

**OPINION 6**  
IGNORING THE  
WARNING SIGNS

**WORLD 8**  
ETHNIC GUERRILLAS IN MYANMAR  
SAY THEY SHOT DOWN COPTER

**SPORT 12**  
BALE SCORES HAT-TRICK  
AGAINST SHEFFIELD UTD

DEHRADUN, TUESDAY MAY 4, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹2



# the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



THINK OF  
THE CHILD:  
MADHAVAN  
11 VIVACITY

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

\*Late City Vol. 15 Issue 121  
\*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

# Bengal Opp badly battered

## 8 workers of BJP and Left killed; TMC rejects allegation of party's role

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Ruthless attacks on the van-  
quished Opposition work-  
ers continued in West Bengal  
with at least 8 people losing  
their lives to alleged Trinamool  
Congress violence in various  
parts of the State in the past 24  
hours or so, reports said.

Chief Minister Mamata  
Banerjee made a public appeal  
asking the people to remain  
indoors and refrain from  
engaging in violence, but polit-  
ical animosity degenerated into  
bloodshed.

Indian Secular Front work-  
er Hasanur Zaman was repeat-  
edly bombed to death at De  
Ganga in North 24 Parganas  
while BJP worker Haran  
Adhikari was shot in Sonarpur.

Another BJP supporter  
succumbed to bullet injury at  
Moynaguri in Jalpaiguri district  
of North Bengal. A third BJP  
worker was shot dead at  
Burapancha village near

Sitalkuchi in Coochbehar  
where CAPF firing had claimed  
four lives during the elections.  
A woman was bumped off  
at Ranaghat in Nadia district  
while a Left supporter was  
killed in Murshidabad, sources  
said. Another BJP man was  
allegedly beaten to death at  
Beleghata in North Kolkata,  
party men alleged.

Properties, including  
motorcycles, of BJP and  
CPI(M) supporters were  
destroyed at Chakdaha,  
Haringhata and other areas of  
Nadia district, sources said.

Bengal BJP president Dilip  
Ghosh alleged that the houses  
of BJP men were vandalised  
and torched at Bhagwanpur  
and Patashpur in East  
Midnapore while saffron party  
offices were torched at  
Balurghat and North Dinajpur  
in North Bengal. He appealed  
to the Chief Minister to "stop  
this carnage and let the people  
live in peace."

Ghosh led a team of BJP  
leaders to meet the Governor  
at Raj Bhavan. He said,  
"Elections are over and what-  
ever ill-feeling should now be  
forgotten... Instead of that our  
workers and those of some  
other political parties are being  
systematically targeted, beaten  
up, murdered and their prop-  
erties destroyed. We have been  
forced to transfer the victims of  
this violence to other safer  
places. I request the Chief  
Minister to order her men to  
stop this or else we shall be  
forced to resume campaign  
from tomorrow."

Refuting the charges, TMC  
spokesperson Kunal Ghosh  
said, "Our leader Mamata  
Banerjee has asked people not  
to indulge in violence. In none  
of the cases, the TMC is  
involved. In fact, it is the fight  
between the old and the new  
BJP men. The old BJP men are  
beating up the new entrants  
who went from the TMC."

## Nandigram recount was stopped at gunpoint, will move court: Mamata



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addresses the media in Kolkata on Monday PTI

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The people of West Bengal  
had put the rulers of Delhi  
in their place by handing them  
out a stunning loss in the  
Assembly elections and this  
"proves that the BJP is not a  
shahenshah," Chief Minister  
Mamata Banerjee said.

Mamata will take oath for  
the third time in a row as  
Bengal Chief Minister on May  
5, senior party leader and  
Minister of the outgoing State  
Cabinet Partho Chatterjee said  
after the TMC Legislator party  
on Monday unanimously elect-  
ed her as the Leader of the  
TMC Legislative Party.

She alleged the BJP had  
misused the poll body to defeat

her but failed, "thanks to the  
people of Bengal".

Refusing to let her anger  
on the Election Commission  
die down, Mamata complained  
how the counting of votes at  
Nandigram was manipulated at  
gunpoint to ensure that she lost  
by a wafer-thin margin.

"I have an SMS with me...  
it was sent by someone... it said  
the Returning Officer of  
Nandigram was forced not to  
order a recount at  
gunpoint... he said he had  
risk his life and family if he  
ordered a recount... But I will  
not take it lying down. I will  
move the court and definitely  
tell all the officials to preserve  
the VVPAT and other papers,"  
she said.

# India Inc calls for lockdown to save lives

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Supreme  
Court advised the Central  
and State Governments to con-  
sider a lockdown to break the  
chain of Covid-19 transmis-  
sion, prominent industrialist  
and trader bodies have called  
for a nationwide shutdown.

Prominent industrialist  
and Confederation of Indian  
Industry (CII) president Uday  
Kotak called for the curtail-  
ment of economic activity "to  
reduce suffering" due to the  
deadly second wave of Covid-  
19 cases in India.

"At this critical juncture  
when the toll of lives is rising,  
the CII urges the strongest  
national steps, including cur-  
tailing economic activity, to  
reduce suffering," Uday Kotak  
said in a tweet.

Kotak has asked for the  
highest-level response mea-  
sures to address the rising  
wave of Covid-19 cases, as  
currently safeguarding lives is  
key to cut the transmission  
links.

"The healthcare infra-  
structure and supply build-up  
are being undertaken on an  
emergency basis by the  
Governments at the Centre  
and States, but will take time,"  
he said.

Earlier, several experts as  
well as leading economists sug-  
gested the Government a  
nationwide lockdown is the  
only solution to break the  
chain of Covid infections. From  
US epidemiologist Anthony  
Fauci to AIIMS Director  
Randeep Guleria, all have sug-  
gested a complete lockdown.

An online survey con-  
ducted by the Confederation of

All India Traders (CAIT)  
showed that at least 67.5 per  
cent participants are in favour  
of nationwide lockdown while  
78.2 per cent people have said  
they agreed that corona has  
become uncontrollable.

CAIT national president  
and secretary general Praveen  
Khandelwal on Monday urged  
the Prime Minister to imme-  
diately impose a nationwide  
lockdown in order to break the  
chain of infections during the  
second Covid-19 wave.

CAIT said in the event of  
a national lockdown, the trad-  
ing community across the  
country will ensure the supply  
of essential items like last year.  
Over 9,000 respondents partic-  
ipated in the online survey.

Amid an exponential rise  
in coronavirus cases, the SC on  
Sunday urged the Centre  
and States "to consider impos-  
ing a lockdown to break the  
chain in the interest of public  
welfare".

## UP EXTENDS LOCKDOWN FOR 2 MORE DAYS

**Lucknow:** The Uttar Pradesh  
Government has extended  
the coronavirus-induced cur-  
few in the entire State by two  
more days, May 6. As per the  
latest order, the restrictions  
will remain in place in all 75  
districts till May 6 morning.  
The restrictions were slated  
to be lifted on May 4 morn-  
ing. This is the second exten-  
sion of lockdown-like curfew  
in the country's most popu-  
lous State.

## Cloudbursts in Rudraprayag, Uttarkashi

**Dehradun:** Houses in some vil-  
lages and roads were damaged  
in two separate cloudburst  
incidents in Rudraprayag and  
Uttarkashi districts of  
Uttarakhand on Monday.  
However, there is no informa-  
tion about any human casual-  
ties, the state emergency op-  
eration centre here said.

CM Tirath Singh Rawat  
spoke to the district magistrates  
concerned and asked them to  
keep an eye on the situation. He  
directed them to provide relief  
and the required financial assis-  
tance to the affected people.  
The CM also asked PWD,  
NHAI and Border Roads  
Organisation officials to imme-  
diately clear the blocked roads  
to ensure that the people in the  
affected areas do not face any  
inconvenience. **PTI**

# O2 piles on K'taka agony, 24 die

PTI ■ BENGALURU

In yet another hospital  
tragedy in the country in  
recent days, 24 patients, 23 of  
them Covid-infected, died in  
Karnataka's Chamarajanagar  
due to alleged oxygen shortage  
in the district hospital in  
the last 24 hours, with the  
Government warning of string-  
ent action against those  
found guilty.

The Government ordered  
a probe into the matter and  
appointed senior IAS officer  
Shivayogi Kalasad as the  
inquiry officer.

Following the incident,  
Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa  
convened a meeting with oxy-  
gen producers, where a num-  
ber of decisions were taken to  
ensure supply of allocated  
quantity of oxygen to the State  
by the Centre.



Relatives grieve after death of Covid patients due to shortage of oxygen cylinders in Chamarajanagara District of Karnataka on Monday PTI

Among these were to  
reduce the time taken to refill  
oxygen tankers, provide a green  
corridor for faster commuting  
of oxygen tankers and avoid  
unnecessary delay at toll gates.

Utilising the service of the  
LPG tanker drivers in  
case of emergency was also  
another important decision.  
Health Minister Dr K  
Sudhakar maintained that only

three people had died due to  
oxygen shortage and not 24 as  
reported, though he stressed  
that the probe would reveal the  
truth.

The incident evoked a  
sharp response from the  
Congress, with party leader  
Rahul Gandhi wondering  
"how much more suffering  
before the system wakes up."

In heart-breaking episodes  
preceding today's incident in  
the country, a fire at a mall in  
Mumbai housing a Covid-  
designated hospital in March  
left nine, including those on  
ventilators, dead, while 22

Covid-19 patients who  
were either on ventilator or  
oxygen support, suffocated to  
death when their oxygen sup-  
ply stopped suddenly due to a  
malfunction in the main stor-  
age at a civic hospital in  
Nashik.

Covid-19 IN INDIA
TOTAL CASES: 2,02,19,578 (+2,99,715)
DEATHS: 2,21,356 (+2,409)
RECOVERED: 1,65,46,717 (+2,64,775)
ACTIVE: 34,42,730
MAHA: 47,71,022 (+48,621)
KERALA: 16,64,790 (+26,011)
K'TAKA: 16,46,303 (+44,438)
UP: 13,42,413 (+29,052)
DELHI: 11,94,946 (+20,394)

## Mild Covid patients need not rush for CT-scan, it can lead to cancer: AIIMS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With people rushing for  
computerised tomogra-  
phy scan (CT-scan) at the  
slightest sign of Covid-19  
symptom, the Government has  
asked them not to do so as it  
can have health side-effects as  
serious as cancer besides caus-  
ing holes in their pocket.

"In mild Covid-19 illness  
CT-scan is not needed, rather  
it can result in cancer in young  
people in their later stage of life.  
One CT-Scan is equivalent to  
300 chest x-rays, it's very harm-  
ful," said AIIMS director and  
pulmonologist Dr Randeep  
Guleria. CT scan and markers  
are being misused. A lot of peo-  
ple are getting CT scans done.  
There is no use of the scan in  
the early stages, as it will not  
detect Covid properly in mild



cases, Dr Guleria said.

Guleria, who is also a  
member of the national pan-  
demic task force, added blood  
tests can't always prove Covid  
infections as other underlying  
diseases can also trigger a spike  
in biomarkers.

The CT-scan machine  
takes cross-sectional images  
of the body using computers

and rotating X-ray machines.  
They are being used to detect  
Covid infections by detecting  
signs of pneumonia or white  
patches in the lungs. More  
people are relying on the  
expensive scan than last year as  
reports suggest the mutant  
variants of the virus can go  
undetected in the gold standard  
RT-PCR test.

## They won UP panchayat elections but didn't stay alive to celebrate victory

VIRENDRA NATH BHATT ■ LUCKNOW

In a sad end of the panchay-  
at elections, more than half a  
dozen candidates in the pan-  
chayat polls have died across  
the State before they were  
declared elected by the return-  
ing officer.

Re-poll will now be held on  
these seats later.

According to reports, most  
of the candidates died follow-  
ing Covid like symptoms but  
none of them had got them-  
selves tested or treated because  
they did not wish to be barred

from the counting process.  
The State Election  
Commission (SEC) had said  
the candidates and their  
agents will be allowed to enter  
the counting centres only if  
they have tested negative for  
Covid-19 in the 48 hours prior  
to the commencement of the  
counting process or taken both  
doses of the vaccine.

Pinky, who contested the  
village pradhan post in  
Kurawali in Mainpuri  
district, won the election on  
Sunday. However, she died  
before the counting could take  
place.

## Take criticism by Madras HC in right spirit, SC tells EC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on  
Monday rejected the pleas  
of Election Commission of  
India to ban media reporting  
on the Madras High Court's  
observations that the poll panel  
was singularly responsible for  
Covid-19 deaths and it should  
be booked for murder.

Justices DY Chandrachud  
and MR Shah advised the EC  
to take the criticism by the  
Madras High Court in the  
right spirit. "The ECI is a sea-  
soned constitutional body



which has been entrusted with  
functions of conducting the  
elections. We cannot in today's  
times say media will not report  
the discussions that take place  
in court," the Bench said.

The Bench went on to  
point out that the discussions  
that take place in the courts are  
of importance and are in pub-

lic interest. "It's not a mono-  
logue that one person will  
speak and then judges will  
speak. We have an Indian pat-  
tern of arguments in  
court... There is an aspect of the  
application of mind. First  
prayer of don't report what is  
said in court was farfetched,"  
said Justice Chandrachud reject-  
ing the EC plea.

"When something is  
observed, it's in the larger pub-  
lic interest. They (Judges) are  
also humans and they are also  
stressed... Take this in the cor-  
rect spirit," said Justice Shah.

## CAPSULE

**COVID HITS IPL: KKR-RCB MATCH POSTPONED**  
**New Delhi:** A Covid outbreak  
left the star-sprinkled IPL on  
tenterhooks as Kolkata Knight  
Riders' Varun Chakravarty and  
Sandeep Warrier tested positive,  
forcing postponement of their  
game against Royal Challengers  
Bangalore, while cases also  
came to light in the Chennai  
Super Kings camp.

**MARKETS**

SENSEX 48,718.52 (-63.84)

NIFTY 14,634.15 (+03.05)

GOLD 47,330.00 (+593.00)

SILVER 69,300.00 (+1776.00)

**WEATHER**

MAX 34.0°C

MIN 20.0°C

Partly Cloudy Sky

POWERED BY

UNIGATE GENERAL MEDIA (P) LTD

<https://pioneeredge.in>

## NEET-PG deferred for 4 months, medicos to join Covid battle

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In view of an unprecedented  
rise in Covid-19 cases across  
the country, the Government  
has decided to postpone  
NEET-PG for at least four  
months. The decision was  
taken at the high-level review  
meeting held by Prime  
Minister Narendra Modi.

It was decided that the  
State and Union Territories  
Governments are to make all  
efforts to reach out to each  
prospective NEET candidates  
and request them "to join the  
Covid-19 workforce in this  
hour of need. The services of  
these MBBS doctors can be  
utilised in the management of  
Covid-19," said a statement  
from the Prime Minister's



Office (PMO).

A series of important deci-  
sions were taken "to boost  
availability of medical person-  
nel to fight Covid-19," it said.  
The NEET-PG exam will not  
be held before August 30.

"Students will also be given  
at least one month of time after  
announcement of exam before  
it is conducted. This will make  
a large number of qualified  
doctors available for Covid  
duties," said the statement.

# Kalaighnar at Stalin's coronation!

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu's sombre mood  
due to Covid-19 pande-  
mic gave way to celebra-  
tions, music, dance and bursting  
of firecrackers since Sunday  
evening when it was known  
that MK Stalin would form the  
next government as the DMK  
won a comfortable majority in  
the legislative Assembly polls.

By late Sunday evening, the  
DMK headquarters and Stalin's  
personal bungalow came under  
a security blanket as the cops  
of the State Armed Police took  
over the entire route.

Limousines with  
Government number plates  
were the first ones to reach  
Stalin's house and since then  
there has been no end to the  
number of visitors calling in.  
DMK cadre from all over the  
State flooded the party head-  
quarters as the route to Stalin's  
residence was completely taken  
over by security men.



It was fun, music and  
dance everywhere. Party  
activists with pictures of Stalin  
pinned to their pockets (a  
show of obeisance to

Thalapathy, as Stalin is  
addressed by friends and cadre)  
were seen distributing sweets to  
all those who had visited the  
party headquarters.

Iniyavan, popularly known  
as Idli King of Tamil Nadu, had  
come to the party office to pay  
his respect to the Chief  
Minister designate. He made

the day a memorable one to all  
those who had come to the  
party headquarters with a spe-  
cial gift. A specially made idli,  
aply titled Kalaighnar Idli, was  
Iniyavan's gift to Stalin.

It took him and four of his  
assistants nearly ten hours to  
cook the idli which resembled  
the face of M Karunanidhi, the  
former Chief Minister and  
Stalin's father.

"This is a special idli and  
not for consuming. It has nine  
kinds of grains engraved on it  
with colouring agents approved  
by the Food and Drug Agency.  
This is our tribute to  
Karunanidhi as well as a wel-  
come gift for Stalin," said  
Iniyavan, who holds a world  
record in the different varieties  
of idlis. Iniyavan can make  
more than 100 varieties of  
idlis, namely, chocolate idli,  
coconut idli, vanilla idli, jas-  
mine idli, carrot idli and a host  
of steam cakes with different  
flavours.



# PUNJAB TO START VACCINATING 18-PLUS

**PRIORITISES GROUPS; 70% DOSES FOR CO-MORBID INDIVIDUALS, 30%FOR HIGH-RISK CATEGORIES**

**PNS ■ CHANDIGARH**

With the state getting an allocation of only 3.30 lakh vaccines for the 18-plus category from the Serum Institute of India (SII) for the month of May, Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Monday ordered 70 percent of the doses to be reserved for individuals with co-morbidities, and the remaining 30 percent to high-risk category of employees and workers in this age group.

Capt Amarinder, chairing a high-level virtual review meeting, announced that with- in these groups, district-wise allocation has also been pri- oritized based on population

index, mortality, and density. Given the severe supply constraints, it has been decid- ed to limit the vaccination for 18-44 age group in this phase to major urban centres, he said, expressing concern over the fact that even for the 45- plus age group, the State was in short supply, as a result of which only a few vaccine cen- tres were currently function- ing.

The state expects two lakh doses to arrive on Tuesday for vaccination of 45-plus cate- gory. Of the 33,46,500 Covishield doses received so far, a total of 32,91,450 have already been utilized.

In the 18-44 age group, for the month of May, the maxi- mum allocation of 50 percent has been prioritized for Group A of the most-affected districts of SAS Nagar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Bathinda, and Patiala.

Another 30 percent has been reserved for the Group B districts of Hoshiarpur, Pathankot, SBS Nagar, Faridkot, Kapurthala and Gurdaspur, while 20 percent will be utilized in the other districts that have the least

cases at present. Allocation has been made proportionate to the popula- tion of major urban areas of Zones A and B, while for Zone C, an equal distribution of doses across has been al- located for each district.

The decisions have been taken in accordance with the vaccine strategy recommend- ed by the state's Vaccine Expert Committee for May, after the spokesperson said after the meeting.

The committee, compris- ing Dr Gagandeep Kang, Dr Jacob John and Dr Rajesh Kumar, recommended that when further doses are avail- able or as the epidemiologic situation changes, the priori- tization framework may be modified.

Accepting the recommen- dations of the committee, the Chief Minister approved expansion of the list of co-morbidities to include obesity (BMI>30), disabilities (like spinal cord injury) and multi- ple co-morbidities determined to increase risk by a treating physician, in addition to those specified by the Central Government.

He pointed out that since individuals with co-morbidities are at highest risk of severe disease and deaths, it was imperative to vaccinate them on priority.

For the remaining 30 per- cent, the Chief Minister said that while the strategic roadmap contains a list of professions at risk, given the limitation of vaccine avail- ability, for the month of May, the top three categories have been chosen, including gov- ernment employees, con- struction workers, and teach- ers and other staff at govern- ment and private educational establishments, all of whom have a greater interactions with other individuals and are highest risk of infection and transmission.

Notably, Punjab Government has placed an immediate order of 30 lakh doses with Serum Institute of India Limited for 18-44 cate- gory on April 26, but has been informed that the allo- cation will be 3.30 lakh doses only for the 18-44-year age group for the month of May 2021.

To boost supplies, the

Vaccine Expert Committee has recommended that increased doses be sought in partnership with private sector and other sources, for allocation of avail- able doses in May.

It has also suggested that the State Government initiate a consultation with national and international vaccine experts to recommend the dosing strategy for Covishield and possibly other vaccines, given the international exper- ience with expanding popu- lation coverage and its impact.

Further, the Committee has recommended develop- ment of a plan for evaluation of vaccine effectiveness for prioritized groups, those with co-morbidities, and the gen- eral populations. This will be valuable in designing further control efforts and may be done in conjunction with infectious disease modeling for the state, the Committee stressed.

**Punjab set to get 3.30 lakh vaccines for 18+ cate- gory for May**

Govt prioritizes vacci- nation within groups, besides district-wise allocation based

on population index, mortal- ity, and density

·70% doses to be reserved for individuals with co-mor- bidities

·Remaining 30% to high- risk category of employees and workers in the 18-44 age group

·Maximum allocation of 50% made for Group A of most-affected districts of SAS Nagar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Bathinda, and Patiala

·Another 30% reserved for Group B districts of Hoshiarpur, Pathankot, SBS Nagar, Faridkot, Kapurthala and Gurdaspur

·Remaining 20% to be uti- lized in other districts with least cases presently

·Govt to limit vaccination for 18-44 age group to major urban centres initially

·State in short supply for 45-plus age group, only few vaccine centres currently function- ing

·Two lakh doses likely to arrive on Tuesday for vacci- nation of 45+ category

·Obesity, disabilities due to spinal cord injury also includ- ed in list of co-morbidities.

Punjab increases rates for oxygen transportation; to be as per market rate

**PNS ■ CHANDIGARH**

To further streamline and ensure hassle-free supply of liquid medical oxygen (LMO) in the state, the Punjab Government on Monday decided to increase the rates as per the present mar- ket rates for transportation of the life-saving gas from the manu- facturers and suppliers outside the State as well as from the air separation and refilling units within the State.

“The decision will be imple- mented with immediate effect after the Transport Department issues formal orders,” the Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan said at a high-level meeting. The devel- opment assumes significance as the State was facing certain issues that were creating hurdles in the smooth movement of LMO that was critically required to be sup- plied to the hospitals.

The Chief Secretary said that it was decided that Punjab shall increase the transportation rates as per the present market trend.

“It has also been decided that in view of the now applicable Centre’s instructions issued on the rates of medical oxygen and the transportation rates fixed by

the Transport Department, the earlier tender conditions, if any, fixing the rates or pricing of life- saving gas and also that of its transportation will be considered as amended to the extent that now payment would be made to transporters as per the actual rate of LMO supplied to them by plants plus applicable trans- portation charges as per today’s orders issued by the State Government,” she said.

The meeting further decid- ed that a LMO storage tank at Government Medical College (GMC) in Amritsar will be set up forthwith.

“As the levels of availability of medical oxygen in Amritsar remain critical, the work of oper- ationalizing the storage tank shall be carried out at a war foot- ing level and accomplished with- in minimum possible time,” revealed Mahajan.

To further ramp up the sup- ply chain, the meeting took another important decision to immediately free the nitrogen carrying tankers used for move- ment of semen under contract with the Animal Husbandry Department and utilize them for movement of LMO till the situ- ation normalizes.

## PUNJAB CM SEEKS MORE OXYGEN TANKERS FROM CENTRE TO MEET GROWING DEMAND

**PNS ■ CHANDIGARH**

Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Monday appealed to the Centre for more Oxygen tankers to be made available to the State, which did not have enough tankers to transport the critical commodity for saving lives of seriously ill- COVID-19 patients.

The Chief Minister, at the COVID review meeting, said that the state urgently need more tankers, as it currently had only 15 at its disposal, with two more likely to come in by Tuesday which “are not enough to handle the require- ment for transporting the Oxygen supplies coming in from other states”.

Punjab has a 195 MT allo- cation from various plants in other states, but the actual sup- ply received over the past seven days has been around 110-120 MT daily, which has also been erratic, the Chief Minister noted.

In this period, the number of patients on Oxygen support

has gone up from 4,000 to around 9,000, and though the State Government’s steps to monitor and streamline sup- plies through its controls rooms has helped in keeping things stable, the situation remains fluid and a matter of concern, he added. The current consump- tion of oxygen in the State is more than 225 MT daily, while the average increase in demand every day is around 15-20 percent.

Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan told the meeting that in addition to the shortage of trucks available with trans- porters in the State, the fact that a tanker takes around four to five days to bring the 90 MT quota allocation from Bokaro plant has made things worse.

Unless the State gets more tankers, the situation could aggravate, she added. In addition to 90 MT from Bokaro, the State’s cur- rent allocation is: 60 MT from plant in Baddi, 20 MT from plant in Panipat, 15 MT from plant in Roorkee, and 10 MT

from plant in Dehradun. Besides, around 80 MT is gen- erated daily from the state ASUs (air separation units) and local PSA (Pressure Swing Adsorption), and steps are being taken to increase pro- duction on a continuous basis, she said, adding, however, that this was not sufficient to meet the increasing demand. Medical Education Minister OP Soni said that more Oxygen cylinders were also needed at Government hospitals to meet the growing requirement.

**AAP WRITES TO CM TO ADDRESS OXYGEN SHORTAGE; SAYS GAS BEING WASTED AT BATHINDA REFINERY**

Aam Aadmi Party on Monday appealed to Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh to address the shortage of oxygen in the State by implementing a prop- er system of production and storage of oxygen gas from Sri Guru Gobind Singh Refinery Phulokhari Plant.

## Shops selling non-essential items will remain closed for a week in Chandigarh from today

**PNS ■ CHANDIGARH**

With the Covid-19 cases hitting a high almost everyday, the UT Administration on Monday ordered to shut all the shops selling non-essential items for a week in Chandigarh from 5 pm on Tuesday.

Officials said that the night curfew will continue from 6 pm to 5 am every day and total weekend curfew on Saturday and Sunday will continue. Crowded places like Sukhna Lake, Museums, Libraries, Rock Garden will remain closed. While there will be no restriction on inter-state movement, those entering Chandigarh without negative Covid-19 reports or vaccine certificates will be subject to random testing.

These decisions were taken by UT Administrator, VP Singh Badnore after reviewing the covid situation in a Special War Room meeting here. The meet- ing was attended by Manoj

Parida, Adviser to the Administrator, Arun Kumar Gupta, Principal Secretary Home and Sanjay Beniwal, DGP, KK Yadav, Commissioner, Municipal Corporation Mandip Singh Brar, Deputy Commissioner.

In the meeting, there was a detailed discussion regarding restrictive steps taken by the neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana including lock- down measures to prevent spread of infection. Chandigarh being the common capital of Punjab and Haryana, it was also felt that a total lockdown for a long period will adver- sely affect the economy and may also lead to migration of labourers from the city, there- by causing massive disruption.

Badnore asked the health authorities that beds’ capacity in medical institutions should be enhanced to accommodate the increasing number of covid patients. A Special Task Force should be constituted under Principal Secretary Health to

ensure proper auditing of the fatalities taking place in Sector 16, 32 and 48 hospitals. This will help the Administration to improve and take corrective measures in indoor medical treatment.

**BIGGEST SINGLE DAY SPIKE WITH 890 CASES IN CHANDIGARH, 11 DEATHS**

Showing no respite, the pandemic continued to surge in Chandigarh on Monday, with 890 people testing positive, up from the previous all-time high of 860 recorded just a day back. Eleven more patients succumbed to the virus in the city taking the death toll to 507. The total caseload was record- ed at 45,196 while the active cases were 7943 till the evening, stated Chandigarh’s health bul- letin.

In the last 24 hours, six women and five men died due to Covid-19. As per the health bulletin, 466 male and 424 female residents were tested positive in the last 24 hours.

## Capt Amarinder again says ‘no’ to lockdown; warns harsh measures

**PNS ■ CHANDIGARH**

Even as Punjab is repeatedly hitting the highest point in registering daily COVID-19 cases and related deaths, Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Monday once again ruled out complete and harsh lock- down as of now. However, he also issued a warning to the peo- ple against laxity in adherence to the curbs imposed in the State, making it clear, “if the situ- ation does not improve, I would be forced to consider a total lockdown”.

Chief Minister’s decision came on the day when the state’s Health and Family Welfare Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu advocated for a complete lockdown across the State “at least for 10 days” noting that cases have reached its peak.

On the other hand, the Chief Minister stated that he had, so far, refrained from ordering a sweeping lockdown in the State because it will hurt the poor the most and would lead to exodus of migrant labourers, plunging industries into chaos again. “However, if the people do not strictly com- ply with the restrictions in place, harsher steps might have to be taken,” he added.

Notably, Punjab is current- ly in a “soft lockdown” situa- tion, with numerous curbs in place, with additional restrictions

imposed by the government on Sunday. The state police chief Dinkar Gupta told the meeting that all measures were being taken to enforce the current curbs strictly.

Capt Amarinder, chairing a high-level virtual meeting to review the COVID situation, also ordered a stop on all take- away deliveries from resta- urants, which was being used by youngsters as a pretext to move out of their homes.

Only home deliveries of food should be allowed, he directed the officials. Permission was also given for shops selling fertilizers to remain open.

**HOSPITALS OVER- WHELMED, CM ORDERS BOOSTING BED CAPACITY**

Asserting that he would not allow Punjab to go the way of some other states, where patients could be seen lying out on the roads, Chief Minister said that industry should be encouraged to use their CSR funds for vaccination and treat- ment of their labour suffering from mild or moderate illness, so that they can stay at home, thus reducing pressure on hos- pitals.

Underlining the need to step up preparedness amid pro- jections of a peak in the com- ing days, the Chief Minister ordered a 20 percent increase in bed capacity in the next 10 days. He directed the Health and

Medical Education Departments to get stadiums, gymnasiums and other such places ready to house patients. Tented camps should be set up, and gyms or halls should be converted into L2 and L3 facili- ties, he said, adding that “we have to be prepared for the worst.”

He also directed use of staff from Rural Development and other Departments to augment the workforce for tracing of COVID contacts in rural areas. The directives came as the state Health Minister said that the situation was grim with only 300 beds now available at L3 in the State. Hospitals were getting overwhelmed, he added.

**PUNJAB’S 17% DEATHS HAVE “NO CO-MORBID CONDITIONS”**

Health Secretary Hussan Lal pointed out that the state’s positivity rate had on Sunday stood at 12 percent, with the Malwa region showing increased cases in the last seven to 10 days. With L3 occupancy 90 percent and in some cases 100 percent, the situation was grim, he said, adding that CFR was close to two percent and higher (at 2.7 percent) in rural areas. Home deaths currently were also at two percent. The worrying factor was that 17 per- cent of the all deaths had no comorbid conditions, he said.

## Lockdown to break chain of COVID in Haryana: Health Minister

**PNS ■ CHANDIGARH**

Uden imposition of lock- down in the entire state for one week, Haryana Home-cum- Health Minister Anil Vij on Monday said that the state is witnessing an unexpected tsunami of COVID cases on a daily basis and the active cases have crossed one lakh.

People were not following COVID-19 safety protocols and lockdown was the last resort to break the chain of spread of virus in the state, said Vij while talking to the medi- apersons.

Admitting that people would face problems due to lockdown, the Minister said that there was no other way to contain the spread of COVID- 19. People should not step out

of their houses unless it is very urgent, he added.

After ruling out imposition of lockdown since the past fortnight in the state, Haryana Government had on Sunday announced one-week lock- down to contain the spread of COVID-19.

While the state is witness- ing a record number of deaths and fresh cases on a daily basis, it has added nearly 2 lakh cases and over 1,000 fatalities between April 1 and April 30. The worst affected Gurugram district had contributed 59,540 cases during April.

Haryana is under lock- down from Monday to 5 am on May 10. Vaccination centres, banks and essential services will remain functional during the weeklong lockdown.

The Health Minister also

said that strict action will be taken against hospitals which are over-charging for facilities or any other medical assistance from COVID patients in the state.

He said that the rates of beds and other facilities have been fixed for the Corona patients undergoing treatment in private hospitals of the state. Currently, 42 private hospitals in the state are treating COVID patients, he added.

Vij further said that a three- member committee has been constituted for distribution of Tocilizumab injection as per the requirement for patients admit- ted to government and private hospitals. COVID 19 state nodal officer Dr. Dhruv Chaudhary has been appoint- ed as the Chairman of the committee.

Apart from this, senior consultant, Dr. Rajeev Badera and Medanta’s Senior Doctor, Dr. Sushila Kataria have been appointed as members of the committee. This committee will set the criteria regarding the delivery of injections and other related matters. On the issue of burden on health infrastructure, the Health Minister further said that about 70 percent of patients admitted in Haryana hospitals are from Delhi and other adjoining states, who are also being treated in the same way.

About shortage of man- power in hospitals, he said that the government will soon start the process of new recruit- ment to meet the shortage of doctors and paramedical staff in the state. Around 1,400 stu- dents of PG and MBBS finalists

studying in various medical colleges of the state have been ordered to serve in the hospi- tals of the state in the midst of this pandemic crisis.

Along with this, teams of high level officials are working 24 hours to supply oxygen in all the hospitals of the state, he added.

**OXYGEN PLANT TO BE SET UP IN PEHOWA**

Haryana Minister of State for Sports and Youth Affairs, Sandeep Singh said that an oxygen plant of 45-cylinder capacity will soon be set up in the new building the Government Hospital on the Arunay Road of Pehowa. He elaborated that all formalities of this plant which is to be built at a cost of more than Rs 40 lakh, have been completed.

## Oxygen distribution increased in all districts of the State, says Haryana CM



**FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA**  
Regional Office, 1 Floor, UCF Sadan, Vishnu Vihar, Near Prasar Bharti Office, Haridwar Bypass Road, Dehradun-248001, Ph. No.: 9135-2974385-86  
E-mail: gmufci@gov.in, agmcontn132@gov.in Website: fci.gov.in

**NOTICE FOR SALE OF WHEAT/RICE UNDER OMSS(D) WITHOUT E-AUCTION**

FCI, Uttarakhand is starting sale of Wheat/Rice through OMSS(D) (1-9 MT) without e-auction lying at various depots of FCI in Uttarakhand Region from all small (private) traders (retail sale) during 2021-22. The depot wise quantity offered and reserve price and other details can be seen/obtain from website and interested parties may apply accordingly to the concerned Divisional Manager. Details are available on FCI's website http://fci.gov.in/tender.php

Committed to food security in the interest of the nation General Manager (Region)

**PNS ■ CHANDIGARH**

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal on Monday said that the quantity of oxygen distribution in the state has been increased and at present, oxygen is being supplied to all districts as per the requirement.

Now, after ensur- ing supply of oxygen in the hospitals, the

State Government is trying to ensure that the facility of pro- viding oxygen individually should also be made available to the patients as per the con- sultation of the doctor, said the Chief Minister while pre- siding over a review meeting in Palwal district.

Khattar on Monday visit- ed four districts namely Rewari, Palwal, Nuh and Fatehabad to take stock of the health infrastructure and sup- ply of medical oxygen.

He said that teams of offi- cers have been formed in all

the districts to ensure unin- terrupted supply of oxygen in all the hospitals.

He directed the officers concerned to continuously conduct the audit regarding availability of bed and oxygen in the districts. Khattar said that the oxygen quota of the state has been enhanced. On April 22, the state’s oxygen quota was enhanced from 156 MT to 162 MT, while this quota has been further enhanced to 257 MT.

Haryana Government has set up a state level control

room to monitor oxygen sup- ply in the state. Besides this, six PSA technology based plants are ready in Faridabad, Sonipat, Karnal, Ambala, Panchkula and Hisar. Out of these, production has started from Sonipat plant and pro- duction will start in 3-4 days at the remaining plants, he added. The Chief Minister further said that after ensur- ing uninterrupted the supply of oxygen, the number of ventilators is now being increased and if the ventilator is not being used in some

places, then such ventilators will be sent to the places where they are needed, so that more and more patients who require the ventilators can get the facility. At Palwal, the Chief Minister directed that a health survey of every person should be conducted in rural areas. If in this survey it is found that a person is having COVID-19 symptoms, then the person should be advised to stay in home isolation immediately, to prevent the possibility of infection spread, he said. In view of the increas-

ing number of patients of COVID-19, all the health related services are going to be expanded further in Haryana. The number of oxygen beds and general beds is also being increased for the patients, he added. Speaking on the lock- down decision, the Chief Minister said that it is the need of the hour to impose lockdown for a week. We know that people have a prob- lem with the decision of imposing lockdown, but to break the increasing COVID- 19 infection chain, it had

become necessary to impose the lockdown, the Chief Minister said. In view of week- long lockdown, he said that action should also be initi- ated against those who are hoarding the goods unneces- sarily. Khattar said that every possible effort should be made to control inflation in the districts. The CM further said that in view of the present cir- cumstances, the District Administrations should also keep an eye on the supply of essential commodities and medicines in the districts.



# Contagion claims record 128 lives in a day in U’khand

5,403 new cases of disease reported on Monday

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The contagion of the Covid-19 is getting more and more lethal in Uttarakhand. On Monday the state health department reported the death of 128 patients which is a new record of deaths in a single day. Only on April 30, the department had reported the death of 122 patients, a record which was breached by contagion on Monday.

A total of 2930 deaths have so far been reported in the state due to Covid-19 and the death rate is now at 1.49 percent. The authorities reported 5403 new cases of the disease on Monday after which the cumulative count of patients in the state has mounted to 197023. The department discharged 3344 patients from different hospitals after their recovery on Monday.

The recovery percentage has now further dropped and is now at 68.26 percent. Out of a whopping 128 deaths reported on Monday, 17 deaths each were reported from Sushila



Tiwari Government Hospital Haldwani and Subharti hospital Dehradun. Similarly 14 patients died at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh. Deaths of 11 patients each were reported at Himalayan hospital and Kailash hospital Dehradun.

The authorities reported

the death of 10 patients in Military hospital Dehradun and nine at Velmed hospital Dehradun. Eight patients succumbed to the virus at Vinay Vishal healthcare Dehradun while seven died at Mahant Indresh hospital Dehradun. Five patients were reported dead at Vivekanand hospital

Nainital and four at HNB base hospital Srinagar on the day. Three patients died at Arogyadham Hospital Dehradun while two patients each died at Arihant hospital Dehradun, ONGC hospital Dehradun, Brijlal hospital Nainital and district hospital Rudraprayag.

Dehradun district reported 2026 new patients of Covid-19 on Monday while 676 patients were reported in Haridwar on the day. Udham Singh Nagar reported 656, Nainital 458, Tehri 415, Champawat 215, Uttarkashi 192, Chamoli 169, Almora 167, Pithoragarh 150, Pauri 139, Bageshwar 105 and Rudraprayag 35 new patients of Covid-19 on Monday.

The state now has 55436 active patients of the disease. Dehradun continues to be at the top of the table of active cases of the disease with 18948 patients, Haridwar has 10802, Nainital 6694, Udham Singh Nagar 4562, Pauri 3262, Tehri 2351, Champawat 1862, Almora 1645, Chamoli 1401, Uttarkashi 1192, Pithoragarh 1037, Rudraprayag 907 and Bageshwar 773 active cases of the disease.

To contain the contagion of Covid-19, the state administration has set up 282 containment zones in different parts of the state. In the ongoing vaccination drive 8941 people were vaccinated in 173 sessions in different parts of the state. A total of 433376 people have so far been fully vaccinated in the state while 1681416 have been partially vaccinated.

## Centre to send 2 lakh vaccine doses to U’khand



Caption- People queue sans social distancing at the flu clinic in Coronation hospital in Dehradun..... Pioneer photo

STARTING MEDICATION ON TIME PREVENTS COVID FROM BECOMING SERIOUS

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

far for plasma donation. In these messages an appeal has been made to the recovered patients to donate plasma.

Negi said that breaking the transmission chain is necessary to control the Covid surge considering which the Covid curfew duration has been extended in various parts of the state. The state's action plan is focused on the five-steps of testing, tracing, isolation, treatment and vaccination.

The secretary further informed that the number of patients being discharged after treatment is consistently rising in the state.

He said that about 90 per cent of those infected by Covid are recovering while undergoing treatment in isolation, adding that the state government is regularly monitoring the patients in isolation.

Referring to the 104 control room, he said that an average of 1,500 to 2,000 calls are being received here daily regarding various issues.

Secretary Pankaj Kumar Pandey informed that Remdesivir distribution is

being facilitated consistently. The Central government has increased the state's quota with Uttarakhand receiving 2,000 injections on Monday. The government will continue to send Remdesivir injections to the hospitals from where the demand comes.

The state is also cross-checking to ensure that the injections reach the genuine person in need. He said that evaluation by experts has revealed that those with symptoms but not getting tested, those who got tested but didn't reach the hospital at the right time or start medication on time- it is such people whose condition is getting serious. Such people are arriving at the hospital in serious condition with oxygen saturation level of 70 or below which is making the situation difficult. Considering this, Pandey requested that those suffering from symptoms should immediately start taking the medicines and get a sample test done. Taking medicines on time prevents Covid from assuming a serious stage.

## Rawat requests Gujarat CM for oxygen cylinders



PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Considering the problems being faced in the state due to the ongoing surge in Covid-19 cases, chief minister Tirath Singh Rawat had a telephonic conversation with his Gujarat counterpart Vijay Rupani on Monday.

Rawat requested Rupani to help Uttarakhand by providing

oxygen cylinders to the state. Responding to the request, the Gujarat chief minister assured that all possible help will be facilitated to Uttarakhand.

Meanwhile, office bearers of the Radha Soami Satsang Beas (RSSB) met chief minister Rawat at his camp office on the same day. The office bearers of RSSB told Rawat that if

the state government requires buildings for setting up isolation centres, the buildings of the RSSB can be used for this purpose by the government. They also appreciated the efforts being undertaken by the state government to tackle the Covid pandemic. Sunil Talwar, Ajay Sikari and other office bearers of RSSB were present on the occasion.

## Pandemic effect: All varsities, colleges closed in U’khand

THE STUDIES OF THE STUDENTS WOULD CONTINUE IN THE ONLINE MODE

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In view of the severity of the second wave of Covid-19 in the state the Uttarakhand government has closed all the institutes of higher education in the state till further orders. The closure order would be applicable on all government and private universities and colleges in the state.

The institutes of higher education in the state were closed in March last year after the onset of pandemic and were opened on March 1 this year. The state administration

has directed that the studies of the students should continue in the online mode.

The state minister for Higher Education, Dhan Singh Rawat said that the state government is concerned to protect the health of the students. He however added that the studies of the students would not be allowed to get affected by the pandemic. He said that the facility of 4G has been provided to all government colleges of the state which will help in online mode of study during the time when physical classes are not possible due to pandemic.

He added that all the officers and employees of the education department have been asked to remain at their respective headquarters during the pandemic when the institutes are closed.

## Heavy rains cause damage in three districts

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Parts of Rudraprayag, Uttarkashi and Tehri districts experienced heavy rain on Monday evening which caused some blocks on roads and debris entering homes and cattle sheds in villages. However, till the time of this report being filed, there was no information about loss of life.

According to Rudraprayag police, heavy rain near Narkota on Monday evening resulted in considerable quantity of debris landing on the highway. One jeep with four people inside got stuck in the debris. While the people were rescued safely with the help of locals, the jeep was swept away along with the debris into the river. Police and district administration officials were present at the site along with personnel of the SDRF and fire service. Attempts were being made to clear the highway of debris. The heavy rain also resulted in



debris entering homes in Narkota village though no severe damage was reported till late in the evening. According to local sources, similar damage was also reported from other parts of the district due to heavy rains.

Chinyalisaid and other parts of Uttarkashi district also experienced heavy rain in the

evening. Sources state that considerable damage has been caused to crops in the affected regions. Heavy rain was also reported in the evening from some parts of Tehri district where debris entered homes and cattle sheds. No loss of human life had been reported till the time of this report being filed.

## HC seeks detailed report from State on condition of jail inmates

PNS ■ NAINITAL

Hearing on a petition seeking release of certain inmates from the jails considering the Covid-19 surge, the Uttarakhand high court has issued notices to the State government and the director general of police. The division bench of chief justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and justice Alok Kumar Verma has sought a reply to the notice within three weeks.

According to the case details, Haridwar resident Omveer Singh has contended in



the court that last year during the pandemic, the Supreme

Court had directed the formation of a high powered committee. The apex court had also

directed all the state governments that during the pandemic, such prisoners who were under trials or in whose cases the verdict is pending should be released on bail or parole. The high court has asked the state government about the situation in the jails located in the state. It has also asked whether there are more inmates than the capacity of the jail. The state has also been asked what arrangements have been made for medicines, vaccination, oxygen and beds for the inmates. The State government is to submit a detailed report on these aspects within three weeks in the court.

## Salt byelection setback for U’khand Congress

Emotional card, ruling party status helped BJP candidate Jeena

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The comprehensive loss of its candidate Ganga Pancholi in the Salt assembly by-election has come as a setback for the Uttarakhand unit of Congress party which is bracing itself up for the crucial assembly elections slated early next year. Riding on an emotional wave and supported by a strong organisational setup the ruling BJP candidate Mahesh Jeena romped home in the by-election with a comfortable 4,697 vote victory over the Congress candidate. When the BJP offered the party ticket to the brother of late Surendra Singh Jeena in the by-election it was clear that it wanted to garner the sympathy of the electorate by revoking the memory of the late Jeena who was a popular face in the area. The saffron party had successfully played



the emotional card in Tharali and Pithoragarh by-elections and it has repeated it in Salt. The Congress on other hand knew about the sympathy factor and the fact that the electorate in the by-elections generally vote for the ruling dispensation but it hoped to garner anti incumbency votes in the election. Entire unit of the

Uttarakhand Congress had thrown its full weight in Salt. Former chief minister and general secretary of All India Congress Committee (AICC) Harish Rawat who was instrumental in giving party ticket to Pancholi at the cost his aide turned bete noire Ranjit Rawat had made the election as an issue of his prestige. He had



even released video messages from a hospital in Delhi where he was admitted after getting infected with Covid-19 in which he had appealed to the people of Salt for Ganga. On the last day of campaigning Rawat ignored the advice of doctors and campaigned in the area. Apart from Rawat, the in charge of the Uttarakhand

Congress Devendra Yadav, Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Pritam Singh and other senior leaders camped for days in Salt. In fact the whole campaigning was directly monitored by Yadav himself and the party leaders and workers were successful in generating a positive environment for its candidate. The BJP

on the other hand had thrown its entire machinery and had deputed many ministers to ensure success of its candidate. The chief minister Tirath Singh Rawat former CM Trivendra Singh Rawat and the president of Uttarakhand BJP Madan Kaushik too threw their all might for the success of Jeena. "Though the win of the BJP candidate was expected, the loss in the by-election should make the Congress sit and ponder. Congress had thrown its full might in the election but it could ensure a close fight. The party should revise its strategy for the assembly elections which are near," said Suren Rawat, a political analyst.

The observers also opine that the infighting in the faction ridden state unit would further escalate in the coming days. The party is clearly divided into two major camps headed by Harish Rawat and PCC chief Pritam Singh in Uttarakhand and with assembly elections drawing close the infighting could escalate over the control of the party and leadership issue.

## 2022 elections to be BJP Vs AAP affair: AAP

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand unit of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has said that the comprehensive defeat of Congress candidate in Salt assembly by-election has proved that the assembly elections in Uttarakhand in the year 2022 would be BJP versus BJP affair.

The Vice President of AAP Razia Beg said on Monday that the Congress party had thrown its full weight in the by-election but its candidate lost by an even bigger margin than the assembly election of 2017 when the Modi wave was blowing across the state. She said that it shows that the Congress is losing its relevance in Uttarakhand and in the assembly elections the contest would be between AAP and BJP. Beg said that every worker of the party is ready for this battle in Uttarakhand.

**The Vice President of AAP Razia Beg said in the Assembly elections the contest would be between AAP and BJP**

She said that the elections of five states have shown that people have completely rejected the Congress party and the party is a sinking ship now. The ship of Congress would get totally submerged soon, she added.

On West Bengal election result Beg said that the manner in which Mamta Banerjee has defeated BJP despite tall claims of party proves that the people are now getting disenchanted with BJP and its policies.



# SII CEO: Cannot ramp up jab production overnight



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

States seem to have to wait smore to get the adequate supply of vaccines, particularly Covishield with its manufacturer Adar Poonawalla of Serum Institute of India (SII) on Monday categorically stating that his firm cannot ramp up production overnight as vaccine making is a specialised process.

The statement of Poonawalla comes days after he had said that due to “pressure and aggression” for him and his family temporarily leaving the country for the UK, as “everyone wants the vaccine to be available in the quickest possible time.” This is likely to impact the vaccination drive that was kicked off from May 1 to cover 18 + population i.e. about 60 crore people.

In a statement here, Poonawalla said that it has orders from the Government to supply 11 crore more doses over the next few months on top of 15 crore already supplied, Poonawalla said. He further said that another 11 crore doses will be supplied to



states and private hospitals in the next few months. “We have got all kinds of support, be it scientific, regulatory and financial. As of today, we received total orders of over 26 crore doses, of which we supplied more than 15 crore doses. We have also got 100 per cent advance of Rs 1,732.5 crore by the GOI for the next tranche of 11 crore doses in the next few months,” he said.

Earlier in the day, the Union Ministry of Health said that 11 crore doses of Covishield are to come from SII during May, June and July. Another 5 crore doses of Covaxin have been ordered from Bharat Biotech India Ltd for the same months.

Poonawalla, however, did not give a timeline for supplying the vaccines. Pune-based SII can produce 6-7 crore doses a month and is reportedly planning to ramp up production to 10 crore by

July. Though the Centre has among various steps opened up vaccination for all above 18 years from May 1, the procurement of jabs has been left to states and private hospitals. This has led to state after state rushing to SII, which can meet only a small part of the demand.

Serum is licensed to manufacture COVID shots from AstraZeneca Plc and Novavax Inc. But so far, the government has approved only AstraZeneca’s Covishield vaccine for use.

The Government has also approved the homegrown Covaxin vaccine of Bharat Biotech. Russia’s Sputnik V vaccine too has been approved for emergency use.

SII CEO Poonawalla, who is currently in London, said the population of India is huge and to produce enough doses for all adults is not an easy task.

# IAF airlifts O2 from Germany to ease Indians’ breathing



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sustaining the tempo of airlifting the much-needed oxygen from abroad, an aircraft of the IAF flew non-stop for 12 hours to bring home oxygen from Frankfurt, Germany. The C-17 transport plane ferried four empty cryogenic containers from there and landed at the Hindan airbase, Ghaziabad.

Similarly, another C-17 aircraft airlifted 450 oxygen cylinders from Brize Norton in the UK to the Chennai airbase in Tamil Nadu. In the

past few days, the IAF planes carried out numerous sorties to ferry the containers from Singapore, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates.

An Italian air force transport plane landed here on Monday with a team of medical experts, oxygen generation plant and ventilators to help India fight the pandemic. The oxygen generation system capable of supplying the gas to the entire hospital will be deployed at the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) hospital in Greater Noida.

# Covid-orphaned kids adoption appeal alarms child rights body

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Alarmed at various requests appearing on social media such as twitter regarding the adoption of kids whose parents have died due to Covid-19, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has warned the common citizens/NGOs to refrain from doing so and written to States and Union Territories, urging them to inform child protection authorities about such orphans.

“The commission has been made aware of instances where it has been seen that many NGOs are advertising about the children who have become orphans after losing both their parents to Covid-19,” NCPCR chairperson Priyank Kanoongo has written to chief secretaries across the States in a letter.

He said that “in such a sad situation of the surge in Covid-19 cases in the country there are situations arising where the child has lost both its parents or is found to be abandoned. It may be noted that the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 provides for the procedure to be followed for children who have lost their family support and have become children in need of care and protection.”



The missive followed complaints that a few NGOs and individuals had been on their own on the social platforms like twitter and WhatsApp urging people to help such kids “get a new life and spread the word,” while sharing their contact numbers.

The procedure under the JJ Act, 2015 ensures that children are provided all the minimum standards of care and their rights are upheld and protected, Kanoongo said.

“Therefore, it is of utmost importance that these children who have lost their family support must be produced before the child protection authorities of the district, and information about these children must be shared with the

authorities”

He also pointed out that it was necessary for every individual, entity, organisation or NGO to ensure that any information received about orphaned and abandoned children during these Covid times is shared on the helpline 1098.

“Similarly, it is further requested that if any such information for an abandoned or orphaned children is received by any entity, organisation, NGO then the same can be also be informed to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights either through email (cp.Ncpcr@nic.in) or through telephone (011-23478250) for assistance and help to the children,” the letter said.

# MHA orders 5,000 paramilitary officials’ deployment in J&K for law and order

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has ordered deployment of 50 additional companies (5,000 personnel) of the Central paramilitary forces in Jammu and Kashmir to augment law and order security grid in the Union Territory from May 7. The move comes after a request to the effect was made J&K DGP through a letter on April 27 and it was approved by the Centre the next day.

The mobilisation is being made “for augmentation of existing deployment grid to effectively manage law and order and security duties.”

On the decision for



deployment of the 50 Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) or Central paramilitary companies, the order said, “The matter has been considered in this Ministry, it has been decided to provide 50 companies of CAPF (CRPF-20, BSF-10, SSB-10, ITBP-05 and CISF-05 com-

panies) to Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir by May 7.

“The UT Administration of Jammu & Kashmir is requested to work out the detailed deployment plan in consultation with the respective CAPFs and the deployment of the CAPFs companies

may be made only after completing the mandatory quarantine period to break the chain of coronavirus, reads the order issued on April 28.

Keeping in view the Covid-19 situation, the Home Ministry advised the Jammu and Kashmir administration to take necessary transportation/logistics/accommodation and other arrangements required in connection with deployment of the CAPFs within the UT, as per the Government guidelines on the subject. The deployment of the additional paramilitary personnel will be organised by UT Administration, added the copy of the order.

Presently, 60 battalions of the CRPF and 10 battalions of other CAPFs are deployed on the ground in the Union Territory for law and order as also for the security duty roles, sources said. The additional troops are likely to be also used for the conduct of the Amarnath Yatra, they added.

# ‘Erring’ cops booked in ISRO spy case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Monday said it has registered a case in connection with the “ISRO spy case” in compliance to a Supreme Court order of April 15 this year for taking action against the erring police officers who allegedly framed scientist S Nambi Narayanan in a false espionage case.

Earlier, the case was registered by Kerala Police on October 20, 1994, as Crime No. 225/94 at Police Station Vanchiyoor, Trivandrum against a Maldivian National under Foreigner’s Act on the allegations of overstaying in India after the expiry of the visa.

Subsequently, another case as Crime No. 246/1994 dated November 13, 1994, was also registered at Vanchiyoor Police station under Official Secrets



Act 1923 and Section 34 (common intention) of IPC against two accused Maldivian nationals on the allegations that they, in collusion with some others, had taken part in the activities against the sovereignty and integrity of India and indulged in other activities which would harm the cordial relations of India with its neighbours.

Later, the investigation of both the said cases was entrusted to a SIT of Kerala police. In Crime no. 246/1994, besides said two accused, four more persons including two scientists working at Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) of ISRO were arrested on the charges of espionage

activities.

Further, the investigation of both these cases was transferred to CBI. In the Espionage case, CBI submitted Final Report (charge sheet) before the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Ernakulam (Kerala) which was accepted by the Court. While submitting the said report in the Espionage case, the allegations pertaining to espionage were found to be false. One of the scientists S Nambi Narayanan took the matter for taking action against the erring officials to the apex court by way of filing a civil writ petition.

The SC, in its judgement dated September 14, 2018 in the Civil Appeal No. 6637-6638/2018, awarded compensation of Rs 50 lakh to Narayanan on several counts and also ordered the consti-

tution of a Committee, for obtaining actual scenario including arrest, false implication of the said scientist and to find out ways for taking appropriate steps against the erring officials, the CBI said.

Accordingly, a Committee under the Chairmanship of a retired judge of the SC, was constituted by the Union Home Ministry, it said.

The Committee, after conducting inquiry, submitted its report before the apex court. Based on the said enquiry report, the SC through an order on April 15 directed the CBI to proceed in the matter in accordance with law, being a Court directed enquiry.

“Accordingly, as per the directions of Hon’ble Supreme Court, CBI has registered a case,” the agency said in a statement.

# Jaishankar rebuts Jairam over oxygen ‘shortage’ in Embassies

IAN5 ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Sunday took on the Congress, which had attempted to project that the Central Government had collapsed and foreign embassies were reaching out to the Opposition for help with their Covid-19 medical emergencies.

On Sunday, the New Zealand Embassy in New Delhi tweeted an SOS tagging youth leaders of the Congress, saying, “Could you please help with oxygen cylinder urgently at the New Zealand High Commission? Thank you.”

Youth Congress president BV Srinivas responded to the request and tweeted an hour later saying, “We have reached New Zealand High Commission with oxygen

cylinders. Please open the gates and save a soul on time.”

However, the New Zealand Embassy apologised soon after, saying, “We are trying all sources to arrange for oxygen cylinders urgently and our appeal has unfortunately been misinterpreted, for which we are sorry.”

The apology came after Jaishankar rebutted Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, who had on Saturday accused the Government of being completely dysfunctional and unresponsive towards medical emergency at the Philippines Embassy.

On Saturday, the Indian Youth Congress had tweeted a video claiming that its members were providing medical emergency services at the Embassy of the Philippines in

New Delhi.

Ramesh tweeted the video, saying, “While I thank @IYC for its stellar efforts, as an Indian citizen I’m stunned that the youth wing of the opposition party is attending to SOS calls from foreign embassies. Is the MEA sleeping @DrJaishankar?”

To this, Jaishankar tweeted on Sunday morning, “MEA checked with the Philippines Embassy. This was an unsolicited supply as they had no Covid cases. Clearly for cheap publicity by you know who. Giving away cylinders like this when there are people in desperate need of oxygen is simply appalling. Jairamji, MEA never sleeps; our people know across the world. MEA also never fakes; we know who does.”

# Congress: Central Vista essential service, but jab will come in July, is this joke?



IAN5 ■ NEW DELHI

Reacting to reports of the Central Vista as essential service, Congress spokesperson Pawan Khara has attacked the Union Government and raised questions about the vaccines.

Addressing a Press conference on Monday Khara said, “Central Vista is an essential service, amid this pandemic in the Capital where thousands are dying every day, lakhs are suffering and struggling for hospital beds, for oxygen, for medicines, in the same capital city, the Central Vista is an essential service, but the vaccine will come in July, is that a joke?”

He said over the last 15 days, the tragedies in the hospitals that we have all witnessed in Delhi, which is the capital city, a few kilometres from the Central Vista, hospitals are pleading through social media, through media, they are pleading, begging for oxygen.

“Is the vaccine available? We

## The Congress demanded auditing and distribution of foreign aid like injections, oxygen

have been told by the manufacturers that it wouldn’t be available before July. I don’t want to remind Hon’ble Prime Minister what he said in January at the World Economic Forum that by August, 300 million people would be vaccinated,” he said.

The Congress demanded auditing and distribution of foreign aid like injections, oxygen and other drugs. “We request and demand from the Government, every day, please make public, share it with every Indian, where has this aid come from, where is it going -- which state, which hospital, which agency,” he said.



Fourth consignment of medical supplies containing 60 ventilators arrives from UK

PTI

# FICN racketeer held from Bengal gets 6 years in jail

IAN5 ■ NEW DELHI

A special NIA court in Kerala’s Ernakulam on Monday sentenced a fake Indian currency note (FICN) racketeer to six years rigorous imprisonment besides imposing a fine in connection with the Thrissur FICN case.

An NIA spokesperson said here that the special court for NIA cases in Ernakulam convicted Ali Hossain aka Mohammed Ali Hossain, 30, a resident of Murshidabad district in West Bengal, under several sections of the Indian Penal Code in a 2018 FICN case and sentenced him to six years rigorous imprisonment besides imposing a fine of Rs 85,000 on him for his role in procuring, possessing and circulating FICN in Kerala.

The official said that a case



was originally registered at the Thrissur East police station on August 19, 2018 against Hossain following the seizure of two FICNs of Rs 2,000 denomination from his possession.

Based on Hossain’s interrogation, 101 fake notes of Rs 2,000 face value each were recovered from his residence in Palakkad district.

NIA had taken over the case on October 27, 2018.

The official said that investigation had revealed that in 2018, Hossain had conspired with accused Alim Sheikh, a Bangladeshi national who is absconding, to smuggle FICN into Kerala, with an intention to use the same as genuine Indian currency for unlawful gains.



# Pak targets BSF patrol party, shatters peace

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Shattering peace prevailing along the 194 km long international border between India and Pakistan across Jammu frontier, the Pakistani rangers early Monday morning targeted a BSF patrol party in the Ramgarh sub sector of Samba by opening 'unprovoked' firing on them.

This is the first incident of 'unprovoked' firing on the Indian border guards after both India and Pakistan had renewed their mutually brokered ceasefire agreement from the midnight of February 24-25.

Luckily, the BSF patrol party escaped unhurt. Official sources in the BSF confirmed, "no loss of life/injury was reported on ground zero".

According to official sources, "early Monday morning Pakistani rangers stationed at one of the Pak post 'Tipu' and 'Hussain' fired around 20 rounds of small weapons targeting the working party of BOP Majra near mount no 8/36 pillar no 81". In response, BSF jawans exercised utmost restraint but maintained a close watch on the activities of the Pak rangers.

After gathering inputs and making preliminary assessment of the ground situation, PRO BSF, DIG SPS Sandhu, Jammu frontier in a formal statement claimed, "Pakistani r a n g e r s resorted to 'unprovoked' firing at 06:15 a.m in Ramgarh sector on BSF patrolling party ahead of fencing." No loss of life/injury was reported, he added.



Interestingly, the Ramgarh sector was witnessing hectic activity for the last couple of weeks.

On March 16, 2021 alert BSF jawans had killed a Pakistani intruder in the same sector after he refused to retrieve inside the Pak territory and kept advancing towards the Indian side.

Several aeroplane shaped balloons with PLA written on it were also recovered from agricultural fields in the Hiranagar, Arnia and RS Pura sectors of Jammu frontier.

Meanwhile, local villagers in the border areas were living peacefully for the last two months and focusing on harvesting their wheat crops standing in the fields.

Local civilians bore the maximum brunt of cross border firing in the past and were leading peaceful lives since the past more than two months in the forward areas.

## Yogi Govt to launch mega testing drive in villages

**Lucknow:** In order to prevent Covid surge in the rural areas in Uttar Pradesh, the Yogi Adityanath Government is going to launch a mega testing campaign for Covid infection in all the revenue villages of the state from May 5.

The Chief Minister, while presiding over a high-level Covid review meeting, said that the rural areas have been a matter of huge concern and we have to protect the villages from the Covid spread.

To curb the Covid numbers in rural areas, the government has decided to ramp up testing in around 97,409 revenue villages of 75 districts.

The focus is to contain the spread of the infections in rural areas. "We have to protect villages from Covid infection at any cost. There is a need for special vigilance in the villages. In such a situation, a massive campaign of Covid testing should be conducted in all the 97,409 revenue villages of the state", he directed. The initiative starting from May 4, aims to drive down Covid-19 rates and transmission in the rural areas by identifying positive cases.

The Chief Minister has asked the officials to make all the necessary preparations.



The number of RRTs (Rapid Response Teams) should be increased to check Covid spread in the villages of each district. Members of RRTs should make door-to-door visits and check body temperatures, record oxygen level and check for other symptoms in people who are into home isolation.

The Chief Minister also ordered the health department to complete preparations for the successful implementation of this large testing drive which will begin from Tuesday.

"We are hoping that the villagers will recognize the benefits of getting tested to help reduce the spread of the virus," said a government spokesman.

Yogi Adityanath asked the officials to seek help from the monitoring committees. Those who are found unwell or those who tested positive, should be given treatment according to Covid medical protocols. **IANS**

# J&K records 51 deaths on Mon

**Jammu:** The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir on Monday recorded 51 deaths, highest so far in one single day while 3,733 new cases of coronavirus tested positive taking the tally of active positive cases closer to 35,000 cases.

According to a media bulletin, only 11 Covid ICU beds have been left vacant in GMC, Jammu, four in Chest Diseases Hospital, 20 in Gandhi Nagar hospital, three in ASCOMS Hospital. The situation in Srinagar is no different. As per the media bulletin, only 1 Covid ICU bed was vacant in SMHS hospital in Srinagar, 2 in SKIMS, Soura.

Meanwhile, there has been no let up in the total number of new cases. On May 3 out of

3733 new positive cases 1294 were reported from Jammu division and 2439 from Kashmir division.

The death toll due to Covid 19 touched 2421 after 35 deaths were reported from Jammu division and 16 from Kashmir division.

Moreover, 1536 more Covid-19 patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals including 626 from Jammu Division and 910 from Kashmir Division.

Both the capital cities of Srinagar and Jammu continue to record the highest tally of positive cases despite observing corona curfew. On Monday, Srinagar recorded 1136 cases taking the tally of active positive cases to 10,143. **PNS**

## TN CM Palaniswami resigns

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami submitted his Government's resignation to Governor Banwarilal Purohit on Monday morning as a follow up to the Election Commission of India declaring the results of the Legislative Assembly election held on April 6.

M K Stalin, president of the DMK, who led his party as well as the Secular Front to an impressive win in the election would be sworn in as the next Chief Minister on Friday.

The newly elected MLAs of the DMK are meeting at the party headquarters in Chennai on Tuesday to formally elect Stalin as the leader of the legislative assembly. Stalin had told media persons late Sunday evening that the swearing in would be

held at the Raj Bhavan in Chennai and it would be a simple affair. The mission to ensure a smooth transition of power began late Sunday evening and continued throughout Monday with bureaucrats and police officials calling on Stalin at his palatial residence many times.

In the 234 strong Legislative Assembly, the DMK would have 133 members while the AIADMK with 66 members would don the role of the principal opposition party.

The Indian National Congress, the principal ally of the DMK, won 18 of the 25 seats it contested, while the two Communist parties shared two seats each. The VCK, a Dalit outfit, managed to win four seats. The DMK will not include any of the allies in its government as the party commands a safe and secure strength in the House.

The PMK and the BJP, allies of the AIADMK, won five and four seats respectively. The Anna Makkal Munnetra Kazhakaran launched by TTV Dhinakaran and the Makkal Neethi Maiam, launched by film actor Kamal Hassan failed to win at least one seat from the State. Both Dhinakaran and Haassan were defeated in the hustings.

Sixty eight year old Stalin would be the oldest person to be sworn in as Chief Minister. His predecessor Edappadi Planiswamy was 63 when he took oath of office as chief minister in 2017, while M Karunanidhi, Stalin's father had become the chief minister at the age of 45. K Kamaraj was 57 when he was sworn as chief minister while C N Annadurai, the first DMK chief minister was 60 when he became the chief minister.

## Frightening pictures from hospitals exposing tall claims of UP CM: Akhilesh

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Monday accused the ruling BJP Government in Uttar Pradesh of remaining in "isolation" and said the frightening pictures coming from hospitals are exposing the tall claims of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

"The BJP government did nothing in past four years and remained in isolation due to which it has put entire state in isolation now. The tall claims of Adityanath is exposed in frightening pictures and videos coming from hospitals daily," Yadav said in a statement here.

He also questioned the work being done by chief minister's Team-9', saying that in some cases, entire families are COVID-19 positive and no one is there to take care of them. The SP leader also alleged that alive people are being declared dead in hospitals.

"There is no proper supply of oxygen and no beds in hospitals. Hundreds of people are dying due to mismanagement and BJP government is responsible both administratively and morally," Yadav said, adding that such irresponsible government is of no use to people.

# Maha deaths drop to 567

N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a relief to the health authorities, the number of Covid 19-triggered deaths in Maharashtra dropped further to 567 on Monday, while the state logged 48,621 new infections.

A day after the state recorded 669 deaths and 56,647 new cases, the daily deaths dropped by 102 while the infections came down by 8026.

The drop in the number of daily deaths in the state should be seen in the context of the fact that the daily deaths had gone up to 10-35 on April 28, while the state witnessed 802 deaths on May 1 and 669 deaths on May 2. With 567 new deaths, the total number of deaths in the state climbed from 70,284 to 70851. Similarly, with 48,621 infections, the total number of cases rose from 47,22,401 to 47,71,022.

As 59,500 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year went up to 40,41,158. The recovery rate in the state for the first time in several days rose from 84.31 per cent to 84.7 per cent.

The total "active cases" in the state dropped from 6,68,353 to 6,56,870 cases. The fatality rate in the state stood static at

1.49 per cent.

With 78 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai increased from 13,294 to 13,372,

while the infected cases went up by 2624 to trigger a jump in the infections from 6,55,997 to 6,58,621.

## Mumbai BMC chief urges people to come forward for Covid testing

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Concerned by the sudden decrease in the number of Covid-19 tests being conducted in the metropolis, Mumbai Municipal Commissioner I S Chahal on Monday appealed to the citizens in the city to come forward to get tested so that "a minimum of 40,000 tests are done every day" in the country's commercial capital.

In an appeal made on a day when the number of daily Covid-19 tests dropped to 23,542 as against 56,000 tests done in a single day the metropolis last month, Chahal said: "It has been the consistent policy of MCGM to do maximum testing to flush out Corona virus from Mumbai's environment".

"Our highest single day testing from March 2020 till 10th Feb 10, 2021 when second pandemic wave hit Mumbai was 24,500," the civic chief said.

"However, immediately thereafter our testing was more than doubled & touched 56000 tests on a single day in April 2021. Our average daily testing in the month of April 21 was nearly 44000 per day," Chahal said.

"It has been observed that the testing figures have fallen in last few days from 50,000 plus to 38000 day before & 28,000 yesterday. It's likely to fall further during weekends," the civic chief said in the morning.

As per the Covid-19 update released by the Urbanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), the number of Covid-19 tests done on a single day dropped to 23,542 on Monday.

"Our aggressive testing policy has resulted in reduction of the positivity rate. This might have reduced the natural demand for home collection of swabs by our citizens in the last few days," Chahal said.

### COVID BRIEFS

#### PUDUCHERRY: LOCKDOWN EXTENDED TILL MAY 10

Puducherry: Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry Tamilisai Soundararajan on Monday announced that the lockdown to contain the spread of COVID-19 would be extended till May 10. She announced this while speaking to reporters after inaugurating a separate OP booth on the premises of Rajiv Gandhi Government Maternity Hospital here.

#### ANDHRA LOGS 18,972 FRESH CASES

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh crossed the One million mark in total recoveries of Covid-19 patients even as it added 18,972 fresh cases of the infection in the 24 hours ending 9 am on Monday. The latest bulletin said 10,227 patients had recovered in 24 hours, taking the gross to 10,03,935.

#### AHMEDABAD: W RLY SETS UP 19 ISOLATION COACHES

Ahmedabad: The Ahmedabad division of the Western Railway has set up 19 isolation coaches with 304 beds here in Gujarat amid the shortage of beds in hospitals given the surge in COVID-19 cases. Thirteen of these coaches, equipped with required medical facilities including oxygen cylinders, have been stationed at the city's Sabarmati railway station, while six coaches are parked at Chandlodiya railway station, it said on Monday.

#### 5 COVID +VE UNDERTRIALS FLEE FROM HOSP IN JAIPUR

Jaipur: Five Covid-19 positive undertrial prisoners getting treatment at the Chittorgarh District Hospital fled from the facility on Monday, but two of them were nabbed soon afterward, officials said.

#### SIKKIM: 27 NEW CASES, 1 MORE DEATH

Gangtok: Sikkim's COVID-19 tally rose to 8,468 as 27 more people tested positive for the virus while one new fatality pushed the death toll to 150, a health department bulletin said on Monday. The new COVID-19 cases were reported from East Sikkim district (13), West Sikkim (10) and South Sikkim district (4), it said.

## BJP likely to send Central observers to Assam to pick next State CM

**New Delhi:** The BJP is likely to finalise its choice of Chief Ministerial nominee for Assam in a day or two as internal consultation within the party has begun amid a suspense over whether it will continue with incumbent chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal or bring in a new face.

Sonowal and his powerful ministerial colleague Himanta Biswa Sarma are being seen as the two most obvious contenders for the top job. BJP sources said internal confabulation is on in the party, and the its parliamentary board may soon name central observers to preside over the meeting of its newly-elected party MLAs in Guwahati where they will pick their leader. Central observers generally convey the choice of the party top brass to the state leadership which in turn is endorsed by the

MLAs.

The ruling BJP-led NDA has retained its grip on Assam, bagging 74 of the 126 assembly

constituencies that went to polls, while the opposition Congress-led grand alliance managed to clinch just 50 seats. **PTI**

## Assam CM thanks people for victory of BJP-led alliance

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister ASarbananda Sonowal thanked all sections of people for giving a clear mandate to the BJP-led alliance in the assembly election, results of which were declared on Sunday.

Expressing his gratitude to the people belonging to Barak and Brahmaputra valleys, and other parts of the state, the chief minister in a statement on Monday said, they had reposed their faith in

the BJP-led alliance due to its performance in four key areas.

The areas were "development carried out by the BJP-led government which manifested in every nook and corner of the state, its unrelenting fight against corruption, initiatives to strengthen peace and harmony, and committed efforts of the government to safeguard the identity and existence of the Assamese people from the influx which had significantly altered the demography of the state, especially lower Assam", the statement said.

## Coordinate with Centre to hike O2 quota: Raj CM to officials

**Jaipur:** Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has instructed officials to maintain constant coordination with the Central Government to increase the allocation of medical oxygen in view of the ever-increasing active cases of Covid in the state. Along with this, he has also directed to strongly advocate for providing tankers as per requirement to Rajasthan out of the oxygen transport tankers being imported through the central government.

The Chief Minister has said strict adherence to the Covid protocol is very important for lifesaving. He instructed that the epidemic red alert starting from Monday should be strictly followed the guidelines of Public Discipline Fortnight, there should not be any laxity in it.

Shri Gehlot was reviewing the supply of oxygen, availability of medicines, Covid condensation and the epidem-



ic Red Alert - Public Discipline Fortnight starting Monday through video conference on Sunday night.

He said that the consumption of oxygen in the state is increasing rapidly due to increasing compaction. Since the central government is allocating oxygen under the National Plan, it is very important to increase the amount of allocation in view of the need of Rajasthan. He said that there has been an additional increase of 350 metric tonnes in the production capacity of oxygen at the Jamnagar plant. In such a situation, Rajasthan gets an allocation of extra oxygen from there.

## Aligarh hospital demands ₹8,000 to hand over body

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

During the covid pandemic, it has been seen that the sensitivity of Deendayal Hospital staff is dead. Beena Ghosh, resident of Begambagh, died on April 30, but Rs 8,000 were demanded to hand over the body.

Son Shankar was upset due to lack of money. After the matter went viral on social media, the DM in charge took cognizance and the investigation has been handed over to SDM. After this, the body was also handed over to Shankar.

Bina Ghosh was tested positive on 24 April, the same day she was admitted to the corona ward of Deendayal Upadhyaya Joint Hospital.

## Agra residents urged to return empty cylinders

PTI ■ AGRA

Two major NGOs here that have been providing oxygen to Covid patients, have urged their families to return empty cylinders.

About 200 oxygen cylinders and 15 concentrators, provided by the two nonprofit organisations — Shri Chetra Bajaj Committee and Help Agra — are lying with people being treated in home isolation, they told PTI.

"Some people are renting our cylinders further to other people at heavy rates. When we call them, they refuse to return them and tell us to keep the security amount," Shri Chetra Bajaj Committee Spokesperson Nandkishore Goyal said, adding the security amount varied from Rs 5,000 to Rs 6,000.

### MAHA PHONE TAPPING CASE

## Rashmi Shukla moves SC, seeks no coercive action against her

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a new development in the much-discussed phone tapping case, senior IPS officer Rashmi Shukla on Monday moved the Bombay High Court, seeking a direction to the Mumbai police not to take any coercive action against her and urging the court for an urgent hearing in the case registered under the Official Secrets Act and other laws for allegedly leaking certain confidential documents.

In a criminal writ petition filed through her advocate Sameer Nangre, Shukla – who is currently Additional Director General (ADG) of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) based in Hyderabad – sought a direction to the police to not take any "coercive action" against her. She also sought an urgent heading in the case, as she was apprehending her

arrest in the case.

Shukla's counsel said in the petition: "My client is one of the senior most officers of 1988 cadre in police service for more than 30 years....The approach of the respondent state is to arm-twist the petitioner by bogus and frivolous case".

"The petitioner has exposed the nexus between ministers and politicians and other gross corruption involved in assigning posting to police officers...This reveals courage and integrity of the petitioner in performing her official duties and making her best endeavours to expose and eliminate the corruption by bringing the guilty to books," Nangre stated in the petition.

"Instead of applauding and appreciating the work of the petitioner, the government authorities are involved in framing the petitioner in a false criminal case," the petition

stated.

The petition pertains to an FIR registered by the police at the BKC Cyber Police Station on March 26 based on a complaint filed by the State Intelligence Department (SID) against unknown persons for the alleged illegal phone tapping and invoked sections of the Official Secrets Act, Information Technology Act and Indian Telegraph Act.

Before the BKC police registered an FIR in the phone tapping case, Maharashtra Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte had claimed in a report submitted to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray that "it appears that Ms. Shukla herself had leaked the confidential report (to the former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis)".

On her part, Shukla skipped the summons issued to her to appear before the BKC on April 26 and April 28 for recording her statement in the

case.

It may be recalled that the SID had lodged a lodged a complaint with the police after Maharashtra's former chief minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis had on March 23 gone to town demanding a CBI inquiry into the alleged racket involving the transfers and promotions of police officers ranging from inspectors to high-ranging IPS officers.

Fadnavis had made his demand based on a confidentially submitted to it in August last year by the then State Intelligence Commissioner Rashmi Shukla through the then the Director-General of Police Subodh Jaiswal on August 25, 2020 allegedly involving corruption in matters relating to the transfers and promotions of police officers ranging from inspectors to high-ranging IPS officers.



A married couple on their way to pray at the holy river Ganga amid lockdown in Varanasi on Monday



A bride and bridegroom wearing masks leave after registering their marriage at Bandra court, amid lockdown, in Mumbai, on Monday PTI



www.dailypioneer.com

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

PAPER WITH PASSION

## Emphatic victory

The BJP lost the plot when it focused more on damning Mamata than advancing its core agenda

It's a classic case of "glass half full" battle of jibes for both the BJP backers and their critics. For the supporters of the saffron outfit, the victory in Assam and Puducherry and the massive rise in both the vote percentage and the number of seats in West Bengal are a reflection of the BJP's unmatched electoral management and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popularity. The saffron baiters have their own arguments. They contend that the BJP's victory against the Congress in Assam was predictable because the latter is no more a potent political force. Similarly, in Puducherry, it's the personal victory of All India NR Congress (AINRC) leader N Rangasamy and the BJP has merely benefited from the alliance. But in Bengal, where the real battle of 2021 took place, the BJP came a cropper. After all, it had thrown in everything it had in its ever-growing kitty of resources — political, financial and others. The Prime Minister himself addressed 18 rallies and Home Minister Amit Shah held dozens of massive road shows. Several other Chief Ministers, MPs, MLAs and party president JP Nadda camped in Bengal for months together and tried to create the necessary media buzz to defeat the TMC in the psychological space. Coincidentally, several initiatives of the CBI and the I-T department against the TMC leaders also came in handy for the BJP. Mamata and her supporters also kept alleging that



the Election Commission was acting as a player rather than an arbiter.

On the other hand, Mamata got little support from the anti-BJP bandwagon. Though the Congress-Left alliance threatened to cut into her Muslim votes, a few erstwhile UPA leaders came in to campaign for her. Devoid of any serious policy and programme narratives, the campaign became highly personalised with Modi greeting Mamata with "Didi o Didi" catcalls and the TMC supremo hurling the choicest invectives at Shah. The BJP lost the plot when it focused more on damning Mamata than advancing its core political agenda. The Bengali-identity politics turned out to be far more assertive and lethal for the BJP which didn't realise that lord Ram would not threaten a woman who epitomised goddess Durga for millions of Bengalis. In fact, the more the BJP leaders ridiculed Mamata, the more sympathy she drew from the people of the State. The presence of a leader who could give a face to identity politics cost the saffron party in a big way. Most of the borrowed players — described as "rotten eggs" by Prashant Kishor — were seen as opportunists even by the BJP's own supporters. It's obvious that any cadre-based party can't assimilate such an overnight influx without alienating a section of its own supporters. The lesson for the BJP is loud and clear: Wherever the party is pitched against satraps, it would need to focus more on local issues and identity politics. The record of the last seven years shows that the BJP has not been successful in winning against powerful regional players in the State-level elections.

### PICTALK



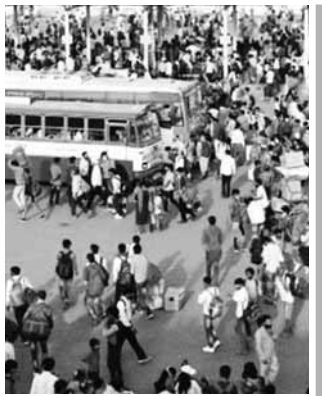
People buy vegetables at a crowded market during the lockdown in Jalandhar

PTI

## Crunch time

The Centre must plan meticulously before it agrees to the SC's advice for another lockdown

Devastated by COVID-19's second wave, the nation is anxiously looking for solutions but seemingly can't find any. The Prime Minister, who had last year announced a hard lockdown, is now advocating a "micro-containment" strategy while the Supreme Court recently asked the Centre to consider imposing another lockdown. But considering the ferocity of the second wave — the exponential rise in cases, mounting death toll, shortage of medical oxygen, vaccines and hospital beds — and the loss of crucial time in the conduct of the Assembly elections and the Mahakumbh, the moot question is: Would another lockdown help contain the infection? There has been no significant improvement in Delhi even after a two-week lockdown — now extended for a third week — as the positivity rate continues to be alarmingly high. Further, even if a pan-India lockdown is imposed as a knee-jerk reaction to the court's suggestion, its impact on breaking the transmission chain is debatable. There's no doubt, however, that it would be a death blow to millions of underprivileged citizens already facing an existential crisis. We have seen how the hapless migrant workers again rushed



back home from big cities fearing a lockdown, even before it was announced.

It is the duty of the Centre to make adequate arrangements for the return of these workers if it plans to enforce another lockdown. It must ensure that these people are not stuffed into trains or buses like last year because that would be another super-spreader. A reasonable period, at least two weeks, must be allowed for their safe return before the lockdown is effected. The Government should also transfer some funds via the DBT schemes into their bank accounts. Also, with the Supreme Court observing that no person shall be denied hospitalisation for lack of identity proof, the Centre must now consult States and formulate a national policy within two weeks. The situation is already out of hand and the entire population must be vaccinated as early as possible. With vaccine shortage and an uneven pricing policy haunting the States, getting the desired outcome from the inoculation drive is easier said than done. With reports that the second wave may hit its peak between May 11-16 before declining by May end, we must be prepared for the worst.

# Ignoring the warning signs

We were wilfully unprepared for this tsunami of an outbreak of COVID-19, though the telltale marks were all in plain sight

Anybody who has seen videos of the horrific 2004 tsunami that killed an estimated quarter of a million people, and there are several of these on YouTube, might have noticed in some videos that as much as 10-15 minutes before the tsunami actually hit the shore, water had started withdrawing from the beach. The students of middle-school geography will remember that it is taught as a classic warning sign of an impending tsunami; and we are actually taught at a very early age that one needs to find higher ground in such a situation. This lesson is redoubled in many coastal areas. Maybe some people did seek shelter when they noticed this, many did not. Yes, the tsunami might have gotten many of those who escaped anyway; it was so devastating that running away could do only so much. But even if it saved a few lives, the lessons in school would have been worth it.

That was a real tsunami, what we have in India right now is not a second wave of COVID-19 infections. We have an overwhelming tsunami of COVID-19 infections and, in Delhi and in many other cities across India, the healthcare system is overwhelmed. We know that at least 3,500 people are dying every day, at least in official statistics. India is inching up to 2,50,000 deaths and almost every family in Delhi at least knows either a loved one or a close friend who has died from the Coronavirus Tsunami. While the authorities now struggle with managing the situation, we have to start taking into account as to why we all ignored the warning signs.

And these were there. These were there for all of us to see and read about in the news. We knew there was a deadly new British variant doing the rounds; we knew that there was a new "double mutant" variant. Even with limited testing, we knew that there were hotspots emerging in and around Mumbai and Pune. But instead of herding



people to a higher ground and safety, like we should have if this were a real tsunami, we were mesmerised and walked into the exposed seafloor, trying to pick up coral and seashells. We travelled to Goa, crowded planes and airports and instead of managing travel from hotspots like the United Kingdom, or even domestic travel, we "celebrated" the rising numbers of air passengers through tweets. Instead of restricting air travel, either within India, from India or into India, we allowed hundreds of people to come in likely carrying new and exotic variants of the virus. The world, however, is scared of the new variants emerging from India and has pretty much closed its doors to India.

Some of us had read about the sudden rise in cases in Brazil, starting with the Amazonian city of Manaus and spreading across that South American country, and wondered whether India too could see such a tremendously debilitating tsunami of cases. Instead, we were told stories of Indian exceptionalism, how India had beaten



INSTEAD OF UNDERSTANDING WHY INDIA WAS SPARED THE 'FULL' IMPACT OF THE ORIGINAL CORONAVIRUS, WE ROLLED OUT A GRADUAL VACCINE PROGRAMME AND INDEED MADE A SONG AND DANCE ABOUT EXPORTING MILLIONS OF VACCINES ABROAD

back the virus and taking a cue from our leaders, across fields from politics to sports, we all let our guard down. Instead of understanding why India was spared the "full" impact of the original Coronavirus, we rolled out a gradual vaccine programme and indeed made a song and dance about exporting millions of vaccines abroad. Nothing against India's generosity to the world, but maybe here following a more selfish American philosophy might have ensured that more people in India were vaccinated and the death toll from this outbreak might have been less.

Yes, a large majority of those who have died were elderly and had led full lives, and while many of them might have died in this tsunami also, the issue is that a large number of people who died need not have died had the arrangements for more beds and oxygen been made earlier. Yes, the system might still have been overwhelmed, meaning that those who caught the disease early benefited from more resources but if the special COVID-19 hospitals in Delhi and

Mumbai had been established a week earlier, if a proper logistical programme had been thought out for oxygen transport a month earlier, many lives might have been saved. The Government is going around tom-tomming India's "low" COVID-19 Fatality Rate; in fact, with a bit of planning and organisation, it could have been lower still.

The fact of the matter is that we saw the warning signs but chose to ignore these; we all bought into the story of Indian exceptionalism. We blithely chose to ignore what was happening elsewhere in the world and believed that once we all start getting vaccinated, things will get even better. We went ahead and planned for massive religious functions like the Mahakumbh, we had parties on Holi and we put ourselves at risk. We ignored the warning signs, even though these were in plain sight for all of us to see. No wonder, now we find ourselves drowning in a tsunami.

(The author is Managing Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### MATCHES ARE AN OASIS THESE DAYS

Sir — The Indian Premier League (IPL) match between archrivals Mumbai Indians (MI) and Chennai Super Kings (CSK) recently was a perfect entertainer and certainly the match of this season so far. Kieron Pollard's stunning onslaught took the Mumbai Indians to an improbable win in a run-fest. The defeat also ended the Super Kings' five-match winning streak.

The MI came out with flying colours in a last-ball thriller. With 138 needed from the last 10 overs, they knew there was just one way to go about it and, in Pollard, they found the man to pursue the Herculean task. He muscled Jadeja for three sixes in the 13th over before smashing two more off Lungi Ngidi in the next. By the end of 14 overs, Mumbai were 130 for three. At the same stage in their innings, the Super Kings were 126 for four. Pollard raced away to 50 in 17 balls, the fifth joint-fastest in the IPL, and reduced the equation to 66 required from the last five overs. A match that witnessed an equal number of fours and sixes (30 each) is absolutely a bad memory for the bowlers. Remarkably, both teams displayed true teamwork to arrive at such a mammoth total. But Rayudu and Moeen Ali from CSK and Pollard and Krunal Pandya from MI deserve special applause. Let's hope the richest cash league will offer the best entertainment in the remainder of the series.

Satish Reddy Kanaganti | Nalgonda

### IT'S TIME TO BE HOPEFUL, CAREFUL

Sir — Winning over the first wave of COVID-19 was no mean feat for India. Buoyed by it, New Delhi started vaccine diplomacy to help other nations during the crisis. However, things turned upside down as the second wave hit us hard and sent our healthcare system reeling. Some sceptics applaud other countries for beating the second wave and compare it with India's "failure". However, we must keep in mind that we have a huge population and there are several other barriers. Despite all the constraints, our recovery rate is far better and mortality rate is too low. Even the US and Russia, among the developed

## BJP should introspect its failure



In the West Bengal Assembly elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) fell way below its expected number of seats. But in a surprise turn, Mamata Banerjee lost to Suwendu Adhikari, her former party colleague who switched sides months earlier and joined the BJP. It's time for the BJP and its leaders, who were earlier claiming to win more than 200 seats, to introspect about what led to their defeat. In an embarrassment for the BJP, its stalwarts such as Union Minister Babul Supriyo, former Rajya Sabha MP Swapan Dasgupta and Lok Sabha MP Locket Chatterjee fell like ninepins. The Assembly election

nations with top medical infrastructure, were devastated by the second wave.

The Centre and State Governments are doing their best to fight the pandemic and utilising their resources to the optimum. The services of final-year MBBS students can be utilised for providing services like tele-consultation and monitoring of mild COVID cases after due orientation by and under supervision of faculty. It's time for all of us to work together and overcome the pandemic. The darkness will soon go away if every citizen follows the rules and precautions at individual level.

Aman Jaiswal | New Delhi

### TAMIL NADU'S DRAVIDIAN ICONS

Sir — These Tamil Nadu Assembly elections were the first time in the last five decades without the towering presence of the icons of Dravidian politics. This time, the State may well have seen the emergence

result is a dampener for the BJP if compared with the outcome of the 2019 Lok Sabha election. It had won 18 of the 42 seats and taken a lead on 121 of the 294 Assembly segments by garnering 40.2 per cent vote share. However, in this election, it won 77 seats — 44 seats less than the lead it had taken in the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

The people of West Bengal chose to rally behind Mamata Banerjee despite the vigorous canvassing against her by tall BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. It seems that the Trinamool Congress was successful in consolidating the Muslim votes and that had a direct impact on the election results. In Kerala, the LDF Government got due recognition from the voters for its efficient management of the State during the severe flood and its proper handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. It's good for the BJP to be ambitious but the recent Assembly results have shown that over-ambition is counterproductive.

Katuru Durga Prasad Rao | Hyderabad

of one, perhaps two, new icons. Now the State has newly elected MLA and to-be-Chief Minister M K Stalin who is well suited for this new generation and for the DMK. He is 68 years old and has finally reached where he wanted to be for five long decades in the shadow of his father and one of the leading lights of the Dravidian movement, the late Muthuvel Karunanidhi.

However, the ALADMK hasn't done as badly as was expected, especially with the weight of an alliance with the BJP which was more like a liability. Stalin, because of his genealogy, long years in politics and two successive wins, in 2019, when the DMK-led grouping won 38 of the 39 Lok Sabha seats in the State, and now, can stake claim to being the next Dravidian icon.

Anshita Rochwani | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## SOUNDBITE

So far, refrained from ordering a sweeping lockdown. But if the people do not comply with the restrictions, harsher steps might have to be taken.



Punjab Chief Minister — Amarinder Singh



US Secretary of State — Antony Blinken

Everybody is building more and more oxygen plants, getting tonnes and tonnes of oxygen cylinders. How are we compensating for all the oxygen that we are forcefully drawing from the environment?



Actor — Kangan Ranaut



Rajasthan Royals opener — Jos Buttler

Nirvachan Sadan is the new crematorium in Delhi. Constitutional bodies (are) burnt here.

TMC leader — Mahua Moitra



FIRST COLUMN

TIME FOR COURSE CORRECTION



SHIVAJI SARKAR

The Govt must reformulate the plan for the resurgence of India with the help of the Opposition and social groups

Economic activities have been hit so hard by the lockdown that traders have cried for deferment of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and other taxes. According to the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), the daily loss of business owing to the lockdown in Delhi is likely to be around ₹600 crore while the total loss across the nation could be nearly ₹30,000 crore if full and partial lockdowns, night curfews and other forms of restrictions are taken into account. CAIT's secretary general Praveen Khandelwal says that non-compliance with these tax stipulations will attract huge penalties on traders across the country. There is no policy or revival plan and the economy is shrinking as people's incomes are in a tailspin, markets have sagging demand and activities are at a virtual thaw. A hard lockdown was imposed on March 24, 2020 without giving a simple thought on how 130 crore Indians would survive if their livelihoods were snatched away. It happened and the next three months revealed that the decision to close down all activities, except those centered around COVID-19, had led the country to a devastating path. Lakhs of the 18 crore migrant workers hit the road amid loss of work and dignity. Nearly 13 months down the line, the Government should have come out with a road map till now but, alas the nation became complacent about having conquered COVID-19 only to realise too late that the virus has not gone and has hit us with greater ferocity. Consequently, there has been an exponential surge in infections, a mounting death toll, lack of medical oxygen and medicines.

The State has largely remained a mute spectator compelling the courts to intervene and stop the administration from smothering voices being raised against the Government's monumental failure. Despite its massive failure to deal with the crisis, the Centre has claimed that all arms of the Government are working unitedly and rapidly to deal with the situation. The nation is still expecting some decisive action against the pandemic but with its ailing healthcare system and mounting death toll the situation is becoming grim day by day. Reports from the countryside say that half-baked hospitals are doing more harm and how the bodies are cremated remains a mystery. "The State has failed in its fundamental obligation to protect the basic fundamental right that is the right to life under Article 21", said Delhi High Court on April 30. The Bench, earlier during the same hearing, had noted the "complete failure of the State" when dealing with other pleas.

We have not suddenly plummeted into such a state. It appears that the nation was in euphoria of collecting brownie points and has given up all thoughts about the lives of its own people or the state of its economy. The latest indicators from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) about the banking system do not bring any comfort. The bank losses or Non Performing Assets (NPA) are mounting. In such a scenario, credit squeeze is obvious. The Rupee is plunging and petrol prices are at an artificial high. The time for correction has come. The Government needs to own up to failure on its part to control the pandemic. Further, it must also admit that it failed to provide employment and prevent loss of jobs following the demonetisation exercise and pushed the country into severe social and economic crisis. The Centre must reformulate the plan for resurgence of the country with the help of the Opposition, religious leaders and social groups not merely for Gross Domestic Product figures but for survival of the informal sector and the free flow of cash. It must give up all political ego. Healthcare should now become the bedrock of the nation's resurgence, supported by a prudent economic policy, even if that means forming a national Government.

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

# Make the COVID jabs free for everyone

There is a dire need to vaccinate at least one billion people within a short time and, given the pitfalls of differentiated pricing, the Centre should opt for inoculating everyone free of cost

Under the 'Liberalised Pricing and Accelerated National COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy (LPANCVS)', announced on April 19, which was kicked off from May 1, the Centre has plans to vaccinate all adults above 18 years of age. Before this, the inoculation drive that was launched on January 16, covered healthcare and frontline workers and people above 50 years of age and those with comorbidities. In the second phase of the drive the age limit was brought down to those above 45. Vaccine manufacturers were giving all their supplies to the Government of India (GOI) and charging ₹150 per dose even as the latter was arranging for inoculation of eligible people free at Government vaccination centres (GVCs). However, those opting to get vaccinated at private hospitals needed to pay ₹250 per dose. The GOI incurred a subsidy on vaccination done at GVCs equal to ₹150 per dose, plus the cost of administering it. It was funded from the Union Budget.

Even as the above arrangement involved differential pricing, like free for those who got vaccinated at GVCs and others getting the jab at private hospitals for a price, the proposed system from this month is much more complex. Under it, of its total supply, the vaccine manufacturer would give 50 per cent to the GOI at the rate of ₹150 per dose and make the remaining 50 per cent available to State Governments, private hospitals, industrial establishments at a price to be declared in advance (the price charged for vaccination by private hospitals would be monitored). People can make an "informed" choice at the time of booking an appointment at a private vaccination centre.

The vaccines will not be available for sale at pharmacists or chemist shops in the open market. The present system of private hospitals inoculating those above 45 years for ₹250 per dose will cease to exist as they will no longer be getting any supplies from the GOI quota and will have to procure directly from vaccine manufacturers at the price notified by the latter.

Meanwhile, the manufacturers have announced prices they intend to charge from the State Governments and private hospitals. The Serum Institute of India (SII), the maker of Covishield, will charge ₹300 per dose on supplies to States and ₹600 per dose from private hospitals. Bharat Biotech, the maker of Covaxin, will charge ₹400 per dose from States and ₹1,200 per dose on supplies to private hospitals. Both will continue to supply to the GOI at the rate of ₹150 per dose (this is as per a statement issued by Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare).

Putting all pieces together, there will be a minimum of five prices for the COVID-19 vaccination dose i.e. zero, ₹300, ₹400, ₹600, ₹1,200 (the cost to the recipients will be higher by an amount equal to the "service charge" levied by the State Governments/private hospitals to cover the cost of administering the vaccine) depending on the vaccine type and the channel through which it is done.

Meanwhile, more vaccines like Sputnik V, Nasal Covaxin and so on, are expected to get approval shortly. But those are likely to be priced



THE COST OF PURCHASE I.E. ABOUT ₹40,000 CRORE CAN BE MET FROM THE ALLOCATION OF ₹35,000 CRORE MADE IN THE UNION BUDGET FOR 2021-22 (AN ADDITIONAL ₹5,000 CRORE WOULD BE NEEDED TO MAKE UP FOR THE DEFICIT). AS FOR THE SERVICE CHARGE FOR VACCINATION, THIS COST MAY BE PAID BY THE STATES FROM THEIR BUDGETS

The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.



even higher. The earlier arrangement was far from optimal as it entailed differential treatment of eligible people depending on the place they got the jab. While, those going to GVCs got it free, others opting for private hospitals paid ₹250 per dose. Even as the involvement of private hospitals was justified in view of the need to cover a large number (there are 300 million in the 45 plus group) within a short time frame, putting a price tag to it and that too ₹100 over and above the price they paid to manufacturers militated against this objective. Indeed, this was a potent factor behind dismal results thus far with only about 20 million in a total of 300 million having got both the shots (even as other factors such as the initial vaccine hesitancy among the public at large as also supply constraints were equally responsible).

Under the new regime, even as the facility of getting a jab for ₹250 per dose at private hospitals for persons in the 45 years plus category has been withdrawn, the Central Government wants over 500 million people (50 per cent of about one billion of the adult population i.e. over 18 years whom it expects to get jabs from States and private hospitals' quota) to pay a price high enough to destabilise the budget of even a middle income family.

Consider the following two scenarios: First, let's take the lowest in the price spectrum i.e.

Covishield — supplied for ₹300 per dose to States. Add service charge of ₹200 per dose (67 per cent of the price; this is the mark-up applied to ₹150 per dose being the price billed to private hospitals under the erstwhile dispensation), the recipient will pay ₹500 per dose. For two doses, this comes to ₹1,000. A family of four will have to shell out ₹4,000.

At another extreme, consider Covaxin supplied for ₹1,200 per dose to private hospitals. Plus service charge, the recipient will pay ₹2,000 per dose. For two doses, this will be ₹4,000. In this case, the dent on this family's budget will be ₹16,000.

Given the high prices at State centres and much higher at private hospitals and considering that vaccination from the GOI quota (50 per cent of total supply) is for free, people will tend to gravitate towards the latter. The clamour for getting vaccinated at GVCs will be so pronounced as to cause a complete breakdown of this network. This could be averted if only the State Governments decide to do free inoculation even out of the paid quota; however, this will require them to give heavy subsidy from the State Budget.

Already, some States like Maharashtra, Delhi and so on have announced their intent to give it all free and others are likely to follow suit. If, it has to be free for all involving subsidisation by the Centre or States then why go

through such a cumbersome route?

Considering that the crisis is of an unprecedented magnitude (once in a lifetime) afflicting the entire population, there is a dire need for vaccinating at least one billion within the shortest possible time frame and given the pitfalls of differentiated pricing, the Centre should opt for inoculating everyone free of charge.

Apart from GVCs, all other stakeholders like the State health facilities, private hospitals, industrial establishments and so on should be involved in the vaccination drive. They can pick up their requirements directly from the manufacturers even as the GOI does overall coordination, negotiates a good price and makes payment.

Given the mammoth numbers i.e. two billion doses, a price of ₹200 per dose should be good enough to cover the cost and give good return to the manufacturers (here, it is pertinent to recall a statement by Adar Poonawalla, CEO, SII, "the firm was making a profit even at a price of ₹150 per dose"). The cost of purchase i.e. about ₹40,000 crore can be met from the allocation of ₹35,000 crore made in the Union Budget for 2021-22 (an additional ₹5,000 crore would be needed to make up for the deficit). As for the "service charge" for vaccination, this cost may be paid by the States from their Budgets.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

I THINK THAT THE PEOPLE OF BENGAL MADE A HISTORIC MISTAKE BY NOT GIVING THE BJP A CHANCE AND BY RE-ELECTING THIS CORRUPT AND CRUEL LADY. —BJP MP BABUL SUPRIYO



IT IS THE VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF BENGAL AND THE VICTORY OF DEMOCRACY. BENGAL HAS SAVED INDIA TODAY. THIS VICTORY HAS SAVED HUMANITY. —WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER MAMATA BANERJEE



# The mysterious end of the quest for knowledge in India

What happened that made the development of science and technology less important after the great burst of scientific creativity in ancient India?

Joseph Needham a brilliant British bio-chemist who had obtained a doctorate from Cambridge University in 1925, visited China several times. In his book 'Science and Civilisation in China' Needham posed the problem, known as "Needham's grand question", in respect of China, but which applies equally to India.

The question is this: Why did China (and India), which were far ahead of Western countries in science and technology at one time, later fell behind, did not have an industrial revolution, became backward and consequently victims of imperialism and colonisation?

There is no doubt that both India and China were at one time far ahead of the Western countries in science and technology. China invented gunpowder, the magnetic compass, paper and printing,



MARKANDEY KATJU

The writer is a former judge of the Supreme Court of India. The views expressed are personal.

which, according to Francis Bacon, were the three most important inventions facilitating Europe to pass from the dark Middle Ages to the Modern age. But why did China's progress in science and technology stop thereafter? According to Needham it could have been the Confucian philosophy, which was incompatible with scientific development, which was responsible for this. But is this explanation not superficial?

As for India, it was far ahead of the West in ancient times. Indians invented the decimal system in mathematics, which was one of the revolutionary inventions in history. The numerals in the decimal system were known as Arabic numerals by the Westerners, but the Arabs called them Indian numerals. Were they really Arabic or Indian? To answer this we

may note that the languages Arabic, Persian, and Urdu are written from right to left. But if we ask an Arab, Persian, or Urdu writer, to write any number (say 259 or 1,379) he will write it from left to right. This indicates that these numbers were taken from a language which is written from left to right. And now it is accepted universally that the decimal system and the number zero, was invented in India.

The importance of zero can be understood by considering the following: The ancient Romans built a great civilisation of Caesar and Augustus. But if we were to ask an ancient Roman to write the number one million he would have been stumped. The reason for this is that the ancient Romans wrote their numbers in alphabets, V standing for five, X standing for ten, L for 50, C for 100, D for 500, and



M for 1,000 (or millennium). There was no alphabet expressing a number greater than 1,000. So if an ancient Roman had to write 2,000 he would have to write MM and if he wanted to write one million he had to write M a 1,000 times.

On the other hand, according to the system invented by Indians, to write one million they had only to write one and

then put six zeros after that. The ancient Greeks and Romans just did not have the imagination to conceive of a number called zero. By using zero our ancestors could conceive of astronomically large numbers. Thus, 1,000 had three zeros after one. If we add two more zeros we get one lakh and so on.

Aryabhata, who reputedly lived in the 5th Century AD worked on quadratic equations, the binomial theorem and calculated the value of pi to a fairly accurate degree. He also made significant contributions to astronomy, being perhaps the first person in the world to prove that the Earth rotates on its axis, thus causing day and night.

Brahmagupta and Bhaskar also made great contributions in mathematics and so on. In medical science India was at least 1,000, if not 1,500, years

ahead of any country. Thus, Sushrut, the father of surgery, invented plastic surgery in the 6th century BC while the Britishers discovered it only towards the end of the 18th century AD during the Anglo-Mysore wars, and that too, from a traditional physician who lived near Pune.

The harbour at Lothal in Gujarat, which is regarded as quite modern in its construction, was built around 5,000 years ago, and is regarded as part of the Indus valley civilisation. Why, then, did we fall behind the West? Why did we not have an industrial revolution? Why was our advance in science and technology blocked, while Europe produced Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, Descartes, Robert Boyle, Cavendish, Priestly, Lavoisier, Maxwell, Gauss, Max Planck, Rutherford, Heisenberg, Pauli,

Niels Bohr, Einstein, Schrodinger, Chadwick, Madam Curie, Otto Hahn in physics, chemistry and mathematics, William Harvey, Ross, and so on in medicine, Edmond Halley and so on in astronomy, James Hutton in Geology, Linnaeus, Buffon, and Darwin in biology, and so on. No doubt we produced CV Raman, Srinivasa Ramanujan, Chandrashekhhar, S Bose and so on but these are just a handful

What happened that made in the history of India the development of science and technology less important (after the great burst of scientific creativity in ancient India), while in the West it became more important? This mystery is yet to be solved. Were there cultural, economic, or historical factors involved in this deceleration in learning? A lot of scientific investigation is called for.



# Ethnic guerrillas in Myanmar say they shot down copter

AP ■ BANGKOK

An ethnic rebel group in northern Myanmar said it shot down a Government military helicopter on Monday during heavy fighting over a strategic position.

The claim by the Kachin Independence Army came as protests against Myanmar's military government continued in Kachin State and elsewhere in the country. It would be the first aircraft shot down during recent hostilities between the government and ethnic guerrilla armies. There was no immediate comment by the government on the incident.

The Kachin are one of several ethnic minorities who have allied themselves with the nationwide protest movement against the military's February ouster of the elected government of Aung San Suu

Kyi, who was arrested and remains in detention. The country's ethnic minorities have been fighting for decades against the central government for greater autonomy.

Government offences are underway against the Kachin and the Karen, another ethnic minority in eastern Myanmar that maintains its own armed force and also has been the target of airstrikes. The fighting in Kachin and Karen states has displaced more than 45,000 villagers.

Col Naw Bu, a spokesman for the Kachin Independence Army, said his group's forces shot down the aircraft after government forces used helicopters and jet fighters in an attack on Momauk township, where the Kachin seized a base at the foot of Alaw Bum mountain from the government on March 25.



Anti-coup protesters burn tires and chant slogans with banner read "The Kamayut strike will be fight for to the end when we get victory" during the demonstration against the military coup in Kamayut township Yangon on Monday

**The ruling junta continues to face challenge in the cities and towns of Myanmar, where street protests are still being held more than three months after it seized power**

A video on social media said to be of the helicopter shows, at a great distance, an aircraft diving as the sounds of heavy weapons are heard. As the helicopter continues a steep descent, it appears to catch fire and leaves a trail of smoke. The video, and another taken from

a distance showing smoke from what was said to be the crash site, could not be independently verified.

Naw Bu said it was the first aircraft shot down in what has become a fierce battle lasting almost two weeks after the government attacked with heavy artillery and fighter jets.

"Good news! Our prayer has been answered. KIA shot down a terrorist's helicopter," Hkanhpa Sadan, foreign secretary of the guerrilla army's affiliated Kachin National Organisation, said on Twitter. Opponents of the military government routinely refer to its forces as "terrorists".

The ruling junta continues to also face a challenge in the cities and towns of Myanmar, where street protests are still being held more than three months after it seized power. Security forces often use

lethal force to break up the protests. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, which tracks deaths and arrests, said at least five civilians were killed Sunday on what protesters declared was Global Myanmar Spring Revolution Day.

The organisation said security forces have now killed 765 protesters and bystanders. The government puts the death toll at about one-third that figure and says its actions are justified to stop what it calls rioting.

The government also has kept up targeted arrests of activists and other people it considers to be behind the resistance movement. The Assistance Association says 3,555 people have been detained since the army's seizure of power. About 40 journalists are among those being held.

## Biden recalls raid on bin Laden in Pak in 2011

**Vows to prevent another terror attack on America**

PTI ■ WASHINGTON



clarity and conviction of President Obama in making the call; the courage and skill of the American team on the ground.

"It had been almost ten years since our nation was attacked on 9/11 and we went to war in Afghanistan, pursuing al Qaeda and its leaders. We followed bin Laden to the gates of hell — and we got him.

"We kept the promise to all those who lost loved ones on 9/11: that we would never forget those we had lost, and that the United States will never waver in our commitment to prevent another attack on our homeland and to keep the American people safe," the president said.

Biden noted that as a result of the efforts taken the US, his administration was bringing to an end the country's longest war and draw down the last of

the American troops from Afghanistan where al Qaeda is now a "greatly degraded" terror group.

The US and NATO formally began withdrawing their last troops from Afghanistan on Saturday, according to White House and military officials. President Biden set May 1, 2021 as the official date on which the remaining troops would begin pulling out, although the military has been flying equipment out of the country in recent weeks, according to US media reports.

There are between 2,500-3,500 US troops and about 7,000 North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) soldiers remaining in Afghanistan, the last of whom will leave the war-torn country by the end of September.

Under a deal signed last year between the Taliban militants and the administration of former president Donald Trump, foreign forces were to have left by May 1 while the Taliban held off attacking international troops.

Biden last month pushed back the May 1 pullout, saying some troops would stay on until September 11 this year, the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, citing the security situation.

**Saudi King names new Economy Minister, eldest son as adviser**

AP ■ RIYADH

Saudi Arabia's King Salman appointed a new Economy Minister and named his eldest living son as a special adviser in a series of royal decrees issued early on Monday.

The king named Faisal al-Ibrahim as the minister of economy and planning, a move that promotes him from his post as deputy minister in which he'd served as since early 2018.

Al-Ibrahim has previously held jobs with Aramco and in the country's Council of Economic Affairs and Development, according to Saudi state media reports.

Finance Minister Mohammed al-Jadaan had been serving as the acting minister of economy since last year. In another decree published in state media, King Salman appointed Prince Sultan bin Salman as a special adviser to his father.

The prince had been head of the Saudi Space Authority, leaning on his experience as the first Arab astronaut to go to space in 1985.

The space authority will now be chaired by Abdullah al-Swaha, who is also the minister of communications and information technology.

## US officials in West Asia to reassure jittery allies over Iran

AP ■ ABU DHABI

Top Biden administration officials and US senators crisscrossed the Middle East on Monday, seeking to assuage growing unease among Gulf Arab partners over America's re-engagement with Iran and other policy shifts in the region.

The trips come as the U.S. and Iran, through intermediaries in Vienna, discuss a return to Tehran's tattered 2015 nuclear deal with world powers that former President Donald Trump abandoned three years ago.

The United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf allies, excluded from Obama-era nuclear negotiations, have repeatedly pressed for a seat at the table, insisting that any return to the accord must address Iran's ballistic missile program and support for regional proxies.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., a key Biden ally dispatched on overseas diplomatic missions, told reporters in the UAE's capital of Abu Dhabi that he hoped to allay the sheikhdom's "understandable and legitimate concerns" about the return to the landmark deal and to create a "broader engagement" with Gulf partners.

Coons said "close consul-

tation" with the UAE about the ongoing talks in Vienna was "important, expected and happening," adding that he hopes the Emiratis "may not just be notified, but actually help."

What that means remains unclear, as Gulf states now watch with resignation as negotiations gain traction in the Austrian capital. When asked to elaborate, Coons balked at the suggestion that the UAE's input had acquired any greater significance in talks with Iran over the last five years.

"I did not in any way mean to suggest that there was some deal in the works where the Emiratis would be securing anything," he said. "Vienna is the place where the United States government, the administration, is negotiating."

Regional tensions are rising. To pressure the Biden administration to lift sanctions and come back into compliance with the deal, Iran has steadily violated the accord's limitations on nuclear enrichment and stockpiles of enriched uranium. The long shadow war between Israel and the Iran has intensified, with suspected Israeli attacks on Iranian ships in volatile Mideast waterways and at Iran's Natanz nuclear facility.

## US begins reuniting families separated at Mexico border

**San Diego:** The Biden administration said on Monday that four families that were separated at the Mexico border during Donald Trump's presidency will be reunited in the United States this week in what Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas calls "just the beginning" of a broader effort.

Two of the four families include mothers who were separated from their children in late 2017, one Honduran and another Mexican. Mayorkas said, declining to detail their identities. He described them as children who were 3 years old at the time and "teenagers who have had to live without their parent during their most formative years."

Parents will return to the United States on humanitarian parole while authorities consider other longer-term forms of legal status, said Michelle Brane, executive director of the administration's Family Reunification Task Force. The children are already in the US exactly how many families will reunite in the United States and in what order is linked to negotiations with the American Civil Liberties Union to settle a federal lawsuit in San Diego, but Mayorkas said there were

more to come.

"We continue to work tirelessly to reunite many more children with their parents in the weeks and months ahead," Mayorkas told reporters ahead of the announcement. "We have a lot of work still to do, but I am proud of the progress we have made and the reunifications that we have helped to achieve this week."

More than 5,000 children were separated from their parents during the Trump administration going back to July 1, 2017, many of them under a "zero-tolerance" policy to criminally prosecute any adult who entered the country illegally, according to court filings. The Biden administration is doing its own count going back to Trump's inauguration in January 2017 and, according to Brane, believes more than 1,000 families remain separated.

While family separation under "zero-tolerance" ended in June 2018 under court order and shortly after Trump reversed course, Biden has repeatedly assailed the practice as an act of cruelty. An executive order on his first day in office pledged to reunite families that were still separated "to the greatest extent possible." **AP**

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - I DELHI ATTORNEY GENERAL'S BUILDING PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI: 110001  
OA NO. 377/20 DATE: 07.01.2021  
KIO BANK LTD. VS. APPLICANT

MR. RAJESH KUMAR & ORS. ....RESPONDENT

DEFENDANT

IN THIS SHIBIR KAMMA BUILDTECH PVT. LTD. 197-B PKT-VI MAYUR VIHAR PHASE-I NEW DELHI-110091

ALSO AT-A-80, SECT-2 NOIDA UP-201301

Whereas the above named applicant(s) has/have instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 30,848/- (Rupees Forty Six Lakh Thirty Thousand Six Hundred and Forty Six Only) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on 07.05.2021 at 10.30 A.M.

Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before the mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.

By Order of this Tribunal For Registrar DRT-I, DELHI

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

NOTICE is hereby given that one Mr. Vinod Arora is the owner of Apartment No. 1202 on 12th Floor, Measuring 152.14 Sq. Mtrs., Building No. III, Pearl Court, Essel Towers, Gurgaon, Haryana, having acquired the same vide Conveyance Deed dated 31/08/05 (Doc. No. 10973). He has lost the original Apartment Buyers Agreement dated 23.04.2005 in respect of the said apartment, a FIR has already been lodged for the same on dated 1/5/2021.

All persons having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.

Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)  
Shop No. 5 & 6, Pkt-E, CSC, Mayur Vihar-II, Delhi-91, Mob. 9810063351

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is to inform to the public at large that we, Kuldeep Bishnoi s/o Late KKS Bishnoi and Asha Bishnoi w/o Late KKS Bishnoi have lost the last page (printed both sides) of the original conveyance deed dated 11 June 2015 issued by the Delhi Development Authority in respect of property i.e. Flat No. 841, Second floor, Sector 14, Pocket 2 Dwarka, New Delhi. Any person possessing the above said documents and using them in any manner will do so at his/her own cost and is legally liable. We shall not be responsible for the said document in any manner at any point of time. If found by any person/organization it should be delivered to us to the below mentioned address. If any person/ corporation/firm/company/bank etc. has any claim or right in respect of the above said property by way of inheritance, share, sale, agreement, lease, license, gift, possession, legal heirs, partners or encumbrance however or otherwise is hereby required to intimate in writing to us at the below mentioned address within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice of his/her/their share or claim, if any, with all supporting documents. After expiration of the notice period, the claims, if any, of such person shall be treated null and void and also treated as waived and non binding on us. 2-16/403, Sakthi Vihar, Delhi Cantt, New Delhi-110010

## 2 ex-Lankan security officials charged over Easter terror attacks

**Colombo:** Sri Lanka's Attorney General on Monday slapped 800 charges against two top former security officials for their failure to prevent the deadly 2019 Easter Sunday bomb attacks in which over 270 people, including 11 Indians, were killed.

The charges were unveiled in the Colombo High Court by the country's top law officer Dappula de Livera against former official in the defence ministry Hemasiri Fernando and former chief of police Pujith Jayasundera.

The duo has been accused of neglecting the prior intelligence input on the impending

attacks, thereby failing to prevent the loss of life.

Nine suicide bombers, belonging to local Islamist extremist group National Thawheed Jamaat (NTJ) linked to ISIS, carried out coordinating blasts that tore through three churches and as many luxury hotels in Sri Lanka on the Easter Sunday in 2019.

A special presidential panel recently recommended that criminal action be taken against both Fernando, Jayasundera and several other senior defense officials, including former president Maithripala Sirisena. **PTI**

## EU summons Russia envoy over blacklisting of its officials

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union has summoned Russia's ambassador after Moscow blacklisted eight EU officials in retaliation for the bloc's decision to impose sanctions over the imprisonment of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

The Russian list announced Friday includes European Parliament President David Sassoli and Vera Jourva, a vice president of the European Commission whose brief includes rule of law issues and disinformation.

European Commission spokesman Peter Stano said that Ambassador Vladimir Chizhov would meet in Brussels later Monday with

senior EU officials who "will convey to him our strong condemnation and rejection of this decision."

Stano said the Russian-imposed travel bans are "obviously very politically motivated and lack any legal justification. They are groundless." He said that "this all shows that Russia is determined to continue the hostile track of confrontation."

Russia's foreign ministry has accused the EU of wanting to punish Moscow for its "independent foreign and domestic policies" and of trying to limit its development with "unlawful restrictions."

EU foreign ministers will discuss tensions with Russia when they meet on May 10.

## Attention travelers! EU proposes reopening external borders

**Brussels:** In an announcement sure to be welcomed by travelers worldwide, EU officials on Monday proposed easing restrictions on visiting the 27-nation bloc as vaccination campaigns across the continent gather speed. Travel to the European Union is currently extremely limited except for a handful of countries with low infection rates.

But with the summer tourist season looming, the bloc's European Commission hopes the new recommendations will dramatically expand that list. The Commission hopes the move will soon allow travelers reunite with their friends and relatives living in Europe and support the bloc's economy this summer.

"Time to revive EU tourism industry and for cross-border friendships to rekindle — safely," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said. **AP**

## 16 Niger soldiers killed in attack near the border with Mali

**Niamey (Niger):** An ambush on a military patrol near Niger's border with Mali killed 16 Niger soldiers and left one missing, the government said.

The patrol was returning from a security mission near the border with Mali in Tillia in the northern part of Niger's Tahoua region when it was attacked by a band of men riding motorcycles on Saturday evening, the Ministry of Interior said in a statement late Sunday. Six other soldiers were wounded in the ambush.

Niger's military also intercepted a group of suspected extremists Friday night, killing at least 24 who were preparing to attack Baibangou, a village about 100 kilometers (62 miles) north of the capital, Niamey,

according to a statement from the ministry of defense.

"While in police custody, before being transported to Niamey, the suspected terrorists tried to escape around 4 a.m. And 24 of them were shot dead by the army," the defense ministry said.

Both incidents are being officially investigated.

Niger and neighboring Burkina Faso and Mali are battling the spread of deadly extremist violence from groups linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group.

The increasing violence has killed thousands of people and displaced hundreds of thousands despite the presence of regional and international troops. **AP**

## Israeli settlers attack Palestinian village after shooting

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli settlers attacked a Palestinian village in the occupied West Bank overnight, setting brush fires and hurling stones, Palestinian officials and an Israeli rights group said Monday.

It appeared to be a revenge attack after three Israelis were wounded in a drive-by shooting at a nearby traffic junction on Sunday.

The Israeli human rights group B'Tselem said dozens of settlers attacked the village of Jaloud. It circulated videos showing the fires, with people shouting in the background. Israeli security forces arrested 11 Palestinians and four people were wounded by rubber bullets, B'Tselem said.

Ghassan Daghlis, a Palestinian Authority official who monitors settlement activity in the northern West Bank, provided a similar account, saying the villagers had come out to defend the village after the settlers attacked.

The Israeli military said Israeli civilians and Palestinians hurled rocks at each other outside the village and that "a number of locations were ignited." It did not provide details on what triggered the violence. It said around 10 people were detained, but did not identify them.

Radical Israeli settlers have been known to carry out so-called "price tag" attacks on Palestinian communities in response to violence or perceived Israeli plans to restrict settlement activity.

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 war, and the Palestinians want it to form the main part of their future state. Nearly 5,000,000 Israeli settlers live in more than 100 settlements scattered across the West Bank, which is home to some 2.5 million Palestinians. **PTI**

**EXTENSION OF CANCELLATION OF UNRESERVED MAIL/EXPRESS EMU SPECIAL TRAINS**

It is notified for the information of passengers that the cancellation period of following earlier announced cancelled trains has been extended as per the details given below:-

Train No. & Name	Extended Up to
04184/04183 Delhi Jn. - Tundla Jn. - Delhi Jn. Unreserved Mail/ Express EMU Special	04.05.2021 & 05.05.2021
04418/04417 Delhi Jn. - Hathras Killah - Delhi Jn. Unreserved Mail/ Express EMU Special	04.05.2021 & 05.05.2021
04414/04415 New Delhi - Aligarh Jn. - New Delhi Unreserved Mail/ Express EMU Special	04.05.2021 & 05.05.2021
04420/04419 Ghaziabad - Mathura Jn. - Ghaziabad Unreserved Mail/ Express EMU Special	04.05.2021 & 05.05.2021

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

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

**RailMadad Helpline No. 139**

**Visit RailMadad website : www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in & download Railmadad app.**

Please join us on

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**

Visit us at: [www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in)

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**



# Govt waives IGST on import of Covid-relief material

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Monday waived Integrated GST (IGST) till June 30 on the import of Covid-related relief material donated or received free of cost from outside India for free distribution.

The Finance Ministry in a statement said the government had received a number of representations from charitable organisations, corporate entities, and other Associations/entities outside India seeking exemption from IGST on the import of Covid-19 relief material, donated/received free of cost from outside India for free distribution.

“Accordingly, the Central Government has ... Granted exemption from IGST on import of such goods received free of cost for free distribution for covid relief,” it said, adding the exemption would be applic-

able till June 30.

This exemption would also cover goods already imported but lying uncleared at the Customs ports.

The Government has already exempted from customs duty import of a host of COVID-related relief materials, including Remdesivir injection and its APIs, Inflammatory diagnostic (markers) kits, medical grade oxygen, oxygen therapy related equipment such as oxygen concentrators, cryogenic transport tanks, etc, and Covid vaccines.

The IGST exemption given on Monday would be subject to nodal authorities, appointed by the state governments, authorising any entity, relief agency or statutory body, for free distribution of such relief material.

The said goods can be imported free of cost by a state government or, any entity/

relief agency/ statutory body, authorized in this regard for free distribution anywhere in India.

The importer shall before clearance of goods from Customs produce a certificate from the said nodal authorities that goods are meant for free distribution for Covid relief.

After imports, the importer shall produce, to the Deputy or Assistant Commissioner of Customs at the port within a period of six months from the date of importation or within such extended

period not exceeding nine months, a statement containing details of goods imported and distributed free of cost.

This statement shall be certified by the said nodal authority of the state government.

“This exemption shall thus enable import of the Covid

relief supply imported free of cost for free distribution without payment of IGST (up to the 30th June, 2021). As customs duty is already exempt , these imports will not attract any customs duty or IGST,” the ministry added.

India’s single day COVID infections had crossed a record 4 lakh mark last week. On Monday, 3.68 lakh new infections and 3,417 deaths were reported.

Last week, the government slashed IGST rate on import of oxygen concentrators for personal use to 12 per cent, from 28 per cent, for two months till June 30.

Under Goods and Services Tax (GST), the tax levied on consumption of goods or rendering of service is split 50:50 between the Centre and the state. Such tax is known as Central-GST or CGST and State-GST or SGST.

## Covid crisis, rollback of stamp duty cut impact Mumbai home sales

IANs ■ MUMBAI

The second wave of Covid-19 and the rollback of the stamp duty cut in Maharashtra impacted the housing sales in April, showed a report by Knight Frank India.

The report noted that Mumbai recorded upwards of 10,000 residential property registrations in April 2021.

However, upon delving deeper into the property registrations data, it was found that, only 7 per cent of these registrations were from new

residential sales concluded in the same month, while 93 per cent of the registrations were from properties transacted between December 2020 to March 2021 for which applicable stamp duties were paid during the lower rate window, it said.

The Maharashtra state government in December 2020 had given a leeway of four months to homebuyers to register a property after the payment of stamp duty in order to prevent crowding of registration offices.

## High frequency indicators show economic activity ‘softening’: Crisil Research

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

India’s high frequency indicators have started to show a softening trend in economic activity, Crisil Research said on Monday.

“In India, the impact of state-announced restrictions are more clearly showing up across high frequency indicators - they all trended down for the second consecutive week,” it said. Retail mobility fell 8.2 percentage points (pp) on average in the week ending May 2, while workplace mobility slowed 7.1 pp.

Besides, toll collection through electronic mode declined 2 per cent on-week.

Similarly, Goods and Services Tax e-way bill collection (volume) declined 6.9 per cent on-week for week ending April 25.

Lately, India’s crushing second Covid-19 wave has been making new peaks with every passing day, as daily cases near the 4 lakh plus level.

“If it was any consolation amid the steep rise in daily cases and deaths, growth in

recoveries, which lagged cases till last week, grew faster by 57 per cent in the week April 26-May 2. That compared with 16 per cent growth in cases.”

“Growth in daily cases in major affected states, such as Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh too slowed down, compared with the week ending April 25. But recovery rate has declined to 82 per cent as of May 2, due to the high base of confirmed cases,” Crisil said.

Furthermore, it said that Covid-19’s second wave is closing in on rural India.

“The share of predominantly rural districts in new cases in April was 30 per cent up from 21 per cent in March. This is still lower than the peak reached in the first wave (at 40 per cent in August 2020).”

“Further, daily vaccinations are slowing as vaccine supplies are choked. They dropped from 1,992 per million in the week prior to 1,585 per million on average, in the week ending May 02. This is the third straight week that daily vaccinations have declined.”

## India’s manufacturing output inches up as demand rises: PMI

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Demand growth pushed India’s manufacturing sector output higher in April, showed IHS Markit India Manufacturing PMI report on Monday.

Accordingly, the report said economic conditions in India’s manufacturing sector remained favourable in April, as companies scaled up production in line with a further improvement in demand.

Consequently, the headline seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI) inched up from 55.4 (index reading) in March to 55.5 in April.

The PMI ranges between 0 and 100, with a reading above 50 indicating an overall increase compared to the previous month.

Besides, the report said consumer goods sector was the strongest-performing category, followed by capital goods and then intermediate goods. “While output and sales

THE PMI RANGES BETWEEN 0 AND 100, WITH A READING ABOVE 50 INDICATING AN OVERALL INCREASE COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS MONTH

increased at the slowest rates since last August due to an intensification of the Covid-19 crisis, there was a faster upturn in international orders,” the report said.

“Moreover, quantities of purchases expanded at one of the strongest rates seen for over nine years as firms sought to boost their inventories.”

Furthermore, survey participants signalled a steep increase in input costs, the quickest since July 2014, and upward revisions to selling prices.

“The rate of charge inflation climbed to the highest in seven-and-a-half years.”

## Corporate revenue seen growing 6% in FY22 as second wave takes a toll: Ind-Ra

PTI ■ MUMBAI

With the second wave of the pandemic disrupting supply chains for most industries, India Ratings has projected an overall 6 per cent median revenue growth for corporates this fiscal over FY20.

However, this will be a high 21.2 per cent over FY21, the year of the pandemic when half of the year was almost lost in lockdowns; and the forecast is more than its own earlier assumption of 4.4 per cent, though.

The service-oriented sector is the worst hit so far when it comes to supply-side disruption from the second wave of the pandemic, the report said on Monday, adding this has pushed back their recovery beyond the current fiscal.

While FY22 is likely to be better than FY20 for most of the sectors due to an improvement in revenue benefitting largely from elevated prices and pent-up demand resulting in higher volume growth, volatile commodity prices along with interest rates reversal and the rupee fall are like-

ly to cap profitability, the report added.

“Given these, we expect an overall median revenue growth of 6 per cent for corporates in FY22 over FY20 and 21.2% over FY21,” India Ratings said, and pointed out this is an increase from its earlier estimate of a median growth of 4.4 %.

The gains in FY22 is primarily a result of some level of consolidation resulting in bipolarisation, meaning larger companies growing faster than smaller ones, it said. Moreover, excess cash used for deleveraging across sectors will result in higher operating leverage supporting the overall credit profile of corporates, the agency noted.

But sectors like pharma, chemicals, cement and steel may witness some capex on account of higher liquidity cushion with them, it added.

Lower revenue growth is likely to test the credit profile in FY23 due to the moderation in consumption and investment demand outlook and smoothening out of supply chain issues, and the consequent possible moderation in prices, the rating agency said.

## Sugar production reaches 29.91 mn tonnes in Oct-Apr of 2020-21: ISMA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The country’s sugar production has reached 29.91 million tonne till April of the ongoing 2020-21 marketing season, industry body ISMA said on Monday.

With regard to sugar exports, mills have contracted for shipments of 5.4 to 5.5 million tonne so far. Out of which, 3.5 million tonne has been exported, while another 1 million tonne is expected to be done by April, it said. On ethanol, Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) said mills have supplied 117.72 crore litres of ethanol to oil marketing companies till April 19 of this year against the total contracted quantity of 302.53 crore litres, it added. Releasing updated production figures, ISMA said mills across the country have produced 29.91 million tonne of sugar during the Oct-April period of the 2020-21 marketing season (Oct-Sept).

ISMA has estimated sugar production to be 30.2 million tonne in the 2020-21 marketing season, higher than 27.42 million tonne achieved in the previous season. As per the ISMA data, Sugar production in Uttar Pradesh, the country’s largest sugar-producing state, remained slightly lower at 10.56 million tonne till April of this year, as against 11.65 million tonne in the year-ago period.

Whereas the output in Maharashtra, the country’s second-largest sugar producer, rose substantially to 10.56 million tonne from 6.09 million tonne in the said period. Similarly, output in Karnataka, the country’s third-largest sugar-producing state, rose to 4.16 million tonne till April of this year as against 3.38 million tonne in the year-ago period. Most mills in these key producing states are expected to close their operations in the next fortnight or so.

## 75 lakh people lose jobs in April as lockdowns sprout; unemployment at 4-month high, says CMIE

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The second wave of Covid-19 and the resultant localised lockdowns have impacted over 75 lakh jobs, taking the unemployment rate to a four-month high of 8 per cent, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) said on Monday.

The situation on the employment front is expected to continue to remain challenging going forward as well, CMIE’s managing director and chief executive Mahesh Vyas said.

“In the month of April, compared to March, we have lost 75 lakh jobs. That is what has caused the jump in the unemployment rate,” he told PTI.

The national unemployment rate touched 7.97 per cent as per the centre’s proprietary data, with urban areas witnessing higher stress at 9.78 per cent and rural joblessness at 7.13 per cent.

The national unemployment rate had stood at 6.50 per cent in March, and the number on both rural and urban front was lower.

The second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a slew of pockets going

### Public Notice

I Kamlesh Kumari Bagai W/o Late Ramesh Chander Bagai, identified by Aadhar no. 711905158139 do affirm and declare that I had given a public notice in The Pioneer News Paper published on 24th April 2021, affirming that my medical records confirm that I do not need any psychological treatment and anyone claiming to have any such record may share the same with me. I affirm that this public notice was given on my own free will and I am firm on the same. I do not take responsibility of any contradictory digital communication, affidavit or document created in my name to contradict the public notice published on 24th April 2021. Kamlesh Kumari Bagai.

under lockdown-like situation with only essential activities being allowed, which result in a chill in a bulk of economic activities and a resultant impact on jobs.

“I do not know about the peaking of the COVID wave, but I can see stress on the employment front,” Vyas said.

What is likely to happen is that unemployment can remain at high levels, he said, adding that the labour force participation rate can also fall. “In worst situation, both can happen,” Vyas added.

He, however, said that the situation right now is not as dire as the one witnessed in the first lockdown, when the unemployment rate had touched up to 24 per cent levels.

The country is reporting around 4 lakh new infections a day and over 3,000 deaths. In an address to the nation last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had advised states to look at lockdowns as a last resort, because of its impact on economic activity.

## SBI allocates ₹71 crore for fight against coronavirus

**New Delhi:**The country’s largest lender SBI on Monday announced allocating ₹71 crore towards the fight against Covid-19, a part of which will be used to set up a makeshift 1,000-bed hospital for the treatment of patients in some of the worst-affected States. State Bank of India (SBI) has allocated ₹71 crore to undertake various support initiatives to combat the second wave of Covid-19, SBI said in a release.

The State-owned lender has allocated ₹30 crore for a makeshift hospital while ₹21 crore will be used to support initiatives such as procurement of life-saving healthcare equipment, oxygen supply to hospitals, Covid-care centres, ambulances, PPE kits, masks as well as food relief efforts. Besides, ₹0 crore will be used to supplement government’s effort in genome sequencing, and ₹10 crore will be earmarked to collaborate with on-ground NGOs to address the community needs, SBI said.

### APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that a person (depicted in the photo), **Namely** : Unknown **S/o** Unknown **R/o** Unknown **Age** : about 65 years, **Height** : 5'5", **Complexion** : Wheatish, **Face** : Oval, **Built** : Thin, **Wearing** : Red colour T-shirt & Khakhi half pant was found in unconscious condition at Gate No. 6, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. He was admitted to Lady Harding Medical College Hospital, Delhi, where doctor declared him brought dead on 27.04.2021. In this regard a case vide DD No : 56A, dated 27.04.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Tilak Marg, New Delhi. The dead body has been preserved for 72 hrs in Lady Harding Hospital Mortuary, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this dead person may kindly inform to the following:-

**SHO**  
**P.S. Tilak Marg, New Delhi,**  
**New Delhi Distt., Delhi**  
**Ph. No. 011-23364100, 8750870526**

DP/266/ND/2021

## PIL seeks removal of hoardings promoting beer: HC seeks Delhi Govt, NDMC stand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI


A PIL in the Delhi High Court on Monday sought direction to the Delhi government and the NDMC to remove the hoardings put up by a Bengaluru-based beer manufacturer advertising its product.

A bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Jasmeet Singh issued notice to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and the beer manufacturer - Pegasi Spirits - seeking their stand on the plea by a lawyer.

Advocate Dhruv Chawla, in his plea, has said that the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) in September last year put out an advisory for private satellite TV channels to ensure that liquor, tobacco and other intoxicants are not advertised directly or indirectly on their channels in violation of existing law.

In March this year he came across several hoardings across Delhi advertising the alcoholic beverage of Pegasi and filed a complaint with the Advertising Standard Council of India (ASCI) regarding the same.

He also filed an application under the Right to Information Act seeking details with regard to any sanction or permission given by NDMC to put up the hoardings.

**KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LTD**  
(A Government of India Undertaking)  
**OPEN E-TENDER (SINGLE PACKET SYSTEM) INVITATION NOTICE.**  
**Name of Work:** Modification / Crossing up to 33KV Overhead lines / infringing the ongoing Railway Electrification project between Ratnagiri to Verna on Konkan Railway route in the State of Maharashtra and GOA) complete into under ground cable. **Tender Notice No:** KR/CO/EL/RN-Verna/xing/T/4/2021, **Date:** 04/05/2021. **Completion Period** : Three Months. **Estimated Cost:** Rs.5,56,10,922/-, Excluding GST. **Last Date & Time for Online Submission of Tender** : 25/05/2021 up to 15.00 Hrs. **Opening of Tender** : On 25/05/2021 at 15.30 Hrs. Amendments/ Corrigendum if any, would be uploaded on IREPS website only. **Submission of Tender Documents** : Through IREPS. Manual Tender Documents shall not be accepted.

### SEARCH OF MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one girl, (depicted in the photo), **Namely:** Ritu, **D/o:** Sh. Surender Rai, **R/o:** H.No. 18-B, Gali No. 6, Salapur Khera, Bijwasan, New Delhi, **Aged:** 15 years 9 months, has been missing/ kidnapped from the area of PS Kapashera, New Delhi since 17.03.2021 at 06.15 AM. In this regard a case vide **FIR No. 098/21 u/s 363 IPC, Dated 17.03.2021, has been registered at P.S. Kapashera, New Delhi.** Her physical description is as under: **Height:** 5' Feet, **Complexion:** Fair, **Face:** Round, **Built:** Medium, **Clothing:** Sky Blue Colour Top and Jeans and Slippers in her feet. Any person is having any information/clue about this missing/ kidnapped girl, may inform SHO, Kapashera, New Delhi at **E-mail: ciccbi@cbi.nic.in** or **website: http://cbi.nic.in** **Fax:** 011-230111334, **Tele No. : 011-23014046 (Direct), 011-23015229, 23015218 extn. 210**



Ritu

**S.H.O**  
**P.S. Kapashera, New Delhi**  
**Ph. 011-25063758, 25066105**

DP/608/SW/2021.

## Markets recoup initial losses to end flat; RIL, banks weigh

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex staged a smart recovery from the day’s low to end with marginal losses on Monday, propped up by robust buying in FMCG and telecom counters.

Reliance Industries and banking stocks accounted for most of the losses, while a rebounding rupee also provided support, traders said.

After plunging over 750 points in early trade, the 30-share BSE index made a U-turn to finish 63.84 points or 0.13 per cent lower at 48,718.52.

In similar movement, the broader NSE Nifty closed 3.05 points or 0.02 per cent higher at 14,634.15.

Titan was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, shedding 4.58 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank, Reliance Industries, Axis Bank, Kotak Bank, ITC, SBI, ONGC and ICICI Bank.

On the other hand, Bharti Airtel, HUL, Maruti, Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints, NTPC

and Nestle India were among the gainers, climbing up to 3.98 per cent.

“Domestic equities recovered sharply from day’s low despite weak global cues. While growing uncertainties about collection efficiency and asset quality of banks/NBFCs dragged heavy weight financials, strong buying in FMCG and Metals supported recovery in markets,” said Binod Modi, Head Strategy at Reliance Securities.

While persistent rise in second wave of COVID-19 cases has weighed on investors’ sentiments, steady corporate earnings with positive managements’ commentaries offered support to markets, he noted.

On the macroeconomic front, India’s manufacturing sector activity was largely flat in April, as rates of growth for new orders and output eased to eight-month lows amid the intensification of the COVID-19 crisis, a monthly survey showed on Monday.

## World shares mixed after retreat on Wall Street

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Shares were higher in Europe on Monday after a retreat in Asia, where some markets including those in Tokyo and Shanghai were closed for holidays. London was also closed for the May Day holiday.

Hong Kong and Seoul declined while Paris and Frankfurt advanced. US futures were higher.

Oil prices were mixed and the yield on the 10-year Treasury note was steady at 1.62 per cent.

Markets have mostly climbed in recent weeks as investors remain optimistic that the pandemic is slowly and steadily coming to a close, at least in the United States.

## Rupee rises by 14 paise to close at nearly 1 month high

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee rose by 14 paise to close nearly one-month high of 73.95 against the US dollar on Monday following losses in the American currency in the global markets.

A fall in crude oil prices and positive economic data helped the local unit pare early losses.

The rupee had opened lower at 74.25 and hit the day’s low of 74.33 later in line with early losses in the domestic equities.

The local unit, however, pared its losses in afternoon trade on the back of dollar sale by exporters, positive manufacturing data and a recovery in stock indices.

## T Rabi Sankar takes over as new RBI Deputy Guv

PTI ■ MUMBAI

T Rabi Sankar on Monday took over as the new Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India for a period of three years, the central bank said in a statement.

Sankar has filled the vacancy created after the retirement of B P Kanungo on April 2.

The other three deputy governors are Michael D Patra, who heads the all-important monetary policy department; Mukesh Kumar Jain, the commercial banker-turned-central banker; and Rajeshwar Rao.

Sankar was Executive Director of the Reserve Bank before being elevated to the post of deputy governor.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet cleared Sankar’s appointment as the new RBI deputy governor on Saturday.

“In pursuance with the Government of India notification dated May 3, 2021, T Rabi Sankar took over as the Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India today for a period of three years or until further orders, whichever is earlier,” the RBI said.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**Tender Notice (Through e-tendering)**  

<b>Name of work with its location</b>	Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract for TPWS equipment both On board and Trackside equipment for section NDLS-PWL for three years.
<b>Approx. cost of the work (₹)</b>	₹28,59,616/- only
<b>Address of the Office</b>	Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-C, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annexe-1, DRM Office, New Delhi-110055
<b>Date &amp; Time for upload the tender/Closing of tender</b>	Tender uploading/closing date & time 02.06.2021 up to 15.00 hrs
<b>Website particular &amp; notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.</b>	See the Northern Railway website www.ireps.gov.in & Notice board at S&T branch, 3rd Floor, DRM office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055

**Tender No. 558-Sig-16-M-Tender-AMC-048-2021-22 Dated : 03.05.2021 959/2021**  
**Serving Customers With A Smile**

### APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of female **Age:** Approx 60 years, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Height:** 155 Cms., **Built:** Thin, **Face:** Round, was wearing Black colour Salwar & Suit, was admitted in Safdarjung Hospital vide MLC No. 131860/21 on dated 28.04.2021.

She was declared brought dead by doctor. In this regard a **DD No. 40A, dated 28.04.2021, has been lodged at P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi.** Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.

**SHO**  
**P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi**  
**Ph.: 011-24106346, 24106345**

DP/649/SW/2021



DOCYARD


DR HP BHARATHI

Deputy Chief Medical Officer

JINDAL NATURECURE INSTITUTE




Time to heal naturally



One of the most common chronic diseases of the respiratory system, asthma affects more than 300 million people across the world with around one-tenth of them in India. While the prevalence of asthma is higher in developed countries, the burden of asthma-related deaths is much higher in developing countries like India. In fact, according to a report published by the World Health Organisation (WHO), over 80 per cent of asthma deaths take place in developing countries.

While environmental allergens like dust, pollen, insects and domesticated animals are the leading triggers of asthma, outdoor air pollution has also emerged as a problematic trigger. Researchers from the French Institute of Health and Medical Research found that high traffic intensity and ozone exposure has increased the risk factors in individuals living with asthma. With rising environmental pollution, the incidence of respiratory disease is increasing in India, particularly among children. It is important therefore to introduce a holistic approach towards the management of this condition through the use of naturopathy and yoga. Evidence suggests that a naturopathic approach can offer long-term health benefits to people with asthma by reducing the intensity of the disease, improving symptoms and lung function while significantly reducing drug requirement.

While modern medicine works in a reactive approach to manage symptoms when they arise, naturopathy works to eliminate the cause and reduce the severity of the disease



Modern medicine relies heavily on the use of steroid inhalation and anti-inflammatory drugs to manage the condition. These drugs work by reducing inflammation and mucus production in the airways, thereby improving symptoms and controlling the condition. However, the high cost of drugs and their potential side effects remain a cause of concern. A naturopathy based treatment, on the other hand, uses a drugless approach which is much safer and sustainable.

Naturopathy is holistic rather than a compartmental way of treating and managing a condition. While modern medicine works in a reactive approach to manage symptoms when they arise, naturopathy works to eliminate the cause and reduce the severity of the disease. The Alternative system of medicine believes that all diseases are caused due to an accumulation of toxins or morbid matter in the body and negative vibrations in the mind. The therapeutic plan in naturopathy is executed in three phases — the elimination phase, which focuses on cleansing the body of accumulated toxins, the soothing phase, which focuses on rejuvenating the body and supplying the necessary nourishment, and the constructive phase, in which the body's metabolic activity is regulated.

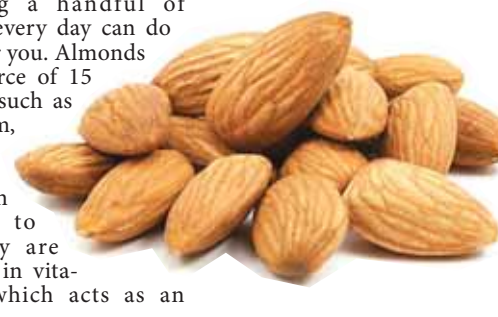
The treatment is divided into three therapy sections — Nature cure therapy, Diet therapy and Yoga therapy. Nature Cure therapy consisted of chest pack applied from 30 minutes to an hour once or twice a day depending upon the clinical condition of the patient. This was accompanied by a combination of hot foot and arm bath, partial massage therapy to upper back and chest, fomentation, Asthma Bath, Oxygen Bath, Steam and Sauna Bath, Enema, Steam Inhalation and Drainage therapy. Under the diet therapy, patients were prescribed nutritionally calcium-rich, non-mucus and non-acid generating food-items along with herbs and lots of water. Yogic kriya, Yogasana, Pranayama and Yoganidra spanning into a three-week programme with a gradual gradation in the severity of the practices was the third pillar of the treatment approach.

The study combined with a year follow up of patients had shown highly promising results. The naturopathy approach helped these patients to improve their lung function and symptoms while reducing the requirement of drugs in most patients.

COVIDCARE

ALMONDS: Immunity has taken centrestage during the pandemic. So much so, that anything and everything that has immunity booster written on it is running off the shelves real quick. However, heightened immunity can be achieved at home without too much efforts.

Eating a handful of almonds every day can do the job for you. Almonds are a source of 15 nutrients such as magnesium, protein, riboflavin, zinc, etc. In addition to this, they are also high in vitamin E, which acts as an





# DEALING WITH DOUBLE TROUBLE

On the occasion of World Asthma Day, MUSBA HASHMI speaks with doctors to tell you how one can manage the disease during Corona and what to do if one is unsure whether he is experiencing an asthma attack or COVID symptoms

Breathlessness, chest tightness and coughing, does these sound like COVID symptoms to you? Most probably, yes. However, the fact of the matter is that all these symptoms echo with asthma too.

While it is hard to identify whether a person is having an asthma attack or COVID because the patients are now presenting with newer symptoms, experts say that asthma patients should continue with their medications.

“People feeling breathless may sometimes confuse between Covid symptoms and an asthma attack. The major symptoms seen nowadays in Covid positive patients are breathlessness instead of fever or any other common Covid symptoms such as sore throat, headache, cough etc. In such a situation it is best to use the inhaler so the asthma attack can be managed. In case of asthma patients having contracted Covid, inhalers and bronchodilators as well as other medications should be continued as per schedule. Nebulisers are again very useful in handling Covid induced bronchospasms. Asthma patients can easily use nebulization, with or without steroids, to help alleviate chest congestions and pressure,” Dr Sandeep Nayar, Senior Director & HOD, Chest & Respiratory Diseases, BLK-MAX

Things to keep in mind

■ If you've recently recovered from an acute Covid infection, delay getting the vaccine until you're fully recovered and done with self-isolation and quarantine measures

■ Also, if you had the infection after receiving the first dose of vaccine, then wait at least 1month after recovery before getting the other dose

■ If, along with asthma, you also have other conditions causing immune deficiency like HIV or cancers, consult your doctor before getting the vaccine

■ Do not step out of home. If unavoidable, wear a double

mask while going out

■ Quit smoking as it can be very dangerous for patients with asthma or other respiratory illnesses

■ Avoid outdoor exercises, focus on breathing exercises, and doing yoga indoors

■ Take prescribed medicines and inhalers. Keep necessary medicines stocked up

■ Eat a healthy diet rich in nutrients and proteins. Avoid eating out and foods rich in oil

■ Take steam twice daily to avoid chest congestion

■ Keep anxiety and stress levels as low as possible

Super Speciality Hospital, tells you. Respiratory viruses can trigger and worsen asthma symptoms and if a person has uncontrolled asthma, they may develop or face severe Covid symptoms. Uncontrolled asthma can mean that there will already be inflammation in the lungs and airways will be compromised so in many cases Covid may even lead to pneumonia, fibrosis (thick and stiff lung walls) or other intense respiratory diseases.

“All asthmatics need to be compliant with their regular medications. Covid virus can also cause flare up of asthma in addition to

**In case of asthma patients having contracted Covid, inhalers and bronchodilators as well as other medications should be continued as per schedule — Dr Sandeep Nayar**

causing pneumonia. Hence, early medical advice should be sought in case of symptomatic deterioration,” Dr Arunesh Kumar, Senior Consultant & Head Respiratory Medicine/Pulmonology, Paras Hospital, says.

Nayar adds that all asthma patients above 18 years of age must get vaccinated to prevent the deadly implications of the virus even if they get infected.

“Vaccination will not just help in protecting from the virus but will also help reduce the severity of the symptoms. However, those having had an immediate or severe allergic reaction to the vaccine or any of its ingredients, must consult their physician,” Nayar says.

Many people don't consider asthma as a serious condition, however, asthma compounded by other infections can increase the risk. An important aspect for all patients is to know the triggers so one can keep away from them and be protected from another attack.

“Identify your triggers. If dust causes problem, try and keep your surroundings dust free. Maintain proper cleanliness at all times. At such a time, when differentiating between COVID and asthma attack has become a task, it is advisable that you are on optimum guard and eliminate anything and everything that can aggravate asthma,” Dr. Deepak Verma, Internal Medicine, Columbia Asia Hospital, Ghaziabad, explains.

DadiKaKehna

Pearly white teeth and picture perfect smile is on everyone's bucket list. ROSHANI DEVI shares simple and easy to follow home remedies that can help



Dazzling white teeth is a dream of many. Everyone wants to get rid of yellow teeth for that perfect smile. Of course, one can visit a dentist but that will fall heavily on your pocket. Here are home remedies for the same.

Most homes have baking soda and yes, it can be used for almost anything — from cleaning toilets to getting rid of that stain in your favourite dress or shirt to even whitening the teeth.

Take two-four teaspoons of baking soda and add lemon juice to make a paste. Depending on the amount of baking soda, the added liquid will differ.

Apply a liberal amount onto the toothbrush and brush teeth for two minutes. Repeat the process a few times a week or until the desired results are achieved.

Believe it or not rinsing the mouth with coconut oil for whitening is age-old. Prior to brushing your teeth, use a spoon to scoop an appropriate amount of coconut oil up. Take one-and-a-half tablespoon of coconut oil and put it into your mouth. Like the mouthwash, swish the liquid around for 10-15 minutes. Spit out the oil and then brush teeth. Repeat as necessary.

# TB care is need of the hour

India accounts for over 27 per cent of the world's 10.8 million TB cases. Experts throw light on the ailment and talk about the role of community and survivors

TB has killed more people in history than any other infectious disease. Mycobacterium Tuberculosis continues to ravage communities and societies across the globe since its emergence 9000 years ago. India bears disproportionately large burden of the global TB incidence, accounting for over 27 per cent of the world's 10.8 million TB cases. This burden is further exacerbated as India also is a leading country for people with multiple drug-resistant forms (MDR-TB) that do not respond to commonly used medicines and aggravate mortality.

Multiple factors contribute to the growing rates of TB: Tuberculosis is a social disease. The under-privileged are disproportionately affected due to poor living conditions, malnutrition and access to healthcare. Stigma leads to underreporting and ostracization within the

community and the workplaces. The long treatment period leads to poor compliance, and the chronic nature of the disease leads to rising mortality.

“The severity of the epidemic has led to a host of TB control initiatives in the country with the Government committed to eradicating TB by 2025. We have made great strides in TB care. The scaling-up of diagnosis and treatment and an efficient system has saved millions of lives. However, while these successes are commendable, there remain gaps, such as the medicalised perception of TB, that need to be addressed. For too long, the focus has been on diagnosis and treatment of disease, with minimal attention to supportive services, making TB redressal a challenge,” Dr Dalbir Singh, President, Global Coalition for TB, says.

TB is a multifaceted issue involving society, gender, and

inequalities. Viewing it through a solely medical lens hinders our opportunities for patient care. A TB patient's first interface with a medical service is often an unfamiliar hospital environment, where a heavy emphasis on technical knowledge and treatment procedures reinforces the patient's growing anxieties. A large part of making TB services accessible involves demystifying the disease. While counselling services ensure that patients are adequately sensitised regarding their illness, these are still centralised facilities that are inaccessible for many. We need to move towards decentralised patient-centric approaches that serve to reduce the burden on marginalised communities.

“While we work towards making TB care more accessible, we must also consider the experiences of those affected by TB. Often, programmes are designed from a position of expertise that

fails to account for the needs of those the programme aims to benefit. There is a glaring absence of the patient's voice in our TB control initiatives and a subsequent lack of understanding of the patient experience. The voices of those affected by TB matter because they break through pre-existing perceptions and provide real experiences and needs of those that have survived TB. There is a need for a sustained effort focused on benefiting them, easing their experiences, empowering them and making them the voice for change,” Dr Rajeev Gowda, Former Rajya Sabha member, adds.

The fight against TB requires the combined effort of many sectors. The pandemic has shown us that it is possible to tackle such diseases if we work together and that there is much to be learned from the COVID-19 response.

TRACK THE PROGRESSION

The second wave of COVID-19 has reported a surge in moderate to severe cases. DR ISRARUL HAQUE tells you how one can monitor the progression of the disease



The second wave of COVID-19 has been characterised by a sharp spike in cases that has overwhelmed the healthcare system in India. Scenes depicting patient and attendants waiting for tests, oxygen and medicines have become common these days. The only solution is to fight back.

The first important observation during this time is that vaccinated people seem to be protected against severe form of the disease. Except a few rare cases, the vaccinated people have mostly recovered well. In addition to this, the infection rate among vaccinated people does not appear to be significantly lower than unvaccinated people. Third, vaccination doesn't provide absolute protection against infection or reinfection. This makes it clear that all citizens need to follow guidelines like wearing of masks, regular hand washing/use of sanitisers and social distancing norms. Fourth, the proportion of people with moderate or severe disease appears to be higher as compared to previous years pandemic. This too has overburdened the healthcare system. Fifth deterioration of patients in second week (from symptom onset) has been reported frequently. The most frequent deterioration has been reported from day seven to day 12 of symptom onset. Deterioration includes rapid decline in oxygen saturation level, markedly increased breathlessness overnight, chest pain, appearance of high grade fever after few days of being afebrile etc. Sixth, though elderly people and people with comorbidities appear to be at higher risk of adverse outcomes but severe disease isn't infrequent among healthy unvaccinated adults.

The picture appears to be gloomy. What can be done at this stage to minimise the loss of lives? Here are a few basic facts that are essential to manage the ongoing pandemic. The first part focuses on what can be done at home. The first step involves classification of disease severity at home. First, anybody testing positive for Covid-19 by rapid antigen kit or RT-PCR needs to isolate himself and monitor his oxygen saturation. Person with oxygen saturation of 94 per cent, 90 to 94 per cent and less than 90 per cent at room air are considered to have mild, moderate and severe disease respectively. These needs to be monitored at least four times a day till two weeks are completed or the person is completely symptom free. Second, we need to identify factors which predict the progression to moderate and severe disease. One important test which can be done at home itself is measuring pulse rate regularly along with oxygen saturation. If the pulse rate is persistently more than 100 on repeated measurement and oxygen saturation drops by more than five per cent on walking for six minutes then there are higher chances of progressing to moderate and severe disease. High Resolution Computed Tomography scoring is informative of disease severity too if it is done on day six of symptom onset.

By following the basic precautions and getting vaccinated will help us beat the virus. The writer is Consultant Physician, Department of Medicine, Patna Medical College, Patna and is also functioning as Nodal Officer of COVID-19 Ward PMCH, Patna



# UPGRADE YOUR OFFICE



## Decor can influence how productively you work from home, says RAGHAV GUPTA

With Covid-19 impacting us like never before, most of us are spending more time at home. Working from home, around the same environment, can become a mundane task. Along with work stress, being locked up at home, can impact us majorly. Changing the set up at home can increase our productivity as what we see and interact with directly influences our well-being.

A home office that inspires creativity is easy. It is also a great way to utilise quarantine time. Here are three basic tips which you can play around with and also infuse with your personal style.

□ Use bright colours as these help you stay awake and alive while keeping lethargy away. An accent piece is a great way to add a fun element to your space. Stress can sneak up on you but the good news is that you can keep the levels

down by simply using the right colours in your home. You might not even notice it, but your body and mind react to colours. For 2021 Pantone hasn't chosen one but two colours of the year — the neutral 'ultimate grey' together with a lovely yellow called 'illuminating'. This mix of colours conveys a message of strength and hopefulness that is both enduring and uplifting. Practical and rock solid but, at the same time, warming and optimistic, this union is one of strength and positivity. As grey is a neutral, soothing shade, hints of yellow can bring in a bright element that your space would be happy to have.

□ Working from home is the norm for plenty of professionals, but for some of us, we're just getting in the groove of working remotely for the first time. As we get used to that work-from-home life, it's important to rearrange your home work space in an organised way



that will keep you focused on your daily tasks with all the essentials you need. To help you upgrade your new work station, avoid getting too cosy or comfy, invest in a good office chair, a desk and, maybe, then add a fashionable cushion to go along with the arrangement. WFH can get boring and it's here to stay, so keep changing your cushions every month or so as these can add a new look to your home-office every month.

□ Last, keeping your surroundings

clutter-free can change the entire game. With fewer distractions around, your eyes will remain focused on tasks at hand. It's essential for your productivity — and your mental health — to keep your workspace organised. It may seem like a daunting task, but the incentive to start organising is undeniable.

—The author is director of e-commerce of an Indian brand of handmade rugs and accessories that are exported to over 90 countries across the world



## Shweta advocates sustainable fashion

Actress Shweta Tripathi encourages sustainable fashion for the sake of the environment. "I am a big advocate of sustainable fashion and I think if one is conscious of the environment, they'd always choose ethical clothing over anything else. Right from thrift stores to second-hand shopping, I'd like to encourage people to indulge in these practices and make a difference," Shweta said.

The actress treats her clothes with a lot of love and care to ensure they are not torn or damaged.

"The problem is that everyone thinks someone else will save the world. It's time to be that someone. If we all do our little bit, the world will be in a better place. I'd also like to tell people that even when it comes to sourcing for shoots, we try our best to cut down on new things," she added.

In her new web-series, the thriller *Escapade Live*, Shweta wears her own footwear. "For my character in *Escapade Live*, I'm wearing my own footwear as opposed to buying new ones because if there's something that already fits, I think it's really unnecessary to purchase new ones," she said.

—IANS

Look good, feel great

Were you always curious about the secrets that beauty experts personally use? Here are some pro tips from SHAHNAZ HUSAIN



Beauty is a matter of cultivating some good habits to last you a lifetime. Here are some tips that I swear by to give you that extra edge:

Remember to cleanse your face every night, removing make-up and pollutants that are deposited during the day. I use an aloe vera and lemon cleanser for normal to dry skin. Glowing skin that is free from blemishes is the result of daily, appropriate cleansing.

Remove all creams, like cleansing creams, nourishing creams, under-eye creams with moist cotton wool, so that there is no moisture loss. Moist cotton doesn't

absorb moisture from the skin.

Moisture and protection are the life of skin, especially in winter, to keep the skin soft and smooth. Sun-exposure also causes moisture loss. Use sunscreen or sun-block before going out in the sun. Choose high SPF for sun-sensitive skin, while SPF 25 would suit most skins. Use a sunscreen gel for oily skin. When you are at home, apply moisturiser.

I have normal to dry skin. So, I apply nourishing cream at night, after cleansing, massaging it on the face with outward and slightly upward strokes. I include the neck in my massage routine and wipe off cream with moist cotton

wool before bedtime.

Use a facial scrub for blackhead-prone, oily skin at least twice a week. Avoid scrubs on pimples, acne or rash, as well as very dry, dehydrated skin. It can deplete both oil and moisture, causing flaking of the skin. For normal skin, a scrub may be used once a week.

Use a face pack at least once or twice a week. I use a face pack daily. It consists of herbal powder and seaweed lotion, mixed with yogurt, honey and egg white. If your skin is oily, apply it more often. Packs help to deep cleanse the skin and tighten it, delaying ageing signs. The Shahnaz Husain Home Pack suits all skin types.

Keep your hair clean and never neglect shampooing the hair. It is very vital to your hair looking its best and staying healthy. Use mild herbal shampoo and hair rinse. After washing the hair wrap it in a towel and allow it to soak up moisture. Avoid rubbing the hair. Avoid brushing wet hair. Use a wide toothed comb.

—IANS

According to National Eating Disorders Association, the International No Diet Day on May 6 encourages the rejection of diet culture. This movement, started by Mary Evans Jones in 1992, celebrates the importance of body acceptance, diversity, and respect for all body shapes and sizes.

The day is dedicated to promoting a healthy lifestyle with a focus on health at any size. It aims to educate people about the right way to diet and not feeling guilty about indulging once in a while; create an acceptance of how your body looks and its uniqueness; and to end weight discrimination.

Nutritionist, sports consultant, psychologist Shwetha Bhatia, who is among the few dietitians recognised by the Indian Dietetic Association, Mumbai, shares her thoughts on the day's importance that may make you rethink your approach to dieting culture.

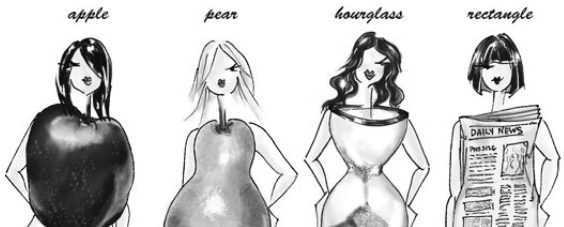
"We must respect people of all sizes and their unique battles with body shaming and weight loss. However positive body image in no way should be an excuse for quitting and remaining unhealthy. As humans we do have a psychological association with food. This can reach unhealthy proportions in the form of emotional eating," Bhatia says.

She emphasises, "Shooting for unrealistic body types is harmful. The focus should be on health and fitness rather than a certain size or number on the scale. Shape is largely determined by your genes. So is the tendency to store fat and build muscle in certain areas. Even when you begin to lose



## In diversity we trust

Despite thin being equivalent to fit in popular culture, an ideal body type is a misnomer



fat, it leaves areas that were never meant to store it first," she says.

With major celebs in her list of clients, Bhatia, 43, is a well-known name in the fitness and nutrition field. She says: "A fit body always looks good. Aesthetics is the by-product when you have more muscle and less fat. Spot reduction does not work. When you exercise, it is working the muscle rather than burning the fat sitting above it. Fat burning is

targeted through the diet. A diet is a combination of nutrients your body needs on a daily basis to survive, repair and adapt. Being on a diet therefore means doing the right things most of the time in line with your health and fitness goals. Going off the diet then means letting go once in a while in a way that it does not throw you off the wagon."

Finally, she advises: "Stop obsessing over calories and consumed and burnt: Exercise

is for improving fitness, not trying to cancel out cheat meals. Calorie burning is the bonus and not the goal of the exercise program. The caloric value of foods is measured in a controlled environment in a lab. But in your body, your hormones and enzymes decide how these calories are released and used.

All calories are not equal. Foods with similar calories take different pathways once digested and their fate depends on our hormones. Calorie counting without paying attention to quality and quantity of nutrients does not make sense, even within a calorie deficit plan. You may lose weight but healthy weight loss means less fat mass while gaining or maintaining muscle."

—IANS



## COMFORT THE CHILD: MADHAVAN

Actor **R MADHAVAN** says it's important for people to explain the ongoing situation to children. "In all this chaos, uncertainty, and stress please spare a thought for the young kids at home. Their world has become frightening and they are being mostly neglected. Explain to them what's happening and make sure that they feel comforted and secure," he said. The actor makes his directorial debut with *Rocketary: The Nambi Effect*, based on the life of scientist and aerospace engineer S Nambi Narayanan.

## fairtalk



As millions of us (me and my family included) strive to stay afloat, let us not forget that our emotional well-being in this current crisis, is equally important! Remember, You Are Not Alone. We are in this together. And most importantly, there is HOPE!

## dailytalk



I would like to appeal to everyone to unite and support our country in this hour or crisis. Virat and I are coming together to do our bit. We will share the details soon so that you can also become part of this movement. Remember, we are all in this together. Guys, please stay safe and take care of yourself.

## VICTORIA ON HOME SCHOOLING

**VICTORIA BECKHAM** spoke about how she spent her lockdown with David and their children. "When lockdown first happened, the schools were closed and we said the priority had to be the children. The most important thing was to sit and watch movies with the kids and cuddle them. I appreciate teachers so much more, home schooling is no joke. I can run a business, I can sit in a board meeting, but home schooling the kids is really, really tough."





