the statement just goes on to show how devoid of empathy are our political leaders who, in spite of seeing the mass scale of devastation in terms of life, employment and business opportunities, can't keep themselves away from courting a headline-worth-of controversy. As Chandler said, one more time: "Handle? I can handle it. Handle is my middle name. Well, actually it's the middle part of my first name.'

The endgame in Afghanistan



There's a host of implications emanating from the withdrawal of American troops from that country, and India needs to watch out

he latest available esti-mates of the number of people, mostly schoolgirls, killed in three blasts in front of a co-educational school in Kabul on May 8, vary from at least 60 (BBC) to over 85 (CNN). The figure may rise further by the time this column is published. The diabolical intent to kill as many as possible is clear from the fact that a car bomb was first detonated and two improvised explosive devices followed as the girls rushed out of the school in panic.

Two questions arise. Who is behind this ghastly crime? What are its implications? As to the first, no one has claimed responsibility. The Afghan Government has blamed the Taliban, which has denied involvement and condemned the strike. This leaves one with the Islamic State, which has staged terror attack in Kabul and elsewhere in Afghanistan and which retains its ability to strike despite losing a great deal of territory over the months.

The Taliban are the more likely culprits. There is no rea-son why one should believe them, particularly when the May 8 blasts have to be seen in the background of the surge in their attacks and terror strikes following President Joe Biden's announcement that all American troops will leave Afghanistan by September 11. They know they will not win an election and they do not believe in democracy. They want to control Afghanistan by force and establish the *Sharia* rule.

Will they be able to do it?

What will happen if they do? The answer to the first would depend on the fighting qualities of the Afghan National Security and Defence Forces (ANDSF), the support they continue to receive from the US and its NATO allies. As to the first, despite serious problems of desertion and unwillingness to enlist, the Afghan National Army (ANA), the land warfare arm of the ANDSF, has emerged a battle-hardened force capable of confronting the Taliban and

other terrorist organisations it faces. Its commando and special forces units have been particularly successful.

Against this, the harsh fact

is that the Taliban have expanded their control over huge tracts of Afghanistan's countryside and some cities, besides inflicting a number of heavy defeats on the Afghan troops. At least some of the reverses the latter suffered the beginning of 2020 are attributable to the Trump administration's atrocious policies. These included asking the Government forces early in 2020 to go on the defensive in the interest of its peace nego-tiations with the Taliban, and arm-twisting it into agreeing to the Taliban demand of releasing 5,000 of their fighters in Afghan jails as a pre-condition for talks. Many of the released fighters have gone back to combat despite the Taliban's promise that they would not do so.
The Taliban, however,

pegan gaining ground even pefore the Trump Administration's policies and pressures hampered the ANDSF's operations. Also, while the capabilities of the Afghan troops have improved,



AS THE DIVERSION TO KANDAHAR OF THE INDIAN AIRLINES HIJACKED FLIGHT IC-814 IN DECEMBER 1999 SHOWED, THE TALIBAN WERE **ACTIVELY** PROMOTING TERRORISM AGAINST IT BY JAISH-E-MOHAMMED AND LASHKAR-E-TAIBA. DO WE HAVE A **COHERENT POLICY** TO MEET THE CHALLENGE?

against the future availability of effective air support, which has played an important role in many of the ANA's successful operations. According to one estimate, 80 to 90 per cent of the air support to it is now provided by the fledgling Afghan Air Force (AAF). The AAF, however, has

been supported by the massive air power of the US. Also. international contractors, now doing the bulk of the maintenance work on its planes and helicopters, will depart with the American troops. This will seriously affect its opera-tional capabilities. This underlines the importance of continued American aid. On July 7, 2012, Hillary Clinton, then US Secretary of State, announced in Kabul that President Obama had designated Afghanistan as a major non-NATO ally of the US. The questions are: How much and of what kind?

Apart from military hardware, there is a need for funds. Countering a blend of insurgency and terrorism is a very expressive business. The US has provided over \$86 billion as security assistance to Afghanistan between financial years 2002 and 2019. Since 2014, it has been providing between five and six

billion dollars per year to fund the ANDSF. How much and what form of assistance will Washington provide Afghanistan after the withdrawal of its troops?

Clearly, the military outcome in Afghanistan hangs in the balance. So does the fate of Afghanistan. All indications are that the Taliban have every intention to re-impose the medieval, authoritarian theocratic system that had reduced Afghanistan to a cleric-administered prison. As Ahmed Rashid wrote in *Taliban: Islam*, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia, edicts of the Taliban's Department of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice changed the lifestyles of Kabul's once easy-going population and forced Afghan women to disappear from public view".

India needs to watch out. As the diversion to Kandahar of the Indian Airlines hijacked Flight IC-814 in December 1999 showed, the Taliban were actively promoting terrorism against it by Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba. Do we have a coherent policy to meet the challenge?

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views

LETITERS TO THE EDITOR

THE OXYGEN CRISIS IN GOA

Sir — An oxygen crisis in the Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), the State's largest COVID facility, has led to the death of over 74 patients in the span of four days due to daily disruptions in oxygen supply. Just two days after 26 patients lost their lives at the GMCH within hours, the State Government told the Bombay High Court Bench in Goa that 15 more patients had suc cumbed.

The Bench was informed of 13 more deaths from the same hospital. The spate of deaths due to the lack of oxygen is causing a serious concern for the COVID-19 patients in Goa's hospitals. However, the Pramod Sawant Government and the hospital both told the court that all the deaths could not be attributed to the disruption in

oxygen supply.

The issue relating to oxygen shortage is so severe that the court had ordered the State Government to drop everything and ensure that there are no deaths for "at least one night". The relatives of the patients did raise an alarm after the oxygen pressure began to drop overnight. But it was several hours before anyone was able to fix the problem and ensure a steady supply of oxygen. It was a simple case of utter negligence on the part of the health department and the Government.

CK Subbu | Goa

BE CAUTIOUS, BUT NOT SCARED

Sir — The recrudescence of COVID-19 in the form of the second wave has claimed many lives since mid-March 2021. Cold, cough, breathlessness and fever have been experienced from time immemorial. Cold triggers fever and cough triggers breathlessness if curative measures are not taken in time: it is a known fact

Fever appears in many forms like flu, malaria, typhoid, encephalitis (brain fever), monkey fever, and so on. The said fevers have not given an undertaking that they would not appear since Corona has been appearing on a grand scale. But since Corona made an appearance, we have hardly heard of the fevers experienced ear-

Open up the barred humanity



ne suggestion of the Supreme Court about placing convicts under house arrest is worth considering. If one may add, the release of political prisoners on bail or parole too merits consideration Political and civil rights activists are often incarcerated for speaking out the truth to power or rebelling against the "system". Dissent is now a crime punishable with imprisonment!

It is a matter of immense significance in terms of human rights that the undertrials make up nearly 70 per cent of the total inmates in Indian prisons. Many of them do not have access to legal counsel or remedy Pre-trial imprisonment in itself is punishment. As they say, the process

lier. If a patient with cold, cough or fever approaches a doctor, they do not treat the patient without subjecting her/him to a COVID test. Have all other fevers lost ground to Corona? If all other fevers are treated like COVID, the fatalities are bound to occur due to wrong diagnosis and wrong administration of medicines

Whether malaria, typhoid and flu have not at all revisited after Corona first broke out in March 2020, the other normal ailments are still very much a reality. This aspect must be looked into by the Government, scientists and doctors

KV Seetharamajah | Hassan

PAY ATTENTION TO RURAL INDIA, TOO

—This refers to the news report, 'Dozens of bodies found buried in sand near Ganga in Unnao', May 14. When COVID-19 first hit India, the biggest fear among both the

is the punishment in India. It is a logical premise that the undertrials could be convicted or acquitted. Eventually, be it conviction or acquittal, they cannot be kept in a place where they run greater risk of contracting Coronavirus. They must be spared the 'capital punishment' by the virus!

t is common knowledge that many of India's prisons are congested and have more inmates than they can accommodate and, as such, they remain the hotspots for the contagion. Needless to say, the prison conditions are conducive to the spread of the contagion. When prisons are crammed full of inmates, it is next to impossible to maintain physical distancing. The incorporation of decongesting prisons into the pandemic response is a much-needed measure Prisoners also share the right to health with those outside prisons for anyone to be dismissive of their greater in-house susceptibility to contract the virus. The non-violent and low-risk offenders pose no significant risk to public safety. Releasing them is a containment measure that has a health benefit by reducing the risk of transmission and an uplifting humanitarian gesture.

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

policymakers and public experts was that the pandemic would travel to India's Hindi heartland — primarily across the rural belt of Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Bihar.

Given the size of the two States, the density of population, the abysmal healthcare infrastructure and the manner in which the virus could quickly transmit in these regions, this fear was legitimate. There was never any cogent explanation as to why this was the case, but this did not deter speculative, and clearly misplaced, theories about

the innate immunity of those in rural India. The tragic sight of the bodies floating in the Ganga confirms that the numbers of reported COVID fatalities are much higher than the official figures

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The situation is extremely fragile as there are also constraints in lifting 100 MT of allocated #oxygen from Burnpur and Kalinganagar





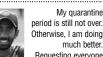
It will take time, but with great firmness, hoth defensively and offensively, we will achieve our goal to restore peace to

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu





- Sunny Leone



much better. Requesting everyone not to spread misleading stories/ information without the whole context.

Cricketer

— Wriddhiman Saha

#breakthechain COVID is not our friend. It's our enemy. Our focus

is only & only to keep

it as far away from us

as possible.



Actor — Vindu Dara Singh

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FIRST COLUMN HEALTHCARE POLICY NEEDS A BOOSTER

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The disparity among the masses makes the downtrodden people more vulnerable



ISHANEE SHARMA

ill the untoward dissemination of Coronavirus in India, the economic prosperity and healthcare developments were often considered complementary to each other. During the COVID pandemic, empirical corroborations show the gap between the two has not narrowed down. resulting in lopsided development. Every year, the Union and State Governments while appropriating their annual finances accord utmost priority toward superficial sectors or ancilliary enterprises ie insurance sector and proffer marginal policy attention to our medical and health care sectors. It is appalling that since Independence, the percentage-based monetary allocation in healthcare development had never exceeded two per cent of the overall financial allocations. Consequently, it results in a displeasing growth of certain sectors accompanied by social disparity caused by the whopping expenses incurred by the majority of our population in meeting the basic medicinal requirements at private hospitals. This disparity makes the downtrodden masses vulnerable in the spheres of human resource development, in seeking adequate health care benefits from the State. Ergo, the plunder bund-like insurance companies exploit them at their own whims and fancies, which in turn eclipses the



economic development and ultimately takes lives of thousands of people in our country due to inadequate healthcare infrastructure. This pandemic has inadvertently helped our economy in highlighting the existing infrastructure lacunaein the medical and healthcare industry. Due to the glaring deficiency of an adequate infrastructure and sufficient human resource in the public hospitals, the most sought-after health care schemes such as Ayushman Bharat have also failed to meet the legitimate medicinal demands of the masses during the times of the pandemic. A report published in a leading daily newspaper highlights that barely 10 per cent of the Ayushman Bharat cardholders could take the benefit of this centrally sponsored scheme.

We have witnessed that ICUs, ventilators, availability of RT-PCR facilities, oxygen cylinders, cardiac monitors for operation theatres, electrocardiogram machines, adequacy of beds available, vaccines, ancillary medicines and steroids, vertical transport facilities, staff and most importantly sufficient number of doctors were also inadequate in most of the healthcare institutions. Scarcity of testing facilities and vaccines erodes the utility of rural and government hospitals and bulldozes the poor patients to hasten to distant places for availing urgent treatment. It can be said that the genesis of this problem accentuated in the year 1991 when our country adopted the LPG (Liberalisation, Privatisation, Globalisation) policy. Since then the government allowed the private sector to take a lead in the health care industry and thereby the state in a gradual manner withdrew from its responsibilities for providing adequate health care means to the masses. This stunted public sector spending on medical services, resulting in excessive reliance upon the private sector in seeking health care benefits. The government needs to realize the fact that the private sector operates in a profit-centric manner and they will not take necessary initiatives to reach the masses at the grass root level. Presently in the rural areas, there are only 0.6 doctors per 1,000 population. A pure mercenary approach in the medicinal industry and inception of users' charges in healthcare sectors have placed the people at a disadvantage. Equilibrium in appropriating budgetary allocation between other sectors of our economy and the healthcare sector is a very crucial policy decision, which our country urgently needs to address for saving the lives of thousands of people who are dving due to the pandemic. Earmarking adequate precedence to the health care sector has also become non-negotiable in the present scenario.

(The writer is the Managing Partner, Ishanee Sharma Law Offices, and works towards achieving gender justice and freedom of speech. The views expressed are personal

Time to embrace the biological revolution



It is an inevitable, irreversible fact. Also, it hides within itself the potential of biological research and its unique opportunities for humanity

biological revolution one can-not fail to notice that one of the biggest ironies in biology is that microbes, which are the oldest self-replicating organisms on earth and which were among the last to be discovered, have largely been ignored. This is evident from the present crisis of the Coronavirus, which has devastated half of the world and has brought it almost to the brink of disaster, partly because of the late discovery of microbes and techniques of genome sequencing.

The lack of attention to micro-organisms is largely due to our observational bias. We tend to ignore what we cannot see. This pre-disposition allowed us to make great progress in astronomy observing visible objects billions of miles away from us, long before we could appreciate the role of bac teria and viruses on this planet. Life on earth is much more than there are plants. Our inherent knowledge gaps about viruses & microorganisms have brought us to the pre-

Hence, biological revolution is inevitable. The following facts expose us to the ongo-ing revolutionary and unprecedented bio-logical research and its unique opportuni-

Microbes have evolved into a complex nanomachine even capable of splitting water via energy from the sun, billions of years ahead, than terrestrial plants. There is only one existing prokaryotic type of bacteria capable of producing oxygen without the sun — the cyano bacteria. We have yet to discover its mechanism.

If one happens to look to the list of noble laureates in the last decade one cannot fail to notice that most of the noble prizes even for physics and chemistry have gone for their study on solving the biological riddle. Several aspects of the mystery of biology are still to be unravelled. Dr Siddhartha Mukherjee of New York University observed that though cancer research started earlier than space travel, cancer is still an unconquerable 'emperor of maladies'. It is no surprise that MIT, an institution known for engineering and technology has changed its focus to molecular biology and some of its faculty members have even won noble prizes for their research on cell biology. Dr Bruce H Lipton of Wisconsin

University and subsequently at Stanford University, USA, in his ground-breaking work, has discovered how cell mechanisms receive and process information in the cell through the critical cell membrane. The cell membrane through its receptor and integral protein that serves as an antenna sends signals from the outside environment. The implication of this research will radically change our understanding of life. It shows that genes and DNA are controlled by signals from outside through the cell mem brane. This research in cell biology and quantum physics is being hailed as a breakthrough showing that behaviour can be



FRESH WATER TO SURVIVE BUT IT IS ONLY FIVE PER CENT OF THE TOTAL WATER **VOLUME OF** THE EARTH. MOST OF IT IS IN ICE SHEETS AND THE SOIL. HENCE, WATER PURIFICATION IS CRITICAL FOR HUMAN SURVIVAL. THIS DISCOVERY WILL USE CELL

WE ALL NEED

PROTEINS OF THE **CELL MEMBRANE** TO PURIFY WATER

The writer is an advisor to Amity School of Natural Resources and Sustainable Development, Uttar Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.



changed as we train our thinking. Thoughts and minds' energy directly influence how the physical brain controls the body's physiology. Mental 'energy' can activate or inhibit the cells' function to produce

Biologists in collaboration with biochemists, biophysicists are working hard to cutting-edge research on most of the areas of the burning issues to meet the demands of the growing population that consumes more and more transportable forms of stored energy. Scientists are turning to alternative sources of renewable energy like solar, hydro, wind and tide. But our energy needs are still not being met because of their intermittent supply and time difference between their production and demand. The alternative renewable energies are getting cheaper, better all the time. However, we are yet to find a way to store these energies ineffective, cheap, reliable ways, without much creation of waste.

If biologists can devise a battery that allows overcoming intermittency problems inherent in solar, wind, and other renewable sources, we could use clean and abundant sources to meet all our energy needs.

The battery converts chemical energy to electrical energy by moving electrons from one metal to another. Electrons are tiny negatively charged particles. The copperzinc plates form positive and negative poles. It conducts the electric current. It can go as long as all the electrons get transferred. Thus, a battery is an energy transportation device. When the battery is dis-

charged, we use electricity to charge. Dr Angela Belcher, materials scientist at MIT, is evolving viruses into variants that could organize non-biological materials such as gallium arsenide and silicon for semiconductors. Her experiment gave her confidence to build new tools to build batteries. She found that metals and metal oxides worked particularly well. Viruses do not have cell walls or any structural elements. It is a protein capsule with DNA / RNA. She found that viruses-building elements could be used to make electrodes that can open a door to clean and efficient, new way for making batteries. Her next step is a virus-based state of art battery, but could this battery take the form of a dashboard, seat cover,

door panel? Nobody knows. Until recently, it was undisputed that cell membrane itself is a medium for exchange of water from cells and outside. Dr Peter Agre, molecular biologist at John Hopkin's Institute, in 1980 while purifying Rh protein from red blood cell membranes to identify it made a discovery that the membrane has Rh protein that works as a gate and alters a particular substance vehicle with a pass to allow entry into the cell. These proteins are known as aquaporins.

Starting with a large volume of the red blood cells, he separated the cell membrane from the rest of its content. Next, he carefully isolated Rh protein from other present proteins. We all need fresh water to survive but it is only five per cent of the total water volume of the earth. Most of it is in ice sheets and the soil.

Hence, water purification is critical for human survival. This discovery will use cell proteins of the cell membrane to purify water. We now know the whole family of aquaporin found in virtually all organisms on earth. A particular amino acid occupies a particular pattern of location and pattern.

Contrary to the theory by a famous economist, Thomas Robert Malthus, the world would be engulfed by war, famine and pestilence, but the convergence of biology and engineering is giving us great hope that we can avoid the gloomy future. How to bring together researchers from the fields of science for a collaborative effort in bioengineering by encouraging national investment in fundamental research that motivates scientists to work in interdisciplinary areas.

For all this to happen we must have convergence-minded policies and international collaboration in the field of biology, where scientists and technologists can work on a platform to defer the sixth mass extinction of Holocene or Anthropocene.

AS PER TV REPORTS, MY NUMBER WAS FALSELY GIVEN AS BELONGING TO SOME AMJAD KHAN, OSTENSIBLY TO LINK ME WITH DRUG TRAFFICKING. — MAHARASHTRA CONGRESS PRESIDENT

NANA PATOLE





ONE PARTY SHOULD NOT TAP THE PHONES OF THE OTHER PARTY OR LEADERS. THE MATTER SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED BY A COMMITTEE OF RETIRED JUDGES. — BJP LEADER

SUDHIR MUNGANTIWAR

The nation needs to come up with a transparent vaccine policy

We, as one nation, one people, need to come together. If all of us don't care for each other in this hour of crisis, who will?

day on May 11 (the day is celebrated to mark 1998 Pokharan nuclear tests) and the irony is Indian science has managed to break an atom and unleash its power but an atomic size virus seems insurmountable. The statement could well be turned aroundto, in this battle of humans' vs virus, policy makers ignored

A month into one the darkest periods of modern Indian history things look tattered and dishevelled with citizens in queues even for performing last rites of their loving. Early celebrations, political compulsions of a democratic society, vibrant regional sensitivities one can attribute a ton of reasons to the current level of pandemic devastation, yet what is lacking is sound backing and knowledge of a science-led bunch of



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

(The writer is a

policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

against pandemic. It may not be an exaggeration if one assumes India's second wave COVID battle is being fought in courts, national and local administrative offices. Each one in their desperation or compulsion to make the right announcement is giving a siloed decision, often overreaching each other's territory, therefore creating an unwarranted bottleneck at a critical time. Examples have been quoted of differences between Delhi and Mumbai and will continue to be a case study for any future pandemic management, but what it showed was any governance has to start right at the colony cluster level. The biggest bunch of caregivers/administrators/counsellors are right in the neighborhood and therefore healthcare and civic infrastructure has to be upgraded

experts leading the fight



at the mohalla level. Tossing a few social media posts with glossy pictures of infrastructure fail to impress when a person urgently needs to breathe Running to courts to intervene is allowing the judiciary to walk into executive's core responsibilities while presenting a united face to any calamity/war or crisis is one of the basic rules of public administration. One does not start to gain brownie points before the unconnected and potentially dangerous parties during a crisis situation. It is shocking to see central, state, local administrations if not judiciary, creating opposing guidelines for Covid management or trying to control surge with delays.

Second, it is important for those at the top to understand that the pandemic is a blunt reminder of the gross neglect tor human resources such as

policy making and governance. India still is governed by bureaucrats, who by training are generalists with no special domain knowledge for han-dling new world challenges therefore solutions. Political leaders of any hue would always cater to their constituencies and come up with the most populist schemes, which may or may not impact lives and livelihoods in the long term. An example, free food distribution, while at a humanitarian level it is a noble move yet ensuring a continuous supply of govern-ment subsidized ration is the only long-term solution. If the 'one nation one ration card' had been operationalised in major parts of India, along with various schemes for migrants and those out of the social net, tons of public sec-

of rationale domain experts in

police could have been better utilized for enforcing other Covid appropriate protocols.If a few scientists, epidemiologists, doctors had been permanently co opted in a steering committee for Covid management in national and State governments (if not local) the permanent tag of India facing worst Covid wave in the world could have been avoided.

Finally, the truth no matter however harsh or shaming if told honestly and with compassion, always benefits the orator. The government has been avoiding queries on vaccination supply and distribu-tion. All domain experts have been suggesting vaccination being the only long-term solution for protecting a large chunk of population and avoiding mass graves. The government had nearly eight months to be prepared for the current onslaught and has next few months.

largest vaccine manufacturing sites in the world, along with a home grown vaccine. It therefore cuts a very sorry figure when despite all the wealth and a team to push India to the next lever of growth, only about 10 per cent of the population has been vaccinated while a sizeable chunk of India, even inmost impacted districts of Delhi and Mumbai, are battling it for ajab in the arm. The cur rent vaccine distribution policy of the government is opaque and needs clarity along with an almost daily update on the pipeline for next few months. Estimates suggest nearly one per cent of the India population would be willing to pay for vaccines. Government must prioritise COVID3 management by securing nearly 1.5 billion vaccines for India in the

been blessed with one of the

Oli sworn in as Nepal **Prime Minister again**

K^P Sharma Oli, heading a minority Government, was sworn in as Nepal's Prime Minister on Friday, four days after the embattled leader lost a crucial vote of confidence in

Parliament. President Bidya Devi Bhandari administered the oath of office and secrecy to Oli as the prime minister at a scaled-down ceremony at Shital

Niwas, the presidential palace. The 69-year-old Chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal-(Unified Marxist-Leninist) was reappointed as prime minister by the president in his capacity as leader of the largest political party in Nepal's House of Representatives.

Oli will head a minority government as he does not enjoy a majority in Parliament after losing the vote of confidence on Monday. He was reappointed to the post on Thursday night as the Opposition parties failed to secure majority seats in Parliament to form a new gov-

Oli will now have to take a vote of confidence at the House within 30 days, failing which, an attempt to form a govern-ment under Article 76 (5) of the Constitution would be ini-

tiated by the President. The ministers of Oli's Cabinet were also sworn in during the ceremony.

GLOBE TROTTING Q

TO BRITISH TOURISTS

Portugal from next Monday, ending

thousands of UK vacation bookings

for Portuguese destinations would be allowed. British visitors will be

admitted on nonessential travel from May 17, the Portuguese foreign

arrival a negative PCR test for Covid-

EX-ARMY GREEN BERET GETS 15 YEARS FOR ESPIONAGE

Falls Church (US): A former Army Green Beret who admitted divulging

military secrets to Russia over a 15-year period was sentenced to more than 15 years in prison Friday on

espionage charges. The sentence of

15 years and 8 months imposed on

Peter Dzibinski Debbins, 46, of Gainesville, Virginia, by U.S. District

Judge Claude Hilton was largely in line with the 17-year term sought by

prosecutors. Defense lawyers sought a 5-year term. Debbins' lawyer, David

Benowitz, argued that Debbins caused

CORRIGENDUM ON EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

tice no WR/Engineering/ Consultancy/ PC Projects/01/2021 dt 26/04/21 for nort listing of Consultants for Providing

ded to 29.05.2021. All other t

ministry said in a statement Friday British travelers will need to show on

days of uncertainty over whether



During the oath-taking ceremony, Prime Minister Oli and Deputy Prime Minister Ishwar Pokharel did not mention the word God though President Bhandari had men-

"I will take oath in the name of the country and the people," Oli said, while President Bhandari had mentioned "God, country and the

All the Ministers and min isters of state from the old Cabinet have been included in the new Cabinet.

Pradeep Gyawali has been reappointed as Foreign Minister while Ram Bahadur Thapa and Bishnu Poudyal were appointed as ministers for Home and Finance. The oath-taking ceremony was kept brief keeping in mind the raging

COVID-19 pandemic in the

country. Vice President Nanda Bahadur Pun and Supreme Court Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher Rana were among the distinguished personalities who attended the ceremo-

There are 22 ministers and three ministers of state in the new Cabinet. Oli previously served as

prime minister from October 11, 2015 to August 3, 2016 and again from Pebruary 15, 2018 to May 13, 2021. Earlier, the President had

asked the Opposition parties to come up with the support of majority lawmakers to form a new government by 9 pm on Thursday after Oli lost the vote of confidence in the House

Palestinians flee as Israeli artillery pounds Gaza

Gaza Health Ministry says toll from fighting has risen to 119, including 31 kids & 19 women

AP ■ GAZA CITY, GAZA STRIP

Palestinians grabbed their Pchildren and belongings and fled neighborhoods on the outskirts of Gaza City on Friday as Israel unleashed a heavy barrage of tank fire and airstrikes, killing Israel said it was clearing a network of militant tunnels ahead of a possible ground invasion.

Israel has massed troops along the border and called up 9,000 reservists as fighting intensifies with the Islamic militant group Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip. Palestinian militants have fired some 1,800 rockets, and the Israeli military has launched more than 600 airstrikes, toppling at least three high-rise apartment buildings, and has shelled some areas with tanks stationed near the frontier.

As Israel and Hamas plunged closer to all-out war despite international efforts at a cease-fire, communal violence in Israel erupted for a fourth night Jewish and Arab mobs clashed in the flashpoint town of Lod, even after Israel dispatched additional security forces.

The Gaza Health Ministry says the toll from the fighting has risen to 119 killed, including 31 children and 19 women, with 830 wounded. The Hamas and Islamic Jihad militant groups have confirmed 20 deaths in their ranks, though Israel says that number is much nigher. Seven people have been killed in Israel, including a 6year-old boy and a soldier. Before dawn Friday, Israeli

everything. Rafat Tanani, his pregnant tanks and warplanes carried



A Palestinian relative mourns over the bodies of four young brothers from the Tanani family who were found under the rubble of a destroyed house following Israeli airstrikes in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza Strip on Friday

wife and four children, aged 7

and under, were killed after an Israeli warplane reduced their

four-story apartment building to rubble in the neighboring

town of Beit Lahia, residents

said. Four strikes hit the build-

ing at 11 p.m., just before the

family was going to sleep, Rafat's brother Fadi said. The

building's owner and his wife were also killed.

Merkel slams

anti-Israel

expletives about Jews.

protests

AP ■ BERLIN

Palestinian attacker killed at post: Israel

Israel's Army says a soldier has shot and killed a Palestinian who tried to ram his car into a military post in the occupied West Bank, then got out and attempted to stab the soldier.

The incident took place Remailah in the occupied West Bank. The Palestinian health ministry confirmed the death, but no other details were immediately available.

Rights groups have com-plained about past shootings of Palestinians by the Israeli military under questionable

Seven Palestinians dead in West Bank amid violence

Palestinians killed in the West Bank has risen to seven. The Israeli army says one was killed after attempting to stab a soldier. Palestinian health officials confirmed that death and said

killed by Israeli army fire in the occupied West Bank. The health ministry said five were killed in stone-throwing clashes with Israeli forces in several locations.

Thousands of B'deshi Muslims rally against Israel

Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman says Germany won't tolerate anti-Semitic demonstrations amid tensions in the Middle East. housands of Muslims led by activists from an Islamic political party demon-Anti-Israel protests in several cities this week have drawn strated in Bangladesh's capital concern and condemnation, on Friday to denounce attacks

outside a synagogue in Gelsenkirchen. A video showed dozens of by Israel against Palestinians. After the end of Eid a-Fitr prayers at Dhaka's main Baitul protesters waving Palestinian and Turkish flags and yelling Mokarram Mosque, activists from the Islamic Andolan Bangladesh, or Islamic Movement Bangladesh, began protesting and were joined by thousands of others. Merkel spokesman Steffen

Seibert said Friday that "anyone who uses such protests to scream their hatred of Jews is Muslim-majority Bangladesh celebrated the key festival of Eid a-Fitr in a subabusing the right to demon-He added that "our democracy will not tolerate anti-Semitic demonstrations." dued manner after the gov-ernment urged people to avoid large gatherings. Authorities

arranged prayers in phases at the Baitul Mokarram Mosque, where devotees maintained distancing to avoid spreading

Afterward, protesters crowded together outside, carrying signs reading "Boycott terrorist state Israel" and chanting "Down with

The current eruption of violence between Israelis and Palestinians began a month ago in Jerusalem. Israel regards all of Jerusalem as its capital, while the Palestinians want east Jerusalem, which includes sites sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims, to be the capital of a future Palestinian

Afghan police say Kabul mosque bombing kills 12

Abomb ripped through a Amosque in northern Kabul during Friday prayers, killing 12 worshippers, and wounding 15, Afghan police said. No one immediately

claimed responsibility for the bombing, the latest in a surge in violence as U.S. and NATO troops have begun their final withdrawal from the country, after 20 years of war.
According to Afghan

police spokesman, Ferdaws Faramarz, the bomb exploded as prayers had begun. The mosque's imam, Mofti Noman, was among the dead, the spokesman said and added that the initial police investigation suggests the imam may have been the target.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid denied any insurgent connection to the mosque attack, condemning it **WESTERN RAILWAY** and accusing Afghanistan's intelligence agency of being behind the explosion.

Both the Taliban and gov-ernment routinely blame each other for attacks. The attackers are rarely identified, and the public is seldom informed of the results of investigations into the many attacks in the

Short listing of Consultants for Providing Consultancy services for Preparatory activities of preparation of bid documents and associated documentation (drawings and bid process management for inviting EPC and PMC services and their finalization for various Civil Engineering projects over Western Railway. The EOI can be submitted through E-Mail (in Digital format) or Physical format to the addresses given in the Original EoI. The last date of submission of the EoI is extended to 29,05.2021. All other terms capital. One worshipper, Muhibullah Sahebzada, he had just stepped into the building when the explosion went off. Stunned, he he sound of screams, including those of children, as smoke



The mother of the mosque's imam. Mofti Noman, cries inside a car near the mosque after a bomb explosion in Shakar Dara district of Kabul on Friday

filled the mosque

Sahebzada said he saw several bodies on the floor, and at least one child was among the wounded. It appeared the explosive device had been hidden inside the pulpit at the front of the mosque, he added.
"I was afraid of a second

explosion so I came immediately to my home" he said. An image circulating on social media shows three bod-

ies lying on the floor of the sque. The explosion comes on

the second day of a three-day cease-fire announced by the Taliban for the Muslim holiday this week of Eid al-Fitr, which follows the fasting month of ernment has also said it would

So far, many of the attacks in Kabul have been claimed by the Islamic State group's local affiliate, though the Taliban and government routinely trade blame.

Last week, a powerful can bombing attack in Kabul killed over 90 people, many of them students leaving a girls' school. The Taliban denied involvement and condemned the

Earlier this week, U.S. troops left southern Kandahar Air Base, where some NATO forces still remain. At the war's peak, more than 30,000 U.S. troops were stationed in Kandahar, the Taliban heartland. The base in Kandahar was cona largest U.S

UN envoy asks Thai leader's aid in ending crisis in Myanmar Bangkok: The United Nations'

out an intense barrage on the

northern end of the Gaza Strip. In the darkness, Houda

Ouda and her extended fami-

ly ran frantically inside their

home in the town of Beit

Hanoun, trying to find shelter

as the earth shook for two and

half hours, Ouda recalled. "We even did not dare to

look from the window to know what is being hit," she said.

When daylight came, she saw the swath of destruction out-

side: streets cratered, buildings

crushed, their facades torn off, an olive tree burned bare, dust

and powered concrete covering

special envoy on Myanmar met with Thailand's prime minister on Friday as she coninues efforts to end violence in Mvanmar sparked by a military takeover in February.
The envoy, Christine

Schraner Burgener, told Prayuth Chan-ocha in Bangkok that she hopes Γhailand will find ways to work with Myanmar's military o ease the unrest, the prime minister's office said in a statenent.
The Army's seizure of

power has been opposed by a broad cross-section of Myanmar's population. *AP*

Myanmar frees Japanese journalist as gesture to Tokyo

Tokyo: An arrested Japanese reporter returned home Friday after being released by Myanmar's ruling junta in what it called a gesture of friendship

Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said Yuki Kigazumi was released after efforts by Japanese diplomats and others. The reporter boarded a plane at Yangon's airport and landed in Japan on Friday night.

Kitazumi, a freelance journalist and former reporter for Japan's Nikkei business news, said in brief comments at the airport that he learned of his Afghanistan, after Bagram told to pack his bag in 10 minnorth of Kabul.

Appendix Ap

House GOP elects Trump defender Elise Stefanik to No. 3 post

 $\begin{array}{c} R^{epublicans} \text{ vaulted Rep.} \\ R^{epublicans} \text{ vaulted Rep.} \\ \text{of House leadership Friday,} \end{array}$ electing an ardent Donald Trump defender in hopes of calming their searing civil war over the deposed Rep. Liz Cheney's unremitting combat with the former president.

Stefanik, R-N.Y., a moder-

ate turned Trump loyalist who's given voice to many of his false

Stefanik defeated challenger Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas, by

claims about election fraud, was elected as expected to the No. 3 post that Cheney, R-Wyo., held for over two years. Backed by Trump and the

Rep. Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., arrives as House GOP members hold an election for a new chair of the House Republican Conference to replace Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo at the Capitol in Washington on Friday

servative House Freedom Caucus, Roy was a prohibitive

134-46 in a secret ballot vote long shot whose candidacy conducted behind closed seemed a signal to GOP leadexpect a robust voice moving

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that the timings of the following Special Trains will be revised as under:-

Train No. & Name	Station	Existing Time	Revised Time	Date (from Originating Station)
09521 Rajkot Jn Samastipur Jn. Spl.	Bharatpur Jn.	04:17/04:22	04:30/04:32	19.05.2021
09177 Mumbai Central - Bhagalpur Spl.	Bharatpur Jn.	04:30/04:35	04:48/04:53	19.05.2021
09133 Bandra Terminus - Ghazipur City Spl.	Bharatpur Jn.	04:12/04:14	04:13/04:15	19.05.2021
09194 Gorakhpur - Mumbai Central Superfast Special	Ratlam Jn.	13:20/13:30	13:50/14:00	19.05.2021
02780 Hazrat Nizamuddin - Vasco Da Gama Express Special	Kopargaon	12:33/12:35	12:18/12:20	with immediate effect.

ocial 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.

For any kind of Information such as detailed Time-Table and Stations enroute etc. igers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in Download RailMadad app. us on

Tabe f B

1035/2021

RailMadad Helpline No. 139



NORTHERN RAILWAY Visit us at : www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

Irish health system targeted in 'serious' ransomware attack

AP ■ LONDON

Treland's health service shut down its IT systems on Friday after being targeted in a ransomware attack by what it called "international crimi-

Appointments and elective surgeries were canceled at several hospitals and Deputy Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said the disruption could last

"There's lots we don't know but it appears to be a ransomware attack by international criminals," Varadkar said.
"The problem could run through the weekend and into next week, unfortunately."

Ransomware attacks are typically carried out by criminal hackers who scramble data. paralysing victims' networks, and demand a large payment to decrypt it. Varadkar called the attack "very serious."

"It's coming at a time when

the health service is extremely busy doing lots of other things," he said. "It's going to be a very difficult time for the health ser-

vice. Health Service Executive CEO Paul Reid told broadcaster RTE that health bosses had "taken a precautionary measure to shut down a lot of our major systems to protect

"We are at the very early stages of fully understanding the threats, the impact and try-ing to contain it," he said. The health service said

appointments for coronavirus vaccinations were not affected. Varadkar said emergency services, ambulance services, GP systems and pharmacy systems also were unaffected, but said there would be "major problems" for radiology services, radiation oncology, elective surgeries and obstetrics and gynaecology appoint-

UK, US scientists call for fuller probe into Covid Wuhan lab leak theory

London: A group of leading UK and US scientists, including Indian-origin Cambridge University immunology and infectious disease expert Ravindra Gupta, on Friday called for more investigation to determine the origin of the Covid-19 pandemic, including the theory of an accidental release from a lab in the central Chinese city of Wuhan

In a letter published in the journal 'Science', the experts from world leading universities such as Harvard, Stanford and MIT said knowing how Covid-19 emerged is critical for informing global strategies to mitigate the risk of future outbreaks.

They caution that hypotheses about both natural and laboratory spillovers must be taken seriously until there is sufficient data.

Fully vaccinated can drop the masks, skip social distancing

AP ■ WASHINGTON

In a major step toward return-ing to pre-pandemic life, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has eased mask-wearing guidance for fully vaccinated people, allowing them to stop wearing masks outdoors in crowds and in

most indoor settings.
"Today is a great day for America," President Joe Biden said Thursday during a Rose Garden address heralding the new guidance, an event where he and his staff went without masks.

Hours earlier in the Oval Office, where Biden was meeting with vaccinated Republican lawmakers, he led the group in removing their masks removing their masks when the guidance was

Biden to meet DACA recipients in immigration overhaul push

AP ■ WASHINGTON

As a candidate, President Joe Biden promised to protect those often described as "dreamers," brought to the US illegally as children, and their families by reinstating an Obama-era policy that protected them from deportation. Biden is scheduled to meet

Friday with six immigrants who benefited from the programme.
The Oval Office meeting

comes as Biden looks to press Congress to pass legislation codifying the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals programme that then-President Barack Obama instituted by executive action in 2012, providing limited protection immigrants brought to the US illegally as children.

Hopeful for early call on TRIPS waiver: Com Secy

India on Friday expressed hope for an early decision in the WTO on a proposal of India and South Africa for a intellectual property rights provisions in the TRIPS agreement to deal with the Covid-19 pan-

demic.
In October 2020, India and South Africa submitted a proposal suggesting a waiver for all World Trade Organization (WTO) members on the implementation of certain provisions of the TRIPS Agreement in relation to the prevention, containment or treatment of Covid-19.

The agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights or TRIPS came



into effect in January 1995. It is a multilateral agreement on intellectual property (IP) rights such as copyright, industrial designs, patents and protection of undisclosed information or trade secrets.

Commerce Secretary Anup Wadhawan said the proposal had received support from several countries.

PTI I NEW DELHI

"I am hopeful that in an early timeframe, some decision will be reached at the WTO...I am hopeful that an early out come will be achieved on this," he told reporters.

The move would help in scaling up the production of vaccines and other essential grew by 60.29 per cent to USD 34.45 billion. products to deal with the coronavirus, he added. ed a growth rate of 195.72 per

Exports jump to USD 30.63 bn in April; trade deficit at USD 15.1 bn

India's exports in April jumped nearly three-fold to USD 30.63 billion from USD 10.36 billion in the same month

last year, according to government data released on Friday.

Imports too rose to USD 45.72 billion last month as against USD 17.12 billion in April 2020, the data showed. Trade deficit widened to

USD 15.10 billion as against USD 6.76 billion in April 2020. Exports in April last year had plunged by a record 60.28 per cent due to the Covid-19 pandemic induced lockdown. In March this year, exports

Due to the low base effect, exports in April 2021 record-

Oil imports stood at USD 10.8 billion as compared to USD 4.66 billion in the corresponding month last year. Major export commodities

which have recorded positive

growth in April include gems and jewellery, jute, carpet, handicrafts, leather, electronic goods, oil meals, cashew, engineering, petroleum products, marine products and chemi-

and, wherever required, suitably guide the officers con-

cerned to maximise the dis-

Benchmarks end flat in see-saw trade; log weekly losses

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The BSE Sensex eked out marginal gains on Friday after two sessions of deep declines as investors scooped up Asian Paints, RIL and FMCG stocks amid a rebounding trend in overseas markets.

A recovering rupee also propped up the market, though the COVID-19 situation and pace of vaccination weighed on investor sentiment, traders said. The BSE benchmark

swung between gains and losses during the session, before finally finishing 41.75 points or 0.09 per cent higher at 48,732.55. However, the broader NSE Nifty slipped 18.70 points or 0.13 per cent to 14,677.80. Asian Paints was the top performer among the top performer among the Sensex components, rallying 8.51 per cent, after the company on Wednesday reported an 81.13 per cent jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 869.89 crore for the March quarter.

Rupee settles at near 7-weak high of 73.29, rises 13 paise against USD

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Indian rupee strength-ened by 13 paise to settle at a near seven-week high of 73.29 against the US dollar on Friday, tracking weaker American currency in the overseas market.

At the interbank forex mar-

ket, the local unit opened at 73.41 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 73.22 and a low of 73.41.

Gold gains ₹146; silver jumps ₹513

New Delhi:Gold rose by ₹146 to ₹47,110 per 10 gram in the national capital on Friday fol-lowing recovery in global precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at ₹46,964 per 10 gram. Silver also gained ₹513 gram. Silver also gained ₹515 to ₹70,191 per kilogram from ₹69,678 per kilogram in the previous trade."Spot gold prices for 24 carat in Delhi rose by ror 24 carat in Delhi rose by ₹146 with recovery in COMEX (New York-based commodities exchange) gold prices.

Rates for RoDTEP likely to be announced in 2 weeks: DGFT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rates for the tax refund Rscheme for exporters -Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) - are expected to be announced in the coming two weeks, a senior official said on Friday.

Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Amit Yadav said it is working with the finance ministry on the

Last year, the government approved the RoDTEP scheme for reimbursement of taxes and duties to exporters, with a view to give a boost to the country's outbound shipments. The scheme was implemented for all goods, with effect from January 1.

"My sense is that in the coming two weeks, we would be in a position to have an announcement of the rates for RoDTEP," he said at a PHDC-

Apex exporters' body the Federation of Indian Export

Organisations (FIEO) has time and again asked the govern-ment to announce the rates for different sectors under the scheme as delay would have

implications for future exports. The rates have to be noti-fied by the Department of Commerce, which would be based on the recommendation of a committee chaired by G K Pillai, former commerce and home secretary

Yadav said due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an impact on both tax collections and expenditure and there is also the challenge of revenue. On the Merchandise Export from India Scheme (MEIS), the DGFT said it is

working with the Department of Revenue on the issue. "We have proposed to the revenue department that if the

MEIS scrips can be issued, which can be encashable a year after...

Something
(on these lines) we are

Forex reserves up by USD 1.444 billion to **USD 589.465 billion**

 $\begin{array}{ccccc} T_{f\ o\ r\ e\ i\ g\ n}^{he\ country's} \\ \text{exchange\ reserves} \\ \text{increased\ by\ USD} \end{array}$ the country's 1.444 billion to USD 589.465 billion in the week ended May 7, 2021, RBI data showed. In the previous

week ended April 30, 2021, the reserves had risen by USD 3.913 billion to USD

588.02 billion. The reserves had touched a lifetime high of USD 590.185 billion in the week ended January 29, 2021. During the reporting week ended May 7, 2021, the increase in reserves was on account of a rise in foreign cur-

rency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall FCA rose by USD 434 million to USD 546.493 billion in the reporting week, the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) weekly

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.

Gold reserves surged by USD 1.016 billion to USD 36.48 billion in the reporting week, the data showed

The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were down by USD 4 million to USD 1.503 billion. The country's reserve position with the IMF declined by USD 1 million to USD 4.989 billion in the reporting week, the data showed.

Govt to provide liquidity to exporters by fast customs, duty drawback refunds Arawback drive on a drawback drive on a dra

In an attempt to ensure liq-uidity for exporters in the dif-ficult period of Covid pandemic, the government has decided to credit all customs refunds and duty drawback claims, made by them upto May 14, by the end of the month.

The Central Board of

Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has launched a special refund and duty drawback between May 15 and May 31. Under this drive, efforts will be made by customs officials for priority disposal of all pending Customs refunds, IGST refunds and Customs duty drawback claims pending as on May 14 this year.

Ín an instructional circular issued to all Principal Chief Commissioners, Commissioners and Commissioners of Customs and Central taxes, the CBIC has instructed officials to closely monitor performance of the special refund and duty

CANCELLATION/REDUCTION IN FREQUENCY OF SPECIAL TRAINS

It is notified for the information of passengers that due to low occupancy and other operational reasons Railways have decided to cancel and reduce the frequency o following special trains, as per the details given below:-

CANCELLATION OF TRAINS			
Train No. & Name	Date from Cancellation		
04740 Bikaner JnDelhi Sarai Rohilla Superfast Special	15.05.2021 to till further advice		
04739 Delhi Sarai Rohilla-Bikaner Jn. Superfast Special	16.05.2021 to till further advice		
02463 Delhi Sarai Rohilla-Jodhpur Jn. Express Special	19.05.2021 to till further advice		
02464 Jodhpur JnDelhi Sarai Rohilla Express Special	20.05.2021 to till further advice		
04811/04812 Sikar JnDelhi Sarai Rohilla-Sikar Jn. Exp. Spl.	19.05.2021 to till further advice		

REDUCTION IN FREQUENCY OF TRAINS **Effective From** Train No. & Name Frequency Frequency 02964 Udaipur City-Hazrat Nizamuddir Tri-Weekly 16.05.2021 Superfast Specia (Tue, Fri, Sun) till further advice Tri-Weekl 02963 Hazrat Nizamuddin-Udaipur City 17.05.2021 Daily (Mon. Wed. Sat) Superfast Special till further advice 04727 Sriganga Nagar-Delhi Jn. Tri-Weekly 15.05.2021 Daily (Tue, Thu, Sat) till further advice Tri-Weekly 04728 Delhi Jn.-Sriganga Nagar 16.05.2021 (Wed, Fri, Sun)

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 Gove





NORTHERN RAILWAY Your Convenience - Our Concern

Reliance Jio announces free talk time offer for JioPhone users for pandemic



PTI ■ NEW DEI HI

Reliance Jio on Friday said it Ris working with Reliance Foundation to provide 300 free minutes of outgoing calls per month, which amounts to 10 minutes per day, for the entire period of the pandemic.

The scheme will be available to JioPhone users who have not been able to recharge due to the ongoing pandemic, the company said in a state-

company to announce free talk time for users in the second wave of pandemic wherein many states have imposed lockdowns or lockdown-like restrictions as a desperate measure to restrict the spread of the

Fuel prices rise sharply again after day's break



IANS NEW DELHI

Maintaining its rising trend, fuel prices increased again on Friday just after a day of pause with state-owned fuel retailers hiking rates of petrol and diesel by 29 paisa and 34 paisa per litre respectively in the national capital.

In Delhi, petrol now costs

₹92.34 per litre and diesel is priced at ₹82.95 per litre up from vesterday's level of Rs 92.05 and ₹82.61 a litre respec tively in the national Capital.

Across the country as well the petrol and diesel prices increased on Friday but its quantum varied depending on the level of local levies in

In Mumbai, petrol now comes for around ₹98.65 a litre and diesel for ₹90.11 a litre according to a price notifica-tion from oil marketing companies Petrol prices in some states

including Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and in some places in Maharastra have breached the ₹100 per litre mark while premium petrol has been hovering above that level for some time

Fuel prices have now increased on four of the last five days rising continuously from Monday to Wednesday, pausing on Thursday and again ris-ing on Friday. Prior to holding back auto fuel prices on ia Sunday, rates had also increased sharply on previous four days as well.

Petrol prices have increased by ₹1.79 a litre Delhi in May in the eight increases so far Similarly, diesel prices have risen by ₹ 2.22 per litre in capital this month.

India needs its own crypto unicorns: Experts



IANS NEW DELHI

tressing that India needs Ssmart and sensible crypto regulation, leading cryptocurrency players in the country on Friday urged the government against the ban and sought engagement to build consensus on crypto regulation.

The government earlier 'calibrated approach' towards digital assets and formulating a Bill on cryptocurrencies. A final decision is yet to be taken

At a webinar organised by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and its Blockchain and Crypto

Assets Council (BACC) members, the stakeholders said that consultation and dissemination of information between the government and the industry participants is crucial to deter mining the most appropriate regulatory framework and supporting innovation. "There are over 1.5 crore Indians holding over Rs 1.500 crore worth a niche market, but a rapidly growing finance market. Despite the growth in crypto adoption, India is behind in terms of both regulations as well as number of successful

crypto startups," said Nischal Shetty, CEO WazirX.

◆ IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is notified for the information of rail passengers that the Railway's have decided to cancel the following Unreserved Mail/ Express & other Special Trains due to low occupancy and other operational reasons as per the following details:-

CANCELLATION OF UNRESERVED MAIL/DMU EXPRESS SPECIAL TRAINS Train No. & Name **Date from Cancellation** 04523 Saharanpur - Nangal Dam Daily Special 17.05.2021 to till further advice 04524 Nangal Dam - Ambala Cant Daily Special 18.05.2021 to till further advice 04532 Ambala Cant - Saharanpur Daily Special 18.05.2021 to till further advice 04461 Delhi Jn - Rohtak Jn DMU Daily Special 17.05.2021 to till further advice 04462 Rohtak Jn - Delhi Jn DMU Daily Special 18.05.2021 to till further advice 04455 New Delhi - Ghaziabad Daily Special 17.05.2021 to till further advice 04404 Saharanpur - Delhi Jn Daily Special 17.05.2021 to till further advice 04459 Delhi Jn - Saharanpur Daily Special 17.05.2021 to till further advice 09805 Kota Jn - Udhampur Weekly Special 19.05.2021 to till further advice 09806 Udhampur - Kota Jn Weekly Special 20.05.2021 to till further advice

For any other information passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.





Yes Bank to sell property of E Commerce Magnum Solution for recovery of ₹345 cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Yes Bank has invited bids for sale of immovable assets of a borrower, E Commerce Magnum Solution Ltd, to recover dues of over ₹345

In an e-auction sale notice, Yes Bank said it took physical possession of the immovable properties mortgaged to it on August 29, 2020 pursuant to a demand notice issued to the borrower and mortgagor in January 2020.

The e-auction will take place under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security

Interest (Sarfaesi) Act.
The auction is with regard to One Hughes project at Chowpatty, Mumbai of E Commerce Magnum Solution Ltd, Yes Bank said.

The bank has set the eserve price for the auction at Rs 270 crore.

"The properties will not be sold below the reserve price set by the AO (authorised officer),"

The properties in possession by the bank will be sold by way of e-auction on June 15, 2021 for recovery of ₹ 345.32 crore as on April 27, 2021, Yes Bank said in the notice.0



Metro RPF conducting 'No mask- No metro' campaign inside a running metro to spread the message of Covid Awareness

Bollywood

JACQUELINE FERNANDEZ

Stav strong, stav safe, stav healthy. Help others when you can. Spread love and kindness always. We are all battling the pandemic in our own ways, let's be understanding and sympathize with all. Let's be there for one another. Keep sharing your stories of kindness with us and help us spread love and unity



SHARAD KELKAR

I chose the project Deia Vu very carefully and wisely. It is not a big budget film where a lot of money is riding on me, because the content is very good. I believe that the film will be appreciated because of the way we shot it and I have full faith in the director Abhijeet Warang. I am not feeling any kind of pressure.



There's a lot of difference between film music and independent songs. There are no boundaries while you're working on an inde pendent song. That's why it's called that. You're not bound by a script, in fact, it's the other way around. The storyline is made depending or



SANJANA SANGHI

hands with Save The Children, a century-old Global Child Rights Organisation in our mission to #ProtectAMillion, Together we will be providing support in the form of oxygen, essential medicine psycho-social support to the most vulnerable

JENNIFER LOPEZ

All of my albums are very special to me, but This Is Me... Then is my favorite album I've ever done so far. know a lot of you have heard me say that before, so in honor of my #JLovers helping it re-enter the album charts again after 19 years, here is a little throwback of



CAUSE

RACE AGAINST TIME... AND DEATH

When the city was being swept away under the onslaught of the second wave of COVID-19, it was volunteer groups which came to the rescue. Chahak Mittal finds out some stories of resilience, faith and patience

8.45 am: I wake up with a jolt and reach out for my phone and open a WhatsApp group I've pinned on top these days. My immediate concern is if Mr Pathak had found a ventilator bed for his mother in North Delhi, a request that came in late last night. I had sent two verified leads, post which I slept, guiltily. To my heart's relief, the 33-year-old man had met his requirement through the contact. I scroll further and the task for the day seems ready. My friend's father, Mr Ramnarayan in Bengaluru, has been prescribed Tocilizumab and his daughter is frantically searching for the medi-cine as the hospital has run out of supplies.

9.00 am: In another group, a request lands for oxygen concentrator in Delhi and I tweet it right away, mentioning between asterisks that 'the patient is just 27' and

also, forwarding the message to other groups. I am looking for leads for the respective cases by cross-messaging and shifting between social media platforms.

2.00 pm: While I have received 10 contacts for

the concentrator, my call log indicates 38 other calls already made in a hunt for the Tocilizumab. I dial the 10 contacts and much to my disappoint-

ment, only one gives hope.

5.30 pm: I have lost track of the number of calls I have made today, perhaps 60-70. I even memorise a

few numbers now which are being shared over and over again but to no avail. I have found two leads for the Tocilizumab. While one says it will be available tomorrow evening, the other requires full payment before delivery. Leaving this decision on the patient's family. I pass on a verified lead for the

concentrator to the Delhi patient.

8.45 pm: I have failed to arrange the medicine for the Bengaluru man despite making desperate calls. I am exhausted and begin to imagine and feel pity for the plight of his daughter. While

the concentrator will be delivered by

 $K^{\mathrm{im}\,\mathrm{Jong}\,\mathrm{Un}\,\mathrm{has}\,\mathrm{a}\,\mathrm{decision}}_{\mathrm{to}\,\mathrm{make}:\,\mathrm{Maintain}\,\mathrm{his}\,\mathrm{bru}}$

tal family legacy or become a legitimate leader, a dilemma

that could ultimately destroy the Kim dynasty. As North

Korea faces a critical cross-

Mind Of A Dictator chronicles

the life and reign of Kim Jong

Un as the young and unpre-

dictable leader attempts to

turn around his nation's for-

shed new light on the duality

of Kim Jong Un, both his

capacity for ruthlessness and a

softer side nostalgic for his

youth. For the first time in an

extended global television

interview, one of the assassins

of Kim Jong Un's half-brother,

Siti Aisvah, tells her extraordi-

nary full story. Also, in a world exclusive, João Micaelo, Kim's

former childhood classmate

speaks publicly for the first

time about visiting Kim in North Korea. It also tracks the

game-changing rise of Kim's sister, Kim Yo Jung, to his

right-hand woman and voice

order using fear and violence

while her brother reinvents himself as a modern leader.

intimate archival footage and

rare interviews paint an in-depth portrait of a fractured

country. Key moments that

give a fresh perspective on the

notorious dictator and his

family's dynasty also include

First-hand testimonies

the regime, maintaining

The film features never before-seen interviews that

tomorrow morning, my mind is still

Next day, 11.00 am: The concentrator has been delivered without any hassle. The 27-year-old patient's family is thankful. I shed a tear of relief! My focus is

back on finding more sources for the Tocilizumab while 20 other requests pile up in my notifications box.

3.00 pm: I learn that Mr Ramnarayan will never need Tocilizumab, or any other medicine now. The search is over. A hope has been killed. Another pyre is being set up. I don't know the man but the grief of his death consumes me, leaves me agitated and helpless like never before. Was an advance and a hefty payment for a medicine

more important than a life?

3.30 pm: I feel like quitting but another request for an oxygen bed in the city makes me recollect my thoughts, which do not agree on giving up on anoth-

er life battling hard. As the second wave racked every nerve of the country in April, this



timeline with few variations became the routine for many people along with juggling WFH. While the demands for resources may have less-ened with the falling number of cases this month, the incidents which the volunteers share haunt them and give a detailed insight into the insides of a relief group formed due to the necessity that emerged out of the cur-

THE BEGINNING
For Abu Sufiyan, founder of Purani Dilli Walo Ki Baatein, it began when some symptoms started to show among a few of his team members in early April, who were then asked to quarantine and work

from home. He got himself tested for COVID-19. Even though the reports were negative, the symptoms were evident. Medical experts alerted him to stay at home since they felt it could be the new mutant spreading in India, which wasn't being detected by the RTPCR tests though the symptoms turn out to be more severe.

He shared, "I started searching

for resources for my team as a few of their family members had severe their family members had severe symptoms. And soon, social media and our group was flooded with requests from people in the capital who were looking for COVID resources desperately. There were SOS calls for hospital beds, plasma, Remdesivir, oxygen support, concen-

trators, cylinders and refillers, ventilator beds, other life-saving medicines like the Tocilizumab and even meals for those who stayed alone and couldn't cook. The demands for ICU home setup followed soon after when people realised how hospitals were now too crowded, understaffed and unequipped. We started preparing lists of verified contacts for the respective needs and put them out as a consolidated information.

Journalist Aditya Raj Kaul, who has been closely and endlessly working with over 500 volunteers, during the second wave to arrange required supplies for COVID-19 patients, said that an extremely dire situation like this demands every one of us to act responsibly. He said that the current struggle of finding oxygen sup-plies reminded him of his grand-mother's demise in 2003 due to the unavailability of oxygen support in time. "It had stayed with me," he added, "and that's how I started from one WhatsApp group to another and because of my good following on Twitter, I would amplify SOS calls and tag several accounts which could be connected to the cases. That's how it grew after people personally started reaching out to me and I could help out more people from places like Jodhpur, areas of Jharkhand, UP and Jammu. In the initial days, we used to get more than 300-500 requests a day, which were different from those 1,000s we received on WhatsApp groups."

DEPLETING RESOURCES, COM-MON CHALLENGES AND EVOLVING STRATEGIES

While the information was being verified and shared through personal handles and social media toolkits, due to the rising number of cases and demands, they soon fell short. Abu added, "After a few hours of creating a list of available resources, they would exhaust and hence, would be of no use to people whom it reached by the end of the day. This became one of the major challenges and hence, we started to mention the date and time when a resource was verified for use and a disclaimer for its limited availability."

Chennai-based independent journalist and part of a volunteer group in the city, Manasa R, pointed out at how suppliers seemed to have run out of stock in most scenarios, due to which the meaning of 'a verified contact' changed each day. She said, "From hospitals to officials, they stopped attending the calls when the cases surged. The lines were either busy or unavailable or they'd hang up. Out of 200 calls, two would respond only in the negative. The most unique challenge was the process of verification. After we added a supplier's contact to the added a supplier's contact to the database, who could help us find an oxygen cylinder, the supplier would later run out of stock and stop answering calls. And we had to start finding new suppliers from a scratch."

Aeshal Fatima, class 12th stu-Aesnai Fatima, class 12th student and Delhi-based volunteer, part of nine such groups on WhatsApp, pointed towards the non-functioning of Google spreadsheets, which had been circulated majorly around social media. matter how many times I updated the sheet with a verified lead, the contact soon would go out of reach or the resources they had available got exhausted since hospitals were running out of oxygen on an hourly basis," said she.

While finding the supplies was a major issue, their reasonability and affordability became a concern soon after. Pointing towards the challenge that unfolded — unreasonable prices of oxygen cylinders or concentrators due to the high demand, she said, "This is the worst thing someone could do to the one who's already suffering. And the sadder part is that in such a life-and-death situation, one has no choice but to give in, no matter the cost."

HAUNTING STORIES OF VIC-

TORY AND DEMISE It was 2 am when Kaul received request from Bengaluru for a 26year-old girl, whose parents were unable to find a hospital bed. Kaul and his team started working on the case right away, got the girl admitted to a hospital, however, to their disappointment, the girl passed away the same night at 4.30. "One of the volunteers, closely associated with the case, broke down and couldn't come to terms with the fact that we were unable to help save her,"

On her second day as a volunteer, eshal came across a request on one of the groups she was part of for an oxygen cylinder in Lucknow. She said, "I sent a few leads and went to sleep with guilt and fear within. I woke up to see that the patient had found the cylinder and was relieved to hear this. That was the first time when I was really motivated to help out as many people as I can during these tough times and I made sure I dedicated myself to it also given the obligation one feels after coming across a

request."
While there were stories of victory and demise coming in, there were also certain cases where the already broken-down healthcare system meant that non-Covid patients had a tough time getting relief. Abu shared, "In one of the most unusual cases during those days, we came across a case of my friend's house help's daughter, who had fallen from the stairs and suffered a severe injury on head. Due to the unavailability of beds in hospitals, they were struggling to find a doctor and a bed for her. It took seven hospitals that night, all at different places, to get tests and MRI scans done. She was finally admitted to the eighth hospital."

On the other hand, there are also stories of resilience, faith and patience which passed the test of time and emerged. Manasa shared how her cousin was unable to find a bed for her younger brother for over eight days, "the longest a case took to close," due to which she began losing hope. "I cried in relief when a combination of luck, perseverance and a personal contact" of the family worked in helping the patient. When she shared the story with other volunteers in the group, who were not involved in the case, they listened patiently, celebrated with her as though the patient was one of their own. "Well, everything is significant — a person being saved, a person dying, a person not receiving the resources on time, a person actually managing to find a resource. We, as volunteers, although, are quite careful about our boundaries with patients and their kin, in a time like this, we are all invested in each of them in some way or the other," she

An in-depth portrait

North Korea: Inside The Mind Of A Dictator takes viewers on a journey through Kim Jong Un's past and present to understand the man and the myth who holds North Korea's uncertain future in his hands



the following:
- A rare interview with Kim Dong Chul, the longest-held American in North Korea, who was imprisoned for spying for the CIA.

- The story of Kim Jong Un's aunt and uncle who cared for him as a teenager before escaping to the United States.

- US Ambassador John

Bolton's critiques of Trump's negotiations with North Korea at the summit in Hanoi, insight on the breakdown in peace talks and Kim's subsequent



- An interview with Lee Young Guk, a bodyguard to Kim Jong Un's father, Kim Jong Il, who spent significant time with Kim Jong Un as a

To understand Kim's leadership decisions over the past three years, including his encounters with President Donald Trump and his plans for the "hermit kingdom," experts, journalists and gov ernment officials unravel the inner workings of his mind and his tumultuous past as he works to determine his legacy.

The two-hour special delves into the complex family dynamics of the Kim dynasty at the heart of North Korea's history and operations, and offers key insight on his school days in Europe, the failed Korea's growing arsenal of nuclear weapons. The special also takes a

adep dive into the psychology and history of the elusive supreme leader in order to bet-ter understand his all-encompassing dynastic power and struggle to keep a grip on control while navigating an uncertain future. From his isolated childhood to the fleeting freedom he experienced in his teenage years to his attempts at diplomacy under the pressure of crippling sanctions, the series pulls back the curtain on a dictator torn between the old ways he grew up with and the encroaching modern world.

The film takes viewers on

journey through Kim Jong Un's past and present to under stand the man and the myth who holds North Korea's uncertain future in his hands North Korea: Inside The Mind Of A Dictator is produced for National Geographic by 72 Films. Mark Raphael and David Glover are executive producers for 72 Films and Carolyn Payne is executive producer for National

Geographic.
(It premieres today at 9 pm as a part of SPOTLIGHT on National Geographic.)

 $R^{\text{akul Preet Singh is a self-}}_{\text{made actor. In a little}}$ over seven years since her Bollywood debut in the 2014 film *Yaariyan*, she has worked her way through the uphill task of dealing with the tag of of the busiest actors in the

Hindi film industry.

She attributes her suc cess to her ability to not be cowed down or be scared of losing stardom. "I am not the kind of person who lives in fear. I came with nothing and I always see the brighter side. I got an opportunity to live my dream and here I am. Ultimately it boils down to when people start appreciating your work. That one smile that you bring on someone's face or when they come and say 'we loved that film of

for, after all," she said. 30, Αt Rakul is highly sought-after in Bollywood, and has a in Bollywood, and has a for

yours'. That is

over the next few months. Currently, she awaits the release of the OTT film Sardar Ka

In demand

Less than a decade after her debut in Bollywood, RAKUL PREET SINGH is a highly sought-after actor with several films lined up for release

Grandson, co-starring Arjun Kapoor. She also has Mayday coming up with Amitabh Bachchan and the film's actordirector Ajay Devgn. In Attack, she shares screen space with John Abraham. She also has *Thank God* with

Ajay Devgn and Sidharth Malhotra, Kamal Haasan's *Indian 2* and the Ayushmann Khurranastarrer Doctor G in the

works.
"There is so much love from the audience and the con-

thought is to just keep working in differ-ent settings with the hope to entertain," she

added. Rakul made her acting debut in the 2009 Kannada film Gilli, and her Telugu debut in Keratam the same year. A year

later, she made her

Tamil debut in

Thaakka.

Thadaiyara

Ask her what is important script or the character -Rakul replies that she believes in the theory of "permutation and combination. "Sometimes you choose a film because you love the

In Bollywood, many con-

sider the 2019 comedy hit De De Pyaar De, co-starring

Devgn and Tabu, her coming-

of-age role. She has also been

seen in Mariaavan and

story and you want to be a part of the message promoted by the film or the entire premise of the film itself. And then there are times when you go by your character and the script. The rest of the times, it depends on the director and other actors involved with the project. It is subjective to each prospective film," she said.

Talking about Sardar Ka Grandson slated for release on May 18 on Netflix, Rakul explained what made her choose this project, "It was the pure emotion of the film that made this a no brainer. While I cannot tell you all about it for obvious reasons, the story depicts a grandson who is willing to go to any extent to fulfill his grandmother's wish."









Singer SUNIDHI CHAUHAN, who recently released her latest single Ye Ranjishein after almost two decades, shares some unknown trivia about five of her favourite tracks. By TEAM VIVA

There is always an untold story behind every song. While some of those stories do come to fore in some way or the other, most of them remain a secret behind the scenes, well away from the spotlight. Singer Sunidhi Chauhan, who recently released her latest single Ye Ranjishein after almost two decades, shares some unknown trivia about five of her favourite songs.

HUI HUI MAIN MAST FROM MAST (1999)

Not many people know this but I had no voice to sing this song in the stu-dio on the day of the recording. Just three days before the scheduled recording, I had lost my voice and my doctor told me if I really wanted to make use of this opportunity, I would have to keep my mouth shut right up to the moment when I have the microphone in front of me at the studio. "If you speak at all during the next three days, you will lose your voice. If you really want it that bad, you better keep mum. Sing straight on the mic, on the day of the world it is a straight on the mic, on the day of the world is a straight on the mic, on the day of the world is a straight on the mic. the recording," he said. I was crushed to hear that, especially since I am someone who believes in practising and rehearsing almost to the point of exhaustion. However, for a change, I followed my doctor's instructions and went with his gut feeling. I was really scared, couldn't imagine what I would sound like with a bad throat. Eventually it all turned out for the best. My doctor's instincts were spot on and my voice was back to its usual element and we successfully recorded the song.

AAJ SOCHA TO AANSOO BHAR AAYE FROM HANSTE ZAKHM (1973) My second all-time favourite song is

Aaj Socha To Aansoo Bhar Aaye by Lata Mangeshkar, and composed by Madan Mohan ji. Each time I hear that song, get transported to another place. I can't help but get lost in Lata ji's voice and the emotions she brought to life in that

Tu is my all

time favourite.

It's a masterpiece.

The melody and the

lyrics, it just takes

me to a place where

I don't want to

come back from

song. While I am not a sad person, I haven't had anything to be sad about in a long while, I cannot help but relate to this song so much. My eyes start welling up as soon as I hear Lata ji's voice in this song.

DIL MEIN JAAGI DHADKAN AISE FROM SUR (2002)

There is no way I could ever forget this song; obviously because of its composition. Much gratitude to MM Keeravani sir who gave me this beautiful song. A little story behind this song is that the *mukhda* was to be sung in one breath and I couldn't help but wonder whether it would be physically possible for me to do so because it had too many lines. But Keeravani sir wanted it to be in one breath and he said that he knew I could do this. He told me that he believed in me and I should just take my time to practise as much as I need. I took about 45 minutes to an hour, maybe more. I lost track of time but when I got

on the mic, somehow nailed it. I couldn't believe I had managed to sing that mukhda in one breath. It is one memory which stands out, it really was a crazy time

REHNA TU FROM DELHI-6

Rehna Tu is my all time favourite by AR Rahman sir and Prasoon Joshi. They have created a masterpiece. The melody and the lyrics, it just takes me to a place where I don't want to come back from. And I must have heard it a

zillion times already but that feeling never wanes...

LE CHALE FROM MY BROTHER NIKHIL (2005) I have to mention Le Chale here. When Viveck Philip, who composed this song, and (Onir) Anirban, who is the director of the film, approached me to sing this song, right off the bat I was in love with it. I was head over heels for the melody. Let me share a story behind this song, which not many, in fact, nobody knows. I was kind of chok-

ing while singing this track in the studio. I tried to not make it too obvious because I knew that if I stopped singing because I knew that it I stopped singing I would start crying. It was really tough keeping my emotions in check while singing this one. And mind you, this was before I got know about the context of this song in the film. It was purely magical, what that melody was doing to me. Those notes were driving me crazy and I could feel myself choking again and again. Nobody knows this, not even Anirban or Viveck... Well I think they will get to know this now



'Difficult yet beautiful journey'

Actor ABHISHEK BANERJEE auditioned for his character in Pataal Lok half-heartedly because he feared rejection as he was the casting director of the series

It's almost a year since the world witnessed actor Abhishek Banerjee delivering a splendid performance in the crime-thriller series *Paatal Lok*. Having starred in comic roles prior to the project, Abhishek showed the fans how versatile he could be when taking on roles in another genre. He has now shared his experience from the time

when he was shooting for the eponymous series.
"Sudip (Sharma) sir went to watch *Stree* in theatre one day and he called me the next day saying that he wanted me to try for the character Vishal Tyagi (Hathoda Tyagi). He said, 'He saw a maniac in my eyes'. It was a shocker as I didn't expect that. I stared at myself in the mirror looking for the maniac in me. Initially, I didn't find the role exciting, Tyagi didn't have many dialogues, even the screen time was less compared to other characters! I was half-hearted about attempting the audition plus I was the casting director too so didn't want to be in an embarrass-ing situation where I get to hear the news of my

mg studion where ige to hear the news of my own rejection from the the team," he said. "However, Karnesh (Sharma) sir and Sudip sir were both convinced that I could do a good job with it. They were not liking the other options I presented to them for Hathoda's role! Finally after a long internal duel, I gathered courage and gave the audition. I gave it my all but still was nervous when I finally sent them the test. Next morning Karnesh sir called, I picked it up anxiously. I was told that they really like my audition and I am on board for the part. Phew! That was such a relief. But it was only the beginning of a difficult yet beautiful journey."

The series went on to receive a lot of praise as it opened to strong critical acclaim. Abhishek, for his portrayal of Hathoda Tyagi, also received a lot of appreciation. His role in the series truly helped him break free of the comedy persona

His recently released anthology film, Ajeeb Daastaans, was again a successful outing. With each new project, he keeps proving his mettle. He now has five projects in line with quite a few more in developing stages. Abhishek will next be seen in Rashmi Rocket, Bhediya, Aankh Micholi,

Divyanka's adventure mode on

Actor Divyanka Tripathi, who is currently shooting in Cape Town for the stunt-based reality show *Khatron Ke Khiladi 11*, says that it was tough leaving her husband, actor Vivek Dahiya, at

This is the first time after our marriage in 2016 that Vivek and I would be by ourselves for an extended period of time. We have gotten emotional many times. Last week, we had been preparing ourselves for the day when I would leave for Cape Town. Leaving him and going makes me very sad," she said.

ly members of all contestants were reluctant in letting them travel overseas amidst the pandemic. "During these uncertain times, it's understandably tough for family members to let us go. In all honesty, I think they are the biggest Khatron Ke Khiladi," Divyanka said.

However, a part of her was overjoyed at being given a chance to engage with something adventurous again.

"I am excited that I am going to do something that was long due. Before coming to Mumbai, I used to get a lot of chances to participate in adventurous activities. I used to participate in a lot of adventure camps when I was a kid. I used to be away from home for 10-day or 50 day-camps, so I was in the habit of staying alone. And in the 15 years since I came to Mumbai, I have never had a chance to travel and be by myself so I have not touched that aspect of my personality in a long while. But I have to say that the next few weeks would be some what bittersweet as I have to stay away from Vivek to make use of an eagerly

awaited opportunity," she added.

On the deadly second wave of COVID-19, Divyanka expressed, "It is a tough time for the industry, but it is not just limited to our industry. Across pro-fessions, just about everyone is going through a tough time. But it is a bit easy for us actors, since we are no strangers to this lifestyle. When we are working, our schedules are erratic, we work rig-orously and for extended hours. But when we don't have work, like, between



shows we work on ourselves at home." "These times are a reminder that

demic, we should try to be healthy men tally and keep indulging in activities at home to keep ourselves engaged," she signed off.

more than work, life is important. I would urge everyone to follow social distancing norms and to stay safe. During this time, mental health is important, and it is important to stay in touch with your loved ones at all times. Those of us who are lucky to not be affected by the pan-

Aanimated adventure film which follows a teenage girl named Yi, who encounters a young Yeti on the roof of her apartment building in Shanghai. She names him Everest and embarks on an epic quest to reunite the magical creature with his family at the highest point on earth along with he mischievous friends Jin and Peng (played by Albert Tsai). But the trio of friends will have to stay one-step ahead of Burnish, a wealthy man intent on capturing a Yeti, and zoologist Dr Zara to help Everest get about his experience of working on the film and more. Excerpts:

☐How did you get involved?

As soon as I read the script and the character description of Peng, I just fell in love with him, so I decided to audition for the role. I was really excited to be part of a film that was portraying Chinese culture, with a modern Chinese family, which we haven't had, ever, really. The last major film was Mulan, which was about ancient times.

□How did animator and director Jill Culton pitch Peng to

Just that he's a fun-loving, energetic kid. He is always intended to be the younger character and almost comic relief, but with more depth than that. He is also the optimistic one of the group. He's always playing, and when other people are about to give up, he really wants to continue the journey. He has a ton of fun on this adventure with Everest. Peng is the only one, along with Everest who seems to be taking this journey more like a vacation. When the others are considering the next step, he's over there having a thumb war with

ove the unknown

Actor ALBERT TSAI says that it is human nature to be drawn to what hasn't been confirmed or discovered yet. By TEAM VIVA



□What did you want to bring to the role?

some of my personality into Peng. A lot of his body language and movements were sort of inspired by what I did in the recording booth because they had a camera on us when we were recording the audio, just to see what we would do. Being a TV actor, I did the movements along with the lines, which was natural for me and that they imported onto Peng.

□Did Peng change at all as the

film evolved?

He stayed more consistent through the various stages of production. I feel like he was always going to be the younger member of the group, the comedic heart. I think there were slight personality changes...

I don't know if he was quite the basketball aficionado that he

□What is it about the Yeti creatures that we're so obsessed

tures. We love the unknown, and what we haven't confirmed or discovered yet. Also, what's really exciting is, we bring a differ-ent version of the Yeti into the film, as opposed to sticking to the normal depiction, which is more gorilla-like, abominable snowman who is mean and scary. We bring a cuter, more innocent version. He's got these powers, which aren't normally part of the Yeti mythology, so it's really fun. Jill [Culton] said she wanted to base Everest off of her experience with her dogs, which is why he sort of has dog-like qualities. But he also has his

own emotions and he's quite intelligent.

□Was it fascinating to see the film come to life step by step? That was one of

my favorite parts of this entire experi-ence. It was fascinating for me to see how a scene could go from basic storyboards and sketches to animation and layout. It started out as very rough 3D animation got finer and finer, with lighting and effects and all that, until finally it's

what you see at the movies. The scenes I saw a lot of were Everest scenes I saw a lot of were Everest and Yis escape from the city, and the blueberry sequence. I tracked those two from the beginning and it was exciting for me to see how they were animat-ed.

☐You're usually on your own in the recording booth. What sort of challenge was that as an

actor? It was definitely very different than what I am used to. A lot of times in the recording sessions, we would do a certain line I think it's just part of our several times, changing the to the next one. It had a sequential approach, and we could play around with it a lot more. Jill was so collaborative, along with the whole team, and nothing had been set in stone yet, so we were able to ad lib a bit and improv here and there. The few recording sessions we did do together as a cast were a lot of fun, too, because that was more like traditional acting.

□You're a big fan of animated film. Any favorites?

I really love The Lion King. I think that was the first animated movie I watched, so it was special for me. And it was a little like Abominable, since it was nature-focused. A favorite DreamWorks movie of mine? I love Shrek and Kung Fu Panda too, those were really funny.

☐You're a producer these days,

what prompted that?
I've always been fascinated by what happens behind the scenes and how a team of cast, writers, producers and directors put together a TV show, so I've always wanted to get into that side of things. I've been trying to do that, and it's where I see myself in the future.

(The film premieres on May 16 at 9 pm on Sony PIX.)

Raman's sacking bring CAC under scanner

Pormer opener WV Raman's unceremonious ouster from the Indian worm? the Indian women's team head coach's position has opened a can of worms with both the Madan Lal-headed Cricket Advisory Committee and Neetu David-led selection panel coming under the scanner of BCCI big-

wigs.
Raman, who successfully coached the women's team to T20 World Cup final in Australia and is widely acknowledged as one of the best Indian coaches, was removed by Lal and Naik's CAC, which reinstated Ramesh Powar, who was removed from the same post in 2018.

IS LAL'S COMMITTEE ILLE-

"Maddi paaji (Madan Lal) celebrated his 70th birthday on March 20. The BCCI, in its appeal to Supreme Court against some of the reforms, doesn't ask for rollback of age-cap of 70 years. So how come Madan Lal was allowed to sit in CAC meeting?" a senior mem-

While the BCCI has no intention of using its veto to over-rule Lal and Naik, the board's top officials are unable to wrap their heads around as to what led to recommendation of Raman's removal.



DID RAMAN & NEETU HAVE

It has been confirmed from multiple sources that Raman had red-flagged the kind of squad that David, Arati Vaidya, Renu Margrate, Mithu Mukherjee and V Kalpana picked for the South Africa series, for which teen batting sensation Shafali Verma was not picked for the ODIs and senior pacer Shikha Pandey was inexplic-

ably dropped.
"Do you know what kind of official said.

The selectors said that Pandey

"But when they were asked to prove their point, they couldn't simply do it," the official alleged.

fielding was questioned and put forth as the reason for her non-selection in the ODI team.

"If Raman had a counter-question that if Shafali's fielding is a problem for 50-over cricket, then it is bigger problem in T20 format where it is more important. Then how is she being selected in T20 format," the official asked.

The selection of leg-spinner C Prathyusha and left arm seamer Monica Patel has also been ques-tioned as they didn't look ready for the rigours of International crick

Prathyusha gave 60 odd runs in 8 overs in one of the games.
"How did Monica get selected

over Shikha Pandey?" is a question that is being asked.

COUNTER POINTS AGAINST RAMAN

While the majority believe that the stylish southpaw of yester-years has been hard done by, there are a few critics who feel that there were some loose ends from his side

"Some girls complained that he will at times switch himself off during training sessions. Also some girls felt under-appreciated. Someone like Rajeshwari Gayakwad was not even once praised despite she being the best bowler during the series," a mem-

There's 'prima donna culture' in women's team: Raman writes to Ganguly, Dravid

New Delhi: Ousted Indian name anyone, it is understood that written to BCCI president Sourav Ganguly, alleging that there is a "prima donna culture" in the national team and it needs to

In the mail that has also been marked to National Cricket Academy head Rahul Dravid, Raman has also offered to present a roadmap for women's cricket in the country, if asked.

"As far as I know, Raman has said that he has always 'believed in team being placed above every-body else, and insisted that no indi-vidual can really be a prima dona;

a source privy to Raman's mail said. The stylish former left-hander's crisp letter to the two former cap-tains is sure to ruffle a few feath-ers given that it has always been the coaches who have either stepped aside or sacked following fallouts with players, most notably ODI captain Mithali Raj.

While Raman's letter didn't

ber from the anti-Raman camp

Another allegation against Raman is that he unwittingly gave

he has spoken extensively about the star culture that prevails in the team, which he said is probably doing more harm than good.

It is learnt that Raman has written about certain individuals who need to place the team above

"Raman has asked Dada (Ganguly) that if a past accomplished performer feels constrained by this culture, then he (Ganguly as a former India captain, should take a call on this matter, whether the coach is asking for too much," the source added. Raman, it is learnt, is dismayed

by allegations that he is not proactive as a coach. "In case the president and secretary want to hear his opinion on allegations about his work ethic, he can explain."

The letter has been copied to Dravid because Raman sincerely believes that he can contribute towards building a roadmap for Indian women's cricket.

gloveswoman Nuzhat Parween a debut cap without knowing that she has already played both ODIs and T20Is for India

short passes TURKISH F1 CANCELLED

only drafted onto the F1 calendar as a replacement for the cancelled Canada GP two weeks ago, was itself axed on Friday. F1 chiefs, forced into another change due to Covid-19 protocols, announced that they will instead return to the sport's safe haven of Austria.

NEYMAR TO MISS FINAL

PARIS: Neymar will not play for PSG in next week's French Cup final against Monaco after a booking in Wednesday's semi-final saw the Brazilian incur a suspension.

LAPORTE CAN PLAY FOR SPAIN

LAUSANNE: Manchester City defender Aymeric Laporte has been approved to play for Spain instead of France at Euro 2020.

ALAPHILIPPE TO SKIP OLYMPICS

PARIS: Cycling's road race world champion Julian Alaphilippe said on Friday he will not take part in the Tokyo Olympics. The French rider said the decision was a personal choice.

IRFAN, 4 OTHERS RETURN -VE

NEW DELHI: Olympic-bound race walker K T Irfan and four other elite track-and-field athletes have returned negative for Covid-19 in a confirmatory second test conducted at SAI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru.

PHILLIPS, MITCHELL GET NZ DEAL WELLINGTON: White ball batsman Glenn Phillips and allrounder Daryl Mitchell have been included for the first time on New Zealand Cricket's list of centrally contracted players. But Test spinner Ajaz Patel has been dropped from the 20-strong list.

ALVES, SILVA BACK FOR BRAZIL SAO PAULO: Veteran defenders Dani Alves and Thiago Silva were brought back into the Brazil squad for next month's World Cup qualifiers against Ecuador and Paraguay

SHOOTERS DOING DRY FIRING

NEW DELHI: In quarantine till May 19, India's Olympic-bound shooters are keeping themselves busy with dry firing in their hotel rooms at Zagreb before they hit the range next week.

JAPAN EXPAND COVID EMERGENCY

TOKYO: Japan expanded a coronavirus state of emergency on Friday, just 10 weeks before the Olympics, as campaigners submitted a petition with more than 350,000 signatures calling for

BILES RETURNING TO COMPETITION

INDIANAPOLIS: Reigning Olympic gymnastics competition for the first time in more than 18 months at the US Classic next week. Agencies

A FALL-OUT?

them is the distraction they can create," Paine said in the *Gilly*

"There was a lot of talk that

and Goss podcast on Friday.

they weren't going to Brisbane. They're always changing gloves

and bringing out physios and

all that can get on your nerves. Just said that was one of the

things that probably distracted me and took my eye of the ball

said that his team was distract-

ed by the Indian team's "nig-gling" during the epoch-mak-ing Test series early this year

The 36-year-old Paine had

logic was given for dropping Shikha and Shafali? It is beyond comprehension," a peeved senior

was unfit because she hasn't worked hard on training during lockdown and was "overweight".

Paine clarifies on India comments after being slammed

which the visitors rallied to win. Soon Paine was trolled on Twitter by Indian fans.

"I did say that they simply outplayed us and that they deserved to win but they left that one out. The Indian fans have been slamming me on social media. They say that I'm making excuses again but it's all good fun," Paine said.

"I certainly wasn't making any excuses. I was asked about some of the challenges of the summer, and I said that was one of them for me," he added

Hussey recovers from Covid, Saha +ve again

New Delhi: Chennai Super Kings batting coach Michael Hussey has recovered from Covid-19, paving the way for his return to Australia on Sunday but Sunrisers Hyderabad's Wriddhiman Saha has received conflicting results in two coronavirus tests, prolonging his isolation.

Saha, who has been named in India's squad for the World Test Championship final and the subsequent Test series against England, is hoping to join the squad's bio-bubble in Mumbai on May 25. His inclusion is subject to fitness.

"Hussey has returned with negative RT-PCR results and has recovered well.

We haven't yet decided when he is going to fly back and which route he will take - Maldives or Australia," CSK CEO Kashi Viswanathan said on Friday.

In case of Saha, he will continue to be in quarantine after one of his two tests came positive.

"My quarantine period is still not over. Out of the two tests done, 1 was negative and other one came as positive Otherwise I am doing much better. Requesting everyone not to spread mis-leading stories/information without whole context," the wicketkeeper-batsman post-

Bond played major role in shaping Bumrah's career

things, and one of those was

talking about the challenges of

playing against India. One of

PTI MUMBAI

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia captain Tim Paine Aon Friday stood by his comments that his team indeed

got distracted by India's

sideshow" but clarified that he

didn't ever intend to use it as an

excuse for their home Test

series defeat in January.

A day after receiving online

flak from Indian fans for his

"side show" comments on Indian team, Paine clarified

himself while chatting with

"I was asked a number of

Adam Gilchrist in a podcast.

India's star pacer Jasprit Bumrah has said that former New Zealand speedster Shane Bond, who is currently the bowling coach of Mumbai Indians, has played a major role in shaping his career.

The Mumbai Indians fast bowler,

who will lead India's attack in the upcoming World Test Championship final against New Zealand, expressed his views in a video shared by his IPL franchise.
"I always try to talk to him even when

I am not here and with the Indian team. So, it's been a good journey, and hopefully, every year I keep learning something new and try to add new things to my bowl-"He has played a major role in that. It's been a great relationship so far, and hope-

fully, this continues for many many years to come," Bumrah said. He said he was always fascinated by how Bond bowled in his playing days and tries speaking to the MI bowling coach

even when he is on India duty. "I met him (Bond) for the first time



in 2015. As a child, I had seen him bowl used to bowl for New Zealand, and how

he used to operate," the India pacer said. Bumrah, who has so far played 19 Tests, said that Bond assisted him a lot in broadening his horizon which in turn

helped him blossom as a cricketer.
"When I met him over here, it was a good experience. He helped me a lot to open my mind to different things that I could try on the cricket field. So that was very good and that relationship has only gotten better each and every year," added the Gujarat pacer.

Bond, on his part, termed Bumrah as

the best death bowler in the world. Seasoned New Zealand left-arm pacer Trent Boult also had words of praise for his compatriot, saying that Bond was a "tremendous thinker of the game and a

pretty good tactician."

"He has been here for a long time, he knows what he is doing and he puts in a lot of work into making sure that the bowlers are well equipped and have got enough information to make some decisions on the day. Yeah, really enjoy working with him," said Boult, who has played

for place in playing XI'

New Delhi: Former India selector Sarandeep Singh has backed the current committee's call to ignore Hardik Pandya from the Test squad and said the all-rounder doesn't fit into the playing XI even in the shorter formats if he can't bowl his quota of overs.

After undergoing a back surgery in 2019, Hardik has not bowled regularly since his comeback and not being able to offer his all-round skills cost him a place in the Indian Test squad for the UK tour.

Sarandeep, whose tenure ended with the historic tour of Australia earlier this year, was also surprised that a rare talent like Prithvi Shaw did not even make the standbys for the England tour.

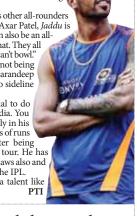
"The selectors' decision to ignore Hardik for Tests is understandable. He has not been able bowl regularly after his surgery. I feel he has to bowl 10 overs in ODIs and four in T20s to be part of the playing XI even in shorter formats. He can't just play as a batsman," Sarandeep, a former India

"If Hardik doesn't bowl, it disturbs the balance of the side hugely. You have to play an extra bowler because of that and someone like



said it is way too early to sideline a batsman like him.

"He has the potential to do what Sehwag did for India. You can't sideline him so early in his career. He has scored tons of runs in domestic cricket after being dropped post Australia tour. He has corrected his technical flaws also and



Átletico could still be look how he played in the IPL. results if they are to overturn a "You have to back a talent like Shaw for that matter." end if they overcome Osasuna four-point deficit.

Dortmund rout Leipzig in German Cup final

AFP ■ BERLIN

Jadon Sancho and Erling Braut Haaland both netted twice on Thursday as Borussia Dortmund won the German Cup with an emphatic 4-1 win over RB Leipzig to spoil Julian Nagelsmann's hopes of leaving with a title.

Dortmund turned on the style at Olympic Stadium, converting all of their three first-half shots on target to sweep Leipzig aside as Sancho netted twice either side of a

superb Haaland goal. "I am very happy that I could score two goals and set up one for Haaland," Sancho told ARD.

The England winger could have claimed a hat-trick late on after rounding Leipzig goal-keeper Peter Gulacsi, but failed to get his shot away.

Spain midfielder Dani

Leipzig, before Haaland grabbed his second in the dying stages despite slipping as he connected.

Dortmund lifted the German Cup for the fifth time in the club's history.

"It's unbelievable, I am

Olmo pulled a goal back for

roud of the morale the team has shown in the last few weeks," said captain Marco Reus as Dortmund have also recently got back into the Champions League places.

Real trim Atleti's lead Granada: Real Madrid kept the

pressure on Atletico Madrid by Thursday to reduce the gap to two points at the top of La Liga, with two games left to play.

A draw or defeat for Real Madrid would have given Atletico the chance to win the title on Sunday by beating Osasuna but goals from Modric Rodrygo, Alvaro Odriozola and Benzema secured a comfortable victory at Los Carmenes.

crowned champions this week-



and Real fail to win away at

Even third-placed Barcelona are still in the running but they need an incredible swing of

Liverpool end Old Trafford hoodoo

iverpool kept their chances of a place Liverpool Kept their changes League in their own hands with a thrilling 4-2 victory. United at Old tory over Manchester United at Old Trafford on Thursday.

Jurgen Klopp's men still need to win

their remaining three games over the next 10 days to guarantee their place in the Champions League for a fifth consecutive season, but cleared the biggest hurdle in their path with a first victory away to United since 2014.

Roberto Firmino scored twice either side of half-time after Diogo Jota cancelled out Bruno Fernandes's early opener for the



Marcus Rashford's strike set up a grandstand finish, but Mohamed Salah secured a vital win in the final minute as Liverpool moved up to fifth in the table. "We are still in the game, still in the race. That is all we could do tonight," said

Klopp.
"It was necessary. Without this result we don't have to talk about it."

The clash between English football's two most successful clubs had been postponed 11 days ago as United fans

stormed the pitch and clashed with police amid protests against the club's A peaceful protest took place before

kick-off as supporters again voiced their anger at the Glazer family.

'Hardik needs to bowl Nadal ends losing streak against Alex



AP ROME

 R_{three} straight losses to Alexander Zverev with a convincing 6-3, 6-4 win over the German on Friday to reach the Italian Open semifinals.

Zverev had beaten Nadal in

straight sets at the same stage in Madrid a week ago but their latest meeting went the Spaniard's

Aiming for a record-extending 10th Rome title, Nadal raced to a 4-0 lead in the first set and saved all eight break points he

faced in the second.

"I played more solid than
Madrid. Conditions are different," Nadal said, alluding to the fact that the high-altitude of the Spanish capital allowed Zverev to dominate more with his serve. "Here are little bit more normal conditions. I was able to control

a little bit more."

It was a stark contrast from Nadal's long three-set comeback win over Denis Shapovalov a day earlier, when the Spaniard saved two match points.

Nadal's semifinal opponent will be big-serving American Reilly Opelka, who reached his first Masters semifinal with a 7-5, 7-6 (2) win over Argentine qualifier Federico Delbonis.

In the women's tournament, 2019 Rome champion Karolina Pliskova rallied past 2017 French Open winner Jelena Ostapenko 4-6, 7-5, 7-6 (1) to set up a semifinal against Petra Martic. Martic eliminated Jessica Pegula 7-5, 6-4 for her biggest result since recently hiring former French Open champion Francesca

Schiavone as her coach. The only real moment of concern for Nadal came when he



training session prior to the start of Geneva Open tournament on Friday AP

while running down a drop shot when he was serving for the first The crowd of about 2,500 let

tripped over the service line

out a collective gasp as Nadal tumbled onto the clay and rolled over onto his back wincing in apparent pain. After putting Nadal's reply away for an easy winner — the Spaniard still managed to get the ball over the net - Zverey hopped over the net to check on

the 20-time Grand Slam cham-

Nadal got up, though, dusted himself off and served out the set with his back and even headband still covered in clay.

"Some lines are higher than the rest of court, so when you touch the line it's dangerous," Nadal said.

Zverev, the 2017 Rome champion and winner of the trophy in Madrid last weekend, had numerous opportunities to recover from an early break in the second set but Nadal stepped up his game each time and closed it out on his first match point with a perfectly executed serve-