

**OPINION 6**  
THE MESSAGE OF  
THE PANDEMIC

**WORLD 8**  
STAMPEDE IN  
ISRAEL KILLS 45

**SPORT 12**  
MAN UTD BEAT AS ROMA  
6-2 IN EUROPA LEAGUE

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

\*Late City Vol. 31 Issue 119  
\*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY MAY 1, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3

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CHANGE IS  
INEVITABLE:  
SUNIL GROVER  
10 VIVACITY



## UP, Guj to keep May 1 jab date

TN, MP join list of States unable to launch prog for the want of vaccines

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
With just a handful of States ready to take up the 18+ category vaccination drive from May 1, the Government on Friday said the vaccination will begin on a slow pace on Saturday, but it will stabilise soon. Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat are among a few States which would undertake a limited exercise as scheduled for Saturday.

who have expressed inability and said they cannot launch the vaccination programme for the want of vaccines. Several States such as Delhi, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar have said the third-phase of the vaccination drive may not be rolled out from May 1 as they have not received doses from vaccine companies. Other States, including, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and West Bengal, have also flagged shortage of vaccines, as per reports. "States are coordinating with the vaccine manufacturers. And wherever they have coordinated with them, the drive will begin there, and it will slowly expand," Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Union Ministry of Health, said at a Press conference on Friday even as more than 2.45 crore beneficiaries have registered themselves on CoWIN digital platform for the Phase-3 of the vaccination. Delhi Chief Minister



People read a notice that states 'no vaccination for 3 days' as per BMC orders displayed outside a Covid-19 vaccination centre in Mumbai on Friday. PTI

Arvind Kejriwal too on Friday said the State has not received any doses from companies yet, and 3,00,000 doses of Covishield are expected to come in next 1-2 days. The Joint Secretary added that the Government is in touch with States, and it is working to boost production of vaccines to ensure that the inoculation drive progresses smoothly. "Those States who can procure vaccines from manufacturers can start vaccinating tomorrow (Saturday)," said the official. He also warned against "misplaced bravery" and stressed on following Covid-appropriate behaviour and treatment guidelines while saying, "We may be tired but the

virus isn't". Seeking everyone's support to manage the situation, Agarwal said "misplaced fear" was also being observed among people and urged them not to stock oxygen cylinders at home. However, the Uttar Pradesh Government has announced that Covid vaccination for 18 years and above would be launched in a phase manner starting with seven most affected districts of the State on Saturday. "UP vaccination drive above 18 years of age to start only in those districts tomorrow where active cases are more than 9,000," said additional Chief Secretary health Amit Mohan Prasad. The 7 districts where the vaccine drive will be launched are Lucknow, Kanpur, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Meerut and Bareilly. Like UP, Gujarat will also begin Covid vaccination drive for 18+ on Saturday only in 10 most-affected districts.

## Will treat Covid info gag as contempt of court: SC

**Court asks SG to convey it to all DGPs, wants free accessible vax programme**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
The Supreme Court on Friday emphasised the need for upholding of Freedom of Speech and said there can be no clampdown on citizens sharing their grievances on social media on Covid-19. Any such actions by the authorities will be treated as contempt of the Supreme Court, a Bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud and comprising Justices L Nageswara Rao and Ravindra Bhat said. The Bench directed Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to communicate this direction to all DGPs across India. "I flag this issue at the outset. We want to make it very clear that if citizens communicate their grievance on social media and the internet then it cannot be said it's wrong information. We don't want any clampdown of information. We will treat it as a contempt of court if such grievances are considered for action," Justice Chandrachud said.



A suo motu case initiated by it to examine issues relating to the management of the Covid-19 situation in the country.

During the hearing, judges frequently expressed displeasure on the rationale behind the different pricing of vaccines and suggested for uniform pricing and universal immunisation. The judges asked how poor people and people who belong to the marginalised section can access when at present vaccination registration is happening through website CoWIN only. "What happens to the marginalised and SC/ST population? Should they be left to the mercy of private hospitals," asked Justice Bhat. The Bench also said the Government must consider National Immunisation Programme for various vaccines and must think of providing free of cost vaccination

to all citizens. The top court also said that private vaccine manufacturers cannot be allowed to decide which State should get how much. The Bench reminded Centre that it has powers to control prices, citing provisions in the Drugs Act. During the argument between Centre and Delhi Government on oxygen supply, Justice Chandrachud told Delhi Government's counsel Rahul Mehra that the Supreme Court wanted to send a message to Delhi Government to adopt a cooperative approach during the human tragedy. "Please convey our message to the highest level that they have to keep politics aside, talk to the Centre. Politics is for election, at this time of humanitarian crisis each and every life needs to be taken care of," said Justice Chandrachud. The Bench also asked the Centre to ensure no local address proof of Covid-19 patients is sought by hospitals for admission. The judges said that there should be no address proof or Aadhar Card seeking during admission of a patient. First preference will be to get treats, they said. The SC will deliver short order on Saturday on Friday's hearing and asked Centre and State Governments to come with specific policies on next hearing, May 10.

## Crisis explodes: Whopping over 4 lakh cases in 24 hrs

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
India saw a new single-day high of over 4 lakh new cases and 3,521 deaths as coronavirus situation exploded in Karnataka with the States registering 48,296 new cases and 217 deaths in 24 hours till Friday midnight. Once again Kerala, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu West Bengal remained the prime driver of the nation's Covid count. Bengaluru urban alone accounted for more than 50 per cent of the cases on Friday, with 26,756 fresh infections. The day also saw 14,884 getting discharged after treatment.



Health workers check Covid-19 patients at the temporary Covid ward at Shehnaiz Banquet Hall in New Delhi on Friday. Ranjan Dimri / Pioneer

In Maharashtra, on a day when 44,000-odd Covid-19 tests were done, the test positivity percentage came down to a single digit in Mumbai, even as the bed availability went up to 5,725 in 172 hospitals across the metropolises. Mumbai Municipal Commissioner IS Chahal said on Friday: "At a time when we are doing 44,000 Covid-19 tests in the metropolises, our positivity has come down to a single digit. We are perhaps the only in India with single digit positivity with high testing...Of the new infections reported today, 85 per cent were asymptomatic." *Continued on Page 2*

## Complete failure of State: Delhi HC on Covid sufferings

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
It is a complete failure of the State," the Delhi High Court said on Friday as a group of lawyers, including Bar Council of Delhi chairman Ramesh Gupta, pleaded for help seeking medical facilities to advocates suffering from Covid-19 pandemic. The hearing witnessed breakdown of lawyers, including senior advocate Gupta, who urged the judges to come to their rescue and help them as they were not getting medical treatment. A bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli said they understood the pain which lawyers were undergoing and termed the situation as a failure of the state. "We understand your pain. We are going through the same. This surge of Covid has such a huge number...nobody could have imagined that this will

attack us in this way... Finances are not the issue here. The problem is infrastructure. The problem is we don't have doctors, nurses, attendants, oxygen and medicines. It is a complete failure of the State," the bench said, adding that, "its getting tougher for us". The court was hearing a petition seeking medical facilities for lawyers. Gupta, representing the petitioner lawyer, submitted that a private hospital has agreed to give medical treatment to lawyers but it only has oxygen beds and not ICU beds and urged the court to attach them with a hospital which can provide them critical care in case of need. He said they do not want money, they only want that in case of any emergency, medical help be provided to lawyers and they will collect more funds from their fellow advocates. *Continued on Page 2*

Covid-19 IN INDIA	
TOTAL CASES:	1,91,57,094 (+4,01,911)
DEATHS:	2,11,835 (+3,521)
RECOVERED:	1,56,73,003 (+2,98,951)
ACTIVE:	32,63,966
MAHA:	46,02,472 (+62,919)
KERALA:	15,71,184 (+37,199)
K'TAKA:	15,23,142 (+48,296)
UP:	12,52,324 (+34,372)
DELHI:	11,49,333 (+27,047)

**2nd wave five times previous peak in Rajasthan, UP**  
New Delhi: The second wave of Covid-19 is five times the previous peak in Rajasthan and UP, 4.5 times in Chhattisgarh and 3.3 times in Delhi while Karnataka, Kerala, Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Odisha are not only reporting higher peaks but also high Covid-19 case growth trajectory," the Union Health Ministry said on Friday and sought to blame the rising cases for putting strain on the country's health infrastructure. "As the rate of rise of the infection has been rapid in the second wave of the pandemic there has been an immense strain on the health infrastructure... treat the oxygen as a critical commodity," said the Government which is facing flak for poor handling of the crisis amid shortage of drugs, manpower and particularly oxygen which is leaving patients gasping for breath. P4

**Weekend lockdown in Gurugram, Fbd, 7 Haryana districts**  
Gurugram: Amid surge in Covid cases in Haryana, the State Government imposed a weekend lockdown in nine districts, including Panchkula, Gurugram, Faridabad, Sonapat, Rohtak, Karnal, Hisar, Sirsa and Fatehabad. The weekend lockdown started from 10 pm on Friday will continue till 5 am on May 3 to contain the spread of Covid-19.

## Soli Sorabjee dies of Covid

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
Eminent jurist and former Attorney General Soli Sorabjee, who appeared in several landmark Supreme Court cases like Kesavananda Bharti and SR Bommai, succumbed to Covid-19 at hospital on Friday. Sorabjee, 90, contributed immensely to the evolution of the Constitutional laws and enriched the principles of freedom of speech and human rights through his robust arguments in relevant cases before the apex court. He is survived by wife, a daughter and two sons. Sorabjee was a recipient of the Padma Vibhushan and a renowned human rights lawyer. He had also served as the Attorney General of India from 1989-90 and then from 1998-2004 during the tenure of VP Singh and Atal Bihari Vajpayee respectively. The President, the VP and the PM condoned the demise of the eminent jurist. *Continued on Page 2*

## Fake Remdesivir manufacturing unit busted, 5 arrested

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**  
The Crime Branch of Delhi Police has busted a manufacturing unit of fake Remdesivir in Uttarakhand and arrested five people. The police said a total of 198 vials of fake Remdesivir, one packing machine, 3,000 empty vials to be used in packing of Remdesivir and other packing materials of Azithromycin were recovered from the possession of the accused. The accused have been identified as Mohammad Shoaib Khan (28), Mohan Kumar Jha (40), Manish Goyal (35), Pushkar Chanderkant Pakhale (32), Sadhna Sharma (40), Vatan Kumar Saini (32) and Aditya Gautam (33). According to Monika Bhardwaj, the Deputy Commissioner of Police

## DGCA extends suspension of international flights till May 31

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
Amid Covid gloom, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Friday extended suspension of scheduled international flights till May 31, 2021. However Vande Bharat Mission and flights under the travel bubbles India has so far created — which are currently not suspended by other countries — will continue. During the second surge, about 20 countries have in the last 10 days imposed restrictions like flight suspension from India or stricter entry norms for travellers from here. Since April 15, India has been witnessing a steep rise in the number of Covid-19 cases. Scheduled international passenger services have been suspended in India since March 23 last year due to the coronavirus pandemic. *Continued on Page 2*

## Black marketeers prey on even bodies

**SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI**  
For a family to keep alive a loved one suffering from Covid-19 is a nightmare, but it's equally traumatic to arrange mortuary van to carry his body. Even to hire an ambulance to take a patient to hospital is a major challenge now. First ambulances are not available, and if you are lucky to get one, it comes at an exorbitant rent. Harish (28), a resident of Khyala area in the city, who first bought an oxygen cylinder for ₹20,000 for his father, had to pay ₹9,000 per hour to an ambulance to take him to Meerut where he was able to arrange a hospital bed. Harish is not alone who has become the victim of these "black marketeers". There are several others in the national

## Stay in touch with people to resolve issues: PM to Mins

**Govt taking all measures to overcome Covid 2nd wave: Modi**  
**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday urged his Ministers to stay in touch with people of their respective regions and asked them to ensure that local level problems related to Covid pandemic crisis are promptly identified and addressed. In the meeting, Prime Minister apprised the Council of Ministers of the measures taken by the Government to overcome the Covid second wave. The meeting noted that the present pandemic crisis is "once in a century crisis" and has thrown a big challenge for the world. "Modi said all arms of the Government are working unitedly and rapidly to deal with the situation. He also urged the Ministers to stay in touch with

people of their respective regions, help them and keep getting their feedback. He stressed upon the need to ensure that issues at the local level are promptly identified and addressed. The Council reviewed all the efforts made in the last 14 months by the Central and State Governments and the people of India," said Government in a statement. Modi said the measures being taken to further ramp up their supply and availability were also pointed out. The support measures to the vulnerable population in the form of provision of food grains and financial support to Jan Dhan account holders were also pointed out, he said. *Continued on Page 2*

**CAPSULE**

**DELHI L-G BAIJAL TESTS COVID POSITIVE**  
New Delhi: Delhi L-G Anil Bajjal on Friday said he has tested positive for Covid-19 with mild symptoms. He said he will continue to work and monitor the situation in Delhi while being isolated at his residence.

**ROSE VALLEY: ED TAKES POSSESSION OF ASSETS**  
New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate on Friday said it has taken "possession" of assets worth ₹304 crore in connection with its money laundering case in the alleged Rose Valley ponzi scam that took place in West Bengal and Odisha.

**NOIDA POLICE EXTENDS SEC 144 TILL MAY 12**  
Noida: The police in Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar on Friday extended restrictions under CrPC section 144 till May 12 citing law and order situation over counting of panchayat election votes and some festivals in the coming days, according to an order.

## Insurance scheme for frontline health workers extended for 6 months

**New Delhi:** Insurance scheme for frontline health workers has been extended for another six months, the Government said on Friday after Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a meeting to review the functioning of different empowered groups through video conference.



Capital who are paying high rates to them just to save the lives of their loved ones. In West Delhi's Punjabi Bagh area, an ambulance service demanded ₹50,000 from a kin of the Covid patients to take the body to the crematorium, just 3 kilometres away. "Since the family members of uncle, who passed away due to Covid on Wednesday, are in quarantine, we tried to arrange the ambulance but they were charging so much following which we finally took the body in our car as we cannot afford to pay such huge amount," said the kin of the deceased. "After arranging oxygen bed, just to drive from Mukherjee Nagar to GTB hospital, the ambulance driver charged us ₹8,000," said Vikrant (34), who had taken his mother to hospital in an ambulance on Wednesday. Generally, the cost of ambulance use in Delhi is ₹500 for the first 5 kms. Then the charges were ₹50-60 kms beyond 5 kms. "My 66 year-old mama, was admitted in a private hospital in Dwarka and when he died the hospital did not make arrangement for disposal of the body. We contacted authorities but received no response but in the end we hired a general ambulance at ₹20,000 to reach the crematorium to perform last rites," said Ranbeer Sharma. *Continued on Page 2*

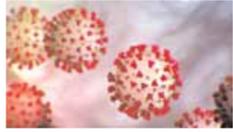
# Total Covid lockdown in Kerala likely, hints CM

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

As the number of new Covid-19 patients crossed 37,199 mark and 49 persons succumbing to the pandemic on Friday, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan hinted of the possibilities of a total lockdown in Kerala.

Addressing the media, the Chief Minister, who was in a jubilant mood in the backdrop of the exit poll results announced by certain TV channels on Thursday that gave the CPI(M)-led LDF a clear victory, asked people to strictly adhere to the weekend lockdown which will be in force on Saturday and Sunday.

"I am asking the people of the State to cancel their programmes to go out of the house for the next two days. The police have been given full authority to check each individual and vehicle that comes out to the roads and examine



the authenticity of the purpose of the outings," said Vijayan.

The Test Positivity Rate in the State as on Friday was 24.88 per cent. "There are certain districts which show unusual hike in the number of patients and the spread of the pandemic. The Government is seriously considering to declare total lockdown in such districts," said the chief minister.

Both Central and State Government offices in Kerala would function with a minimum staff as the pandemic was going out of control. Banks have been instructed to restrict their operations only through on-line and shut down the branches after 1 pm, disclosed the chief minister.

Vijayan said he had asked the health department to ensure that medical care was made available to non-Covid patients who make it to the hospitals. The Kerala Government Medical Officers' Association in a letter to the Chief Secretary had pointed out that there was a shortage of more than 1,000 doctors in the government hospitals in addition to a dearth of medical professionals. But the Chief Minister did not make any references to the concerns expressed by the doctors who had also told the Government that the health care system in the State was facing severe crisis.

From Tuesday, Kerala will see strict laws with regard to crowding of people as well as functioning of business establishments. Hotels would be allowed only to sell packed foods while the number of devotees and faithful who crowd places of worship would be restricted to 50.

# Lower positivity rate in Mumbai raises hopes

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

On a day when 44,000-odd Covid-19 tests were done, the test positivity percentage came down to a single digit in Mumbai, even as the bed availability went up to 5,725 in 172 hospitals across the metropolis.

Confirming the development, Mumbai Municipal Commissioner I S Chahal said here on Friday: "At a time when we are doing 44,000 Covid-19 tests in the metropolis, our positivity has come down to a single digit. We are perhaps the only in India with single digit positivity with high testing...Of the new infections reported today, 85 per cent were asymptomatic."

"We are slowly but surely getting out of the woods. I salute our Team BMC and also the tremendous faith shown in our Team by our chief minister," the Mumbai civic chief said.

According to the statistics released by the BMC, the positivity percentage dropped to 9.94 per cent on Thursday. The percentage dropped further on Friday.

The development came down on a day when the daily infections came down to 3871 as against the

infections of 4338 cases reported by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Thursday.

A cursory study of the Covid-19 infections reported in Mumbai reveals that while daily positive cases stood at 9242 with a positivity rate of 20.85 per cent April 1. The number of infections went up to 11,573 with a positivity rate of 21.82 per cent on April 3. The number of infections came down to 9316 with a positivity rate of 18.44 per cent on April 15.

The infections came down further to 4336 on April 25 with a positivity rate of 15.31 per cent on April 25.

With the number of tests having increased to 43,524 on Thursday, the number of infections came down to 4328. Consequently the positivity dropped to 9.94. After the authorities conducted 44,000-odd tests on Friday, the infections came down to 3887. As a result, the positivity dropped further from the earlier day's figure of 9.94 per cent.

In a related development triggered by the increased discharges from the hospitals in Mumbai, the availability of Covid bed increased to 5725, as against the total bed capacity of 21,796 in 172 hospitals

in the metropolis.

Friday's was the first occasion when the positivity rate in Mumbai dropped to single digit, ever since the second wave of pandemic broke in the metropolis two months ago.

Earlier on December 5 2020 when Mumbai was still in the grip of first wave of pandemic, the Covid-19 test positivity had come down to 5 per cent in Mumbai for the first time since March-April last year.

It may be recalled that when the Covid-19 began to spread rapidly in Maharashtra during March-April last year, the positivity rate was as high as 35-36 per cent.

According to the statistics released by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), the Covid-19 positivity which stood at 6.69 per cent on November 25 when the metropolis recorded 1272 cases, came down to 5.03 per cent on Friday, a day when the Mumbai logged 825 fresh infections. The infections came down further to 758 in the metropolis on December 5.

In all 16,394 tests were conducted in the metropolis on December 4.

# Bihar Chief Secy dies from Covid complications

Patna: Bihar chief secretary Arun Kumar Singh on Friday died because of Covid complications. The senior Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer was undergoing treatment for the disease at a hospital in state capital Patna.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who received the news during a cabinet meeting, condoled his death, an official statement said. He said the officer was an efficient administrator and his death was an irreparable loss to the administrative service.

Mr Kumar has announced that the officer will be cremated with full state honours.

Mr Singh, a 1985-batch officer, had been appointed the chief secretary of Bihar in February this year, days after the Janata Dal United formed a government in alliance with the BJP in Bihar.

He had replaced senior IAS officer Deepak Kumar. India on Friday reported highest-ever 3,498 deaths in the last 24 hours amid the more dangerous second wave of coronavirus infections. The country also logged 3,86,442 Covid cases, which is the biggest spike since the start of the pandemic. India has been recording more than 3 lakh daily coronavirus cases for several days.

The massive caseloads across the country have triggered shortages of hospital beds, medicines and life-saving oxygen. In several cities, reports of people dying because of lack of oxygen and medical care have emerged.

Bihar currently has 1,00,822 active coronavirus cases. The government's official death count figure is 2,480. Agencies

# Chinese Prez writes to Modi, offers help to fight pandemic

Beijing: Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and expressed readiness to strengthen cooperation with India to fight the pandemic and provide support and help to deal with the current surge of COVID-19 cases in the country. President Xi sent a message of sympathy to Prime Minister Modi over the COVID-19 pandemic in India, the official media here reported.

"I am very concerned about the recent situation of COVID-19 pandemic in India. On behalf of the Chinese Government and people, as well as in my own name, I would like to express sincere sympathies to the Indian Government and people," according to the message from President Xi to Prime Minister Modi.

"The Chinese side stands ready to strengthen cooperation with the Indian side in fighting the pandemic and provide support and help in this regard. I believe that under the leadership of the Indian Government, the Indian people will surely prevail over the pandemic," Xi said.

"Humanity is a community with a shared future. Only through solidarity and cooperation can countries around the world ultimately defeat the pandemic," the Chinese president said.

India on Friday logged 3,86,452 new coronavirus infections, the highest single-day rise so far, pushing the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 1,87,62,976, while active cases crossed the 31-lakh mark. The death toll increased to 2,08,330 with 3,498 new fatalities. On Thursday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi promised to do the utmost in supporting India's fight against the COVID-19 surge and said that anti-pandemic materials produced in China were entering India at a faster pace. In his letter to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Wang said that the Chinese side "shares empathy for the challenges facing India and expresses sincere sympathy." "The coronavirus is the common enemy of mankind, and the international community needs solidarity and coordination for a concerted response. The Chinese side firmly supports the Indian Government and people in fighting the pandemic," he wrote in the letter. PTI

# Crisis explodes...

From Page 1

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The Test Positivity Rate in the State as on Friday was 24.88 per cent. "There are certain districts which show unusual hike in the number of patients and the spread of the pandemic. The Government is seriously considering to declare total lockdown in such districts," said the chief minister.

Both Central and State Government offices in Kerala would function with a minimum staff as the pandemic was going out of control.

# Maha suspends use of particular Remdesivir brand after 90 patients develop side effects

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Government on Friday ordered the suspension of use of a particular brand of Remdesivir vials, after nearly 90 Covid-19 patients developed side-effects on being administered the injections in three hospitals of Raigad district in Maharashtra.

The shocking incident came to light on Thursday, after the patients — who were administered Remdesivir injections with a brand name of 'Covifor' manufactured by the company Hetero Drugs — developed chills, drop in blood pressure, fall in SPU count, varying degrees of fever or other health issues in various hospitals. Confirming the development, Maharashtra's FDA Minister Rajendra Shingane said on Friday that the state government had ordered the suspension and withdrawal of 'Covifor' brand of Remdesivir vials manufactured by the company Hetero Drugs which resulted in side-

effects in 90 patients.

In a video-statement released to the media separately, Raigad Collector Nidhi Choudhari said that he had ordered the suspension of Remdesivir vials with brand name 'Covifor' brand manufactured by M/s Hetero Drugs after he received complaints from the affected patients.

According to Choudhari, the Raigad district administration received 510 vials of Remdesivir which it distributed to various hospitals to treat the critical Covid-19 patients. "But, after we received complaints from the patients who developed side-effects, we suspended and withdrew the defective batch of vials," she said.

"The condition of all the patients is stable now. There is no cause for worry," the minister said. Pending the chemical analysis of vials from all the batches of the defective brand of Remdesivir, the State FDA ordered the doctors not to prescribe the particular brand of the life saving drug to patients.

# Maha prepared for third wave, can pay one-time cheque for 12cr doses: CM

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

With his Government having delayed the launch of Covid-19 vaccination for the people in the age group of 18-44 years owing to lack of adequate stocks of vaccines, Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray said here on Friday that it was prepared to purchase entire quantity of 12 crore doses, if it was made available the vaccines needed for the third phase of vaccination in the state.

Two days after his government announced that it would give Covid-19 vaccine free of cost to all the people in the 18-45 years' age group, but postponed indefinitely the launch vaccination programme scheduled for May 1 owing to lack of vaccine stocks, Uddhav urged the Centre to ensure increased availability of vaccines to the state.

Addressing the people across the state via video-conferencing, Uddhav said: "In all, we have six crore people in the 18-44 year age group and we need 12 crore doses if we are to give two doses each to them.

From our side, our government is prepared to purchase the entire quantity of 12 crores at one go if it is made available to us. We are urging the Centre to consider our needs and make available as many vaccines as possible so that we can tide over the Covid-19 crisis at the earliest."

"The Centre has entrusted us with the responsibility of undertaking vaccination for the people in the 18-44 years' age group. We may be having a financial difficulty, but we are prepared to purchase 12 crores of vaccines required by us at one go. For us, saving lives is more important than money. That's what we have kept the money aside for the purpose," the chief minister said.

"But, unfortunately, currently there are limited stocks of vaccines in the country. We are speaking to Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) and the government-run Bharat Biotech International Ltd (BBIL). We expect to get just 18 lakh doses of vaccines for the 18-44 years' age group during May," Uddhav said.

# Complete...

From Page 1

Gupta, who broke down while addressing the court, said, "We want my lords to come to our rescue. We do not want to criticise anyone or any government. We have Rs 4-5 crore in our funds and will arrange more from lawyers. We only want my lords to help us. Sir kuch karo aap (Sir please do something)."

The bench asked the Delhi Government to take instructions on the issue and inform it at 2.30 pm.

During the hearing, Delhi government standing counsel Santosh Kumar Tripathi also became emotional while informing the court about a lawyer friend's demise due to Covid-19 and said "daily we are losing our dear ones."

Gupta also submitted that there is a hospital in Dwarka in the name of Indira Gandhi which is under construction for last 8 years and is near completion and urged the court to arrange for 100 oxygen beds for lawyers there.

Meanwhile, an official of an oxygen refiller unit told the court that they were regularly

giving their accounts to the Delhi Government and were doing their best.

The court asked them to continue doing that and serve the society in these tough times.

"It is a war, as a society and community, we cannot let people suffer because of other's greed who are indulging in black marketing. This creates artificial scarcity. People in desperation have to buy oxygen cylinders and medicines in black. That money is of no use. We have to bring out best and not our worst at this time, the bench observed.

# DGCA extends...

From Page 1

"In partial modification of circular date 26-6-2020, the competent authority has further extended the validity of circular issued on the subject cited above regarding scheduled international commercial passenger services to or from India till 2359 hrs IST of May 31, 2021. The restriction shall not apply to international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by the DGCA," the DGCA circular stated.

Many countries, including the US, UK, Kuwait, Australia, Italy, Bangladesh, Thailand, Hong Kong, UAE, Iran, Saudi Arabia, France, Kuwait, Oman, Indonesia, and Canada have banned flights from India, citing Covid-19 cases and the "double mutant" virus being found in the country.

However, since June, the Government allowed limited operations of Air India flights under the "Vande Bharat" mission for certain categories of Overseas Citizenship of India, Persons of Indian Origin cardholders and other Indians who were stuck abroad due to the pandemic and has so far

formed air bubbles with some countries for the past one year.

India currently has a bilateral air bubble arrangement for the operation of special international passenger flights with 28 countries, including Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Canada, France, Germany, Iraq, Japan, the Maldives, Nigeria, Qatar, the UAE, the UK and the USA. The other countries with which India has such a pact are Bangladesh, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Kuwait, Nepal, Netherlands, Oman, Russia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Tanzania, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

# Soli Sorabjee...

From Page 1

Prime Minister Narendra Modi described him as an outstanding lawyer who was at the forefront of helping the poor and downtrodden through law.

Chief Justice of India (CJI) NV Ramana also condoled the

demise of Sorabjee.

"I am deeply saddened to learn about the passing of Shri Soli Jehangir Sorabjee, former Attorney General of India. In his nearly 68-year-long association with the judicial world, he made immeasurable contribution in enriching the global jurisprudence of Human Rights

and Fundamental Right," he said.

"Shri Soli J Sorabjee served the office of Attorney General of India twice with great distinction. His humane and compassionate approach defined his legal work. His body of work, spread over nearly seven decades, in defending the fun-

damental rights and human rights is of international repute. He will be remembered as a legend who added strength to the pillars of democracy. I pay my deep respect to the departed soul. Condolences to the family, friends and fans," the CJI said in his condolence message.

# Black marketeers prey on even bodies

From Page 1

"As hospital authorities are also aware of ambulance and mortuary van high rates, that is why they are not arranging the services. We were given contact number of mortuary services by the hospital following which we contacted them and they had charged us Rs 7,000 to take the dead body to crematorium," said Sandeep Kohli (46), whose 70-year-old relative died due to covid at Batra hospital near Mehrauli.

When The Pioneer spoke to an ambulance driver regarding the spikes in rates he said that there is no security for them and they can anytime we can catch coronavirus. "We too have families and this ambulance is our only source of income," said Subhash, an ambulance driver.

When asked about the charges, he said it depends upon the customer and distance. "Generally, we are charging Rs 5,000 per hour for customers going outside Delhi and in the city we are charging Rs 10,000 per 4 kms," said

Subhash.

"The ambulance service owners have created their own rate list. For ambulances with oxygen and other facilities the charges for inter-state travelling are around Rs 20,000 per hour and for general ambulance they are charging Rs 5,000 per hour," said Sanket Mishra, who recently used ambulance service to get his uncle admitted in Haryana's Jhajjar from Delhi.

"I paid Rs 15,000 in advance while when we reached here in Jhajjar hospital we paid Rs 25,000 more to the ambulance driver. Life is important and that is the reason we paid this amount," said Mishra.

"Whether it is an oxygen cylinder or ambulance, one has to pay double rates to avoid the service to save their loved ones. After failing to get a bed for my 46-year-old sister, Sunita, in hospital, bought an oxygen cylinder in black at Rs 28,000 through a friend. It took three days to arrange the cylinder," said Vijay Dhiman, a resident of Rohini.

# Stay in...

From Page 1

"It was also noted that India could successfully produce two vaccines and there are many candidates at the various stages of approval and induction. More than 15 crore vaccinations have been done as on date. The council of Ministers also stressed the importance of Covid appropriate behaviour - wearing a mask, keeping the physical distance of 6 feet, and washing hands frequently," said the Government.

The Council reiterated that the participation of society is a key aspect to accomplish the gigantic task ahead and expressed confidence that the country will rise to the occasion and defeat the virus.

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CMC/BY/21-22/RB/PM/10	Providing Photography & Video Recording Services for Enforcement department in BYPL	₹ 1.41 Crore	₹ 2.82 Lakh	24.05.2021 15:00 HRS	25.05.2021 02:30 HRS
CMC/BY/21-22/RB/PM/11	Providing Various Activities at Enforcement Department in BYPL	₹ 7.48 Crores	₹ 7.48 Lakh	24.05.2021 15:00 HRS	25.05.2021 03:00 HRS
CMC/BY/21-22/RB/PM/12	Providing Meter Reading and Bill Distribution services for various offices of BYPL	₹ 26.72 Crores	₹ 26.72 Lakh	24.05.2021 15:00 HRS	25.05.2021 03:30 HRS
CMC/BY/21-22/RB/PM/13	Mobile Cleaning and Upgrade the Hygienic Condition of Various Offices of BYPL	₹ 7.00 Lakh	₹ 1.40 Lakh	24.05.2021 15:00 HRS	25.05.2021 04:00 HRS
CMC/BY/21-22/RB/PM/14	Providing Pull / Push SMS and SMTP Relay Services in BYPL	₹ 55.00 Lakh	₹ 1.10 Lakh	24.05.2021 15:00 HRS	25.05.2021 16:30 HRS

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# Don't rush to vaccine centres today, wait for info: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Friday said it will not launch the vaccine drive for those between 18-44 years from Saturday. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal urged people not to visit any centres as of now because this may deteriorate law and order situation and breach Covid-19 appropriate behaviour.

"I appeal to all citizens to not queue up at vaccination centres before our announcement as this might lead to violation of social distancing and create a law-and-order situation, we have not yet received the vaccines from the compa-



nies. It is hoped that the vaccines will arrive in a day or two, following which, we will begin the drive," Kejriwal said.

According to officials, the national capital will receive three lakh COVIDHIELD vaccines in next two-three days.

"The Delhi administration is in constant touch with the companies, we have two vaccines -- COVISHIELD and

COVAXIN -- both the companies have been urged to render 67 lakh doses each within three months," Kejriwal added.

On the behalf of its administration, CM Kejriwal assured Delhi residents that the official announcement will be made about the vaccination drive. "Once we get the vaccines, we will make an official announcement, following which, only those who are registered and given appointments are to come to the vaccination centres. I request everyone, not to rush. Everyone is to be inoculated and preparations have been made for the same," Kejriwal said.

Appealing to the masses for

their support by following Covid19 protocol, Kejriwal said with everyone's support, we can complete the vaccination process within the next three months.

"This is a humongous exercise and to execute this herculean task is a massive challenge. This can only be completed with everyone's support. Ergo, it is a request to not crowd the vaccination centres in the coming days. Each and every person will be vaccinated. The Central Government and the Delhi Government are working together, and only once all of us are on the same page, can we be guaranteed of success," he added.

## Govt hospitals to hire medical staff

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government's health and family welfare department has issued an order pertaining to augment the assistance staff in Covid-19 hospitals. According to the order signed by Ashish Chandra Verma, Officer on Special Duty (OSD), (H & W), the medical superintendent of covid-19 Government hospital now allowed to recruit medical manpower to manage critical corona patients.

As per the order released

on April 29, the honorarium per day shift is between INR 15,000 to 800 for different posts from specialists, MBBS to nursing students based on the qualification eligibility criteria.

The order which has been approved by the Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, stated, "In supersession of previous orders issued and exercise of power - DMA -2005, Medical Directors/

Medical Superintendent/ Directors of all Covid hospitals of GNCTD are allowed to augment the capacity to manage critically ill

patients at the remuneration indicated against each post under sector of Disaster Management Act -2005."

Further, the specialists with post graduate qualification will get 15,000 honorarium per day, consultant (MBBS) - 6000 per day, intern/nursing students/dental ayush - 4000 per day, nurse/ANM - 2000 per day and security, nursing students and guard will get 810 and 800 per day.

The order further stated the medical directors / superintendent /directors of all covid

hospitals of government of NCT of Delhi are directed to requisition, medical manpower to augment the capacity to manage the critically ill patients initially for three months, if required.

Meanwhile, Sisodia reviewed the status of oxygen supply in hospitals. "The crisis still persists and shall continue till we get sufficient quantity of supply. Not for a single day has Delhi been able to receive the allocated quantity of 490 MT oxygen. Every day is an SOS situation for Delhi," he tweeted.

## Five held for making forged Covid test reports

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested five people for allegedly making forged Covid-19 test reports in south Delhi's Malviya Nagar.

The accused have been identified as Pragyanand Sharma (24), Himanshu Sharma (24), doctor Manish Kumar (32), Satender (26) and Nikhil (22).

"On Thursday, a police control room (PCR) call was received at the Malviya Nagar Police Station in which the caller told police that some persons at Genestrings Lab, Malviya Nagar, were making fake coronavirus test reports," said the senior police official.

According to the complainant Vipul Saini, a resident of Khirki Village, he along with 45 of his relatives gave samples for Covid-19 testing to Himanshu and Pragyanand.

On Sunday, Rishab Shukla, a friend of Saini, also gave his sample for testing to the accused duo. The test reports stated that Shukla was Covid positive, but he did not have any symptoms. On Wednesday, he gave his sample to another

laboratory where he tested negative for the infection, police said.

"On Thursday, Saini along with Himanshu and Pragyanand went to the Genestrings Lab and found that the report of Shukla was not in the records of the laboratory," said police.

"Admitting to their crime, Himanshu said he along with his cousin Pragyanand, used to collect home samples and give them to Manish, working in Genestrings Lab, without making any entry in the records of the laboratory," said the senior police official.

"Manish used to share the results with Pragyanand through excel sheets and then Pragyanand would print the results on the fake letter head of Genestrings Lab," said police official.

Responding to the development, Chetan Kohli, COO, Genestrings Diagnostic Center, Malviya Nagar said, "After being approached by few patients to authenticate reports bearing our lab's name, we found out that they were not issued by us nor tested at our lab.

## Two arrested for selling O2 cylinders at exorbitant rates

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested two men in west Delhi's Paschim Vihar for allegedly selling oxygen cylinders at exorbitant rates.

The accused have been identified as Vinay Kumar and Kewal Singh. Police said that the duo used to procure oxygen cylinders from Faridkot in Punjab and sell them at higher rates.

According to a senior police official, police got a tip-off that Kumar and Singh would arrive in Paschim Vihar in an ambulance on Friday following which a police team was tasked to nab them.

"Both the accused were arrested. Six oxygen cylinders were seized and the duo used to charge Rs 28,000 to 35,000 for one oxygen cylinder," said the senior police official.

Earlier On Wednesday, the Delhi Police arrested two men for allegedly black-marketing oxygen cylinders from west Delhi's Punjabi Bagh area.

## Helpline number launched to address needs of kids in distress

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Rising to meet the challenge of children facing distress during Covid-19 pandemic, the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR) has launched a helpline number +91-9311551393 to address the needs of children in any distress during the pandemic.

Anurag Kundu, Chairperson, DCPCR said, "Children are the most vulnerable in these testing times as they remain dependent on others to provide for them. The helpline is receiving numerous cases wherein a child has lost all sources of support and is in need of immediate care. The Commission is committed to resolving all such cases in less than 24 hours."

DCPCR intervenes within 24 hours on all the SOS calls on the Helpline.

These include medicines for the children, or essential supplies of food, shelter, clothing, etc, the DCPCR said in a statement.

## SDMC refutes charge of using dog crematorium to cremate bodies

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After reports surfaced in the media that the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) is using dog crematorium to cremate bodies died of Covid-19, the civic body refuted the charges saying that it has no dog crematorium in south Delhi.

"We have 4-acre land in Dwarka Sector 29. There is a dog sterilisation centre on the right side of it. There is no dog crematorium anywhere on that land. In fact in whole of South Delhi, SDMC has no dog crematorium," the civic body said in a statement.

The civic body said that pyres are being constructed in the areas so that the deceased can be given dignified last rites. This centre will be used only when capacity of all other Covid crematoriums are exhausted, it said.

## AAP MLA Shoab seeks President's rule in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In view of the exponential surge in Covid-19 cases, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Shoab Iqbal on Friday demanded imposition of President's rule in Delhi.

AAP MLA from Matia Mahal, who had left Congress and contested the Delhi Assembly polls last year on AAP ticket, claimed that neither him nor the Government is able to offer any help to the people affected by the second wave of Covid-19.

In a video message released by the MLA, he said, "I feel embarrassed being an MLA since I cannot be of use to anyone, our Government is unable to stand with the people. Despite being a six-time MLA, there is no one to listen to (me) and I cannot contact anyone."

Iqbal urged the Delhi High Court to impose the President's rule in the national capital with immediate effect for three months. "Delhi is in a very bad

**He also demanded that a strict check be kept on those selling Covid19 medicines to control black of drugs and its use in hospitals too should checked**

situation, I request the Delhi High Court for imposition of President's rule in Delhi with immediate effect otherwise there will be dead bodies across the city," the AAP MLA said.

"I feel like crying, I have lost my sleep. People are desperate and unable to find medicines and oxygen. I cannot help even a friend who is in hospital without oxygen and medicines," he said.

Reacting to this, Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta said that shortage of hospital beds, medicines and oxygen has reached its peak and we fear

that the health services in Delhi might collapse by the time Covid19 peaks around 8th May as anticipated by experts.

Gupta further said that the sentiments expressed by Iqbal accepting collapse of health infrastructure and demanding imposition of president rule in Delhi may have come from his mouth but few other ruling party MLAs too are likely to follow.

He demanded that a strict check be kept on those selling Covid19 medicines to control black of drugs and its use in hospitals too should checked.

The national capital on Thursday had recorded 395 deaths due to coronavirus, the highest since the pandemic began a year ago, and 24,235 cases with a positivity rate of 32.82 per cent, according to a bulletin issued by the city health department.

This was the eighth day in a row that Delhi had recorded over 300 deaths due to COVID-19.

Ministry of Culture  
Government of India

NATION SOLEMNLY COMMEMORATES

# 400<sup>th</sup> PARKASH PURAB OF SRI GURU TEG BAHADUR JI

1<sup>st</sup> May, 2021

Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Ji was blessed with utmost courage and remarkable compassion. He devoted himself to building a society that is kind, progressive, just and inclusive. People across the world are inspired by his noble ideals. We bow to him on his 400th Parkash Purab. - Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

davp 09101/13/0008/2122

# Covid-19 surge strains health infra: Ministry

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The second wave of Covid-19 is five times the previous peak in Rajasthan and UP, 4.5 times in Chhattisgarh and 3.3 times in Delhi while Karnataka, Kerala, Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Odisha are not only reporting higher peaks but also high Covid-19 case growth trajectory," the Union Health Ministry on Friday sought to blame the rising cases for putting strain on the country's health infrastructure.

"As the rate of rise of the infection has been rapid in the second wave of the pandemic there has been an immense strain on the health infrastructure... treat the oxygen as a critical commodity," said the Government which is facing flak for poor handling of the crisis amidst shortage of drugs, manpower and particularly oxygen which is leaving patients gasping for breath.

"The doubling of Covid-19 cases has also been rapid, which should ease if the turnover time reduces," Joint Secretary (Health) Lav Agrawal said even as he asked the states to treat the available oxygen as a critical commodity and undertake an oxygen-consumption audit at all hospitals, including private ones, amid a shortage of the life-saving gas in several parts of the country.

From the start of the pandemic, the Government had identified oxygen-supported

## THE MINISTRY ALSO SAID COVID-19 SUSPECTED WARD SHOULD BE CREATED IN HOSPITALS

beds as major clinical interventions, Agrawal said at a press conference here even as he enlisted various measures taken by the Government to boost oxygen supply.

The Government had procured 1,02,400 oxygen cylinders at the national level in April-May 2020 and distributed those among the states while the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has issued instructions for fixing the price of liquid medical oxygen.

Agrawal said 162 pressure swing adsorption (PSA) plants of 154-MT capacity each have been sanctioned across the country. Of these, 52 plants are already installed, 87 have been delivered and work to commission these plants at the earliest is on. The PSA plants can enable hospitals for in-situ generation of oxygen.

Agrawal said the states have been allotted 8,593 MT of oxygen. "An order for 1,27,000 oxygen cylinders was placed on April 21 and the deliveries are expected to start in a couple of

days. These include 54,000 jumbo cylinders (D type) and 73,000 regular cylinders (B type). Additionally, 551 PSA plants have been sanctioned to be implemented by the Union health ministry. These plants will be installed in different public health facilities," he added.

The States have been advised to ensure a rational use of oxygen, prohibit abnormal use by monitoring non-closure of valve during no-use, stop unnecessary oxygen administration to patients who may not require it clinically and for monitoring private health facilities that indulge in pushing oxygen cylinders as part of home-based Covid care packages, Agrawal said.

The Ministry also said that Covid-19 suspected ward should be created in hospitals and all those patients who have symptoms but do not have test results should also be admitted to hospitals.

"Most deaths being reported by Maharashtra, Delhi... The second wave trends have been similar, the world over... We need to focus on vaccination," the Ministry said.

On the import of oxygen, the union health ministry said, "So far orders for 200 MT oxygen has been placed on SSB Cryogenic Singapore, 1,800 MT on Gulf Industrial Gases, Abu Dhabi, and 1,500 MT on Ultra Pure Gases being sourced from abroad."

# CRPF HQ closed till Monday for sanitisation of two buildings

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The CRPF on Friday decided to close its headquarters and another office at RK Puram due to unprecedented rise in number of Covid infections and for sanitisation of the entire premises of these two buildings. The offices will remain closed till Monday.

"In view of unprecedented rise in number of Covid-19 positive cases in Directorate General, CRPF and rapid rate of infection in Directorate, the entire building of Directorate General, CGO Complex and all branches located at RK Puram, New Delhi will be sanitised/disinfected on 01/05/2021 to 02/05/2021 as per the protocol and directions of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW)," reads the order issued on Friday.

The order said the Assistant Commandant (Line) of the Directorate General will ensure that all the indoor areas such as entrance lobbies, corridors, staircases, lift, security guard rooms, office rooms, meeting/conference room, canteen (wet & dry) should be mopped with disinfectants. For sanitization, the detailed guidelines for disinfecting indoor areas of buildings as per the Union Home Ministry guidelines issued last year will be followed.

"The Competent Authority

has further decided that Directorate General will remain closed on 03/05/2021. All the officers and personal will work from home on 03/05/2021. However, Inspectors General or in his absence the senior most Deputy Inspectors General of the concerned branches may detail any officers/officials to attend office on 03/05/2021 to attend urgent nature and unavoidable office work," it further said.

The CRPF headquarters at the CGO Complex and its offices in RK Puram will reopen on Tuesday.

The move comes amid raging Covid-19 cases in the national capital, virtually crippling the medicare infrastructure as well as crematoriums in the city.

As many as 18,070 CRPF personnel have contracted Covid-19 disease till now including 161 cases in the last 24 hours. Of this, 16,416 personnel have been cured and 94 patients have succumbed to the disease. Presently, 1,560 cases continue to be active in the CRPF ranks.

The Central paramilitary forces have recorded 63,910 cases of coronavirus infection till so far of which 56,849 infected personnel have been cured and suffered 231 casualties. As many as 6,828 cases continue to be active in the various paramilitary forces.

# T'gana Govt gets nod to use drones for delivery of vaccines

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Civil Aviation Ministry and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Friday permitted the Telangana Government to use drones for experimental delivery of vaccines within the visual line of sight. The Ministry's statement does not mention which particular vaccine will be part of this experimental delivery.

Drones in the country are allowed to be used within the visual range, and agencies have to seek special permission from the Civil Aviation Ministry for conducting trials beyond the visual line of sight.

The ministry on Twitter said it has granted conditional exemption to the Telangana government from the Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Rules, 2021, for "conducting experimental delivery of vaccines using drones within the visual line of sight range". The drone usage permission has been granted for conducting experimental delivery of Covid-19 vaccines within Visual Line of Sight (VLOS) Range using drones. This exemption will be valid for a period of one year or until further orders, it noted. These exemptions shall be valid only if all conditions and limitations as stated for the respective entities are strictly adhered to. Trials will also assist in assessing conditions such as population, degree of isolation, geography etc to identify regions

## Earlier, drones have been utilised to carry blood samples of a patient from Dehradun to a village in Tehri Garhwal

that specifically require drone deliveries. The Telangana government has in March 2021 sought an exemption from UAS Rules 2021.

Earlier, drones have been utilised to carry blood samples of a patient from Dehradun to a village in Tehri Garhwal.

On April 22, the ministry had permitted the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to conduct a feasibility study on using drones to deliver COVID-19 vaccine.

The civil aviation ministry and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) have granted permission to the Indian Council of Medical Research to conduct trials for delivery of COVID-19 vaccines using drones a few days ago. The ICMR will conduct the feasibility study in collaboration with IIT Kanpur for which permission has been granted for one year.

India is struggling with the second wave of the coronavirus infection as hospitals in several states are reeling under a shortage of medical oxygen and beds.

# Capsule-based smell test may help diagnose Covid-19: Scientists

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A new capsule-based smell test may help in the rapid diagnosis of various diseases linked to the loss of smell such as Covid-19, scientists say.

The test has been found to be easy to use in patients with Parkinson's disease, and could also be helpful in diagnosing COVID-19 in the broader population, according to the study published in the journal Royal Society Interface.

The researchers at Queen Mary University of London in the UK noted that small tests have the potential to support the diagnosis of certain neurological conditions, including Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

However, these tests are not widely available, expensive, and take too long to administer in routine healthcare settings, they said.

To address this problem, the team developed a novel smell testing kit which uses capsules of aromatic oils placed between two strips of single-sided tape.

To take the smell test, the capsules are simply crushed between the fingers and the tape strip peeled to release the aroma contained within the capsules. Based on a person's ability to recognise these smells, a score would be generated that can be sent to their doctor if they are experiencing a loss of smell.

"Our capsule-based smell test can assist in the rapid diagnosis of various diseases linked to the loss of smell," said lead researcher Ahmed Ismail from Queen Mary's School of Engineering and Materials Science.

"These include chronic neurological conditions such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease, as well as COVID-19, which is known to affect the sense of smell," Ismail said.

Being non-invasive and less stressful, the capsule-based smell test has benefits over the nose swab in diagnosing COVID-19, according to the researchers.

This is an advantage for testing children in particular, as they are typically horrified if they need to do a nose swab, and the test can be done in the comfort of their own home, they said.

The study showed that, in a small group of eight patients with Parkinson's disease, the smells from the tests were detectable.

The participants also cited the relative ease in the process of rupturing the capsules, particularly for those with tremors, compared to the standard scratch and sniff smell test available on the market.

"Most of the smell tests on the market depend on using paperboard items treated with a fragrant coating called scratch and sniff, in which you need to scratch a card to release the odour," Ismail added.

"The problem with this approach is that the amount of odour released depends on the extent to which the individual scratches, something that might affect the outcome of the test," he explained.

The new capsule-based smell test does not have this problem because the amount of odour released is controlled by the amount of oil precisely encapsulated, the researchers said.

# IAF makes 150 sorties in two days to ferry O2 containers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Increasing the tempo of its operations to fight the corona pandemic, the IAF in the last two days carried out more than 150 sorties ferrying oxygen containers and medical supplies.

As part of the ongoing effort, the IAF on Friday also flew supplies to Lucknow to set up a hospital for Covid-19 patients there. "The Indian Air Force (IAF) is continuing to carry out sorties from within India and abroad to cater to the requirement of oxygen in the country, amid the current COVID-19 situation," said the defence ministry.

Giving details of the last few days, they said on Thursday the IAF carried out 23 sorties from abroad, airlifting 39 oxygen containers with 670 metric tonnes of capacity, while from within the country, it carried out 124 sorties, airlifting 87 containers with 1,798 metric tonnes capacity.

On Friday, the IAF airlifted eight oxygen tankers from Singapore to the Panagarh airbase in West Bengal. "Two C-17 aircraft are airlifting eight oxygen tankers from Singapore to Panagarh. The task is in progress," an official statement noted.

The IAF is also conducting



multiple domestic flights to transport oxygen tankers and oxygen plant equipment within the country. Two oxygen tankers each were taken from Chandigarh to Bhubaneswar, from Agra to Ranchi, Gwalior to Raipur, Indore to Surat and from Chandigarh to Ranchi, and one from Vadodara to Ranchi on Friday.

Moreover, six oxygen tankers were taken from Hindon to Ranchi, two were taken from Jodhpur to Jamnagar and two from Mumbai to Bhubaneswar.

The transportation of oxygen tankers from one place to another within India was done with the help of the C-17 aircraft, the statement added.

"An IL-76 aircraft is airlifting three oxygen plant equipment from Delhi to Dimapur and Army load of 15.3T with 53 medicos for set-

ting up of COVID hospital at Lucknow," it noted.

In a related development, a 57 member Naval Medical Team consisting of four doctors, seven nurses, 26 paramedics and 20 supporting staff was deputed to Ahmedabad. The team will be deployed at the 'PM Cares Covid Hospital', a special hospital set up to manage the Covid crisis.

As part of its efforts to fight the pandemic, the Navy launched Operation Samudra Setu-II for shipment of oxygen-filled Containers to India.

Mission deployed Indian Naval warships will undertake shipment of liquid Oxygen filled cryogenic containers and associated medical equipment in support of nation's fight against COVID-19.

Two ships INS Kolkata and INS Talwar have entered port

## In a related development, a 57 member Naval Medical Team consisting of four doctors, seven nurses, 26 paramedics and 20 supporting staff was deputed to Ahmedabad

of Manama, Bahrain\* for embarking and transporting 40MT of liquid oxygen to Mumbai. INS Jalashwa is enroute to Bangkok and INS Airavat to Singapore for similar missions.

Meanwhile, the Army on Friday stepped in and eased the oxygen shortage in Agra to some extent by repairing a non-functional oxygen plant there.

A technical team from the Army on April 27 identified a big crack and several leakages in the air separator unit. Over twelve hours, the team dismantled and welded all the cracks.

Another critical component was required to generate oxygen. An Air Force aircraft flew in the component from Ahmedabad on the midnight of Thursday. Further process to fit the component and make the plant operational was completed on emergency basis and the plant made fully operational by midnight on Friday, officials said. The plant is expected to fill over 1,500 oxygen containers.

# Don't take Covid symptoms in kids lightly, suggests Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Don't dismiss as viral fever if your kid is having symptoms like fever, cough, breathlessness/shortness of breath, fatigue, myalgia, rhinorrhea, sore throat, diarrhea, loss of smell, loss of taste etc. S/he might be suffering from coronavirus, said the Union Health Ministry which has for the first time admitted that kids too can catch Covid 19.

Some children may also have gastrointestinal symptoms. Such children do not need any investigations. These children can be managed at home with home isolation and symptomatic treatment. Children with symptoms can be treated at home, as per the protocol for management of the pandemic in paediatric age group issued by the Ministry in the wake of studies that second wave of Covid-19 is not sparing the children also.

As per the Ministry, the majority of children with coronavirus infection may be asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic, moderately sick or severe illness.

According to the Ministry, asymptomatic children are usually identified while screening and they do not require any treatment except monitoring for development of symptoms and subsequent treatment according to assessed severity. Children with Inflammatory



Syndrome had mild Covid-19, Shows US Study.

"Parents/ caretaker are required to maintain a monitoring chart including counting of respiratory rates 2-3 times a day when child is not crying, looking for chest drawing, bluish discoloration of body, cold extremities, urine output, oxygen saturation monitoring (hand held pulse oximeter) if feasible, fluid intake, activity level, especially for young children. Doctors or health care workers should be contacted regularly," as per the guidelines.

It said that children with moderate COVID - 19 disease may be suffering from pneumonia which may not be clinically apparent and respiratory issues. In this case no lab tests are required routinely unless indicated by associated comorbid conditions.

Regarding treatment, the

protocol says that children with moderate Covid-19 disease should be admitted in Dedicated Covid Health Centre or Secondary level Healthcare Facility and monitored for clinical progress. Maintain fluid and electrolyte balance. Encourage oral feeds (breast feeds in infants); if oral intake is poor, intravenous fluid therapy should be initiated.

The guidelines give in detail about the vitals to be observed and medicines to be given during fever. In the case of the children with Severe Covid-19 disease, the protocol does not rule out severe pneumonia, Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome, Septic Shock, Multi-organ dysfunction syndrome (MODS), or pneumonia with cyanosis. Clinically, such children may present with grunting, severe retraction of chest, lethargy, somnolence, seizure.

# ED seizes ₹304 crore assets in chit fund case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has taken possession of movable and immovable properties worth ₹304 crore of Rose Valley Group of companies in a chit fund related money laundering case.

The case under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) was recorded against Rose Valley Group of companies in which it was found that the Group companies had collected huge amount of money from the gullible public by floating various fake and fictitious schemes and defaulted in the repayments. Investigation under PMLA has revealed that several properties in West Bengal, Odisha, Tripura, Assam, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and others States were acquired in the name of various companies of Rose Valley Group, by illegally diverting the funds collected from the public.

After investigation, the ED had attached the properties found to have been acquired from the proceeds of crime (amount collected by way of selling fake and fictitious schemes) and the orders of provisional attachment of said properties were confirmed by the Adjudicating Authority (PMLA), New Delhi, it said.

The ED had also filed its prosecution complaints (chargesheets) against the Group companies and its directors before the Special PMLA Court here.

A special drive was undertaken by Kolkata Zonal Office-II of the ED for taking possession of the properties of Rose Valley Group of companies, throughout West Bengal, Tripura and Odisha under PMLA which resulted in taking over possession of 412 movable properties amounting to ₹47 crore and 426 immovable properties amounting to ₹257 crore.

# Field commanders get power to set up Covid hospitals

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to speed up efforts to fight the corona pandemic, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday granted emergency financial powers to field commanders to set up and operate quarantine facilities and hospitals besides procuring related equipment.

Moreover, the Cantonment Boards all over the country are maintaining 40 general hospitals with 1,240 beds and have thrown open these facilities to the civilians as well as the residents of the military stations.

Giving details of the defence minister invoking special provisions, officials said here he granted Emergency Financial Powers to the Armed Forces to empower them to meet the current Covid-19 situation in the country.

These powers will help Formation Commanders to establish and operate quarantine facilities, hospitals and



undertake procurement, repair of equipment and items besides provisioning of various services and works required to support the ongoing effort against the pandemic.

Under these powers, Vice Chiefs of Armed Forces including Chief Of Integrated Defence Staff and General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C) and equivalents of all three services have been given full powers, whereas Corps Commanders/Area Commanders have been delegated powers up to ₹50 lakh per case and Division Commanders and equivalents have been delegated powers up to ₹20 lakh per case.

These powers have been devolved initially for a period of three months from 1st May to 31st July 2021. These are in addition to the emergency powers delegated to the Medical Officers of the Armed Forces last week.

As per the order, emergency financial powers were delegated to Director General Medical Services (Army/Navy/Air Force), head of Medical Branches at Formation/Command Headquarters of Army/Navy/Air Force/Andaman & Nicobar Command and Joint Staff including Command Medical Officers of Navy and Principal Medical Officers of Air Force (Major General and equivalent/Brigadiers and equivalent).

The delegated financial powers are as follows. DGMS (Army/Navy/Air Force) - ₹500 lakh, Major General & equivalent - ₹300 lakh, Brigadier & equivalent - ₹200 lakh.

As regards the contribution of the Cantonment Boards, officials said presently 39 Cantonment Boards (CB) are maintaining 40 general hospitals with 1,240 beds.

The CB hospitals at Pune, Kirkee and Deolali with 304 beds have been designated as dedicated Covid hospitals. Cantonment General Hospitals (CGHs) of Kirkee, Deolali, Dehuroad, Jhansi and Ahmednagar have been designated as Covid care centres with 418 beds. A dedicated Covid health centre at Dehuroad is ready and would become functional soon, while ICU facility with six beds is being set up at CGH, Kirkee. Oxygen support is available in 37 CBs and presently they have a stock of 658 cylinders.

These measures were taken after Rajnath held review meetings on 20th April and again on 24 April and directed the Armed Forces and various other establishments of his ministry to extend all possible assistance to the civilian administration to tide over the present situation. He underlined that people look up to the Armed Forces in times of crisis as they have great hope and trust in them.

# Sorabjee fought for fundamental rights

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Eminent jurist and former Attorney General Soli Sorabjee, who succumbed to Covid-19 at a hospital here on Friday wrote several books on laws and justice, press censorship and the Emergency, and stood for democratic values. He had vehemently fought against human and fundamental rights violations.

In one of the major court battles in recent times, relating to fundamental right violations was the Shreya Singhal case in which the Supreme Court in 2015 agreed to his submissions and struck down a provision in the Information Technology Act relating to restrictions on online freedom of speech and expression.

The apex court held that section 66A was unconstitutional as being violative of freedom of speech guaranteed under the Constitution, the argument put forth by Sorabjee. Considered close to Vajpayee, Sorabjee had led India's fight before the International Court



of Justice (ICJ) when Pakistan sought compensation from India for downing of their naval patrol aircraft Atlantic in 1999 just after the Kargil war.

The ICJ at the Hague ruled in India's favour after taking note of Sorabjee's submissions and dismissed Pakistan's plea for compensation, saying it had no jurisdiction over the matter. He also appeared and worked for the Citizen's Justice Committee which represented anti-Sikh riots victims. Born in a Parsi family in 1930, Sorabjee enrolled at the bar in 1953 and was designated senior advocate by the Bombay High Court in 1971. He served in the legal domain for close to seven decades.

Sorabjee was appointed by the United Nations as a Special Rapporteur for Nigeria in 1997 to report on the human rights situation in that country.



Ashok Gehlot, Chief Minister



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 The beneficiaries of the National Food Security Act and Socio-Economic Census-2011 are not required to register. They will continue to receive benefits as before.

Those who have registered till 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021, will be covered under the Scheme starting from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021.

Those families who register till 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021, will avail benefits of the Scheme from the date of registration.

Those who register after 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021 will avail benefits of the Scheme from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021.

Free registration at E-Mitra Kendra

There is no restriction on the size of family and income limit, for the Scheme.

Government personnel are not required to register under this scheme as RGHS is being implemented by the State Government, on the lines of CGHS.

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\*The State Government shall bear the premium amount of the Scheme for the beneficiaries of the National Food Security Act and Socio-Economic Census-2011, small and marginal farmers, contract workers, helpless and destitute families who received an ex-gratia amount by the State Government for COVID-19 last year. Besides the above categories, all other families can avail benefits of this Scheme by paying an annual premium of Rs. 850 only.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## A free rein

The Governments must stop their machinery from harassing people they consider a thorn in the flesh

The COVID-19 surge has exposed the bitter social and economic divide that has existed in India for centuries and which still persists despite tall claims by the so-called stakeholders of our democracy. Some recent events in the pandemic era amply highlight this sad truth. The District Magistrate (DM) of West Tripura, Sailesh Kumar Jaday, is in the news for barging into a banquet hall and disrupting a wedding ceremony to enforce the COVID-19 protocol. The DM acted as a law unto himself, disregarding the fact that due permission had been taken to host the wedding. The errant official apologised only because the ruling party MLAs demanded his scalp after a public outcry. Shift to Bihar, and a Minister's son holds a big fat wedding with hundreds of guests in attendance making a mockery of the strict guidelines issued to contain the surge of Coronavirus. The lack of sensitivity to the suffering of the common citizen also found a reflection in the way policemen reportedly snatched an oxygen cylinder from a person who kept pleading with the cops to let him take the cylinder to save his dying mother. There are myriad versions of the Agra story with the unifying theme that the cops snatched the cylinder from the wailing person who fell at their feet. Compare this to the treatment meted out to India's powerful personalities who can walk into any hospital where beds are reserved for them



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

# The message of the pandemic

Elements of Nature like water, air, fire, plants and animals sustained our existence but an exploitative approach is recoiling on humankind

The report of the World Health Organisation-appointed team of international researchers that visited Wuhan, China, in January-February 2021 leaves one in no doubt that the COVID-19 virus originated from animals. Submitted on March 30, 2021, it described as "extremely unlikely" the possibility that the virus had leaked out from a laboratory in Wuhan. While saying that the virus had most probably travelled from one animal to another before afflicting humans, it also examined the possibility of the virus travelling directly to people from the original host animals or from the supply chain of frozen or refrigerated foods.



Animals and plants are parts of Nature. The question arises whether the COVID-19 virus, now in its devastating second coming in India, is fundamentally a part of humankind's growing conflict with it. Like global warming, it is part of Nature's counter-offensive against our relentless, colonial exploitation of almost every aspect of it, not for just survival but even luxuries. It would have been different otherwise. To quote Mahatma Gandhi's famous observation: "The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed."

A failure to recognise this and confining oneself to an instrumental response to the pandemic would not — even if it succeeds — prevent another major or similar calamity from striking us. The instrumental response is, doubtless, critically important in its consequences in the present instance and, equally without doubt, has been grossly inadequate. There has been an obvious failure to anticipate the fearful extent and ferocity of the current surge — if not the very advent. As has been said, a major problem here has been insufficient knowledge about the virus and the dynamics of its mutations and spread. Hence, some part at least of the response has been on the basis of the knowledge of previous virus outbreaks. However, lockdowns and measures like curfew and

other restrictions on movement, while providing some breathing space in the interim, cause substantial economic damage and social disruption in the form of events like the return of migrants.

While this is the best that could be done under the circumstances, matters have been made worse by the inadequate administrative action leading to acute shortages of vaccines, oxygen cylinders, beds in hospitals and intensive care units, ventilators and cremation facilities. This has been the result of complacency and inadequate prioritisation of the fight against COVID-19. Particularly unfortunate has been the role of the Election Commission of India. It should not have spread out the elections in phases, which extended campaigning over weeks in West Bengal and increased the time span of the resultant spread of infection.

This might have had a less disastrous impact had the ECI disallowed, from the beginning, the holding of large rallies and insisted that both those attending and addressing the ones permitted, wore masks. Realising that neither of these was happening, it should have, after due warning to all con-



THE QUESTION ARISES WHETHER THE VIRUS, NOW IN ITS DEVASTATING SECOND COMING IN INDIA, IS FUNDAMENTALLY A PART OF HUMANKIND'S GROWING CONFLICT WITH IT. LIKE GLOBAL WARMING, IT IS A PART OF NATURE'S COUNTER-OFFENSIVE AGAINST OUR RELENTLESS EXPLOITATION

cerned, banned the holding of mammoth gatherings. It did nothing of the sort. It is perhaps not a coincidence that the ban on the holding of victory rallies came after the Madras High Court had lambasted its role in contributing majorly to the spread of the present surge.

The ECI had either not realised the implications of its decisions or was under pressure to do what it did. It is unbelievable that the former was the case; a person with minimal common sense would have known. Nor can the latter, if it has happened, be an excuse. It had a responsibility to resist pressure and act independently. In either case, its conduct has left much to be desired.

Be that as it may, the question of humankind's relationship with Nature remains. Its own spiritual and biological attributes, and emergence and evolution in the matrix of Nature, had made its conflict with the latter inevitable. As to the former, MN Roy points out in the second of his *Twenty-two Theses of Radical Democracy*, "Quest for freedom and search for truth constitute the basic urge of human progress. The quest for freedom is the continuation, on a higher level — of intelligence and emotion — of the biological struggle for existence."

Elements of Nature like water, air, fire, plants and animals sustained human existence; those like floods, cyclones, droughts, fire, wild animals and diseases threatened it. Humans survived by achieving mastery over, and harnessing, natural forces, to achieve ever-increasing levels of comfort and luxury. In the process — lip service notwithstanding — it has come to regard Nature as something to conquer and exploit. The COVID-19 pandemic is a result of its abuse of animals.

Individual liberty is important. Modern democracies, however, emphasise that harmonious social existence requires the imposition of some consensual limits on it to maximise freedom for all. The concept has to be extended to Nature, and human activities that damage it beyond the minimum needed, disallowed. No doubt non-human constituents of it, like animals, devour one another and/or plants. They, however, do not play the kind of havoc that humans do.

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

### PICTALK



Renowned sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik creates a sand sculpture for public awareness, in Puri

PTI

## Double standards

What's the logic for allowing the Kumbh Mela last month but suspending the Char Dham Yatra now?

As the Centre and States come in for stringent criticism for being caught napping when the pandemic's second wave hit the country and the subsequent mismanagement of the situation, the Uttarakhand Government has announced the suspension of the Char Dham Yatra. Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat said the gates of the four Himalayan temples — Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri — would open on May 14 as scheduled, but only for the priests. Though it is heartening that yet another super-spreader event has been averted, what is saddening is that the Government didn't do this on its own accord. The decision came a day after the Rawat Government was castigated by the Uttarakhand High Court (HC) for mishandling the outbreak. The court said, and rightly so, that the State had become a "laughing stock" by allowing the Kumbh Mela to take place in the midst of a raging pandemic. To its credit, the HC has been trying to make the Government see sense and repeatedly taking it to task over its irresponsible decision to continue with the yatra in the midst of a highly contagious outbreak, calling it "frightening".



One only wishes that had such better sense prevailed on the Government earlier, it would have stopped the Kumbh Mela even before it began. Because, make no mistake, the Kumbh was as much a super-spreader as the Assembly polls. Daily COVID cases saw a 6,000 per cent increase between March 1 and April 22 in poll-bound Bengal and a 450 per cent spike between April 1 and April 17, when the Kumbh congregation dispersed. Why is it that our leaders, who certainly should know better, have to be forced by either the judiciary or the PMO to take decisions that should come to them naturally? Are our representatives so short of common sense or is it that political considerations take precedence over the well-being of citizens? What else can explain the local body elections in Uttar Pradesh and Telangana which will also turn out to be super-spreaders. If the Madras High Court thinks that the Election Commission officials should be "booked for murder" for the spiralling Corona cases in the poll-bound States, then what about the Uttarakhand CM? When everything is shut, as it ought to be, what is the justification behind holding the Kumbh, the Assembly polls and the local body elections? Shouldn't the CMs of such States also be "booked for murder"?

### COMPASSION RULES THE HEARTS

Sir — It is heartening that a couple has donated 100 new electric fans for COVID-19 patients at the Government Medical College and ESI Hospital in Coimbatore by pledging their jewellery. The greatest part of this news is that the good samaritans want to remain anonymous. This is one of the rarest of rare gestures stemming from the compassion and love the couple have in their hearts. With hospitals barred from using air-conditioners during the pandemic, the donation would be of great help to the patients. The couple reached the hospital with a truck carrying 100 fans. However, hospital authorities tried to turn down the donation after learning that the couple had pledged their gold ornaments. They finally relented after assurances from the couple that they were not in dire need of money.

However, contrary to the above selfless service by the anonymous couple, it is shocking that Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Minister Umesh Katti told a farmer-activist enquiring about food grain allotment to "go die", following it up by saying that it is a "good time for farmers to die". When a Minister does not have empathy, the least to do is to throw him out of the Cabinet. The last time Katti courted controversy was in February, when he declared that the families with televisions and two-wheelers should surrender their Below Poverty Line cards or face action. It's plain shameful.

Tharcisus S Fernando | Chennai

### NATION MOURNS SORABJEE'S DEATH

Sir — The dreaded Coronavirus has now snatched away from us a passionate human rights lawyer, former Attorney General and Padma Vibhushan recipient, Soli Jehangir Sorabjee (91). Country's twice Attorney General, first in 1989 and then from 1998 to 2004, Sorabjee was always in the forefront of defending the fundamental rights and human rights. He was involved in many landmark Supreme Court (SC) cases and argued for free speech and press freedom, limiting the police power of the State and a vibrant democracy protected from over-

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Hats off to Dabhalkar



It refers to the editorial 'The real heroes' (April 30). It gives us immense confidence and strength when we read about the sacrifice made by Narayan Dabhalkar of Nagpur. We must be proud of him. In these trying times when some anti-social elements are finding opportunity in disaster and exploiting the sorry state of affairs, there are some great souls like Dabhalkar who work in the interest of humanity even if it comes at cost of their own life. The sacrifice made by the octogenarian, who voluntarily gave up his bed at the hospital when he saw a woman pleading to get her 40-year-

old COVID-positive husband admitted, is no mean feat. "I am 85 years old. I have lived my life. But if that woman's husband dies, then the children will be orphaned. So it is my duty to save that person's life," he said. However, he died at home three days later. No words are enough to praise what RSS volunteer Dabhalkar has done.

In the same vein, Mumbai-based businessman Ketan Rawal, who has provided his vanity vans to the Mumbai Police free of cost for ferrying the frontline healthcare workers and taking care of them, merits a great deal of appreciation. Besides, the good samaritans of Ludhiana sending free home-cooked food packets to the COVID patients as well as organising "oxygen langars" also deserve applause. Let's doff our hats to these noble, selfless souls who are doing real service to the mankind and have saved humanity by their selfless service and sacrifice from behind the scenes. RIP, honourable Narayan Dabhalkar!!

Azhar Ali Khan | Rampur

### UNIFORM PRICING POLICY FOR VACCINES

Sir — This refers to the editorial, 'Mayday! Mayday!' (April 30). The moot point remains that the Governments have failed to rein in the black marketeers of medical oxygen and medicines when their demand is sky-high. The way more than 1.33 crore

people registered on the Arogya Setu app and Co-WIN portal to participate in the vaccination drive from May 1, shows how keen the youth are to get vaccinated. There is also a great risk of contracting the virus among the youth in the age group of 18-44 years.

The pandemic's second wave has jolted the healthcare sector. However, the central and State Governments are working hard to save the lives of their citizens by utilising all the resources available. At this crucial juncture, curbing the shortage of oxygen, medicines and other equipment should be the priority of the Government, police and administration. The differential prices of vaccines put a question mark on the Government's policy. Making the prices uniform is not only in the favour of the citizens but also of the Government.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

## SOUND BITE

All arms of the Government are working unitedly and rapidly to deal with the situation.



Prime Minister — Narendra Modi

I encourage the member States to develop and implement national action plans on antimicrobial resistance, strengthen regulation of antimicrobials, improve knowledge and awareness.

UN General Assembly President — Volkan Bozkir

Change is inevitable. When films started coming, people thought that maybe the audience for plays would be affected but theatre has continued. Eventually, social media came and now we have OTT. With time, people adapt to evolution.



Actor — Sunil Grover

Australian players could accompany Indian and English players to the UK and go to Australia from there.

RCB batsman — Glenn Maxwell

Let the roads be empty on May 2 but our hearts overwhelm with joy over the election victory.



DMK president — MK Stalin

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

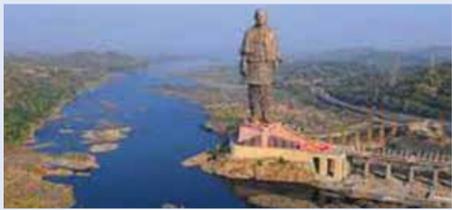
### SIX DECADES OF DEVELOPMENT

Today the word 'Gujarat' has become synonymous with development



NILESH SHUKLA

On May 1, 1960, Bombay State was dissolved and split on linguistic lines into the two States of Gujarat, with a Gujarati speaking population and Maharashtra, with a Marathi speaking population. The creation of an independent State of Gujarat was a triumph of the Mahagujarat movement, also known as the Mahagujarat Andolan, which was a political movement demanding the creation of a separate State for Gujarati-speaking people from the bilingual Bombay State since 1956. Ever since then, Gujarat has not looked back. Over the last six decades, Gujarat has not only emerged as a key player in boosting the economy of our country but also been a hub of tourism, industrialisation and innovation. The State has also produced a number of prominent national leaders and exceptional personalities such as Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Morarji Desai, Homi Bhabha, Vikram Sarabhai, Jamsetji Tata, Dhirubhai Ambani, Narendra Modi and Sunita Williams, to name a few.



Gujarat has become the growth engine of India today. However, when it was separated from Bruhad Mumbai and came into existence as an individual State, there were many challenges in front of the then leaders of Gujarat. There was no cultivable land and water and electricity facilities were almost absent in the State. The entire infrastructure needed to be developed to fulfil the leaders' goal of making Gujarat a progressive State. It was due to the collective efforts of the leaders and the people that Gujarat reached the pinnacle of success.

In the six decades since its formation, Gujarat has transformed into 'Vibrant Gujarat' and has become a model State of India. Gujarat has created its unique identity in the world with its good governance, people-oriented administration, holistic development, peace, security and public welfare policies.

Gujarat has achieved phenomenal growth in each sector. Today, with business-friendly policies and an environment that fosters the 'Ease of Doing Business (EODB)', Gujarat has become one of the top ten industrial States of India. Gujarat is number one in attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and received the highest FDI worth ₹1.58 lakh crore during April-December 2020. Gujarat has successfully attracted investments in the automobile sector and is emerging as an automobile manufacturing hub. The rapid industrial growth in the State has enabled it to reduce its unemployment rate and Gujarat has the lowest urban unemployment rate of 3.4 per cent.

Gujarat has also achieved a high growth rate in the agricultural sector and its irrigation area has doubled with the advent of the Narmada canal. As a result, agricultural production has increased manifold and today, Gujarat ranks first in the country in groundnut production, with a 40 per cent share. With various farmer-oriented schemes like the 'Krishi Mahotsav', the 'Drip Irrigation scheme', '7 Steps of Farmer Welfare' and the 'Kisan Suryodaya Yojana' Gujarat is leading in agricultural development and the prosperity of farmers. With the Sardar Sarovar project, the 'Sujalam Sufalam Jal Abhiyan' and the 'SAUNI Yojana', Gujarat has become a water surplus State from a water deficient one. Besides, Gujarat has become the front runner among the top seven performers in the nationwide 'Jal Jeevan Mission' and more than 80 per cent households of Gujarat are getting potable water through taps. The State is taking a significant step towards transforming sea water into potable drinking water and establishing a desalination plant at Mandvi.

It has been 60 years since the State of Gujarat was established, and today the word 'Gujarat' has become synonymous with development. Under a decisive leadership Gujarat is set to create a 'New India' through a 'New Gujarat.'

(The writer is Joint Director, Information, Gujarat Bhawan, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)

# Need to grasp SME capital budgeting

Conducive policies have to be framed not only to provide funds to small firms but also to help them in the management of cash resources



HIMA BINDU KOTA

The lifeline of any business is finance. The allocation and usage of funds — technically known as capital budgeting — is one of the most important strategic decisions of any business. But is this decision different for small firms as compared to large ones? The allocation of capital in small enterprises is often more important than in large firms — given their lack of access to capital markets — as the funds necessary to correct a mistake may not be available. Also, big firms allocate capital to numerous projects, so a mistake in one can be offset by success in others.

While capital investment is a relevant area for small firms, the majority of studies conducted during the past four decades have focused on the capital budgeting decisions of large enterprises and similar evidence does not exist for small organisations. Therefore, little is known about the capital budgeting practices of small businesses. Given the proportion and importance of small companies in economies the world over and their constant motivation for more efficient use of resources to remain competitive, there is a definite need for information on the methods used by small firms to accumulate and allocate their scarce capital.

The Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sector is the backbone of any growing economy and is recognised as the engine of growth — accounting for about 70 per cent of employment and significantly contributing to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The contribution of this sector can be seen from the statistics provided by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) which shows that it contributes about 6.11 per cent to the manufacturing GDP and 24.6 per cent to the GDP from services. Further, it has a 45 per cent share in the overall exports from India and provides employment to around 120 million people. It manufactures more than 8,000 diverse products, ranging from low-tech items to technologically-advanced ones. Globally, 99.7 per cent of all enterprises in the world are SMEs and the balance 0.3 per cent are large-scale enterprises.

The SME sector in India accounts for 95 per cent of all industrial units. Since this sector is critically important for any economy, proper financial management is of utmost importance for its survival. It is a known fact that financial problems are often a major cause for the failure of small businesses. The two major problems, undercapitalisation and the difficulty in getting external finance support, are often related to poor fiscal management. Poor and in some cases lack of proper financial record-keeping close the avenues of small firms to avail from traditional lending sources as these businesses cannot demonstrate their financial viability.

Many SMEs in the start-up phase, underestimate the cost of operating a business and thus fail to manage the cash flow and the amount of operating capital required. Several studies have attempted to establish the existence of the association between SME performance and specific financial practices. The evidence suggests that successful financial performance by SMEs have a positive association with effective management of financial matters, such as planning, maintenance of financial records, obtaining external finance, professional finance advice and other factors.



THERE EXISTS A GAP BETWEEN EDUCATION, GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND THE REAL BUSINESS WORLD. THE TRADITIONAL BUSINESS EDUCATION MOSTLY FOCUSES ON FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF LARGE FIRMS. HOWEVER, THE MAJOR FOCUS HAS TO NOW SHIFT TO FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF SMALL BUSINESSES

The writer is Associate Professor at Amity University, Noida. The views expressed are personal.



nance of financial records, obtaining external finance, professional finance advice and other factors.

The capital budgeting theory is based on certain assumptions like maximisation of shareholders' wealth by investing in all positive Net Present Value (NPV) projects and rejecting those with negative NPV; and access to perfect financial markets, allowing it to finance all value-enhancing projects. However, applicability of these assumptions to small firms may be doubtful. The separation principle, that states that investment decisions can be made independent of shareholders' tastes and preferences, does not hold for closely-held and small businesses. Under the NPV technique, the projects are accepted if the NPV is positive, that is, if the cash outflows are less than the present values of future cash inflows discounted at the firm's cost of capital. However, since shares of small firms are not readily marketable, market determined discount rates are inappropriate in small businesses. One of the most important differences between capital budgeting for large and small companies is that in the former decisions can be made independently of stockholders' view but in the latter, it is essential that owners be involved in the decision-making process.

Small firms also face difficulty in raising funds from the capital markets. In fact, shortage of equity and long-term funds con-

tinue to halt the growth of SMEs in the country. In addition, research shows that small companies are not able to access bank loans because of their information-opaque and lack of strong banking relationships.

Furthermore, for some small enterprises, it is impossible to raise funds through a public issue and for others it may be prohibitively expensive. The above-mentioned cash constraints encourage the small enterprises to maintain sufficient cash balances to be ready for any potentially attractive investment opportunity.

Although the SME sector contributes to the overall economy in a major way, over the past four decades financial research has limited itself to understanding the capital budgeting techniques preferred by large organisations and studied the usage of sophisticated tools like NPV, Internal Rate of Return (IRR), Profitability Index (PI) and easy tools like payback.

In a research conducted on 333 small firms in India, it became evident that small businesses in the country employ less sophisticated methods to analyse potential investments than those recommended by the capital budgeting theory. In particular, survey results show these firms use Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) analysis less frequently than "gut feel", payback period and accounting rate of return.

Although 46 per cent of the respondents have advanced professional degrees, they may not be financially literate and their small management team may not be competent enough to undertake a capital budgeting analysis. Additionally, employing an outside consultant to implement the DCF techniques may prove to be a costly affair for small firms.

Since the capital projects are relatively smaller in size, it may not be economical to sustain the cost of analysing them. This suggests that small firms with small projects may be making sense when they depend on less sophisticated techniques or on the owners' "gut feel". Since small firms are concerned with basic survival, they tend to be cash-oriented and therefore may emphasise on payback methods.

Small business owners are also not comfortable in making forecasts beyond the immediate future since they face greater uncertainty in cash flows and capital budgeting.

There exists a gap between education, Government policies and the real business world. The traditional business education mostly focuses on financial management of large firms. However, the major focus has to now shift to financial management of small businesses. In addition, conducive policies have to be framed not only to provide funds to small firms but also to help them in the management of funds.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

DELHI IS ON FIRE. HAS ANY DELHIITE SEEN THE DELHI BJP? WHERE IS THE BJP IN DELHI? OR HAS THE STATE BODY BEEN DISSOLVED?  
—RSS DELHI STATE EXECUTIVE MEMBER  
RAJIV TULI



OUR FOCUS IS ON HELPING PEOPLE IN THIS HOUR OF CRISIS. WHAT ANYONE IS SAYING ON A PERSONAL LEVEL IS NOT THE OFFICIAL OPINION OF THE SANGH.  
—RSS LEADER  
SUNIL AMBEKAR

# Busting the myth of a failed meritocracy

At a time when quality employment has dried up and there is growing inequality, we need to scrutinise the elitist foundations of meritocratic ideals and policy

Ever since Michael Young coined the term 'Meritocracy' in his brilliantly dystopian portrayal in 'The Rise of Meritocracy' in 1958, it has become a leading social ideal of our times. Meritocratic standards gave us the promise of breaking down established hierarchies of privilege. Meritocracy has been seen as an instrument of upward social mobility as it promises an even playing field — rewarding talent, ability, effort and hard work, thereby downplaying the role of one's social position and wealth as determined by the lottery of birth. However, in reality, it has become a smokescreen for inequality favouring the elite in contemporary times.

Meritocracy has been the top agenda of political parties across the spectrum for decades since people find it the most convincing way to achieve an



DIPAYAN PAL

The writer is founder, covidaidindia.in and a post-graduate student at IIT Gandhinagar. The views expressed are personal.

egalitarian society. When we ruminate about meritocracy as the best alternative way for a community to function, we also must consider that merit largely depends on one's socio-economic status, gender and family. Merit is a product of privilege and has taken the shape of "neo-inheritance." Wealthy parents pass their privilege to their children. In the old-world order, people inherited wealth, which allowed them to produce more wealth; in the current system, parents have to have succeeded at the human capital game to concoct their child's human capital to be competitive.

Research has shown that children of meritocratically successful parents always have an edge in building skills that will allow them to succeed in life since the elite get their children admitted to the best educational institutions, which

were seen as passports to the best jobs and elite positions.

This "hereditary meritocracy" has given rise to this new "meritocratic aristocracy." Thus, it takes the form of a vicious cycle in which educational accomplishments and wealth reinforce each other from one generation to the next.

People often speak about "equality of opportunity" as the big Indian aspiration. But having anything close to equal opportunity would require a severe radical re-engineering of our society from top to bottom as access to resources remains a fundamental issue. As long as there are significant wealth inequalities, there will be colossal differences in children's opportunities. The place where an individual is born, the community they grew up in and the institutions they attend shapes them. The wide disparities in every sphere of life are consid-



erably evident in the Indian context. Suppose a child had miserable primary schooling, no matter which institution s/he later attends, s/he won't be able to do the best because of the poor foundation. No matter what admissions criteria are set, affluent children will unequivocally have the advantage. If we focus on entrance examinations, parents will pay for extra-tutoring and entrance preparation courses. If we con-

centrate instead on "holistic" or "all-round" qualities. Certainly, wealth always confers a greater capacity to proffer privileged children the edge over other people's children in terms of opportunities and resources. If we want anything resembling a "meritocracy" in the truest sense of the term, we would probably have to start by institutionalising full egalitarian communism.

Not just opportunities, "old boys club" of elite networks as a form of lobbying in upper echelons (closed-door policies) and absence of professors from marginalised communities in leading academic and research institutions in India (despite having constitutionally mandated affirmative action policies) show the deep-embedded flaws in the system.

We have divided our society into winners and losers where the cost of even coming

second is unfortunately too high. In fact, in the popular sitcom 'Breaking Bad', being brilliant at chemistry was not enough to guarantee mainstream career progression or survival.

These structural inequalities present in the system further deepen class consciousness (as education reinforces class lines) wherein the elite fail to feel the wind of privilege as they believe they are entitled to their privilege, and those born into disadvantage are convinced they have themselves to blame for their inadequacy to overcome the sizeable barriers to social mobility.

The elite, plagued by their insecurities perpetuate this as it licences them to view themselves as productive geniuses offering moral assurance and personal flattery. Recent research in neuroscience and psychology suggests that

"believing in meritocracy makes people more selfish, less self-critical and even more prone to acting in discriminatory ways."

Still, people find the notion of meritocracy appealing. It carries with it the idea of moving beyond where you start in life. However, the ideal has failed. We all need to acknowledge these deep structural inequalities and that everyone in this world does not have the same starting point. At a time when quality employment has dried up, and there is growing inequality, we need to scrutinise the elitist foundations of meritocratic ideals and meritocratic policy practice bringing about reforms like equalising education to ensure that the system is just and fair, where everyone gets equal opportunities to flourish, achieving social mobility and social solidarity in the long run.

# Stampede in Israel kills 45

## 150 others injured at Jewish religious festival



Israeli security officials and rescuers stand around the bodies of victims who died during Lag B'Omer celebrations at Mt. Meron in northern Israel on Friday.

**PTI ■ JERUSALEM**  
At least 45 people were killed and over 150 others injured after a stampede broke out at a religious festival attended by tens of thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel, medical officials said on Friday, in what Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called a "terrible disaster" and promised a thorough probe into the

country's worst peacetime tragedy. The mass gathering was organised to celebrate the Lag B'Omer, an annual religious holiday marked with all-night bonfires, prayer and dancing, at Mount Meron. The town is the site of the tomb of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, a second-century sage, and is considered to be one of the holiest sites in the Jewish world.

Tens of thousands of ultra-orthodox Jews participated in the tragic event on Thursday night at the tomb of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, making it the largest event held in Israel since the coronavirus pandemic broke out last year. A preliminary police investigation revealed that some of the attendees slipped on the stairs, creating a "human avalanche" that crushed mem-

bers of the crowd. Prime Minister Netanyahu called the incident "a terrible disaster," promised a thorough investigation, and said that Sunday would be declared a day of national mourning. "We will carry out a thorough, serious and in-depth investigation in order to ensure that such a disaster does not recur. I would like to declare Sunday as a day of national mourning. Let us all join in the grief of the families and pray for the wellbeing of the injured," he tweeted.

"I must also point out that there was quick rescue work here by the police, the rescue and security forces, and we are profoundly grateful to them; they prevented a far worse disaster," he said after visiting the site. President of Israel Reuven Rivlin lit 45 memorial candles at the President's Residence in memory of the victims. "In memory of the 45 people who lost their lives in the Har Meron disaster. May their memories be a blessing," he wrote in a tweet. Israel recently eased mask-wearing requirements in open areas and other restrictions after the success of a massive vaccination drive that significantly brought down coronavirus-related cases.

# Myanmar poverty could double: UN report

## Disruptions following coup could undo years of progress: Report

**AP ■ BANGKOK**



female heads of household," Kanni Wignaraja, the UNDP's assistant secretary-general for the region, told *The Associated Press* via a Zoom recording. The Feb 1 coup wrested power from the elected govern-

700 have died in the violence. Many factories, offices, banks and other facilities have closed and trade has been disrupted by work stoppages and other disruptions at ports, economists and others familiar with the situation inside Myanmar say. That has worsened already bleak conditions due to the pandemic, which have caused people affected to lose an average of about half their wages. The UNDP said conditions could deteriorate by early 2022 to a level of poverty last seen in 2005. A more optimistic assessment would require a rapid end to the political crisis, which looks unlikely.

# NORTHERN RAILWAY

## Walk-in Interview for Contractual Engagement of Para-medical staff over Lucknow Division

### ENGAGEMENT OF PARAMEDICS FOR COVID 19 MANAGEMENT

1. A Walk-in Interview for contractual engagement of Para-medical staff over Lucknow Division Northern Railway under Divisional Hospital, Lucknow has been scheduled. The period of Re-engagement / Contract will be purely on temporary basis.
2. Applications in prescribed performa along with all requisite documents (as mentioned in Point 7.4) from eligible candidates are invited on following email ID : lucknowparamedical@gmail.com  
**Last date for application is 06-05-2021**
3. The details regarding posts, vacancies, eligibility is as follows :

Sl. No.	Name of post	Vacancy	Minimum Qualification	Age Criteria for contractual employee	Pay
1	Nursing Superintendent	20	Educational : Candidates should possess certificate as Registered Nurse and Midwife having passed three years course in General Nursing and Midwifery from a school of Nursing or other Institution recognized by the Indian Nursing Council or B.Sc (Nursing).	20 - 40 years	Pay 44900/- + DA & other admissible allowances as per rules.

**Note :** The Indian Nursing Council has also laid down certain special concessions for the above courses in respect of Auxilliary nurse - Midwives, Midwives and 'B' Grade Nurses, by way of reduced course period, etc. Candidates obtaining the qualification prescribed above, under these concessions will also be eligible for recruitment.

4. The age limit specified should be as on 01-05-2021 and in case of re-engaged employee the age criteria is that they should be below age of 65 years during period of engagement.
5. Age relaxation will be given to candidate belonging to SC/ST/OBC category as per extant rules.

Date and Time of Walk in Interview	Venue
08-05-2021 10.00 AM onwards	Online

**Note :** Interview may be conducted through electronic media. Candidates will be provided with a link for interview on registered mobile number.

6. **REMUNERATION :**  
In case of re-engaged staff, remuneration is guided by existing railway policy. For contractual staff it will be guided by railway board letter No.2017/trans/01/policy/12-04-2018
7. **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT**  
7.1 The engagement is purely on contractual basis. The service rendered as Re-engagement / contract of para-medical staff is an arrangement for meeting up the requirement of the pandemic situation and it will not confer any right for automatic regularization / absorption in any circumstances. The Para-medical Staff who enter into contract / Re-engagement with the Railways will not have any claim over his/her continuity in service or automatic extension of the term contract / Re-engagement. The Railway administration has full right reserved to discontinue Contract / Re-engagement at any stage.  
7.2 All other terms and conditions as laid in Railway Board's letter No.EING/2005/RC-4/SC/2 dated 31-03-2020 and others as mentioned from time to time shall be binding upon the Para-medical staff.  
7.3 After selection of Para-medical staff, the names of the remaining candidates who appeared in the walk in interview will be kept on waiting list and in event of any vacancy arises in future will be filled by these candidates.  
7.4 Candidates who fulfill above terms and conditions and having requisite qualification should be present on scheduled date, time and venue (ie online) and must be in possession of requisite documents.  
1) Date of Birth proof  
2) Educational qualification (Degree & marks sheets)  
3) Experience certificate / NOC certificate (if already working)  
4) Caste / PWBD certificate (in case of candidate belonging to reserved / PWBD community)  
5) ID proof  
6) Passport size photograph - 06  
7.5 The above mentioned hiring is for a period of 6 months from the date of engagement or upto 30-09-2021 whichever is earlier, unless extended by further orders.  
7.6 The detailed rules of contractual engagement will be given to staff concerned in event of their selection.
8. **TERMINATION OF CONTRACT :**  
During the period of contract either party (the Para-medical staff or Railway Administration) is free to terminate the contract on 15 days' prior notice. In case the Para-medical staff is found physically or mentally invalid or incapacitated the contract can be terminated forthwith. However if Para-medical staff leaves without notice or before completion of 15 days' notice, he/she shall be liable to pay the amount for the required period as per prevailing rates.

### Application form for Walk-in-Interview for engagement of Paramedical Staff

1. Whatsapp Mobile No.....
2. Name (in block letters) .....
3. Father / Husband's Name (in block letters).....
4. Permanent address .....
5. Postal address (with alternate mobile no. if any) .....
6. Date of birth .....
7. Age as on 01-05-2021 (\_\_\_\_ Days \_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_ Years) .....
8. Category to which belongs i.e., SC/ST, OBC, UR (Please write \_\_\_\_\_) .....
9. Nationality .....
10. E-mail address .....
11. Educational / professional qualification .....
12. Experience, if any (Please attach documents) .....
13. Self-attested scan copy of the following documents required to be sent along with this form  
A. Certificate indicating Date of Birth (High School / Equivalent certificate)  
B. Certificate in support of caste in case of SC/ST & OBC issued by the appropriate authority.  
C. Pension Payment Order (PPO) in case of retired Railway doctor and Retired / State Govt. Doctors only.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby declare that all details are given by me in this application are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that in the event of any information given herein being found false or incorrect or in the event of misstatement or discrepancy detected at any stage before or after my engagement, my contract will be terminated and I will be liable for civil or criminal legal action. I understand that I am not eligible for any TA/DA for this interview. I am bound with all rules, regulation and instruction of Railway Board regarding the Paramedical Staff at any stage.

**Place :** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of the candidate**

# US pushes ahead with nuclear plans despite watchdog concerns

**AP ■ ALBUQUERQUE (US)**

The Biden administration appears to be picking up where former President Donald Trump left off as the federal agency that oversees US nuclear research and bomb-making has approved the conceptual design and cost range for infrastructure investments for a multibillion-dollar project to manufacture key components for the nation's nuclear arsenal. The National Nuclear Security Administration in a decision announced Wednesday stated that planning and construction could cost upwards of \$4 billion initially. The agency did not articulate what exactly that money would be spent on nor does it

include the cost of other preparations that would be needed for Los Alamos National Laboratory to begin producing 30 plutonium cores per year. The push to resume production of the nuclear triggers has spanned multiple presidential administrations, with supporters arguing that the US needs to ensure the stability and reliance of its arsenal given growing global security concerns. The nuclear agency also has said most of the cores in the stockpile date back to the 1970s and 1980s. Lab Director Thom Mason during a virtual community meeting Thursday evening fielded several questions about the project, saying the goal of the work is not to expand the arsenal but rather to extend the life of the existing stockpile.

While not everyone agrees with everything the lab does, he said nuclear deterrence and nonproliferation will remain the lab's primary mission. He also pointed to current geopolitical threats. "I think we all wish that we lived in a world where nuclear weapons weren't necessary," he said. "But as long as we're not in that world, the responsibility that we're given by the Department of Defense, by Congress, by the Department of Energy is to make sure that our deterrent is safe, secure and reliable." Democratic members of New Mexico's congressional delegation have supported production at Los Alamos because of the billions of dollars in federal funding and thousands of jobs that are at stake.

# Japan shipowner asks cargo owners to share Suez damage cost

**Tokyo:** The Japanese owner of a massive container ship that blocked the Suez Canal for nearly a week, halting billions of dollars in maritime commerce, is asking owners of the freight it is carrying to share the cost of the damages demanded by Egyptian authorities.

Shohei Kisen Kaisha Ltd said Friday that it has asked freight owners to share the damages in a deal known as a general average declaration. The damage sharing scheme is often used in maritime accidents covered by insurance. The company said it has notified a number of the owners of the approximately 18,000 containers on the ship to assume part of the damages demand, estimated at about \$916 million.

# WESTERN RAILWAY

## CORRIGENDUM TO TENDER NOTICE NO. 192/E-TENDER/P.WAY/2021 DTD. 20.04.2021

Clause Description (Special Condition) of NIT and condition No.16 of Section-C of tender document :- Any offer quoting less than 50% of the tendered quantity will be treated as unresponsive for item No. (b) & (c). Any offer quoting less than 100% of the tendered quantity will be treated as unresponsive for item (a) & (d) to (f). **Field name:** Description **Existing value:** As above **Modified value:** Any offer quoting less than 30% of the tendered quantity will be treated as unresponsive for item No. (b) & (c). Any offer quoting less than 100% of the tendered quantity will be treated as unresponsive for item (a) & (d) to (f). All other terms and conditions of tender notice will remain unchanged. 0622

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# PUBLIC NOTICE

"It is to inform to the public at large that my client Mrs. Kamya and Mr. Paras Bakshi, approached India Shelter Finance Corporation Limited for a Home Loan against House No. 401/4 having an area of 66 sq yards situated at Ram Nagar, Gurgaon herein after referred to as 'the said property' which he is intending to purchase vide **Notarized Agreement to sell dated 27.03.2021** executed by Mrs. Kamal Kishor Kathuria W/o Mr. Dwarika Das Kathuria in favour of Mr. Paras Bakshi. Mrs. Kamal Kishor Kathuria became the owner of the said property vide **Regd. Sale Certificate dated 08.03.2021** executed by Mrs. Sushma in his favour. That Mrs. Kamal Kishore Kathuria lost the prior sale deed dated 23.03.1973 executed in favour of Chetan Bai vide **Sale Deed no. 2924**, another **Sale deeds** dated 17.03.2005 executed between Rama Devi W/o Hans Raj Gendia in favour of Ashok Kumar & Surendra Adhikaria, duly registered at Sub-Registrar Gurgaon, as document no. 25347, and sale deed dated 27.06.2005 executed between Ashok Kumar & Surendra Adhikaria in favour of Kesari Devi, duly registered at Sub-Registrar Gurgaon, as document no. 6669 in respect of said property. These original sale deeds have been lost and is not traceable to Mrs. Kamal Kishor Kathuria. If anybody receive the same should return the sale deed to the below mentioned address. Further, any Person having any type of claim right/ title/ interest over the said property may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc. Any use of the above-mentioned document will be considered illegal."

**[PRASOON LATA] Advocate**  
**SG ASSOCIATES**  
Unit No 7, Basement Floor, Plot No C 78, Sector 2, Noida, Uttar Pradesh.  
E-mail: [sgassociates9@gmail.com](mailto:sgassociates9@gmail.com)  
Mob: 7011172764/971130064

# Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan try to end clashes

**Moscow:** A cease-fire on the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan largely held on Friday following a day of intense clashes that killed more than 20 people and wounded over 100 in a conflict over water supply between the two ex-Soviet Central Asian neighbors.

More than 7,000 Kyrgyz residents have been evacuated from the area engulfed by the fighting as troops from the two countries exchanged gunfire around a water supply facility near the village of Kok-Tash in western Kyrgyzstan on the border with Tajikistan. Early Friday, Kyrgyz officials reported the firing on the border but later said that the truce is being observed. **AP**

# Giuliani defiant, a day after FBI raid of home, office

**AP ■ NEW YORK**

Rudolph Giuliani sought to discredit the federal investigation into his dealings in Ukraine on Thursday, a day after agents raided his home and office. Giuliani said the 6 a.m. Search, which he said involved seven FBI agents, was unnecessary because he offered for two years to provide federal prosecutors his electronic devices and to "talk it over with them." "They won't explain to me what they're looking into for two years," Giuliani said in an evening appearance on Tucker Carlson Tonight. Giuliani's lawyer, Robert Costello, has previously said proposed meetings between



investigators and Giuliani's legal team didn't take place because prosecutors wouldn't agree to a precondition that they first disclose more about the probe. It would be rare for prosecutors to give up detailed information to a potential criminal defendant before charges are filed, or to rely on that person to voluntarily produce electronic files thought to contain incriminating evidence.

# Beyond the pandemic: London votes for a mayor during crisis

**London:** Not long ago, London was booming. Now it fears a bust. Brexit and the coronavirus pandemic have hit Britain's capital in a perfect storm. In 2021, the city has fewer people, fewer businesses, starker divisions and tougher choices than anyone could have expected. On May 6, Londoners will elect a mayor whose performance will help determine whether this is a period of decline for Europe's biggest city — or a chance to do things better. "It's going to be rough, definitely," said Jack Brown, lecturer in London studies at

King's College London. "Those two quite seismic changes" — Brexit and the virus — "will be a lot to cope with." Plagues, fires, war — London has survived them all. But it has never had a year like this. The coronavirus has killed more than 15,000 Londoners and shaken the foundations of one of the world's great cities. London's newly elected mayor will lead a city of more than 8 million that is facing the usual big-city troubles — too little affordable housing and transit, too much crime and pollution — as well as a host of unprecedented problems. **AP**

**Paris:** France has announced its first confirmed cases of the virus variant that is sweeping over India, just as the French president outlined a national reopening plan after six months of virus restrictions. The Health Ministry announced late Thursday night that three people tested positive for the new variant in the Bouches-du-Rhone and Lot et Garonne regions of southern France. All three had travelled to India, and are under medical observation. Authorities are seeking to trace their contacts and investigating other suspected cases, the ministry said. It noted that the variant has been detected in at least six other European countries. **AP**

# Core sectors' output up 6.8% in Mar

CONTRACTS 7 PC IN 2020-21

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The output of eight core sectors grew by 6.8 per cent in March, the highest in 32 months, driven by base effect-led uptick in production of natural gas, steel, cement and electricity, official data showed on Friday.

The growth rate of the eight infrastructure sectors - coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement and electricity - stood at (-) 8.6 per cent in March 2020.

According to the commerce and industry ministry data, production of natural gas, steel, cement and electricity jumped 12.3 per cent, 23 per cent, 32.5 per cent and 21.6 per cent in March, as against (-) 15.1 per cent, (-) 21.9 per cent, (-) 25.1 per cent and (-) 8.2 per cent in March 2020, respectively.

Coal, crude oil, refinery products and fertiliser segments recorded negative growth during the month under review.

During 2020-21 (April-March), output of the eight sectors contracted by 7 per cent as against a positive growth of 0.4 per cent in 2019-20.

Commenting on the numbers, ICRA Ltd Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said the 6.8 per cent growth in March, a "32-month high", is due to the base effect.

The low base of the lockdown-hit April 2020 would push up the year-on-year expansion of the index of eight core industries to a sharp 50-70 per cent in April 2021, with exceptionally high growth expected in cement and steel, she added.

"However, we have observed a slackening in the sequential momentum in April 2021 in electricity demand, vehicle registrations, and generation of GST e-way bills, revealing the impact of the recent surge in COVID infections and localised restrictions.

"Based on the available data, we project the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) to record a sharp growth of 17.5-25 per cent in March 2021," she added. In February, output of these sectors dipped by 3.8 per cent.

# Non-food credit grows 4.9% in March: RBI data

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Non-food credit grew 4.9 per cent in March 2021 as against a growth of 6.7 per cent in the year-ago month, RBI data showed.

Credit growth to agriculture and allied activities accelerated to 12.3 per cent in March 2021 from 4.2 per cent in March 2020, the data on Sectoral Deployment of Bank Credit - March 2021, released by the Reserve Bank of India, showed Friday.

Advances to industry decelerated marginally to 0.4 per cent in March 2021 from 0.7 per cent last year.

However, credit to medium industries registered a robust growth of 28.8 per cent in March 2021 as compared to a contraction of 0.7 per cent a year ago.

Loans to micro and small industries decelerated to 0.5 per cent in March 2021 from 1.7 per cent a year ago, while cred-

it to large industries contracted by 0.8 per cent as compared to a growth of 0.6 per cent a year ago, the data showed.

Credit growth to the services sector decelerated to 1.4 per cent in March 2021 from 7.4 per cent in March 2020, mainly due to deceleration in credit growth to NBFCs and contraction in credit to professional services.

Credit to the trade segment, however, continued to perform well, registering accelerated growth of 11.8 per cent in March 2021 as compared to 4.6 per cent a year ago, RBI data showed.

Personal loans continued to witness slowdown in growth during the reporting month. It decelerated to 10.2 per cent in March 2021 from 15.0 per cent a year ago.

Vehicle loans and loans against gold jewellery continued to perform well during the month, witnessing accelerated growth, the data showed.

# Sensex snaps 4-day rally, crashes 984 pts; HDFC twins top drags

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity indices broke their four-day winning streak to close deep in the red on Friday as the grim Covid-19 situation and lacklustre Asian cues triggered unwinding of risky bets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex sank 983.58 points or 1.98 per cent to finish at 48,782.36. The broader NSE Nifty tanked 263.80 points or 1.77 per cent to 14,631.10.

HDFC twins were the top losers in the Sensex pack, skidding up to 4.38 per cent, followed by ICICI Bank, Kotak Bank, Asian Paints, M&M, TCS, HUL, and Maruti.

Only four index components closed higher - ONGC, Sun Pharma, Dr Reddy's and Bajaj Auto, climbing up to 4.32 per cent. However, on a weekly basis, the Sensex advanced 903.91 points or 1.88 per cent, while the Nifty surged 289.75 points or 2.02 per cent.

"Domestic equities fell sharply today on weak global cues and heavy sell-off in financials. Asian markets traded weak on emerging concerns

about growth after China's factory activity expanded slower than expected in April.

"A persistent rise in daily caseload and higher number of deaths continue to remain matters of concern for central and state governments and therefore any possibility of further economic restrictions cannot be ruled out by the state governments. Market is expected to be volatile until we see a clear reversal in COVID-19 cases," said Binod Modi, Head-Strategy at Reliance Securities.

Sectorally, BSE finance, banking, auto, FMCG and industrials indices tanked up to 2.73 per cent, while oil and gas, healthcare and metal closed in the positive territory.

Broader BSE midcap and smallcap indices slipped up to 0.65%. India saw 3,86,452 new coronavirus infections in a span of 24 hours, the highest single-day rise so far, pushing the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 1,87,62,976, while active cases crossed the 31-lakh mark, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday.

# Rupee logs 1st drop in five days, settles marginally lower at 74.09 a dollar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Snapping its four-day winning streak, the Indian rupee on Friday settled with a marginal 2 paise loss at 74.09 against the US dollar amid concerns over economic recovery in view of mounting Covid-19 cases in the country.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 74.03 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 73.95 and a low of 74.12.

It finally ended at 74.09 against the American currency, registering a fall of 2 paise. For the week, the domestic unit strengthened 1.22 per cent or 92 paise against the dollar. However, for the month, the rupee weakened by 97 paise or 1.32 per cent.

# FMC India to donate 7 oxygen plants to hospitals in five States

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Agri-science firm FMC India on Friday said it will donate seven Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) oxygen plants to hospitals in five states, including Delhi/NCR.

The other four states are Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat, it said in a statement.

"To help meet some of the urgent demand for oxygen at area hospitals, FMC India will contribute seven PSA plants to support urgent patient care and save precious lives," FMC India President Pramod Thota said. The installation of PSA plants at these hospitals will enable a continued supply of oxygen, without the challenges of transportation logistics, it added.

Further, FMC India said it will launch a multi-faceted campaign aimed at educating local farmers and growers about safety and wellness measures to protect themselves from Covid-19 while continuing farming and adopting good agricultural practices.

# Covid disruption unlikely to impact April GST collections: SBI Ecowrap

FIANS ■ MUMBAI

Even with the new wave of Covid-19 resulting in lockdowns in 15 parts of the country and impacting business all across, the country's GST collections, the barometer of economic activity in India, is likely to cross the Rs 1 lakh crore mark for the sixth time in as many months in April, a SBI Ecowrap report said on Friday.

According to the internal simulation model adopted by SBI Ecowrap, the April GST collection is expected to be in the range of Rs 1.15-1.20 lakh crore. This is marginally short of the record high GST collection in March of Rs 1.24 lakh crore.

The optimism about possible GST collection in April, the report says, is from a healthy growth in E-way bill

generation.

"This will be quite impressive given the fact that during April, most of the states imposed partial lockdowns. Also, it is heartening to note that despite the curbs due to the second wave, the All India GST E-way bills till 25 April have reached 4.89 crore and we estimate it to cross 5.5 crore comfortably, given the past trends," the report said.

"We believe that any disruption in GST collections will be transient and the states will have comfortable SGST collections."

The present optimism is also on account of trend shown last year, given the SGST collection, allocation of IGST to states and Cess amount, it is around 89 per cent of the budgeted numbers of Rs 6.5 lakh crore.

# RBI Governor meets MD, CEOs of small finance banks

FIANS ■ MUMBAI

**A lot of discussions hovered around assessing liquidity scenario for banks and making an assessment of bad assets emerging from current economic situation**

The Reserve Bank of India on Friday held a meeting with heads of small finance banks on credit flows to different segments of the borrowers and get a sense of emerging stress on banks' balance sheet in view of the current economic situation.

The video conference meeting, chaired by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, was also attended by Deputy Governors MK Jain, MD Patra, M Rajeswar Rao and a few other senior RBI officials.

In his opening remarks, the Governor recognised the important role of the SFBs in delivering credit and other financial services to individuals and small businesses. He also emphasised the supervisory expectations in terms of

maintaining their business resilience and managing risks prudently.

Das advised the banks to pay focussed attention on improving customer grievance redress process while also strengthening IT systems in the interest of the banks and their customers.

A lot of discussions hovered around assessing liquidity scenario for banks and making an assessment of bad assets emerging from current economic situation.

# Amazon's profits soar as online shopping surges amid pandemic

FIANS ■ SAN FRANCISCO

Riding on the continued surge in online shopping, Amazon has posted another record quarter, with sales soaring 44 per cent (on-year) to \$108.5 billion.

Net income increased to \$8.1 billion in the March quarter, compared with net income of \$2.5 billion in the first quarter of 2020, showing how millions of people now shop on the platform as pandemic continues to ravage the retail sector.

Amazon shares climbed more than 3 per cent in extended trading on Thursday.

Amazon said that in the second quarter (April-June), it expects to post revenue between \$110 billion and \$116 billion.

"Two of our kids are now 10 and 15 years old — and after years of being nurtured, they're

growing up fast and coming into their own," said Jeff Bezos, Amazon founder and CEO.

"As Prime Video turns 10, over 175 million Prime members have streamed shows and movies in the past year, and streaming hours are up more than 70% year over year," the outgoing CEO said in a statement. There are now more than 200 million paid Prime members worldwide.

"In just 15 years, AWS has become a \$54 billion annual sales run rate business competing against the world's largest technology companies, and its growth is accelerating — up 32 per cent year over year," Bezos added.

Amazon's sales increased more internationally than in North America. International revenue surged 60 per cent year over year while North America revenue jumped 40 per cent.

# Govt sets record 104.3 million tonne rice production

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid scare of Covid-19 second wave which forced the States and Union Territories to impose lockdown like curbs, the Government on Friday set a record rice production target of 104.3 million tonne for the kharif season of 2021-22 crop year (July-June). However, the overall foodgrains production target for the full 2021-22 crop year is kept at 307.31 million tonne. This includes production of 151.43 million tonnes of food grains during kharif (summer) season and 155.88 million tonnes during rabi (winter) season. The targeted production is over 1.3% more than last year's estimated food grain production of 303.34 million tonnes. Meanwhile, the government has asked five non-traditional onion growing states - Rajasthan, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh to increase the area sown under the crop by 9,900 hectares in the forthcoming kharif season to avoid any price rise situation.

As per the target set up at the kharif conference 2021 on Friday, the production of rice has been set up at 121.1 million tonnes while the output of wheat has been estimated at 110 million tonnes. The production of coarse grains like maize, millets and bajra has been set up at 51.21 million tonnes

while output of pulses has been estimated at 25 million tonnes. Whereas the production target for coarse cereals is kept at 37.31 million tonne and oilseeds at 26.20 million tonne for the kharif season of 2021-22.

On agri-inputs, Malhotra said the requirement of urea has been assessed at 177.53 lakh tonne, di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) at 65.18 lakh tonne, Muriate of Potash (MoP) at 20.24 lakh tonne and NPK fertilisers at 61.87 lakh tonne for the kharif season of this year. In the case of seeds, the availability is estimated to be in surplus as far as most kharif crops are concerned, except for maize and soybean.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, rice is the main crop grown in the kharif season, sowing of which begins with the onset of southwest monsoon from June. In the kharif season last crop year, rice production was estimated to be at 103.75 million tonne against the target of 102.60 million tonne, as per the agriculture ministry's second advance estimate.

Inaugurating the Conference, the Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar appreciated the efforts of farmers for the record production for food grains (303.34 million tonnes), which is over 1.96% higher than the previous year's output (297.50 Million Tonnes).

**Office of Chief Medical Officer, Haridwar**  
Email: cmoharidwar@rediffmail.com

**Notice Inviting Tender (Re-Bid)**

Chief Medical Officer, Haridwar invites tenders through tendering, from Eligible Bidders for the following works:

**01. Health Workers/Sweepers with sanitation and necessary equipments (inclusive of all taxes) to be deployed at DCCC/DCHC etc.**

Tender documents can be purchased from office of the Chief Medical Officer Haridwar between **01.05.2021 to 07.05.2021 (11:00AM)**. Information in this regard with all details can be downloaded from [www.cmoharidwar.org](http://www.cmoharidwar.org). It is also to be informed that any amendment in future against the re-tender shall be uploaded only on [www.cmoharidwar.org](http://www.cmoharidwar.org).

Document Download Start Date	01.05.2021 at 1000hrs
Proposal Due Date	07.05.2021 at 1200hrs
Opening of Technical Bids	07.05.2021 at 1300hrs
Tender Document Price	Rs 1000 (GST Extra)

No. Covid/CMO/2021-22/2835-1 **CMO, Haridwar**

Tender notice for e-tendering is invited by **PCE, Metro Railway** for the following work: Execution of balance Civil Engineering works for RCC framed structure of Jessore Road station building including finishing, water supply, sanitary, fire fighting, circulating area, landscaping and other ancillary works in connection with extension of Metro Railway from Noapara to Barasat via Bimanbantar. Approx. cost of work : Rs. 24.88 Crores. Earnest Money : Nil. Completion Period: 10 months. Date & time of closing : 07.06.2021 at 12.00 hrs. For full details visit [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in). Abridged e-Tender Notice No. Civil-2361-2021 (Open) Two Packet System **Metro Railway, Kolkata**

**PARADIP PORT TRUST**  
**e-TENDER CALL NOTICE**

Name of the work "Supply, Installation, Commissioning of Navigational/Range Lights & five years maintenance" Estimated cost **Rs.2,10,73,613/-**. Last date & time of submission of bid **dt.16.05.2021 upto 18.00Hrs**. Refer our website <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> for details.  
**Executive Engineer (PED-III)**  
**PPT/PR/27/21-22 Dt.30.04.2021**

**UJVN Limited**  
HO "UJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006  
Telephones: 0135-2763808 Fax- 0135- 2763508  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: [www.ujvn.com](http://www.ujvn.com)

पत्र सं. 317 दिनांक : 30 / 04 / 2021

**e-Tender Notice**

Office of the Executive Engineer (C&M) MB-II Joshiyara, Uttarkashi invites online bids from interested parties. Brief summary of tenders is given below :

Tender No: 01/EE(C&M)/MB-II/Joshiyara/2021-22 & 02/EE(C&M)/MB-II/Joshiyara/2021-22

Name of work: 1- Annual Civil Maintenance & Repair of various type of Residence at Joshiyara Colony, MB-II Uttarkashi. 2- Annual sweeping, cleaning & Repair of sewer line, Drains under Premises of Joshiyara Colony, MB-II, Uttarkashi. Estimated cost : ₹ 31,27,444.00 (excluding GST) & ₹ 25,42,162.00 (excluding GST)

Date of availability of bid document on website : 01.05.2021  
Last Date for submission of bids on website : 25.05.2021

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

**Executive Engineer (C&M)**  
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

# NTPC charts way forward to contain the spread of Covid-19

New Delhi: Considering the huge surge in Covid-19 cases in India, NTPC is taking several steps to fight against the spread of the virus.

NTPC is adding to the capacity at all of the 7 NTPC hospitals which are being used for treating Covid-19 infected employees.

It has also tied up with Apollo Hospital for its KAWACH facility which has brought immense relief to the Covid infected patients since now they are getting better treatment even being in home isolation.

NTPC Medical Cell is constantly in touch with super-spe-

cialty hospitals across India and is doing its best to enable admission and care to critical patients amidst the present crisis.

NTPC and project sites are extending support on a case to case basis by providing airlift on priority for critical cases.

A dedicated COVID-19 helpline number for both present and retired employees and also for their families to provide them information on testing centres and probable treatment centres in government and NTPC empanelled hospitals.

# Bank of India EGM next week to seek shareholders' nod for preference shares to Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Bank of India (BOI) has convened extraordinary general meeting (EGM) of shareholders next week to seek approval for issuance of equity shares to government for capital infusion of ₹3,000 crore.

EGM of the shareholders of Bank of India will be held on Wednesday, May 5, 2021 through video conferencing and other audio visual means, the bank said in a regulatory filing. The board will seek consent of shareholders of the bank to issue and allot up to 42,11,70,854 equity shares for cash at ₹71.23 per equity share including premium of ₹ 61.23

aggregating up to ₹3,000 crore on preferential basis to government, the bank said in a regulatory filing.

The government in March had sanctioned to infuse the capital in BOI as part of equity during the financial year 2020-21.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

It is notified for the information of passengers that the following Special Trains have been cancelled as per following details :-

Train No. & Name	Cancellation Date(s)
05074 Tanakpur - Singrauli Special Express	Upto 31.05.2021
05073 Singrauli - Tanakpur Special Express	Upto 01.06.2021
05076 Tanakpur - Shaktinagar Special Express	Upto 30.05.2021
05075 Shaktinagar - Tanakpur Special Express	Upto 31.05.2021
09009 Mumbai Central - New Delhi Duronto Express	14.05.2021 to till further advice
09010 New Delhi - Mumbai Central Duronto Express	15.05.2021 to till further advice
09025 Bandra Terminus - Amritsar Jn. Clone Express	10.05.2021 to till further advice
09026 Amritsar Jn. - Bandra Terminus Clone Express	12.05.2021 to till further advice
09337 Indore Jn. - Delhi Sarai Rohilla Special Express	20.05.2021 to till further advice
09338 Delhi Sarai Rohilla - Indore Jn. Special Express	20.05.2021 to till further advice

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

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

RailMadad Helpline No. 139

Visit RailMadad website : [www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in) & download Railmadad app.

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

945/21

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**राष्ट्रीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान कुरुक्षेत्र**  
**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY KURUKSHETRA**  
[Under the Ministry of Education (Shiksha Mantralaya), Govt. of India]  
**KURUKSHETRA-136119 (HARYANA)**

**Advt No. 04/2021**

**TENDER NOTICE**  
**CASHLESS MEDICAL INSURANCE SCHEME**

Sealed tenders are invited from Insurance Companies (Licensed and Registered with IRDA) dealing with Health Insurance for implementation of Cashless Medical Insurance Scheme at National Institute of Technology Kurukshetra on Pan India basis.

Technical and Financial Bid documents are available in the Institute website: [www.nitkkr.ac.in](http://www.nitkkr.ac.in). The detail documents can be downloaded from the Institute website.

The technical and financial bids should be sealed by the bidder in separate envelopes duly super-scribed and both these sealed envelopes are to be put in a bigger envelop which should also be sealed and duly super-scribed.

Complete tender documents should be submitted on or before **21.05.2021 by 02.00 p.m.** Bids received after the last date and time due to postal delay or any other reason will not be considered for evaluation.

**Sd/-**  
**Registrar /c**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank hereby inform that all scheduled auctions, to be held for the period between April 29, 2021 till May 31, 2021 under recovery of dues as per court orders, stands postponed until further notice, due to unprecedented outbreak of Corona Virus (COVID-19). The list of auctions that are postponed are given hereunder:

Sr. No.	Case Details	Asset Details	Reserve Price	EMD	Scheduled Date & Time of Auction
1.	ICICI Bank Limited Vs Rahul Yadav, Case No-CM (M) 222/2020	Vehicle No- UP14ET0642, Make and Model- TATA ACE, Manu Yr- 2014	70,000/-	7,000/-	May 06, 2021- 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
2.	ICICI Bank Limited Vs Hygiene Feeds & Farms Private Limited, Case No- OA/ 1525/2019	Vehicle No- HR67B4552, Make and Model- EICHER 20.16, Manu Yr- 2019	5,20,000/-	52,000/-	May 01, 2021- 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM
3.	ICICI Bank Limited Vs Munna Lal Kumawat, Case No- OA 656/ 2018	Vehicle No- RJ32PA0653, Make and Model- TATA LPO 1618, Manu Yr- 2017	11,95,000/-	1,19,500/-	May 01, 2021- 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM
4.	ICICI Bank Limited Vs Niroz Insulations Private Limited, Case No- OA No. 902 of 2018	Vehicle No- RJ20GB5360, Make and Model- AL 2518, Manu Yr- 2018	12,25,000/-	1,22,500/-	May 01, 2021- 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM
5.	ICICI Bank Limited Vs Niroz Insulations Private Limited, Case No- OA. No. 902 of 2018	Vehicle No- 100149357, Make and Model- JCB JS 205 LC, Manu Yr- 2017	24,50,000/-	2,45,000/-	May 01, 2021- 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Date: May 01, 2021  
Place: Delhi NCR

**SHORTCIRCUITS**



**SONAKSHI SINHA**

There's an urgent need for oxygen cylinders, concentrators, medicines, food and financial help for so many people. Seeing the way the situation has been handled, I believe we need to step in to make a difference. So, I make a sincere appeal to all of you, please come forward and donate and help in any possible way to fight this battle.



**BHUMI PEDNEKAR**

It is completely devastating to know that Chandro *dadi* is not with us anymore. It really feels like a very big personal loss. She was someone who lived a very fulfilling life. She made her own rules, paved her own path and she had a beautiful sisterhood and a beautiful partnership with Prakash *dadi*.



**JOHN ABRAHAM**

Starting today, I will be handing over my social media accounts to NGOs we have partnered with across the country and all content posted on my handles will be exclusively to help connect those affected with the resources they require.



**JESSICA SIMPSON**

I am always open. I'm open about my insecurities and my flaws, and if I can help inspire anybody to feel better about themselves, that's why I'm here. I'm always out to empower women, empower people to feel better about themselves

**GEORGE CLOONEY**

Well, you try (to instill charitable values in my children). They're not quite four yet so they don't (understand). My kids will always say, they'll pick up a toy and they'll go, 'This is for the poor people. I go, 'Good. OK, so let's put it in the basket and we'll take it to the poor people.' Then there's this shock on their face when reality hits.



**WILD WORLD**

Anwar Mamon has been producing documentaries for over a decade. During this time, he has been lucky enough to film in some of the most remote locations on the planet, such as the frozen Canadian High Arctic, the uncharted jungles of Burma, the dense forests of Russia and the desolate deserts in Namibia. The driving force behind everything Anwar makes is a passion to bring nature closer to viewers than ever before and also attract a more diverse audience to the natural history genre by finding stories that are emotional, relatable and engaging. His latest series for BBC2, *Waterhole: Africa's Animal Oasis* featured a successful partnership with a wildlife reserve to ensure local communities benefited from film shoots and also were represented onscreen.

In a world first, remote cameras are half-submerged in a specially built waterhole in Africa. The series reveals secret animal behaviour and new science, the evolution an ecosystem around a brand-new water source. Rigged with a state-of-the-art camera system to film around the clock, this new waterhole in a water-stressed region in Tanzania doesn't just give a lifeline to wildlife, it also provides an extraordinary eye-to-eye view of the action as animals including lions, baboons, elephants, giraffes and cape buffalo gather around it. As the seasons shift, it discovers how water shapes the behaviour of Africa's most iconic animals and has a unique perspective on the inner workings of the African savannah. Excerpts:

**Could you explain the importance and relevance of a show like *Waterhole: Africa's Animal Oasis*?**

This is a unique natural history event or show, because we were the first people ever to put cameras embedded into a waterhole in Africa. We didn't know what was going to happen. It was a very high risk show, as we didn't know whether animals would come or how many or which ones would come. The importance is that it illustrates, throughout the three episodes, how important biodiversity is and gives you a deeper understanding of biodiversity as we



**SPRING OF LIFE**

*Waterhole: Africa's Animal Oasis*, a new series, by producer ANWAR MAMON gives an insight into the importance of biodiversity, By TEAM VIVA

really get to see how everything from the tiniest insects to giant African elephants interact and help each other to survive in the African ecosystem.

**What's the kind of technology used for this show? And what were the challenges faced?**

So we had fixed cameras, which are remote and are essentially on motors that can spin 360 degrees. These can film at night with infrared technology. The challenge was that those kind of cameras don't run on batteries. These need to be hard-wired. We had up to 20 of those running, sometimes up to 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Obviously, it wasn't like a regular natural history film shoot. So we had to excavate lots of ground lay up to two kilometres of cable and had a control centre where all the camera feeds could come into one place and where we could choose which camera to record when. When an animal came in, we could choose how to film it. And, those cameras are not designed to be put into the middle of the African Savannah. They're

not designed to cope with 40-degree heat, or elephants stepping on them, or dust. Dust was a huge problem and so we worked with some amazing technicians at the reserve. We found out but, also on our own, we actually created these pyramid casings out of steel that they managed to fix into the ground. And they protected the cameras from heat and did help protect them from dust. Also, much to our surprise it did stop them from getting damaged by large animals like elephants and buffalo. Thanks to many of the local people and Tanzanian guides that we worked with, we ended up doing this, the pyramids, obviously because that's the strongest geometric shape. So we thought that would help if elephants trod on it or buffalo pushed it. But the locals came up with a great idea, that we cover them in canvas, which is exactly what they use for their safari tents. The thinking behind that is that the animals are used to seeing Safari tents, and they don't often trample on those and they stay clear of them. So what we anticipated was that they would see lots of

little tents dotted around the waterhole and would ignore them. And luckily, that's what happens.

**What is the kind of wildlife found at the waterhole?**

On this show, we really had no idea what would turn up or when it would turn up. So when you ask what kind of wildlife? Well, pretty much everything you can imagine from the African Savannah. So lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo... the big five. We had a hippo walk past at one point. But we also had all the things you might not expect. We had incredible bird life. We had wading birds, some incredible insects, as well, that rely not just on water but also on the mud to survive. So we were very lucky over the six-month period that we managed to capture lots of different animals.

**Any unique experience while shooting for this show?**

Yeah, for sure. We had an extensive experience of filming animals around the world and in Africa. What this show enabled is that fixed the remote cameras all around the

water. Because we partnered with Mwiba Wildlife Reserve in Tanzania, we were involved in the beginning of the building of the waterhole, so we were able to put filming highs right in the middle of it and sunk them in. So when you went into the filming height, your eyes were in line with the water. So, you had an animal eye level view as animals came to drink. A unique experience that I'll never forget is when we were filming an elephant at night, he'd come for a drink and we were in the hiding. You don't often get to film elephants at night, because they can be dangerous, obviously. But this elephant was maybe five feet away. And to hear it drinking, you know, sucking up the water in its trunk in and then squaring in his mouth. Then it started doing some vocalisation as well because there were some other animals coming in. So that was a very special moment.

**How was the experience shooting alongside Africa's most iconic animals?**

I think it was very special,

because often with wildlife shows we focus on one behaviour or species. Sometimes you're very much focused on predator prey. What's unique about the waterhole and this series is that this is the one place where all animals have to come. At some point, they're all going to need water, they're all going to come to this one central place and they have to figure. What we got to witness was, how they cooperate, how they interact, how there is a schedule to life at the waterhole, within a week, certain animals were coming at certain times, which meant that other species wouldn't come. It's always a privilege to film in Africa with its wildlife. And what this series enabled us to do was to get closer, and hopefully to understand them better.

**What are the factors affecting the waterhole currently? Is climate change affecting the ecosystem here?**

Yes, I think it's an important element of the show, that water is becoming an increasingly scarce resource across Africa. That is partly to do with climate change, partly to do with pressures from wildlife and pressures from the human population. So there's a lot of pressure on water resources, especially at certain times of year, like the dry season. The importance of putting in things like water holes is that you have to choose very carefully where you put them. We're not saying that waterholes should be put across Africa, because what we did is we worked with scientists, the wildlife reserve and the Tanzanian government to choose the location of this water very carefully. So, that it would benefit animals but not interfere with the ecosystem in too much of a negative way and would benefit animals throughout the year with a constant water source. While they would also keep using their traditional more natural water sources as well.

**Can you tell us more about the partnership with the wildlife reserve to ensure that local communities benefited from this shoot?**

Mwiba wildlife reserve in Tanzania has been a wildlife reserve for nearly a decade and they have

worked with local communities, including the ancestral owners of the land, the Hadzabe tribe. So, one of the first things we did with them is to ensure that local communities were aware of what we're doing and work behind it. So, I had a meeting on one of the first trips to Tanzania with the heads of the tribe who blessed the sight of where the water was going to be. I think they recognise the growing issue of water scarcity, for wildlife. And we're very happy that hopefully, this waterhole, which is going to stay there permanently, as part of reserve, will be something for future generations of wildlife to help them survive. Then during the build, we were very insistent that we use wherever we could local community help during the build. Also, while we were filming, we relied heavily on local expertise... so guides... but also some of the tribe members helped us to not just identify certain flora and fauna but also to identify specific animal characters. Because we were there for a long period of time, we were able to film 24x7. We were able to get from them, this character info that you wouldn't normally get. Like we were able to film a leopard called Jasiri, which means brave one, in Swahili. Jasiri has been known since he was born to many of the people in that region. We were able to enrich our storytelling because of working with the local communities.

**Any surprising moments captured at the waterhole?**

Many surprising moments, too many to even go into really. I think you have to wait until the May 10 when it goes on TV. But I think the biggest surprise to us was the interplay between two of the apex predators in that location, which are lions and hyenas. We anticipated that lions and hyenas would come to the waterhole and we also anticipated that one of those predators would dominate essentially. And during the earlier parts of filming, lions were definitely dominating the waterhole, but that changed halfway through. We were very surprised to see how hyena actually ended up being the most dominant force at the new Waterhole by the end.

(The show premieres on May 10 at 9 pm on Sony BBC Earth.)

**WELLNESS**

With the lockdown, restrictions and changes at work, people have been grappling to find some normalcy in their lives. As the crisis deepens, there are mixed emotions, feelings of despair, fears, insecurity, stress, and for women, in particular, there have been extra care-giving responsibilities while working from home and working at home. It's important to remain upbeat while staying at home, managing self-care and well-being. Vasant Mundra, Consultant Psychiatrist, PD Hinduja Hospital and MRC; and Chandni Tugnait, MD (A.M) Psychotherapist and Founder-Director, Gateway of Healing, share some tips for women to take care of themselves:

**BE PHYSICALLY FIT**

If one is fit, one is likely to have a slightly better mood than one would have had if one was not so. So be active. Morning sunlight is essential for the upbeat of an individual. Get up and get some sunlight. Whether it is within the house, from a terrace, from a corridor, or possibly in a compound somewhere, get morning sunlight.

**FOLLOW A ROUTINE**

A routine always helps us cope with change. Make sure you focus on a routine with healthy eating habits, exercise, good sleep and meditation or mindfulness exercises. This improves focus and productivity and also leads to lower stress levels.

**MIND IS MONEY**

The next thing is to stop wasting neurotransmitters of our brain on things that do not matter. Whether we have anxiety about coronavirus, concerns about the administration, or frustration about our favourite cricket team, we are spending neurotransmitters for something more substantial. The

**Sit back and breathe**

It's important to remain upbeat while staying at home, managing self-care and well-being



simplest way is to focus on one's brain is like how we would treat our wallet. We are always careful when handing out or wasting money. Let's just be as careful with wasting our brain chemicals like our money. Fear, anger, envy, anxiety are all waste neurotransmitters. Often it is not so much the situation that causes it but our interpretation of the situation.

**LIMIT INFORMATION INTAKE**

It's important to be aware and cautious, however, an overdose of news and information from all corners can be very distracting and emotionally draining. Make sure you limit your intake of the pandemic-related news if it unnerves you.

**TAKE FREQUENT BREAKS**

It can be quite unnerving to manage the office work, house work, online school classes for kids, and so much more. Amid it all, it's important to take frequent

breaks (even if for five to ten minutes each time) and relax. A breather, every now and then, not only increases our productivity but also helps keep stress at bay.

**SURROUND YOURSELF WITH POSITIVE PEOPLE**

Be part of communities that uplift you. Connect with people who inspire you, who are fun to be with and who allow you the space to be the way you like. It's especially important to not engage with people who are constantly in a negative loop and are not willing to step out of it. Also stay away from people and things that are emotionally or energetically draining.

**PRACTICE GRATITUDE**

Research has proven how a simple practice of gratitude daily can shift so much in a person's life. It improves the physical and psychological health and adds bliss to life, thereby improving the relationships with self and others. The key factor here is to 'feel' gratitude and not just 'think' gratitude.

**REVIVE A HOBBY**

Once a week (if not everyday), indulge in your hobby and see how much it adds to your life. Whether it is dancing, painting, creating music or reading, take that time out for yourself. You matter! And only when you are able to feel physically, mentally and emotionally balanced can you contribute to the others around you. It isn't selfish to indulge in some 'me time'. On the contrary, it is absolutely essential.

Some more tips for a positive well-being are: do not overreact when feeling angry; try not to get easily insulted; try and value the other person's opinion; exercise regularly; enjoy food keeping an eye on the portions; watch positive content; enjoy conversations; and stay connected with friends.

—JANS

**CELEB TALK**

**Power of social media**

Sunil Grover has been making people laugh with his antics as a funnyman on television for years. He has also impressed with the odd serious role, as he did recently in the web series *Tandav*, or the Akshay Kumar-starrer film *Gabbar Is Back*. The advent of social media has been a boon for new-age talent over the recent years and Sunil, too, has benefitted from the platform.

"You have to see so much talent has come forth because of social media. Everyone has got a platform to express themselves and people can watch whatever they like," he said.

If the advent of social media and OTT is changing art of storytelling, Sunil noted this is something that happens every few years. From theatre to films to television to social media and OTT now, viewers have proved they can adapt easily.

"Change is inevitable. When films started coming, people thought that may be audience for plays would be affected but theatre has continued. Eventually, social media came and now we have OTT. With time, people adapt to evolution," he said.

For him, as an artiste, a variety in platforms means a better chance to experiment, which in turn throws new challenges.

"I love taking up challenges. I recently did a show on OTT and the challenge there was that it was a very serious role and I was worried about what if people laugh at that. Of course, it worked for me and I liked the fact that in *Tandav* the audience accepted me as something different. I think what the audience



wants is good performance and not anything else. They want to see an amount of freshness, too," he said.

"I have been doing similar kind of things for a while, so when I do something different and it works, the audience appreciates it and I like (the fact) that I got to do something fresh," he added.

Sunil will soon be seen in the upcoming comedy show *Hasee Toh Phasse*, where 10 comedians will be locked in a house, trying to make each other laugh. The challenge for them is to not laugh, and the last contestant who can stay without laughing, wins the show.

"The show's format is different and it has a mental mechanism that I have never dealt with before," said Sunil about the show, which will drop on Amazon Prime Video.

REFLECTION

# THE CONVERSATIONALIST

RAKEYSH OMPRAKASH MEHRA does not believe in giving sound bytes. A discussion with him turns out to be deep, meaningful and in-depth, discovers SAIMI SATTAR



This needs a sit-down discussion rather than a phone conversation," quips a faint voice at the end of a twice-connected conference call. Director Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra is reacting to a long list of questions that I had sent to him earlier. Without missing a beat, I immediately respond, "That is because I'd been wanting to do this since I watched *Rang De Basanti* 15 years back."

The reason isn't tough to guess. All of us distinctly remember why words like 'cult', 'classic', 'inspiring', 'thought-provoking' were descriptions that became intangibly attached to Mehra's second outing. In a curious case of life imitating art, it ignited a popular protest and channeled the rage of a generation which assembled at India Gate after the murder-accused in the Jessica Lal murder were released soon after the film hit the theatres.

Maybe the reason why it touched a chord was that Mehra and writer Kamlesh Pandey touched the pulse of the youth. Earlier, they had scripted a film which included the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, Kakori train robbery and the bombing of the Assembly by Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Chandrashekhar Azad which resulted in them being hanged. "I wanted to make a film on the armed revolution and it was called *Young Guns of India*. I bounced off the idea of the script off the students and it was evident that they didn't identify with it (or with the protagonists who were in the same age group). They weren't interested in the 'idea of India'. So, we went back to the drawing board and rewrote the script." Mehra had realised that even if they made a good film about the people who lost their lives in the armed resistance, it wouldn't serve any purpose. "It will be entertaining, people will sing its songs but that wasn't why I was making the film," says Mehra and adds, "Unless I find a reason, I don't make it."

Speaking about *RDB* Mehra says, "It isn't important if it became iconic. Results are results. Sometimes your voice gets through, at other times it gets lost and, at other times, it gets amplified. What is sad is that the film is still relevant." An opinion which he hasn't shied away from expressing time and again is that despite the spiralling popularity of *RDB*, corruption, which it had targeted, hasn't disappeared. "It normally doesn't. But nations can definitely move in the right direction. The law of the land can be more effective and I don't see that happening in at least the last 20 years," he says matter-of-factly and without a trace of emotion.

Another social reality which not just *RDB* but also his later films *Delhi-6* (2009) and *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag* (2013) more than hinted upon was

that of religious divisions — subtle and more pronounced — within the country. Aslam, the only Muslim among the group of five friends, is derided as a Pakistani; Roshan, the product of a mixed marriage witnesses Hindu Muslim animosity when he comes to India; Milkha, a Sikh, is forced to run away from what became Pakistan. "Isn't that a good thing to criticise religious divisions," asks Mehra. But haven't the religious divisions sharpened compared with the time when the films were made? "I can't comment on the choices people make. I can only do what I can do... not in an immoral, biased or angry way. There are already so many wounds. There is no point in scratching them. You might as well apply a soothing balm. If the films somewhere carry a hidden message of peace and love, it's the right thing to do. Especially since the films go out to millions of people and are the collective subconscious of the nation. Though it is a good medium, it depends what kind of cinema people want to watch."

Outside films, Mehra has been critical of the education system in no uncertain terms. "It's completely redundant. Education needs to be reborn and seen from a new light. The world has changed and continues to change so fast that what children study at school isn't relevant. Learning is important and being ahead of the curve even more so. I can't understand this whole system where children are aiming for 90.6 per cent, 99.6 per cent and more," he argues and says that unless a student is planning to pursue a professional course — like medicine, which entails saving lives, or engineering, which incorporates building bridges and the like, — institutions can't have a system where "students aren't eligible". He feels that this is undesirable for a reason. "When you put people under intense competition in their formative years and under a system of Hindi and English medium, you're dividing and segregating people at the outset. It goes deeper in the form of gender bias as boys are favoured. I think about making a film on it every day," says Mehra who was a part of the selection camp as a swimmer in the 1982 Asian Games held at New Delhi but wasn't selected in the final round.

Music has been central to his films and the songs continue to be popular years after these hit the charts. In fact, while remixes often give a new lease of life to songs, in the case of Masakali from *Delhi-6*, the adverse reaction broke the internet. "Music is a very important part of life and expression in India. While there's *bhakti*, classical or folk music as well as independent music, which is now shaping up, it's the one in films that can be called popular music. The second reason is that films have grown out of folk theatre which was musi-

“IT ISN'T IMPORTANT IF RDB BECAME ICONIC. RESULTS ARE RESULTS. SOMETIMES YOUR VOICE GETS THROUGH, AT OTHER TIMES IT GETS LOST AND, AT OTHER TIMES, IT GETS AMPLIFIED. WHAT IS SAD IS THAT THE FILM IS STILL RELEVANT”

cal," says the Air Force Bal Bharti, Delhi alumni. Mehra lists a third reason why music is central to films. "Some of us use it as a narration or as an abstract or third voice. What you want to say and its subtext can be taken forward by music," he asserts.

In *RDB* Mehra consciously decided not to have lip-synced songs or choreographed dances. "We're evolving. Slowly we're telling stories both musically and non-musically... This, in, itself is a conversation worth many hours," he says.

Of the seven films that he has directed, A R Rahman has been the composer thrice and Shankar-Ehsan-Loy have featured four times. But he doesn't repeat actors very often. However, for his forthcoming, *Toofan*, Farhan Akhtar is playing the lead a second time after *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*. "For a normal audience what they see in front of the camera. I've repeated myself and that's not funny!" he says and explains his reasons. "You might share a relationship that brings out the best in you and you want to take it to the next level. That's definitely what happened with Farhan. This time we have enjoyed ourselves much more. What he brings to the table is intangible," he contemplates. The quality that Mehra likes about the actor is that he doesn't play the part but rather becomes it, which is important to the story writer. "I want the audience to enter the theatre and see the character and not their favourite star. Even if they are drawn by the star power but 10 minutes into the film, they should forget it. In fact, even I, the director and the camera, should become invisible," says the 57-year-old.

Mehra has had a diverse trajectory even in the heptad of films that he has directed. "You want to say something that moves you, gives you sleepless nights ... because you want to tell that story to the world. Sometimes you feel that you managed to say that in one go but at other times it takes two or three films to achieve it," he says and demonstrates it by way of his work. In *Aks* (2001), his debut film, he tried to say that good and evil are two sides of the same coin. "In *Delhi 6*, I attempted to show that good and evil are inside you and when you look inside the mirror, you find Allah, Bhagwan, God and Jesus ... and also the devil and the *kaala bandar*. The choice is yours. I felt that I touched upon it but it became a little intellectual," admits the director about the film which won the Nargis Dutt Award for Best Feature Film on National Integration at the 57th National Film Awards.

He picks up the thread again and says, "In *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag* he was running away from the past all his life. Milkha hated the Pakistanis and he got the biggest honour from the place where he lost everything... including the title of the 'Flying Sikh'. After that,

when he turned around, he sees his childhood smiling back at him. For me, the answer was that you have to face your demons and take them along with you. The only way to nullify them is to look them in the eye," he says sagely.

Not just in his films but overall the content has changed dramatically. It has been powered by the audience feels Mehra who says, "Films directly or inversely reflect what is going on or they predict what is going to happen or they juxtapose the two. When the country was born, there was hope so films reflected that." But this enthusiasm was punctured by the Bengal famine, Maharashtra drought, corruption, joblessness, the loss of China War, constant strife on the Pakistani border and so "Devdas, an escapist and an alcoholic, became a hero. The hero started dancing with the birth of escapism, around 1966-67, which he is still doing. Before Shammii Kapoor the hero never danced." However, he doesn't dismiss escapist cinema as it served the purpose of giving the audience a respite from their own bleak lives. "The rhetoric and propaganda in our films mean we are still living in an escapist environment today. Even when you objectify a woman, it means that society has still not come to terms with her and is unable to accept her as an equal. The audience tells you when the stories should shift and change," says Mehra.

However, he feels that OTT is a distribution mechanism and has nothing to do with telling a story. "Earlier there were single screens, then there were multiplexes and now the screen has shrunk to your palm. When people watch my films on a mobile, I cringe because I've worked so hard on the picture, sound, cinematography, 70 mm. Your storytelling has to be ahead of its time and technologically agnostic," he says and gives *RDB* as an example which people loved on the big screen and still do on TV.

Though he feels that he can't make a series for OTT as he prefers feature films but he believes that the best thing to do is to embrace change. "The added benefit of the digital platform is now that the reach of work is much wider.

After the sports drama film, *Toofan*, is released Mehra intends to do a lot of meditation. "There is so much happening that I don't know what to pick up. There are so many other projects lined up and then I open the newspaper and I feel I need to say something about this or that. You have caught me on the wrong foot as I am on the crossroad but soon I'll have to take a call. Within one month or one and a half at the most," he promises. And we will wait for another film that would ignite conversations.

## APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that this person  
**Name:** Binay Kumar Mandal, **S/o:** Budhan Mandal, **R/o:** DVC Campus Bishunpur, Dhanbad, Jharkhand, **Age:** About 41 years, **Sex:** Male, **Height:** 5 feet 7 inch., **Complexion:** Shallow, **Built:** Normal, **Face:** Oval, **Wearing:** Multi Colour Shirt and Black Colour Trousers was found Dead at IT Park, Shastri Park, Delhi on 27.04.2021, in the area of PS Shastri Park, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 38-A, dated 27-04-2021 has been registered at PS. Shastri Park, Delhi. The Dead Body has been preserved in GTB Hospital, Delhi Mortuary for 72 hours for identification. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following.  
**SHO**  
**PS. Shastri Park, Delhi**  
**DP/769/NE/2021 Ph.: 011-22170120, 8750870723**

## कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता, लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकीय खण्ड बेमेतरा (छ.ग.)

ऑनलाईन निविदाएं प्रपत्र-ए में प्रतिशत अनुबंध हेतु नीचे उल्लेखित कार्य के लिये छत्तीसगढ़ के राज्यपाल की ओर से अधोस्ताक्षरकर्ता के कार्यालय में एकीकृत पंजीयन व्यवस्था में श्रेणी-डी एवं उच्च में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से आमंत्रित की जाती है।

स.क्र.	सिस्टम न.	निविदा सू.क्र.	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (करोड़ में)
1.	76536	13	Empanelment of implementation support agencies (ISAs DWSM) for successful implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in the district Bemetara of Chhattisgarh.	772.30

- बिड प्रारंभ की तिथि - 26.04.2021
- बिड सबमिशन की अंतिम तिथि - 17.05.2021

उपरोक्त कार्य की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर राशि, विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापित, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेब पोर्टल <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> में दिनांक 26.04.2021 से देखे जा सकते हैं।

कार्यपालन अभियंता  
 लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकीय खण्ड  
 बेमेतरा (छ.ग.)  
**R.O. No:- 60401/13**  
**R.O. Date:- 29/04/2021**



Heartiest Greetings to the people of Haryana on the 400th Prakash Purab of Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib

May 1, 2021

Govt. of Haryana  
 "I appeal to all to celebrate this Prakash Purab at home during the COVID-19 pandemic and pray for the welfare of everyone while offering ardas to Guru Ji."  
**- Manohar Lal**  
 Chief Minister, Haryana



# GAME 2021

## CAPTAIN'S CALL

ON A PITCH LIKE THIS (AHMEDABAD), WE FELT LIKE WE NEEDED A FINGER SPINNER WHO COULD HIT HARD LENGTHS. HE (BRAR) DID EXACTLY THAT AND BATTED REALLY WELL IN THE END AS WELL

— KL RAHUL



# KL, BRAR SINK RCB

## PBKS skipper continues his scoring run against RCB, this time with unbeaten 91 before Harpreet dismisses Kohli, Maxwell & De Villiers in 34-run win

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Skipper KL Rahul scored a combative 91 while Harpreet Brar accounted for three key batsmen as Punjab Kings thumped Royal Challengers Bangalore by 34 runs here on Friday.

Put into bat, Punjab were in a spot of bother at one stage but Rahul's perseverance, power-hitting of Chris Gayle (46) and energy of Brar (25) ensured they had a competitive 179 for five on board.

Rahul and Gayle shared a 80-run stand but Punjab's middle order collapsed as Brar, batting at number seven, was the only other batsman to manage a double-digit score.

Rahul and Brar added 61 runs for the unbeaten sixth wicket to rescue the side after the RCB bowlers had seized the initiative following Gayle's dismissal in the 11th over.

Rahul hit seven fours and five sixes in his 57-ball knock, while Brar took 17 balls for his 25 that had two sixes and a four.

Brar (3/19) then returned with ball in his hand to dismiss key batsmen — Virat Kohli (35), Glenn Maxwell (0) and AB de Villiers (3) — as RCB managed 145 for eight.

The fiery spells from Riley Meredith (1/29) and Mohammed Shami (1/28) meant that RCB were off to a sedate start as they could score only 36 runs from the Powerplay overs.

The 24-year-old Australian pacer consistently tested the RCB openers and eventually uprooted the stumps of Devdutt Padikkal (7) after being hit for a



Punjab Kings all-rounder Harpreet Brar celebrates with skipper KL Rahul after he takes wicket of RCB captain Virat Kohli

six on a mis-timed shot by the left-hander.

Kohli, who was hit on his right elbow by compatriot Shami, and Rajat Patidar kept the scoreboard ticking as shot-making was not easy against the disciplined Punjab bowlers.

At half-way mark, RCB were just 62 for two and to make matters worse, left-arm spinner Brar clean bowled Kohli and Maxwell off successive deliveries in the 11th over.

The Punjab bowler returned

and sent back dangerous De Villiers (3) to leave RCB gasping at 69 for four in 12.1 overs.

From there onwards, it stopped being a contest as the required run-rate kept soaring.

Earlier, the pace duo of Daniel Sams and Mohammed Siraj bowled tight spells initially to keep the Punjab batsmen on a tight leash, not letting them open their arms.

Prabhsimran Singh, who played in place of injured Mayank Agarwal, could not con-

tribute much, scoring a run-a-ball 7.

Rahul looked in good touch, driving the ball elegantly but runs did not come at a good pace for the side until Gayle exploded.

The West Indian creamed five fours, including four in a row, in the last over of the Powerplay, bowled by Jamieson.

He followed that up with two sixes off Yuzvendra Chahal in the next over with the first one being a flat maximum.

Runs came thick and fast,

boosting the run rate but Gayle could not convert that into a big knock.

Jamieson got rid of the Caribbean marauder, getting him caught behind. It was a soft dismissal as the sharp short ball touched Gayle's gloves and reached into the hands of AB de Villiers.

The tall Kiwi bowler also got rid of Nicholas Pooran (0) while Deepak Hooda (5) & Shikhar Dhawan (0) also made their way back to pavilion in a jiffy.

## SCOREBOARD

PUNJAB KINGS	
KL Rahul not out	91
Prabhsimran Singh c Kohli b Jamieson	7
Chris Gayle c de Villiers b Sams	46
Nicholas Pooran c Shahbaz b Jamieson	0
Deepak Hooda c Patidar b Shahbaz	5
Shahrukh Khan b Chahal	0
Harpreet Brar not out	25
Extras (b 0, lb 1, w 4, nb 0, p 0)	5
Total (5 wks, 20 Overs)	179
Fall of wickets: 19-1 (Prabhsimran Singh, 3.3), 99-2 (Chris Gayle, 10.4), 107-3 (Nicholas Pooran, 11.3), 117-4 (Deepak Hooda, 13.6), 118-5 (Shahrukh Khan, 14.4)	
Bowling	
Daniel Sams	4-0-24-1
Mohammed Siraj	3-0-24-0
Kyle Jamieson	3-0-32-2
Yuzvendra Chahal	4-0-34-1
Harshal Patel	4-0-53-0
Shahbaz Ahmed	2-0-11-1

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE	
Virat Kohli b Brar	35
Devidutt Padikkal b Meredith	7
Rajat Patidar c Pooran b Jordan	31
Glenn Maxwell b Brar	0
Ab de Villiers c Rahul b Brar	3
Shahbaz Ahmed c Brar b Bishnoi	3
Daniel Sams b Bishnoi	3
Kyle Jamieson not out	16
Harshal Patel c Bishnoi b Shami	31
Mohammed Siraj not out	0
Extras (b 0, lb 8, w 3, nb 0, p 0)	11
Total (8 wks, 20 Overs)	145
Fall of wickets: 19-1 (Devidutt Padikkal, 2.3), 62-2 (Virat Kohli, 10.1), 62-3 (Glenn Maxwell, 10.2), 69-4 (Ab de Villiers, 12.1), 91-5 (Rajat Patidar, 14.4), 96-6 (Shahbaz Ahmed, 15.4), 96-7 (Daniel Sams, 15.5), 144-8 (Harshal Patel, 19.4)	
Bowling	
Riley Meredith	3-2-0-29-1
Mohammed Shami	3-4-0-28-1
Ravi Bishnoi	4-0-17-2
Harpreet Brar	4-1-19-3
Chris Jordan	4-0-31-1
Deepak Hooda	1-0-13-0

boundarymeter	
4s	727
6s	315

PLAYER	RUNS
1. KL Rahul (PBKS)	331
2. Shikhar Dhawan (DC)	311
3. Faf du Plessis (CSK)	270

PLAYER	WKTS
1. Harshal Patel (RCB)	17
2. Avesh Khan (DC)	13
3. Rahul Chahar (MI)	11

MOST SIXES	
1. KL Rahul (PBKS)	16
2. Jonny Bairstow (SRH)	14
3. Andre Russell (KKR)	13

## SUMMER SLAM

### MOTION PICTURE



Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma cuts cake to celebrate his 34th birthday on Friday

ritsajdeh/Instagram

## 'NIGHTMARE OF A WEEK'

India off-spinner R Ashwin's wife Prithi Narayanan on Friday said her family has been through a "nightmare of a week" after as many as 10 members of the house tested positive for Covid-19. Days after her husband's pullout from the lucrative league, Prithi, in a series of tweets, shared the ordeal her family has faced after contracting the highly contagious virus. "Feeling ok enough to croak a tiny hi to all of you. 6 adults and 4 children ended up testing + the same week, with our kids being the vehicles of transmission — the core of my family, all down with the virus in different homes/hospitals. Nightmare of a week. 1 of 3 parents back home," she tweeted.

## DHAWAN, JD, POORAN CONTRIBUTE

India & DC opener Shikhar Dhawan, Rajasthan Royals pacer Jaydev Unadkat announced their contribution towards Covid-19 relief work. Dhawan said that he will contribute ₹20 lakh plus money from all post-match individual awards he receives during the season to Mission Oxygen. Unadkat said 10% of his IPL salary will be contributed to help patients who need essential medical resources. Punjab Kings' Nicolas Pooran has also decided to donate a part of his IPL salary.

## POINTS TABLE

	P	W	L	NRR	PTS
1 CSK	6	5	1	+1.475	10
2 DC	7	5	2	+0.466	10
3 RCB	7	5	2	-0.171	10
4 MI	6	3	3	+0.071	6
5 PBKS	7	3	4	-0.264	6
6 KKR	7	2	5	-0.494	4
7 RR	6	2	4	-0.690	4
8 SRH	6	1	5	-0.264	2

# Mumbai, Chennai battle for supremacy

### KEY PLAYERS

**QUINTON DE KOCK**  
Quinton finds form with unbeaten 70 against Royals and his return will relief pressure from Rohit

**FAF DU PLESSIS**  
Former SA captain is the leading run getter for CSK and has formed a good p'ship with Ruturaj at top

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rohit Sharma's elegance and Suryakumar Yadav's flamboyance will be pitted against the brute power of Faf du Plessis and grace of Ruturaj Gaikwad when heavyweights Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings cross swords here on Saturday.

MI and CSK head into the match after identical seven-wicket wins over Rajasthan Royals and Sunrisers Hyderabad respectively and both teams would be keen to continue their winning streak.

The biggest positive for Mumbai has been the return to form of opener Quinton de Kock (117 runs), who made a blistering, unbeaten 70 against Rajasthan.

The faltering Mumbai middle-order also clicked in the previous game, on a comparatively easy batting track compared to the one at the Chepauk.

Suryakumar (170 runs) would need to convert his starts while Krunal Pandya (68 runs) played a useful cameo, which would have bolstered his confidence. He would be keen to take it forward from where he left.

Kieron Pollard (81 runs) also displayed his hard-hitting skills on Thursday and would be raring to go once again, and so would fellow all-rounder Hardik Pandya (36 runs).

Pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Trent Boult have been exceptional, particularly at the death, and would need to perform again to contain the in-form CSK batters.

Leggie Rahul Chahar, with 11 scalps, has been MI's leading wicket-taker. He would, however, need support from Krunal and the seasoned off-spinner Jayant Yadav, who was a tad expensive in the last game.

Meanwhile, CSK have been a force to reckon with this season, having won five of their six games.

Openers du Plessis (270 runs) and Ruturaj (192 runs) have been in top form and would be keen to provide the team with another strong start.

Their middle-order has also been among runs. Moeen Ali (148 runs) has adjusted well to the role of pinch-hitter, while the presence of the ever-reliable

### VENUE: ARUN JAITLEY STADIUM, DELHI

## HEAD TO HEAD

Matches	30
Mumbai Indians	18
Chennai Super Kings	12

### LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

- Chennai Super Kings defeated Mumbai Indians by 5 wickets in Abu Dhabi
- Mumbai Indians beat Chennai Super Kings by 10 wickets in Sharjah

## 199

Suresh Raina will become fourth player to complete a double century of matches in IPL history. He has played 199 matches so far for CSK and Gujarat Lions

## 717

Rohit Sharma scored 717 runs at an average of 28.68 in 28 innings vs Chennai Super Kings in IPL

Faisal Features

## 121

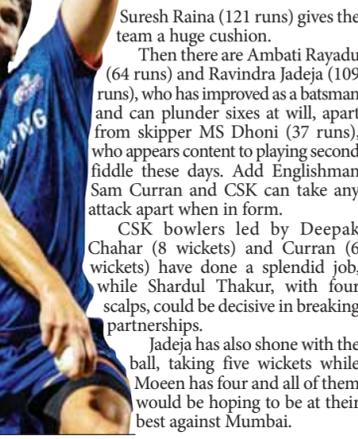
Suresh Raina (121 runs) gives the team a huge cushion.

Then there are Ambati Rayadu (64 runs) and Ravindra Jadeja (109 runs), who has improved as a batsman and can plunder sixes at will, apart from skipper MS Dhoni (37 runs), who appears content to playing second fiddle these days. Add Englishman Sam Curran and CSK can take any attack apart when in form.

## 109

CSK bowlers led by Deepak Chahar (8 wickets) and Curran (6 wickets) have done a splendid job, while Shardul Thakur, with four scalps, could be decisive in breaking partnerships.

Jadeja has also shone with the ball, taking five wickets while Moeen has four and all of them would be hoping to be at their best against Mumbai.



# BCCI confident of hosting T20 WC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BCCI is confident that India will host the World T20 in October as per schedule despite a surge in Covid-19 cases in the country but the marquee ICC event could be held in five cities instead of originally nine short-listed venues.

As per convention, ICC keeps a back-up country ready and it's been the UAE for the past one year.

The IPL is currently on at different venues in separate bio-secure environments but BCCI will face perhaps its biggest test of managing a big-ticket ICC tournament in adverse circumstances.

"We are still hopeful that with five months left and significant population being vaccinated, we will be in a position to host World T20. Yes, one of the options could be curtailing the nine venues to a maximum four or five," a senior BCCI office bearer said on Friday.

An ICC recon team was supposed to reach Delhi on April 26 to inspect the bio-secure arrange-



ments for the IPL, keeping in mind the World T20 but the travel bans imposed on India led to the postponement of the trip.

"Yes, the team was supposed to arrive earlier this week but with travel bans in place, they will come later once situation returns to normalcy," the office bearer said.

An ICC spokesperson told PTI that shifting the tournament to the UAE is not being considered at this stage.

"We're monitoring the situation. Too early at this stage to make a call. Team didn't travel as UAE has shut

its borders to India," the ICC official said.

BCCI's GM (Game Development) Dhiraj Malhotra was on Friday quoted as saying by the BBC that "UAE is the back up venue".

However an office bearer said that UAE was always the second option as per rules.

"You always have a back up venue and UAE has been the venue after it was passed at ICC meeting last year. There's nothing new in what Dhiraj had said. Obviously, if the situation remains same after five months, you will have to have Plan B ready," the office bearer said.

Usually, when ICC World T20 has been held in other countries like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the event has always been confined to three or four venues but it hasn't been a case in India due to board politics and its related compulsions.

The distribution of matches has always been a very touchy issue in the BCCI and if the World T20 goes ahead as per plan, some tough decisions will have to be taken.

## shortpasses

### SHOOTER DADI CHANDRO DIES

**NEW DELHI:** Octogenarian shooter Chandro Tomar, who became the oldest woman sharp shooter in the world after taking up the sport in her 60s, died on Friday after battling Covid-19. She was 89 and was being treated at a hospital in Meerut since April 26.

### OSAKA ENJOYS WINNING START

**MADRID:** Naomi Osaka began her bid to capture a first clay court title with a 7-5, 6-2 win over compatriot Misaki Doi in the opening round of the Madrid Open on Friday.

### TEN HAG EXTENDS AJAX DEAL

**THE HAUGE:** Ajax coach Erik ten Hag has extended his contract until 2023, the Dutch club announced on Friday, pouring cold water on rumours that he was about to leave.

### TASKIN SHINES FOR B'DESH

**PALLEKELE:** Bangladesh pacer Taskin Ahmed took three wickets for 19 on day two of the second Test against Sri Lanka on Friday as the hosts piled up 469 runs for 6 at stumps.

### SA TO BID FOR 2027 ICC WC

**JOHANNESBURG:** Cricket South Africa will bid to host the 2027 men's World Cup, acting President Rihan Richards said on Friday.

### WRESTLERS REACH SOFIA

**NEW DELHI:** India's wrestlers have finally landed in Sofia for the World Qualifiers starting May 6 after missing an earlier scheduled flight because of the travel ban.

# Man Utd on cusp of Europa League final

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Bruno Fernandes and Edinson Cavani each scored twice as Manchester United thrashed an injury-hit Roma 6-2 at Old Trafford to close in on the Europa League final.

United are aiming to get to a final under Ole Gunnar Solskjaer at the fifth time of asking after four semi-final defeats in the past two seasons. But only a second leg collapse will prevent them from facing Villarreal or Arsenal in Gdansk on May 26 after a stunning second-half performance.

The home side trailed at the break as Lorenzo Pellegrini's penalty and Edin Dzeko's tap-in cancelled out Fernandes' early opener. But the Italians lost three players to injury before the break and United took full advantage.

Two predatory finishes from Cavani turned the tie around before Fernandes also fired home from the spot. Paul Pogba and Mason Greenwood rounded off the scoring as United became the first team to score six goals in a European semi-final since Real Madrid in 1964.

"Very pleased with the response," said Solskjaer. "Second half we were very good."

In the other semifinal, Unai Emery



won his big reunion with Arsenal but 2-1 might prove a small reward for Villarreal, who failed to take advantage of Dani Ceballos being sent off in a frantic first leg.

Manu Trigueros and Raul Albiol gave Villarreal a dream start at La Ceramica and the tie looked to be slipping away from Arsenal when Ceballos was shown a second yellow card early in the second half.

But 10-man Arsenal rallied and grabbed an away goal when Nicolas Pepe converted a penalty in the 73rd minute, before Villarreal's Etienne Capoue also saw red with 10 minutes left to play.

## Barca blow chance to go top in Spain

**Barcelona:** Barcelona spurned the chance to go top of the table on Thursday as a shock 2-1 defeat by Granada added another twist to La Liga's most unpredictable title race in years.

Barca could have taken control at the top by moving a point ahead of Atletico Madrid but Granada came from behind to snatch a stunning win at Camp Nou, in what will be a huge boost to the other title contenders.

Lionel Messi scored his 33rd goal of the season to put Barcelona in front but they failed to put the result beyond doubt and Granada hit back, Darwin Machis driving in and Jorge Molina's header completing a remarkable turnaround.

Defeat means Barca took nothing from their game in hand except disappointment, which might be difficult to shake ahead of two crunch games now away at Valencia and at home to Atletico Madrid.

They stay third, level on points with Real Madrid, as Atletico retain their two-point advantage at the top, while Sevilla in fourth remain just three points off first.

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