



‘I’m having loads of fun working with kids’

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

■ What is Nikki Aur Jadui Bubble about?

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

■ What’s your character here?

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

■ How did you come on board the project?

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

■ It is a kid’s fantasy show, are you having lots of fun?

We had lots of fun. There are no adults in the scenes with me. There are adults but we are never in the same frame. The good is that there is gossip, the atmosphere is stress-free. There is a negativity like there might be in other

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

■ Were there any challenges since you are working with kids?

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

■ How did you get into acting?

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

■ Hero Bhakti Hi Shakti Hai was a role you did and grabbed eyeballs. What made the show popular?

It was one of the few superhero shows. Back then, there was just *Shaktiman*. *Hero Bhakti...* became

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

■ Is there a role that you hated doing?

No, not really. I never put myself in a position where I ended up hating doing something. Acting is my profession. If I don’t love I can’t do justice to the characters I have done.

■ W h a t next?

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



WEEKLY NATTER

ASIM RIAZ TURNS RAPPER

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

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

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

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

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

CINDERELLA TO LAUNCH WORLDWIDE IN SEPTEMBER

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

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

RASHMI AGDEKAR BECOMES CAUSE AMBASSADOR

After many Bollywood celebrities being tested positive for Covid-19 and understanding the hard times actress, Rashmi Agdekar opens up about duty towards fighting the disease and helping the country by being a cause ambassador. Agdekar has blown the audience’s mind with her brilliant performance. The young and talented actress started her acting career in 2017, in the web series *Dev DD*. Since then she has played various critically acclaimed roles in several web series and movies. Celebrities like Varun Dhawan and Kartik Aryan have also joined initiatives as cause ambassadors are contributing during these tough times by sharing verified information with their followers, Rashmi Agdekar herself being a Covid survivor understands the need to support people at this hour and has

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

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

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

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

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

TELLY TALE

DANCE IT OUT

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

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



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

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

‘I HAVE NEVER DONE A SCREEN TEST’

Over the past few years, Raima Sen

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

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

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

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

HIBA’S FAVOURITE SEHRI DELICACY

Hiba Nawab aka CP in Sony SAB’s Jijaji Chhat Parr Koi Hai was in Bareilly with her family and friends during Ramadan.

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

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



vital part about this sacred month is fasting and praying, which means *ibadat*, by keeping *rozas* and by reading the Quran. We celebrate this month by cherishing each and every moment and by worshipping. I think it is essential to help people in need and do charity. My fondest memory for the holy month of Ramadan dates back to the days I observed my first roza. I was eight years old and was super excited about it. We eat some delicious dishes this month, and this year I am in Bareilly with my family and friends after so long to celebrate the month of Ramadan and Eid. I avoid eating fried food across the year, but I grab a bite of spicy and fried food to my heart’s content during this time of the year. My favourite *sehri* delicacy is *khajla*, I love to eat sweet dishes as I have a sweet tooth. My resolution for Ramadan is to do more of *ibadat*.”

ATHARVA ASKS A TRICKY QUESTION

Sony SAB’s *Wagle Ki Duniya* –



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

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

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

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

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

Plan Your Stay At Home Sunday

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

FLUFFY BANANA WALNUT PANCAKES

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



small food processor and process until light and fluffy.

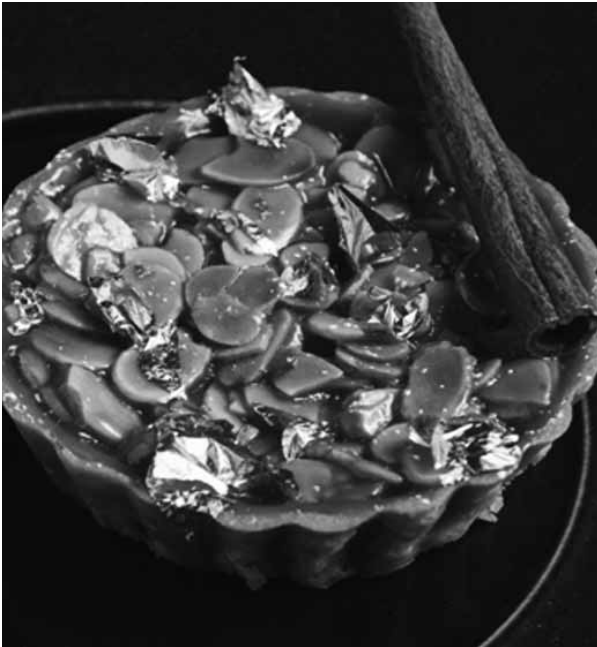
■ Mash banana with a fork in a large bowl and stir in milk and melted butter. Stir together dry

ingredients in a medium bowl and stir into banana mixture, being careful to not overmix. (A few small lumps are ok)

— California Walnuts

ALMOND CINNAMON TART

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



■ Serve once done and demould the tart. serve with

vanilla bean ice-cream.
— Almond Board of California

Deadly spell of Covid-19 continues in U'khand

Record 197 deaths reported on Saturday, 5,654 new Covid cases reported

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The deadly sting in the second wave of Covid 19 cases in Uttarakhand is continuing to hit the people of the state. The state health department reported a record 197 deaths in a single day on Saturday which broke the record of deaths (180) created on May 9. The death toll from the disease has now climbed to 4,623 in the state. The department also reported 5,654 new cases of the Covid on the day which increased the cumulative count of patients to 2,83,239 in the state.

The department discharged 4,806 patients from different hospitals after their recovery on the day. A total of 1,93,496 patients have so far recovered from the disease. The recovery percentage is now at 68.32 while the sample positivity rate is 6.70.

Out of the record 197 deaths reported on Saturday, 30 deaths occurred in Government Doon Medical College (GDMC) hospital, 27 at Sushila Tiwari government hospital Haldwani, 25 at District hospital Rudrapur, Udham Singh Nagar, 16 from SDH Roorkee, 12 at Rajiv Gandhi cricket stadium, 10 at All India Institute of Medical



Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh and eight each at Military Hospital (MH) Dehradun and Base hospital Kotdwar. Similarly seven deaths each occurred at HNB base hospital Srinagar and Base hospital Almora and six at Himalayan hospital Dehradun on the day. Five patients each died at Mahant Indresh hospital Dehradun and SPS government hospital Rishikesh while three patients were reported dead at Arogyadham, Kanishka hospital and Sanjeevani hospital Kashipur.

The provisional state capital Dehradun reported 1423 new cases of the disease on Saturday. Nainital reported 1037, Pauri 482, Haridwar 464, Uttarkashi 428, Tehri 405, Udham Singh Nagar 384, Almora 339, Pithoragarh 246, Chamoli 215, Bageshwar 138, Rudrapur 51 and Champawat 42 new cases of

the disease on Saturday.

The state now has 80,000 active patients of the disease. Dehradun continues remains at the top of the table of active cases of the disease with 27,667 patients; Haridwar has 14,240, Nainital 7,264, Pauri 6,090, Udham Singh Nagar 5,812, Tehri 5,119, Chamoli 2,452, Almora 2428, Uttarkashi 2,288, Rudrapur 2,221, Pithoragarh 1,874, Champawat 1400, and Bageshwar 1,145 active cases of the disease.

To contain the contagion of Covid-19, the state administration has set up 471 containment zones in different parts of the state. In the ongoing vaccination drive 33,090 people were vaccinated in 483 sessions in different parts of the state on Saturday. A total of 6,79,782 people have so far been fully vaccinated in the state while 19,22,142 have been partially vaccinated.

U'khand to appoint medical counsellors for Covid patients in home isolation

The step would help in monitoring the patients in home isolation in a better way

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The patients of Covid 19 in home isolation would now get the services of a medical counsellor who would be in regular touch with the patients during their quarantine period. Apart from closely monitoring the health of the patients these counsellors would ensure that the medical kit is delivered at their residences.

In case of deterioration in health of the patients in home isolation, these counsellors would inform the Covid control centres (CCC) in the districts and the village level Covid monitoring committees. The CCC would arrange the medicines as per the medical opinion and arrange for ambulances for transporting the patient to a Covid Care centre or dedicated Covid hospital.

In an order to the all district magistrates (DM), the secretary health Amit Singh Negi said that the DMs would allot one medical counsellor to every Covid patient in home isolation. These counsellors would be selected from among allopathic doctors, pharmacists, nursing staff, Ayush practitioners, dentists, PG students of Allopathic and Ayush medical colleges and the staff of the medical colleges capable of

doing the job. A list of people capable of being counsellors would be prepared by the nodal officers for Human Resource Management of the districts. Negi said that for providing guidance to these counsellors' one nodal officer would be appointed in every district. These counsellors would also be provided online training. A committee comprising of Vice Chancellor (VC) of Medical University, Principal Government Doon Medical College (GDMC) and Head of Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) Dr Pankaj Singh would be responsible for online training of counsellors.

In the order, Negi said that the counsellors would make a phone or video call to the patient on a daily basis and would keep a record of his/her condition. They would also submit reports of the monitoring of the patients done by them.

One counsellor should not be provided for more than 50 patients and they would be provided with Rs 1000 per month as reimbursement for telephone bill payment and upkeep of the documents.

The decision to provide medical counsellors to every Covid patient assumes significance amid increase in the fatality of contagion in the state. The experts are of the view that unmonitored home isolation is one of the reasons for higher death rate in the state. The issue was highlighted in detail by The Pioneer in its edition of May 2, 2021.

Manage current situation while also preparing for third wave: CM



PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The senior officials and district magistrates are responsible for ensuring full logistical support to the front-line workers working to treat and save Covid patients.

Stating this while chairing a video conference to review the Covid-19 situation in the state on Saturday, Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat said that the availability of medicine kit at all levels must be ensured along with all necessary treatment for Covid patients. Referring to experts pointing at the possibility of the third wave of Covid, Rawat said that the current situation has to be faced even while concrete preparations must be made for a possible third wave. Arrangements to face the third wave of Covid should be fool-proof, he stressed.

He said that in the coming times, there should be CT scan machines in every district hospital along with trained

personnel to operate the machines. Rawat also stressed on the need to increase testing, adding that adequate availability of vaccines should be ensured for vaccination. Covid appropriate behaviour should also be ensured at all the vaccination centres.

He stressed that there should be real time entry of Covid related data, warning against any carelessness in this regard. If an ICU is not functional anywhere it should be made operational and trained personnel should be appointed if needed. Stating that oxygen should be utilised properly, Rawat said that oxygen use should also be regularly audited. Preparations should be made assessing the probable oxygen requirement in the coming months. He also directed officials to look into the availability of medicines for treatment of black fungus.

Reiterating that strict action should be taken against those involved in black mar-

keting and over-charging, the CM also stressed on the need for hoarding of oxygen cylinders. He also directed the officials to take necessary steps to prevent Covid from spreading in the mountainous regions.

Chief secretary Om Prakash said that the Civil Aviation department should arrange for one helicopter each at Chinyalisaid and Pithoragarh from June 15 to September 30 so that serious patients, oxygen cylinders and other items can be airlifted in case the roads are blocked during the rains. Oxygen concentrators should be provided on a priority basis in remote areas.

Officials informed in the meeting that the process of global tendering for importing vaccines had been started. Additional chief secretary Manisha Panwar, director general of police Ashok Kumar and other officials concerned were also present in the meeting.

O2 plants being set up in all districts, says CM

Rawat visits Covid centres, inspects arrangements in three districts

PNS ■ DEHRADUN ■ RUDRAPUR

Stating that there was no shortage of oxygen in the past or present in the state, chief minister Tirath Singh Rawat said that to prevent any shortage, oxygen plants are being set up in every district. The chief minister said this while visiting Gopeshwar in Chamoli district during his daylong tour of three districts on Saturday.

Reaching the Covid centre at the district hospital in Gopeshwar, the CM directed that installation of the oxygen plant here be completed in the next two days. He also inspected the vaccination of people in the 18-44 years age group at the government PG college.

Rawat said that vaccination is the top priority of the government which is working to ensure that no individual is left without being vaccinated against Covid. He said that work is also being undertaken to import vaccines from abroad,



adding that all will be vaccinated in Uttarakhand soon. The CM said that adequate oxygen beds, ventilators, PPE kits and other resources are available in the state. Further, 500-bed Covid hospitals are being set up at Rishikesh and Haldwani with the assistance of Defence Research and Development Organisation

(DRDO). He also appealed to the people to wear masks in public, wash hands frequently and observe all the Covid guidelines properly.

From Chamoli, the CM reached Rudrapur district where he inspected the Madhavashram Covid care centre at Koteswar and district hospital. Interacting

with the doctors, Rawat directed them to ensure constant monitoring of the patients. Speaking about raising public awareness on Covid from time to time, he said that Covid kits are being delivered to the homes where needed through Asha and Anganwadi workers to enable timely treatment of patients at home and prevent-

ing the need for them to get admitted in the hospital. He said that the number of Covid tests is being increased consistently across the state.

Later, the CM reached Srinagar in Pauri district where he checked the Covid related works in the district. After inspecting the vaccination of 18-44 years age group, the CM held a meeting with officials concerned in the medical college hall.

He directed the officials to ensure that people do not face any inconvenience in getting vaccinated. Rawat also checked the condition of patients in all the Covid wards via CCTV camera.

Seeking information from personnel in the Covid control room about daily calls received, he said that the data of Covid patients should be kept secure and work in the control room should be undertaken 24 hours in shifts.

He also enquired about the health workers, police and SDRF personnel on duty, asking them to observe all necessary precautions for protection from Covid while discharging their duties. State minister for Disaster Management, Dhan Singh Rawat also accompanied the CM on his visits.

Edited clip of CM's slip of tongue debunked

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

A slip of tongue by the chief minister Tirath Singh Rawat was presented in an incomplete video clip which spread swiftly on the social media. While interacting with mediaperons during his visit to Gopeshwar in Chamoli district on Saturday, the chief minister said, "We are administering the Covid vaccine swiftly. Providing oxygen to those in the 18-44 years age group has also been started," he said, before correcting himself in the next sentence replacing the word 'oxygen' with 'vaccine'.

However, the incomplete video clip of his media interaction which ended with the slip of tongue was soon spread on social media eliciting questions, criticism and ridicule from social media users. As the edited clip of the chief minister's statement spread on the social media, the state government issued a clarification in



the evening along with the complete video clip. In the complete video clip the CM also exhorted the public to get vaccinated without fail as it is essential to defeat Covid-19. According to the state government, only a portion of the video clip was spread on social media with questionable intentions while editing the part in which the CM corrects his slip

of tongue. The general public was appealed to not use and forward the edited video.

It is pertinent to mention here that though the chief minister has elicited questions with some of his statements in the past, attempts were evidently made

to project a minor slip of the tongue into something major by spreading the edited video clip on Saturday. However, while some supporters of rival politicians, critics and other social media users were seen trying to exploit the opportunity, there were some including rival politicians who shared the complete video clip to clear the picture.

Gangotri reopened for summer, first prayer offered on behalf of PM



PNS ■ GANGOTRI

The portals of the Gangotri shrine in Uttarkashi district were ritually reopened for the summer at 7:31 AM on Saturday. With the reopening of Yamunotri on Friday and Gangotri on Saturday, the first prayers were offered on behalf of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Prime Minister had sent Rs 1,100 for the prayers through the Char Dham

Devasthanam Management Board.

The Teerth Purohiths offered the prayers while observing Covid guidelines and prayed for relief from the pandemic and happiness of the people. Special offerings were made to the deity on behalf of the Prime Minister.

Due to the Covid restrictions, there were only a few people at Gangotri on the occasion of its reopening.

Chief Minister Tirath Singh

Rawat and the Tourism and Culture minister Satpal Maharaaz greeted the people on the occasion. Referring to the Char Dham Yatra being suspended due to the Covid surge, the chief minister said that the pilgrimage would be started after the situation normalises. Meanwhile, the portals of Kedarnath shrine are slated to be reopened on May 17 while the portals of Badrinath shrine are slated to be reopened on May 18.

JOY provides resources to the needy in Dehradun

PNS ■ KOTDWAR

Amid the second wave of the Covid crisis many people are going through various difficulties but some organisations are doing whatever they can to minimise the problems of the people.

Just Open Yourself (JOY) is a youth-driven non-profit organisation in Dehradun which is helping people overcome the critical situation in Dehradun due to second wave of Covid-19. They are distributing free oxygen cylinders to Covid-19 patients amidst this pandemic. The organisation is focusing on tackling the problem of shortage of oxygen cylinders and also providing other Covid related items sanitisers and masks to those in need. Till date, they have circulated oxygen cylinders among 150 people and are working to help more people. The services are being provided free of cost, no refill charges and free delivery 24 hours. The volunteers are providing resources to the ones facing financial crisis amid Covid and are also providing medicines in some mountainous areas of the state.

Founder president of JOY, Jai Sharma said, "Little did we know that this pandemic will



force us to see its lethal side in this manner. Looking around to see people losing their lives due to the scarcity of oxygen cylinders in the city made us take this step. We started by providing two oxygen cylin-

ders and within one week managed to get 70 oxygen cylinders."

He added, "We thank our young volunteers who have been working selflessly day and night to serve the people.

We are also very grateful to all our donors who have contributed and helped us. We are thankful to noted personality Raghav Juyal who helped us and provided us with two oxygen concentrators."

Listen grievance of MNREGS workers: Pritam to Govt

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Pritam Singh has said that the state government should take the initiative to break the deadlock created by the agitation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS) employees. These workers are on a path of agitation for the last 61 days. He said that the Government Order (GO) released by the additional chief secretary Manisha Panwar is deplorable in which it is mentioned that the MNREGS workers would be employed through an outsourcing agency.

The PCC chief said that the development works in the rural areas have been hampered by the agitation of these workers. He said that the MNREGS is an employment generation scheme and due to the prevailing situation of pandemic the return of migrants have started and these workers can play an important role in providing employment to the returnees. Singh said that due to the strike of 1300 workers all development works have ceased and immediate steps to break the deadlock should be taken.

500-bed hosps each in Panipat, Hisar to open today

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

To augment arrangements to control COVID-19 pandemic, Haryana Government has set-up 500-bed temporary COVID hospitals each in Panipat and Hisar which will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar today

Apart from these, two more hospitals (100 bed Field Hospital and 300 Bed Covid Care Centre) have also been constructed in Gurugram which too will be inaugurated.

The temporary COVID Hospital established in village Bal Jatan near the refinery in Panipat has been named Guru Tegh Bahadur Sanjivani COVID Hospital. Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, and Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij will also be present at the inauguration of the hospital. 25 doctors and 150 para-medical staff have been appointed for the functioning of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sanjivani Hospital.

A statement said that since the hospital built near the refinery in Panipat is far away from the city, a police outpost has been set up near it. Roads have been built to connect the hospital blocks. Apart from the ambulance of the Health Department in the hospital, five



mini bus ambulances from Haryana Roadways and two ambulances from the refinery will also support the movement of patients to the COVID Hospital. Five ambulances from the Police Department will give their support for this hospital as well. The hospital in Hisar is named after former Deputy Prime Minister, Chaudhary Devi Lal Sanjivani Hospital. The supply of oxygen in this hospital will be as per the flow of 7.1 liters per bed per minute, which will be supplied from the oxygen plant of Jindal Steel Industries, the statement said. A supply of 8 MT of oxygen has been arranged per day. Hisar's COVID Hospital, set up at Jindal Modern School, is divided into four blocks. Oxygen points have been added to all beds. Apart from the doctors, paramedical staff

as well as medical interns have also been hired here. Five ambulances have been deployed in the hospital.

The 100-bed COVID Field Hospital at Tau Devi Lal Stadium in Gurugram has been set up by Vedanta. It has 20 ICUs and 80 oxygen beds. Vedanta will provide all the necessary medical equipment for the treatment of COVID patients. Apart from this, a 300-bed COVID Care Centre has been set up in Sector 67 of Gurugram in joint collaboration of M3M, CII Air Force and Doctors for You NGO.

Meanwhile, CM Khattar said that in this global pandemic of Covid-19, the Central and State Governments are strenuously working towards controlling the on ground situation and delivering their best in this hour of pandemic

crisis.

Addressing a virtual program, Khattar called upon social organizations as well as political parties and said that Corona is a very huge disaster and we have to fight against it together. He said that the farmers' organizations can do the agitation for their demands even after the situation gets normal.

He said that in the first wave of Covid, a maximum of 3,000 cases came up daily but this time around 16,000 cases

are coming on a daily basis. Due to this, the health system initially faced a massive pressure. Along with doctors, beds, there was also a crisis of oxygen. But the situation was soon brought under control. At present, the state is getting 282 tonnes of oxygen. Oxygen is being supplied to the homes of needy patients in collaboration with about 350 organizations. Essential items like beds, concentrators and ventilators are being contributed by social organizations.

Haryana declares black fungus as notified disease

Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij on Saturday said that black fungus has been declared a notified disease in the State. Now, if any cases of this disease are found, the doctors will have to report them to the concerned chief medical officer (CMO), Vij said. The black fungus infection, also known as mucormycosis, is caused by a fungus called mucor. Now, if a patient is diagnosed with black fungus in any government or private hospital of the state, it will have

to be reported to the CMO of the district concerned so that appropriate steps can be taken to prevent the disease, he said.

Senior doctors of PGIMS, Rohtak will conduct meetings through videoconferencing with all the doctors who are treating coronavirus patients in the state and inform them about the treatment of black fungus. Recently, several states have flagged cases of COVID-triggered mucormycosis, especially among patients who are diabetic.

Curfew extended in Himachal Pradesh till May 26

PNS ■ SHIMLA

The Himachal Government on Saturday decided to extend the coronavirus-induced curfew in the State till May 26. The decision to extend the curfew was taken in a State Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur.

The Cabinet reviewed the COVID-19 situation in the State and expressed concern over the sharp surge in the number of COVID-19 cases in the State. To break the virus chain, the Cabinet decided to extend the Corona Curfew in the State till 6 am on May 26, an official statement said.

It was decided that to check the exodus of labourers and workers, all shops dealing with construction materials would also remain open on Tuesday and Friday in a week for three hours. The Cabinet also decided to allow hiring dead body vans to all the Medical Colleges and Zonal and Regional Hospitals and hospitals with bed capacity of 200 and above. It also decided that the forest

department would provide free wood for cremation of corona deceased where forest rights are enforced and forest corporations would provide fuel wood in other areas. All the MCs would be allowed to hire dead body vans.

The Cabinet also decided that no marriages would be allowed to hire marriage palaces, community halls and tent houses and outside catering and DJ/Band. Marriage would be only held in houses or Courts with the restriction of 20 persons. There will also be no procession of Barat. It also gave its nod to procure CT Scan 128 slice and MRI 1.5 Tesla Machines worth Rs. 20 crore in Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru Government Medical College, Chamba to facilitate the people. It accorded its approval to ex post-facto permission to the executing agency of Makeshift Covid-19 Hospital at Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Government Medical College, Ner Chowk Mandi to include construction of one labour room and one operation theatre etc.

Doon varsity organises virtual international symposium

The event was organised virtually and was attended by more than 100 participants belonging to various national and international

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

An international symposium titled 'History of Ideas: Latin America and India in 20th Century' was organised by the Department of Spanish Studies, School of Languages, Doon University on Saturday. The event was organised virtually and was attended by more than 100 participants belonging to various national and international institutions from all over the world.

Delivering the welcome address, the vice chancellor of Doon University, Surekha Dangwal elaborated on the need to look at such connections that may not be connected geographically but perhaps intellectually, especially in times of a surging pandemic to draw inspirations from each other.

The director of the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, Ash Narain Roy delivered a lecture on Latin American experience in 20th Century with regard to internationalism, pink tide and indigenous epistemologies like the idea of Buen Vivir. The second speaker, Professor Minni Sawhney from GRS, University of Delhi elaborated on Octavio Paz's work on India and drew connections with his studies on Claude Levi Strauss and Nagarjuna's Madhyamika philosophy.

Punjab's first O2 express on way to Bokaro to lift 40 mt LMO

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

With the rolling out of Punjab's first Oxygen Express towards Bokaro on Saturday morning, the State will soon be in a position to lift its full 80 MT O2 quota, need-

ed to further boost up its stock of life-saving medical ingredient. Senior IAS officer supervising the Oxygen Control Room, Rahul Tiwari said that the department has overcome the difficulty of tanker heights and of agencies to carry the O2

supplies vital in the state's fight against the deadly virus. We have been able to procure and put in use two ISO containers that fit in the HBL requirements of the railways and regards bringing in an agency we have roped in the services of MARK-

FED, our time tested organisation of Punjab, to fasten up and streamline the O2 procurement process to ensure there is no shortage of oxygen anywhere in the state.

Tiwari said the state has been planning aggressively to foresee its need of oxygen in coming days and the government has also been pushing the central government to increase its quota of tankers to lift all allotted Oxygen in a smooth and timely manner. The rail express left through Dapper on its way to Bokaro, the Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan said Saturday.

Besides, Punjab has also expedited the process of procuring on its own more oxygen tankers from different parts of the country and abroad.

Mahajan was chairing a high-level meeting to review the availability, need and distribution of the medical oxygen in the state besides taking stock of the ongoing initiatives to check the further spread of devastating second Covid wave in the state. Briefing the present status of the supply chain of oxygen to Punjab from different parts of the country, Principal Secretary Transport K Siva Prasad said the efforts have also been intensified to bring oxygen tankers from Belgium and Australia. "Hopefully, the sup-

Punjab to demand more oxygen tankers from Centre, says Chief Secy

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

To bridge the gap between the rising demand and supply of the medical oxygen in the State, Punjab Government would demand additional oxygen tankers from the Centre to speed up the supply chain of the life-saving gas in the state from far and near, chief secretary Vini Mahajan said Saturday.

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ply of oxygen tankers from Australia and Belgium will reach Punjab soon," he added.

Rahul Tiwari, who is supervising the Oxygen Control Room, said Punjab's first oxygen express train left for Bokaro in Jharkhand on Saturday morning to pick up its 80 metric tonne (MT) quota of oxygen, which would further strengthen the stock of life-saving medical supplies in the state. He said the services of Markfed were being used to further speed up the process of oxygen procurement and ensure that there was no shortage of the life-saving gas in the state.

Principal Secretary, Water Supply and Sanitation, Jaspreet Talwar, while sharing the district-wise information of Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) oxygen plants, said a total of 44 PSA plants would be set up in Punjab at a cost of Rs 4.71 crore for which several NGOs and big companies have come forward to help the Punjab Government in this endeavour.

Regarding the status of oxygen concentrators in the state, the Chief Secretary was informed that Punjab has around 1,060 concentrators at

present, which were being distributed in the districts as per the requirement, while more concentrators would be available soon and would be sent to the districts as per the need.

The Chief Secretary directed the Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) to ensure uninterrupted power supply to all the hospitals in which Covid patients were being treated.

She ordered PSPCL to also ensure uninterrupted power supply to the new hospitals, which have been set up or were being set up by the NGOs. Directions were also issued to the Public Works Department (PWD) to provide more basic facilities to the three government colleges-cum-hospitals in the state and the Mohali hospital, which has been turned into an exclusive Covid care facility.

While hoping that the Covid situation would improve soon and the state would emerge victorious in its sustained fight against the deadly virus, the Chief Secretary urged all the officers to serve diligently till the situation returns to normal.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is notified for the information of rail passengers that the Railways have decided to cancel the following Special Trains keeping in view the cyclone warning in Coastal Gujarat Region, as per the following details:-

| CANCELLATION OF TRAINS | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Train No. & Name | Date of Cancellation |
| 04321 Bareilly-Bhuj Express Special | 16.05.2021 & 17.05.2021 |
| 04678 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-Hapa Express Special | 17.05.2021 |
| 04680 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-Jamnagar Exp. Special | 16.05.2021 |
| 09070 Varanasi Jn.-Okha Superfast Special | 15.05.2021 |
| 09566 Dehradun-Okha Uttaranchal Express Special | 16.05.2021 |
| 09270 Muzaffarpur Jn.-Porbandar Express Special | 16.05.2021 |
| 04322 Bhuj-Bareilly Special | 17.05.2021 |
| 04312 Bhuj-Bareilly Ala Hazrat Express Special | 18.05.2021 |
| 04677 Hapa-Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Express Special | 18.05.2021 |
| 09565 Okha-Dehradun Uttaranchal Express Special | 21.05.2021 |
| 04679 Jamnagar-Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Exp. Special | 19.05.2021 |

Note: For any kind of information passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website: www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in

Visit RailMadad website:-
www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in

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E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE (UNDER SARFAESI ACT)

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE ASSETS UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 READ WITH PROVISION TO RULE 8 (6) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s), that the below described immovable property mortgaged / charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical/symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Union Bank of India (Secured Creditor) will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", "WHATEVER THERE IS" AND "WITHOUT RECOURSE BASIS" on 18.06.2021 in between 10:00 AM to 03:00 PM, for recovery of respective amounts, due to the Union Bank of India (Secured Creditor) from the respective Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) as mentioned below. The Reserve Price and Earnest Money Deposit will be as mentioned below. For details terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Union Bank of India (Secured Creditor) website i.e. www.unionbankofindia.co.in. Bidder may also visit the website <https://www.ibapi.in> The under mentioned properties will be sold by Online E- Auction through website : www.mstcecommerce.com on 18.06.2021 for recovery of respective amounts plus interest and other expenses in the respective borrowers accounts.

"Online E- Auction through website : www.ibapi.in

Date & Time of Auction: 18th June, 2021 at 10.00 A.M. to 03.00 P.M

| Lot No. | a) Name Of The Borrower/ b) Name Of The Branch c) Description Of Property d) Name Of The Owner/S | a) Reserve Price In Rupees b) Earnest Money Deposit (Emd) (In Rupees) | Debt Due Contact Person and Mobile No. Inspection Date / Time | Encumbrance Possession Symbolic/ Physical |
|---------|---|--|--|---|
| 1 | a) M/s Boltmaster India Pvt. Ltd. b) Asset Recovery Management Branch c) Factory Land & Building at plot No. 14,15, & 16 sector-6, Rudrapur, Uttaranchal. Total Land Area of the Property -7742 sq ft or 7200 sq mt. d) M/s Boltmaster India Pvt. Ltd | a) 4,70,00,000.00 b) 47,00,000.00 | Rs.35,86,56,165.77 (Thirty Five Crore Eighty six lakhs Fifty six Thousand One Hundred Sixty Five and Paise Seventy Seven Only) as on 31.03.2021 plus further interest thereon w.e.f 01.04.2021 at applicable rate of interest, cost and charges till date. Mr.Aklesh Meena-Mobile No.7018573938 Mr. Bodhan Biswas - Mobile No. 8928211305 01.06.2021/3.00 PM to 5.00PM | Not known to A.O. Physical Possession |
| 2 | a) M/s Boltmaster India Pvt. Ltd. b) Asset Recovery Management Branch c) Plant & Machinery at plot No. 14,15, & 16 sector-6, Rudrapur, Uttaranchal. d) M/s Boltmaster India Pvt. Ltd | a) 45,00,000.00 b) 4,50,000.00 | | |

Bidders are requested to visit the Bank's website www.unionbankofindia.co.in for detailed terms & conditions of E-Auction and other details before submitting their Bids for taking part in the E-Auction. Bidder may also visit the website www.ibapi.in. of Service Provider Indian Banks Auction Properties Information (IBAPI) Portal.

The intending bidders must have valid e-mail id to participate in on-line Auction. The terms and conditions of sale shall be strictly as per the provisions of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) / RULE 9(1) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES 2002

This may also be treated as notice under Rule 8(6) / Rule 9(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 to the borrower/s and guarantor/s of the said loan about the holding of E-Auction Sale on the above mentioned date.

For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided i.e www.unionbankofindia.co.in or <https://www.ibapi.in>

www.mstcecommerce.com

Place : Mumbai
Date : 16.05.2021

Sd/-
Authorized Officer, Union Bank of India

Capt Amarinder lashes at Adityanath for tweet on Malerkotla district

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Saturday slammed Yogi Adityanath over his "inflammatory" tweet on the declaration of Malerkotla as the 23rd district of Punjab, terming it an attempt to incite communal hatred in the peaceful state as part of the BJP's divisive policies.

Contrasting the communal harmony in Punjab with the divisiveness being promoted by the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh, Capt Amarinder asked the former to stay out of his state's affairs, which are in much better shape than those in UP under the "divisive and destructive" BJP government, which has been actively promoting communal discord in the state for the past over four years.

"What does he (Yogi Adityanath) know of Punjab's ethos or the history of Malerkotla, whose relationship with Sikhism and its Gurus was known to every Punjabi? And

what does he understand of the Indian Constitution, which is being brazenly trampled every day by his own government in UP?" asked the Chief Minister, in a strong reaction to his UP counterpart's tweet, describing Malerkotla's new status as a "sign of the divisive policies of the Congress."

Mocking the UP chief minister's comment, Capt Amarinder said that given Yogi Adityanath government's and BJP's track record of spreading communal hate, such a remark was utterly ridiculous, apart from being totally unwarranted and uncalled for. The whole world knows of the communally divisive policies of the BJP, and particularly the Yogi Adityanath government in UP, said the Chief Minister. Pointing to the spate of changes in names of various UP cities , including Mughal Sarai to Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay Nagar, Allahabad as Prayagraj and Faizabad as Ayodhya, he dubbed it an attempt by the Yogi government to rewrite history,

which the peace-loving people of India will never condone.

Citing media reports, Capt Amarinder recalled that UP was the first state in the country to approve "love jihad" laws, and Yogi Adityanath's open hatred for Taj Mahal (which he sees as a legacy of the Mughals) has been the subject matter of criticism in international press.

In fact, the UP chief minister is reportedly the founder of Hindu Yuva Vahini, an organisation that was responsible for starting cow vigilantism, which led to lynching of Muslims in his own state, the Punjab Chief Minister further pointed out. It was obvious that the tweet of the UP government head on Malerkotla was nothing but a provocative gesture aimed at creating conflict among the communities living in perfect harmony in Punjab, said the Chief Minister. He termed it a conspiracy on the part of the BJP to spread disharmony in Punjab ahead of the Assembly elections, which are just months away.

6-time MP, ex-Guv, Union Min Lal Bhatia passes away at 100

PNS ■ AMRITSAR

Senior Congress leader and Ssix-time MP from Amritsar Raghunandan Lal Bhatia passed away after a brief illness at a private hospital in Amritsar. He was 100.

He was first elected to the Lok Sabha in 1972 from the Amritsar parliamentary constituency, and again re-elected from the same seat in the

1980, 1985, 1992, 1996 and 1999 elections as a member of the Congress. Bhatia had also served as the Governor of Kerala from 2004 to 2008 and the governor of Bihar from 2008 to 2009. He had also served as the minister of state for external affairs in 1992. Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh expressed grief over the death of Raghunandan Bhatia. "Saddened to lose former

Governor & Senior Congress Leader & six-time MP, Raghunandan Lal Bhatia Ji. My thoughts and prayers are with his family members in their hour of grief. May his soul rest in peace," the chief minister tweeted. Punjab Congress leader and MLA Raj Kumar Verka condoled the demise of Raghunandan Bhatia, describing him as "Bhishma Pitamah" of the Indian politics.

Haryana records 144 Covid-19 fatalities, 9,676 new cases

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana on Saturday reported 144 Covid-19 related deaths, taking the toll to 6,546, while 9,676 fresh infections pushed the case count to 685,312.

According to the health department's daily bulletin, the latest deaths included 18 from Gurugram, 16 from Hisar, 13 from Jind and 10 from Rohtak, nine from Faridabad, eight from Bhiwani and seven each from Karnal, Rewari and Yamunanagar. Among the districts which continued to report a big spike in cases included Gurugram (1691) and Faridabad (867), Hisar (773), Sonapat (739) and Bhiwani (566). The total number of active cases in the state dropped to 95946. The total recoveries so far were 5,82, 820, the bulletin stated. The cumulative positivity rate was 8.36 percent, it said. The recovery rate was 85.04 percent, it added.

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



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tauktae ravages Kerala's coastal areas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

The Minister highlighted the critical challenges faced by the states.

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

State health administrators were advised to increase ICU



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Covid situation in country stabilising, says Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

Niti Aayog (Health) member said.

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

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

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

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

The official said 11 states have over one lakh active

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

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

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

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

Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health, said a total of 18.04 crore vaccine doses have been administered so far in the country. This includes 12.74 crore people above the age of 45 years, 1.62 crore healthcare workers, 2.25 crore frontline workers and 42.59 lakh people between the age of 18-44 years who have received their first dose.

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

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

In his commissioning

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

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

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

Experts for action as WhatsApp privacy policy comes into effect

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Israeli airstrike on Gaza home kills 10

AP ■ GAZA CITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

AP

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AP ■ DUBAI

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

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

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

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

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



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

AP

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

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

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

"We need individuals who believe in change," he said.

Raisi had been named as a

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

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

Japan, US, France hold military drill eyeing China presence

AP ■ KIRISHIMA TRAINING AREA (JAPAN)

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

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

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

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

tensions with China are rising around the island of Taiwan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Saudis to host meeting of Muslim nations' FMs

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

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

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

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

Indian-American policy expert Neera Tanden appointed WH senior adviser

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

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

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



economic relief from the coronavirus pandemic, and from strengthening the Affordable Care Act to tackling climate change.

"Many of these bold policy solutions, which have bipartisan support from voters across the country, were developed and led by Neera at CAP over many years. The administration's efforts will be magnified with Neera Tanden on the team," Podesta added.

In March, she faced a tough time for the confirmation of her nomination as Director of the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) over her past

Kid reporter who interviewed Obama at White House dies at 23

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

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

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

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

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

China successfully lands its rover on Mars



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

AP

PTI ■ BEIJING

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

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

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

month mission in search of life on Mars' surface.

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

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

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

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CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvn.com

e-Tender Notice दिनांक: 15.05.2021

Office of the (Executive Engineer (Test), Ganga Valley, UJVNL, Haridwar), invites online bids from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below :

Tender No. - 01/UJVNL/EE(Test)/GV/2021-22

Name of work- Supply Installation Testing and Commissioning of Fixed Type On Line DC Insulation Monitoring System for Chilla Power House

Estimated cost: 78,40,698.00 + GST

Date of availability of bid document on website: 17.05.2021 (11:00 Hrs)

Last date for submission of bids on website: 17.06.2021 up to 17:00 Hrs

For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal "http://uktenders.gov.in"

Executive Engineer (Test),

"Avoid Wasteful use of Electricity"

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|---|-----------------------|---|---|
| REGD. OFFICE : 78 K.M. DELHI MILE STONE, NH-1, G.T. ROAD, VILLAGE JATTIPUR, POST BOX NO. 3, POST OFFICE SAMALKHA, PANIPAT -132103 (Haryana) CIN:- L111HR1995PLC032541 Website:www.indocotspin.com Email ID:rajpalaggarwal2000@yahoo.com, info@indocotspin.com Statement of Standalone Audited Financial Results for the Quarter/Year Ended March 31, 2021 | | | |
| PARTICULARS | 3 MONTHS ENDED | YEAR TO DATE FIGURES FOR CURRENT PERIOD ENDED | |
| | 31.03.2021 Audited | 31.03.2021 Audited | CORRESPONDING 3 MONTHS ENDED IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR 31.03.2020 Audited |
| Total Income from operations (net) | 313.72 | 816.08 | 997.37 |
| Net Profit/(Loss) from Ordinary activities after Tax | 17.25 | 4.77 | 10.64 |
| Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after Extraordinary Items) | 17.25 | 4.77 | 10.64 |
| Paid Up Equity Share Capital | 420.05 | 420.05 | 420.05 |
| Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve as shown in the Balance Sheet of Previous Year) | 17.25 | 219.15 | 214.38 |
| Earnings Per Share (before Extraordinary Items) (of Rs. 10/- each): Basic and Diluted (in Rupees) | 0.41 | 0.07 | 0.25 |
| Earnings Per Share (after Extraordinary Items) (of Rs. 10/- each): Basic and Diluted (in Rupees) | 0.41 | 0.07 | 0.25 |
| NOTE: (i) There is no qualification on the audit report for the quarter/ year ended 31st March, 2021 (ii) The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly/Year Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The Full format of the Quarterly/Year Financial Results is available on the Stock Exchange websites: www.bseindia.com , nseindia.com , www.scri.com | | | |
| For Indo Cotspin Limited Sd/- Bal Krishan Aggarwal Managing Director DIN No. :00456219 | | | |
| Place: Panipat Date: 15/05/2021 | | | |

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता

लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड, बलीदाबाजार (छ.ग.)

ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

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

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

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

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

हस्ता / -

कार्यपालन अभियंता

लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड

बलीदाबाजार-गटपासरा (छ.ग.)

R.O. No:- 60572/12

R.O. Date:- 13/05/2021

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL

HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR

Telefax :- 0194-2496089, Email Id:- xenmhchdk@yahoo.in

(Short-term)

GIST of E -NIT NO: MHCHD/TS /2021-22/20/e-tendering Dated:-12-05-2021

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited from registered/ reputed/experienced firms with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work:-

Name of Work:- SITC of Open-well Submersible Pumping Units along with allied Mechanical works for water supply at Govt. Chest Disease Hospital, Srinagar.

Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs) :- 1.45

Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees) :- 200

Time of completion (in Days) :- 05

AA Accorded Vide No :- 08-MCS of 2021, Dt: 27-04-2021

TS. NO :- MHCHD/TS15 of 05/2021

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

2. The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from **13-05-2021 (10.00 hrs). to 19-05-2021 (14:00 hrs)** in two (02) cover.

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

Sd/- Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar

No. DIPK-1587/21 Dated:- 15.05.2021

GST Council to meet on May 28

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

and other pending items.

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Power engineers body demands mass vaccination

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



IANs ■ NEW DELHI

ed sales.

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

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

Within Chronic therapies, Cardiac therapy grew 22 per cent.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

NTPC has also started vaccinating those who are in the age bracket of 18-44 at many of its plant locations. Vaccination drives have been undertaken across NTPC stations in coordination with respective state administrations. The company is running 24X7 control rooms across plants for better coordination for patients across sites which is coordinated by a special task force.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Mr. Desh Deep Chawla & Mr. Sumit Chawla were joint owners of Property No. 154, area measuring 112.50 sq. mtrs. in Block-A, Sector-48, Noida, "the said property" by virtue of Transfer deed dated 15.10.2011. Further Mr. Sumit Chawla became the owner of ½ share of his late father Mr. Desh Deep Chawla vide a mutation letter dated 21.02.2019, in the record of Noida Authority. All persons including other legal heirs of late Mr. Desh Deep Chawla are hereby informed that above mentioned owner want to sell the said property to someone who is taking loan for purchase the said property from ICICI Bank Ltd., if anybody has any objections upon the ownership of Mr. Sumit Chawla in respect of the said property to sale (Mortgage, and any kind of objection, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present. (Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants) 201, 1st Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Moti Nagar, N. Delhi-15 Ph: 011-41112827-28 kumarassociatesadvocate@gmail.com

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY
E-Tendering Tender Notice No. 19/2021
Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.) N.E. Railways Izatnagar For and behalf of president of India invites "OPEN" e-tender through on Line (E-tendering) for the following work. **S.N.: 1, Description of Works:** Zone No.1. MQP to LC No. 250A (Both In.) Chaulpa colony, Bareilly city colony, station front colony at Bareilly city. **Approx. Value:** Rs. 52,25,017.00. **S.N.: 2, Description of Works:** Zone No-I/ZN/L.C.No. 250A (Ex) to LC No.244 B (in) Station Colony, Loco sheds Station Bareilly City. **Approx. Value:** Rs. 34,85,772.00. **S.N.: 3, Description of Works:** Zone No. 3. L.C. No. 244B to BPR (Both ex.) Loco Colony, station colony, S.E./ works /P. way/Sig., ADEN/Line office/IZN, SMG Line, station colony, CBJ Line plant and colony / IZN. **Approx. Value:** Rs. 57,40,561.00. **S.N.: 4, Description of Works:** Zone No. 4. Divisional Hospital and medical colony (north of IVRI road) Izatnagar. **Approx. Value:** Rs. 49,28,974.00. **S.N.: 5, Description of Works:** Zone No. 5 Divisional office, BRI office etc. including office colony Izatnagar. **Approx. Value:** Rs. 43,26,021.00. **S.N.: 6, Description of Works:** Zone No. 6. Mech. Workshop. Including workshop administrative building and store Depot. Izatnagar. **Approx. Value:** Rs. 70,94,625.00. **S.N.: 7, Description of Works:** Zone No.7. Officers colony Road no.1 to 7 (Kaliwari) all inclusive at Izatnagar. **Approx. Value:** Rs. 87,11,938.00. **S.N.: 8, Description of Works:** Zone No. 8. Kaliwari (Ex) to New modal colony & DSL shed at Izatnagar. **Approx. Value:** Rs. 70,84,063.00. **S.N.: 9, Description of Works:** Zone No. 9. Bhojipura (Inc.) to Lalkuan (Ex.). **Approx. Value:** Rs. 59,22,550.00. **S.N.: 10, Description of Works:** Zone No. 10. Makrandpur (Ex) Ujhayani (Inc.). **Approx. Value:** Rs. 48,05,742.00. **S.N.: 11, Description of Works:** Zone No. 11. Ujhayani to kasganj (Ex.Both). **Approx. Value:** Rs. 45,68,883.00. **S.N.: 12, Description of Works:** Zone No. 12. Kasganj (In.) to MHA (Ex.) up to km.253/0. KSJ(In)up to km.417/0 and Jafan colony, Mal godam colony at Kasganj]. **Approx. Value:** Rs. 63,53,674.00. **S.N.: 13, Description of Works:** Zone No.13. Kasganj L.xing no. 310 to PTI. (Inc.) upto km. 204/0. **Approx. Value:** Rs. 38,90,700.00. **S.N.: 14, Description of Works:** Zone No. 14. PTI. (Ex.) to FGR (Ex.). **Approx. Value:** Rs. 69,20,305.00. **S.N.: 15, Description of Works:** Zone No.15. FGR (Inc.) to KLJ (Ex.) up to Km.132/0. **Approx. Value:** Rs. 52,22,384.00. **S.N.: 16, Description of Works:** Zone No.16. FGR (EX) Km.132/0 to ARL (Ex.). **Approx. Value:** Rs. 74,90,845.00. **S.N.: 17, Description of Works:** Zone No. 17. CPA (EX) up to km. 2/2 and BRT branch line to ARL(Inc.). Km.65/0. **Approx. Value:** Rs. 79,37,728.00. **S.N.: 18, Description of Works:** Zone No. 18. MHA (Inc.) Km.253/0 to MSN (Ex.). **Approx. Value:** Rs. 49,67,482.00. **S.N.: 19, Description of Works:** Zone No. 19.MSN (Inc.) to MRT up to L.xing no.357 (Inc). **Approx. Value:** Rs. 70,67,353.00. **S.N.: 20, Description of Works:** Zone No. 20. MRT up to L. xing no.357(Ex) to MTJ (Ex) including R.E. colony & Delhi Lajpat nagar officer's rest house. **Approx. Value:** Rs. 53,55,684.00. **S.N.: 21, Description of Works:** Zone No.21 Pilibhit station yard and all Pilibhit colony. **Approx. Value:** Rs. 1,15,44,000.00. **S.N.: 22, Description of Works:** Zone No. 22. Bhojipura (Ex.) to Mallani (EX.) & Pilibhit (EX.). **Approx. Value:** Rs. 43,03,000.00. **S.N.: 23, Description of Works:** Zone No. 23 PBE (Ex.) to TPU (Inc.). **Approx. Value:** Rs. 54,29,950.00. **S.N.: 24, Description of Works:** Zone No. 24. PBE (ex.) to SZP (INC.). **Approx. Value:** Rs. 26,28,800.00. **S.N.: 25, Description of Works:** Zone No. 25. MB (Ex.) to RMR (Inc.). **Approx. Value:** Rs. 88,76,100.00. **S.N.: 26, Description of Works:** Zone No. 26. LKU (Inc.) to KGM (Inc). **Approx. Value:** Rs. 99,12,335.00. **S.N.: 27, Description of Works:** Zone No. 27. Holy day home at NNT & RKT & other rail establishments of hill area under SE/works/NNT. **Approx. Value:** Rs. 43,18,057.00. **S.N.: 28, Description of Works:** Zone No. 28. LKU (Ex.) to RMU (EX.). **Approx. Value:** Rs. 80,32,273.00. **S.N.: 29, Description of Works:** Zone No. 29. Lalkuan (Ex.) to Kashipur (Ex.). **Approx. Value:** Rs. 65,14,800.00. **Note:- E.M.D. Money of S. No. 1 to 29: Rs. NIL, Cost of Tender Forms of S. No. 1 to 29: Rs. NIL, Completion time/period from the date of issue of acceptance letter of S. No. 1 to 29: 30.06.2022.**
1. Online e-tender can be submitted up to 15.00 hrs of dated 10.06.2021.
2. For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in
Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.) CPROW-28 Izatnagar
Do Not smoke Bidi/Cigarette in train

PNs ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

India to become major production hub for ACC batteries: ICEA

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

“Covid SOS aggregates verified and updated contacts

for important supplies such as medicines, oxygen, plasma donors, ambulance, hospital beds, and testing centres. With a few clicks, the platform connects users to these service providers/resources and tries to ensure that users do not have to waste precious time to access this data,” the statement said. The information available on ‘Covid SOS’ is verified by their teams,

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

Jet Airways’ annual general meeting on June 8

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

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

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

PTI

Raman alleges smear campaign against him

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



1988 and 1997.

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

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

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

Sthalekar slams BCCI over Veda's treatment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

disappointed." Bengal's wicketkeeper-batsman Shreevats Goswami, who has also had stints in the IPL besides representing the country in the U-19 level, backed Sthalekar.

Goswami said state cricket associations in India don't care about their players.

"I don't think cricket Associations caring about their players are even thought by the management in India, Mental health & communicating with players on drawing a future guide for their players doesn't even cross their mind, I can say this for domestic cricket," Goswami tweeted.

Shafali gets maiden ODI, Test call-ups

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

Sneh Rana and Indrani were two stellar performers in the National One Day competition and thus got their call-ups.

The controversial picks of the last time like Monica Patel, C Prathyusha have been dropped from the squad altogether in the team selection meeting which was keenly followed by BCCI president

Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah.

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

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

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

SQUADS

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

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

▶ shortpasses

LIFTERS TO LEAVE ON MAY 18

NEW DELHI: A two-member Indian team, including Youth Olympics Gold medalist weightlifter Jeremy Lalrinnunga, will leave on Tuesday to take part in the World Junior Championship in Tashkent from May 23 to 31.

SURINDER EYE JR SELECTOR'S JOB

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

JEJE PATROLLING RIVER

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

INDIA OFF TO QATAR ON MAY 19

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

HOLDER TO MISS INITIAL WI CAMP

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

MCKEOWN MISSES SMITH'S WR

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

MARY'S QUARANTINE OVER

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

WFI CANCEL SONEPAT CAMP

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

IPL BEST IN WORLD: RIAZ

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

OMAR BANNED FROM OLYMPICS

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

AUSSIES MAY LAND IN SYDNEY

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

Silverwood will skip Pak, SL series

Thorpe, Collingwood to take reins during busy summer

PTI ■ LONDON

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

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

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



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

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

the British media.

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

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

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

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

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

Conway warms up for India with kitty litter on pitch

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

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

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

"Basically the idea is to get the ball to sort of spit out of the rough," Conway, who has featured in three ODIs and 14 T20Is for New Zealand, told *Spark Sport*.

Kitty litter is granulated clay which absorbs waste products of pets like cat or dogs.

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

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

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

PTI



Eng IPL stars likely to miss NZ Tests

PTI ■ LONDON

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

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

Their isolation period expires at the weekend, leaving little more than two weeks before the first Test at Lord's.

"The timeline is considered too tight for the (IPL)

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

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

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

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

MOTION PICTURE



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

Bowlers were aware of ball tampering: Bancroft

PTI ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Batra in favour of conducting Olympics despite virus fears

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

"But as far as Indian athletes are concerned we are taking all necessary precautions and have been preparing to the

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

CONDOLENCE MESSAGE

Principal, staff and students of St. Jude's school, Majra and St. Thomas' College, Dehradun mourn the untimely and unfortunate demise of Adv. M. K. Kohli, a lawyer par excellence and an unmatched human being who served tirelessly for 32 years both the institutions. His passion and loyalty will forever be missed.

the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

The potency of sound

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

2



4

The tale of Ganapati

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

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



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

THE FIGHT FOR SANITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

with immense emotional turmoil of their own.

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

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

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

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

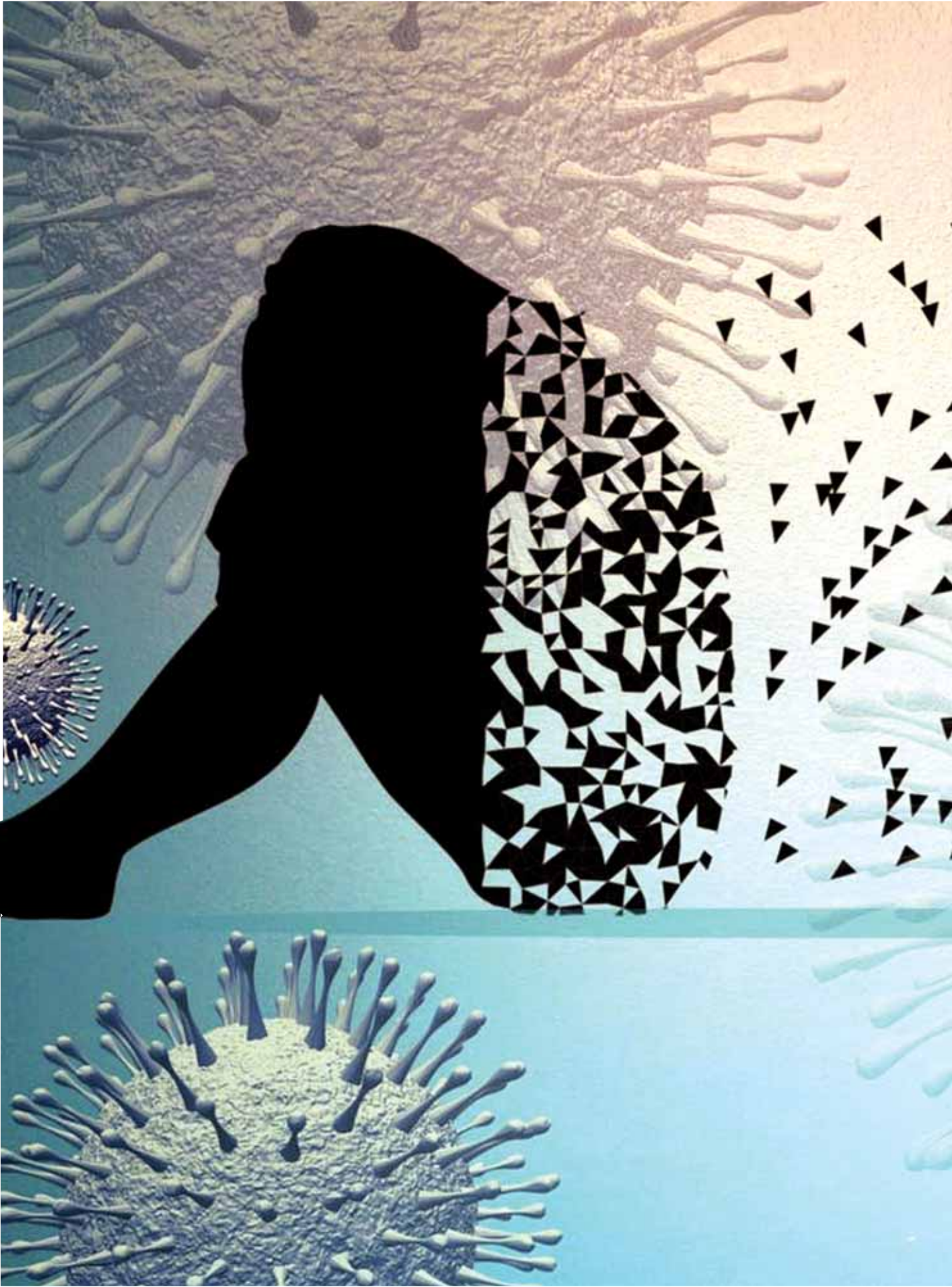
In addition to the grief and loss, there is an impending feeling of doom as over 43% of youth are uncertain about their future career prospects. Many even contemplate suicide. This darkness remains unnoticed as we are fighting to survive this situation.

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

- **Do your bit, refrain from judging self and others:** Judgment only takes us away from action thereby delaying results. Be proactive and sensitive to the battles everyone is going through.
- **Take care of yourself:** You can't pour from an empty cup. So, take care of yourself — eating habits, sleep, exercise, breathing and mindfulness practices, get vaccinated and be in the attitude of gratitude.
- **Ask:** “What can I do today to make a difference?” instead of complaining.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hawks cash in on Israel-Hamas war

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

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

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

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

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



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

AP

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

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



NIKITA RAWAT

Systemic flaws in Indian health sector exposed

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Photo: Ranjan Dimri

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lastly, gradual withdrawal of most successive govern-

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

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

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

