

**OPINION 6**  
RECOGNISING THE  
ARMENIAN POGROM

**WORLD 8**  
MYANMAR'S KAREN INSURGENTS  
BURN ANOTHER GOVT OUTPOST

**SPORT 12**  
ZVEREV STUNS NADAL  
IN MADRID OPEN

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## PMO plays down 3rd wave day after raising spectre

Strong steps can prevent 3rd wave, says Principal Scientific Adviser to Prime Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Two days after he said the third Covid wave was "inevitable", Principal Scientific Adviser to Prime Minister Dr K VijayRaghavan on Friday sang an entirely different tune when he said such scenario could be prevented with proper preventing measures.

"If we take strong measures, the third wave may not happen in all the places or indeed anywhere at all. It depends much on how effectively the guidance is implemented at the local level, in the States, in districts and in the cities everywhere," Dr K VijayRaghavan said amid debate whether the nationwide lockdown should be implemented to stem the Covid-19.

Two days ago, Dr K VijayRaghavan had said, "Phase 3 (third wave) is inevitable, given the high levels at which this virus is circulating. But it is not clear at what time scale this Phase 3 will



A Covid-19 patient waits in an ambulance outside the LNJP hospital in New Delhi on Friday

occur." The current surge in infections seems to be because of the Indian "double mutant" coronavirus and the spread of the UK variant, he had said, adding that vaccines will need to be updated to tackle the new strains that are spreading the contagion faster.

At a press conference here, the top scientist explained that the measures that need to be implemented were about precautions, surveillance, containment and about treatment, and testing.

"The insidious asymptomatic transmission can be stopped. This sounds difficult, but we can and must do this," he said while pointing out that

"there have been peaks and falls in different places in India and all over the world at different times and it is useful to understand how and why the rises of infections take place, why their strength varies, how they fall and what can happen subsequently."

Very simply put, he explained, infections rise when the virus has opportunities to infect humans. Infections fall as

### 4-digit security code in CoWIN from May 8 to minimise error

New Delhi: The CoWIN system is introducing a new feature of four-digit security code from May 8 to minimise data entry errors about vaccination status that would subsequently reduce inconvenience caused to citizens, the Union Health Ministry said.

the virus runs out of opportunities if the number of people it can potentially infect is lowered drastically, he added.

"This happens because people who have been infected are unlikely to be re-infected for a while. Also, people who are vaccinated are protected while people who wear masks are distant and are isolated from those who are infectious."

Continued on Page 2

### TRIPS waiver for Covid-19: WTO seeks new proposal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

WTO Chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has urged the proponents of the proposal for temporary waiver of certain provisions of TRIPS agreement for prevention and treatment of Covid-19 to submit the revised document "as soon as possible" so that text-based negotiations can begin.

Welcoming the statement of US Trade Representative Katherine Tai on the issue, the Director General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has said she "warmly" welcomes Tai's willingness to engage with proponents of a temporary waiver of the TRIPS agreement to help in combating the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

The proposed relaxations in the norms of the agreement are aimed at ensuring quick and affordable access to vaccines and medicines for developing countries.

The agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights or TRIPS came into effect in January 1995.

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## Black fungus preys on corona's victims

Doctors divided on linkage, but Govt says occurrence among diabetics

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The reports of Covid-19 triggered mucormycosis, also known as black fungus, pouring in from several States, have unnerved those infected with coronavirus. The black fungus is believed to be devastating for the health of infected patients with co-morbidities.

But the Government on Friday tried to allay fears saying that there was no cause of worry "as the occurrence is natural and the correlation between the two is not new."

Niti Aayog (Health) member Dr VK Paul at a Press conference said, "The infection affects only those who have a high blood sugar level, notwithstanding the presence of Covid-19 infection."

The black fungus is caused by a group of molds called mucormycetes. These molds live throughout the environment. As the number of Covid infections has increased, the cases of associated black fungus have started trickling from various hospitals in Delhi, Surat, Pune and Ahmedabad, causing concern among health



A critical Covid-19 patient being rushed to receive free oxygen at a Gurdwara in Indrapuram in Ghaziabad on Friday

authorities.

"It is very uncommon to happen among patients who do not have diabetes. There are reports of this fungal infection among Covid-19 patients. But I want to reassure you that there is no major outbreak and we are monitoring the cases at our level," Dr Paul said, adding it is absolutely preventable if one's diabetes is under control.

"There are three factors triggering this fungal infection: uncontrolled diabetes, immunosuppression because of steroids or any other disease and exposure to a wet surface. The presence of Covid-19, breathing difficulty is not necessary for this infection, we must remember," Paul added.

Continued on Page 2

### Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES: 2,18,86,611 (+4,01,228)

DEATHS: 2,38,265 (+4,191)

RECOVERED: 1,79,17,085 (+3,19,469)

ACTIVE: 37,21,769

MAHA: 49,96,758 (+54,022)

K'TAKA: 18,38,885 (+48,781)

KERALA: 18,24,857 (+38,460)

UP: 14,53,769 (+27,763)

DELHI: 12,92,867 (+19,832)

## Khan Chacha serves smuggled oxygen also!

Restaurant owner Navneet Kalra on run after raids recover over 100 O2 concentrators

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

After busting a gang involved in black marketing of oxygen concentrators, the Delhi Police are now on the lookout for Navneet Kalra, who owns Khan Chacha Restaurant and Town Hall restaurant, both situated in the Khan Market area, where over 100 oxygen concentrators were recovered by police during the raids on Friday morning.

Sources said Kalra is the mastermind of the gang. Police said Kalra's mobile is switched off and he is absconding.

According to the police, 96 oxygen concentrators were recovered from Khan Chacha Restaurant and nine were seized from Town Hall restaurant.

Kalra, who is a friend with



Police personnel during a raid at Khan Chacha restaurant, in which boxes of oxygen concentrators were recovered in New Delhi on Friday

the entire Indian cricket team and often questioned for his alleged links with bookies, has gone underground. WhatsApp messages about his impending arrest are also doing the rounds in Delhi, Haryana and UP.

The recovery of over 100 oxygen concentrators came after the arrest of four men identified as Gaurav, Satish Sethi, Vikrant and Hitesh from Lodhi Colony area.

Continued on Page 2

## ₹13.5K cr Central Vista criminal wastage amid pandemic: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday attacked the Union Government over the Central Vista project, terming it a "criminal wastage" and asked the dispensation to focus on people's lives.

"Central Vista is criminal wastage. Put people's lives at the centre, not your blind arrogance to get a new house," Rahul said.

Over the last year, Rahul and the Congress have been asking the Government to shelve its plans on the Central Vista project and give priority to improving medical infrastructure as the country reels under the devastating impact of the pandemic.

Rahul, who early in the day wrote an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over a range of issues pertaining to corona pandemic, took to Twitter once again to express his and party's dismay over the Centre's adamancy over declaring the ₹13,500 crore project into essential services category amid the pandemic.

The grand old party criticised the Government for according the construction work of the Central Vista project "essential services" tag and has accused it of having its priorities wrong.

Continued on Page 2

## Cong playing cheap politics, slams Puri

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Friday came down heavily on the Congress for playing "cheap politics" over the Central Vista project and termed it as the party's tactic to distract people from "monumental governance failures" in their States.

"The Congress' discourse on Central Vista is bizarre. Cost of Central Vista is about ₹20,000 crore, over several years. GoI has allocated nearly twice that amount for vaccination! India's healthcare budget for just this year was over ₹3 lakh crore. We know our priorities," Puri tweeted.

The accusation comes hours after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi criticised the Narendra Modi Government for executing the project, terming it a "criminal wastage", while asking the dispensation to focus on people's lives during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Continued on Page 2

## SC firm on Delhi O2 quota, rejects petition against Karnataka HC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday told the Centre to maintain daily supply of 700 MT of oxygen to Delhi and rejected Centre's appeal against Karnataka High Court's order to supply 1,200 MT daily.

The Bench comprising Justices DY Chandrachud and MR Shah was alerted by Delhi Government Counsel Rahul Mehra that they received only 86 MT of oxygen till 9 am on Friday and that 16 MT was in transit.

"We want 700 MT oxygen to be supplied to Delhi on daily basis and we mean business. It has to be supplied and we don't want to be coercive. Our order will take time to be uploaded by 3 pm. But you proceed and arrange the oxygen... Don't make us go firm," Justice DY Chandrachud said.

"You have to supply 700 MT of oxygen every day till we further order," said Justice Shah. The Bench also refused to interfere with the Karnataka HC order to increase the allocation of oxygen to the State to 1,200 MT per day.

### CAPSULE

**O2 SUPPLY FAILURE CLAIMS 5 LIVES IN RANCHI**  
Ranchi: As many as five critical Covid-19 patients admitted at Sadar hospital in Ranchi died early on Thursday due to asphyxiation after the oxygen supply system of the hospital developed a technical snag.

**WHATSAPP SCRAPS MAY 15 PRIVACY DEADLINE**  
New Delhi: WhatsApp has scrapped its May 15 deadline for users to accept its controversial privacy policy update and said not accepting the terms will not lead to deletion of accounts.

**VETERAN COMPOSER VANRAJ BHATIA NO MORE**  
Mumbai: Vanraj Bhatia, who composed music for parallel cinema classics such as "Bhumika", "36 Chowringhee Lane" and "JaaneBhi Do Yaaro" and gave lift to jingles remembered decades later, died at his home on Friday, according to a friend.

**LION AT ETAWAH SAFARI TESTS COVID POSITIVE**  
Bareilly: A lion at the Etawah Safari Park has tested positive for Covid-19 and another was suspected to have caught the infection, days after eight Asiatic lions in Hyderabad were found infected with the virus. Sixteen samples of 14 Asiatic lions had been sent for test.

## Corona invades rural India with vengeance

ARCHANA JYOTI BISWAJEET ■ NEW DELHI

After causing havoc in urban areas which are reeling under the second coronavirus wave, the virus has now invaded the country's hinterland where healthcare facilities are almost non-existent, testing centres rare, and Covid-appropriate behaviours are only empty talks.

To make the matter worse, in many villages the authorities have no record of deaths and infections in the absence of testing facilities. This is one of the root causes of the unchecked spread of the virus.

Absence of proper medical facilities in these rural areas — home to 70 per cent of the country's population — to deal with Covid-19 and unawareness about the gravity of the disease are making the situation worse.

Health experts said that during the Covid first wave last year, rural areas remained more or less unaffected despite migration of labourers because of strict lockdown and villagers following norms. But this time around, home coming by migrants, panchayat elections, Mahakumbh, marriages, religious events and harvest season have made the Covid-19 situation more ugly.

Take the case of rural areas in south Punjab where 60 per cent Covid cases are being reported from villages.

According to local reports, in the last 20 days, 90 people have died of Covid-19 in Chogath, a village in Bhavnagar district in Gujarat. There is a severe shortage of doctors and medical personnel in the rural areas of Gujarat, as per the report.

Health authorities say around 60 per cent of cases are being reported from villages as



there has been a poor response to the vaccination drive. Same is the situation in several villages of Bihar and Jharkhand. As per official figures, in many predominantly rural districts in Bihar, the number of active Covid-19 cases is almost nine

to ten times of what it was last year. As of now, Bihar has more than 1 lakh active Covid cases with Patna topping the list with 17,000 active cases.

However, in April, five other largely rural districts with a large rural population

registered an increase of more than 4,000 active cases: Gaya (7,703 cases are active), Muzaffarpur (5,406 cases), Saran (4,778 cases), Begusarai (4,675 cases) and Aurangabad (4,364 cases).

Continued on Page 2

## Bengal moves SC for uniform national vax policy, pricing

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Fresh from a stupendous victory in the Assembly elections, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday got her Government to move the Supreme Court seeking a uniform vaccination policy and scrapping of the differential pricing system for the vaccines.

The State's standing counsel has filed an affidavit before the SC saying, "States cannot be made to negotiate and bargain individually on vaccine prices. States will be compelled to allocate funds for vaccines, which will have a crippling effect on an already stretched health infrastructure."



Newly sworn-in Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi Stalin exchanges greetings with Governor Banwarilal Purohit at Rajbhavan in Chennai on Friday

# Mehbooba appeals to PM to release all political detainees

**Srinagar:** PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Friday appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to release all political detainees languishing in jails in and outside Jammu and Kashmir immediately in the wake of the worsening Covid-19 situation.

"Throughout the world, most countries have released prisoners on parole in view of the alarming COVID crisis. A democratic and civilised country like India shouldn't drag its feet and must release these detainees immediately so that they can return home at a time when life feels so threatened," Mehbooba said in a letter to the prime minister. The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said she did not wish to

"politicise the human tragedy that has befallen us all." "It's an unprecedented humanitarian crisis that doesn't discriminate on the basis of caste, colour, religion or social status and has affected everyone. Perhaps the only silver lining in this tragic time is how Indians cutting across religious and regional lines are coming together to lend each other a helping hand," she said. Mehbooba said worrying reports about prisoners dying due to COVID-19 and subsequent lack of medical attention have been trickling in.

At a time when the system is struggling to cope with this horrendous situation, lives of prisoners may be the least priority, she said.

"As far as Kashmir is con-

cerned, it is no secret that hundreds, or may be thousands of detainees and political prisoners arrested since August 2019 continue to languish in jails both in and outside J-K.

"Most of them are detained under preventive laws and don't face any prosecution. Many continue to be held even after courts granted them bail. Most recent reminder of the lurking threat to their lives is Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai's death who lost his life because he contracted COVID in jail and was deprived of medical care," she added.

The PDP president hoped that the prime minister will give due consideration to the matter and order the release of detainees. **PTI**

# 898 more die in Maha

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

With a noticeable increase in the fatalities and a sizeable drop in the infections, Maharashtra on Friday logged 898 deaths and 54,022 new cases, even as 37,386 patients were discharged from various hospitals across the state.

A day after the state recorded 853 deaths and 62,194 infections, the number of deaths increased by 45, while the infections dropped by 8,172.

With 898 new deaths, the total number of deaths in the state climbed from 73,715 to 74,413. Similarly, with 54,022 new infections, the total number of cases rose from 49,42,736 to 49,96,758.

As 37,386 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year went up to 42,65,326. The recovery rate in the state for the first time in several days dropped from 85.54 per cent to 85.36

per cent.

The total "active cases" in the state increased from 6,39,075 to 6,54,788. The fatality rate in the state stood static at 1.49 per cent.

With 71 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai increased from 13,580 to 13,651, while the infected cases went up by 3040 to trigger a jump in the infections from 6,68,085 to 6,71,125.

While Pune accounted for a maximum 1,20,512 "active cases" in the state, Nagpur stood second 61,680, followed by Mumbai with 54,162, Thane (45,670) Nashik (40,434), Chandrapur (27,154), Satara (21,591), Ahmednagar (23,934), Solapur (21,885), Beed (15,550), Buldhana (14,459), Jalgaon (12,678), Latur (14,019), Aurangabad (11,803), Parbhani (10,910), Bhandara (9,305), Osmanabad (8,189), Nanded (6,102) and Nandurbar (5,757).

Of the 2,89,30,580 samples sent to laboratories, 49,96,758 have tested positive (17.27 per cent) for COVID-19 until Friday.



Deserted highway amid Covid-19 lockdown in Kullu on Friday

PTI

# AP logs 17,188 new corona cases, 73 deaths

**Amaravati:** Andhra Pradesh's cumulative coronavirus tally shot up to 12,45,374 as 17,188 fresh cases were added in the 24 hours ending 9 am on Friday.

The total recoveries went up to 10,50,160 after 12,749 more infected persons got cured, according to the latest bulletin.

With 73 fresh fatalities reported in a day, the gross toll touched 8,519, the bulletin said.

Only Chittoor district reported 2,260 fresh Covid-19 cases in 24 hours while seven districts added between 1,300 and 1,900 each. Five districts reported less than 1,000 new cases each. **PTI**

# Black fungus...

**From Page 1**

However, a section of doctors feel otherwise. "Mucormycosis can be very dangerous. If left untreated can cause mutilating damage to face, nose, eyes with disfigurement and loss of vision and also cause invasive brain infection," said Dr Mahesh Kumar, Consultant Internal Medicine, Narayana Health City, Bengaluru.

While "Aspergillus and Candida are more common fungal infections, but this infection is dangerous because it involves the sinus and brain and happens to those who are in an immunocompromised state and/or to patients on steroids," added Dr Vikas Maurya, Director and HOD, Pulmonology, Fortis Hospital, Shalimar Bagh.

According to health experts, Mucormycosis (previously called zygomycosis) has been a cause of disease and death in transplants, ICU and immunodeficient individuals since long. However, it is the rapid increase in numbers seen in unsuspected Covid patients which is a matter of grave concern. Patients who recover from the Covid infec-

tion are increasingly being pushed back into the ICUs.

Last year, Mucormycosis had caused high mortality with many patients suffering from loss of eyesight, removal of nose and jawbone.

"In Covid, patients get steroids and immunity goes down and they may get this infection," doctors pointed out.

The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI), in March this year, gave nod to Mumbai-based bio-pharmaceutical firm Bharat Serums and Vaccines Limited to use anti-fungal medication -- Liposomal Amphotericin B or LAmB -- as a medical intervention in patients of Mucormycosis.

The risk of this fungus can be avoided by avoiding prolonged use of steroids. The common symptoms associated with the disease include headache, facial pain, nasal congestion, loss of vision or pain in eyes, swelling in cheeks and eyes and black crusts in the nose.

The US Centre for Diseases Control and Prevention estimates Mucormycosis with an overall all-cause mortality rate of 54 per cent.

# NE RAILWAY CLARIFICATION

The Northern Railway has refuted a news report captioned "2,600 trains freeze in tracks in 10 days" published in this newspaper on 07.05.2021, wherein it is reported that on an average, Railways has suspended 260 trains per day in the last ten days and a total 2,600 trains were cancelled in ten days.

The NE has termed the report as "false, baseless and misleading". In this regard, it is clarified that Northern Railway cancelled only 28 pairs of trains due to low occupancy and other operational reasons.

Note: We would like to clarify that our report talked about cancellation of trains across the entire Indian Railways networks' all zonal railways. We also quoted appropriate authority in the report. However, any misgiving is regretted.

# TRIPS...

**From Page 1**

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

"I am pleased that the proponents are preparing a revision to their proposal and I urge them to put this on the table as soon as possible so that text-based negotiations can commence," Okonjo-Iweala has said in a statement.

It is only by sitting down together that the member countries of the WTO will find a pragmatic way forward which would be acceptable to all members and which would enhance developing countries' access to vaccines while protecting and sustaining the research and innovation so vital to the production of these life-saving vaccines.

"As I told the General

Council yesterday, we need to respond urgently to Covid-19 because the world is watching and people are dying," she said. The statement, dated May 6, is posted on the WTO website.

The proposal of India and South Africa has received support from more than 120 countries. The EU too has stated that they are ready to discuss the patent waiver issue.

The Biden administration has backed the initiative by India and South Africa at the WTO to temporarily waive patent rules on Covid-19 vaccines, seen as a breakthrough in the global fight against the deadly pandemic by potentially expanding the supply of the vaccines and more affordable doses for less wealthy nations.

Announcing the major policy decision after intense internal debate and strong pushback from American drugmakers, Tai on Wednesday has stated that this is a global health crisis and the extraordinary circumstances of the Covid-19

pandemic call for extraordinary measures. The proposal has urged WTO to grant a waiver for limited years (which will be negotiated by the TRIPS Council) from the implementation, application and enforcement of specific provisions of the TRIPS agreement for the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19.

This waiver would ensure that the intellectual property rights (like patent, design, and copyrights) do not restrict rapid scaling up of manufacturing and do not hinder equitable and affordable access for vaccines and treatments throughout the globe. According to a April 30 statement of the WTO, co-sponsors of the proposal has requested the chair of the TRIPS Council, Ambassador Dagfinn Sorli of Norway, to consider holding a meeting open to all members in the second half of May to discuss the revised proposal before the formal TRIPS Council meeting scheduled for early June.

# PMO plays...

**From Page 1**

He was also of the opinion that without new opportunities and with the above, also done through containment steps, peaks fall. However, while the virus runs out of opportunities it is not eliminated. Therefore as new opportunities arise, so will cases, he said.

New opportunities may arise because the virus may find uninfected people who were previously careful and now lax. New opportunities for infection can arise if people become complacent or unprotected assuming the surge is over, said Vijay Raghavan asserting that the frequency and size of such ups and downs must be reduced.

"Keep effective distance, ensure adequate ventilation, do not crowd, indoors or outdoors, wear masks appropriate to your location. For example, caregivers should protect their wards and themselves extra-carefully," he summed up.

**THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS**

**THANKSGIVING**

Thankyou Mother Mary for your blessings Celine PD(8988)C

# Khan Chacha...

**From Page 1**

After their arrest the police recovered 419 oxygen concentrators that were meant to be sold in black market. The accused were produced in court and one day police custody was taken.

On Wednesday, a police team was on round when Nege Ju Restaurant and Bar, owned by Kalra, was found open. A man was found working on a laptop at the restaurant who was later found taking online orders for oxygen concentrators, police said. Police had searched the restaurant premises and recovered 32 boxes of oxygen concentrators, one box of thermal scanner and one box containing N 95 masks.

"After verification, it was found that the owner of the restobar was Kalra and First Information Report (FIR) under sections of the Essential Commodities Act and Epidemic Diseases Act was registered against the four men identified as Gaurav Singh, Satish Sethi, Vikrant and Hitesh, all residents of Delhi. They were subsequently placed under arrest," said Atul Kumar Thakur, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South district adding that Hitesh was the manager of the place.

"During interrogation, the accused disclosed about their warehouse at the Khullar farm in Chhatrapur area, following which a search was conducted and 387 more units of oxygen concentrators were recovered which were being sold at

exorbitant prices in black market," said the DCP.

Invoices of these oxygen concentrators were recovered. MRP stickers displaying a price of Rs 69,999 per concentrator were also recovered.

"With further seizure of 105 #OxygenConcentrator from Khan Chacha & Town Hall, 2 upscale restaurants in Khan Mkt, total 524 seized from #blackmarketers Owner Navneet Kalra, also owns Dayal Opticals, is on run. Manager, 3 staffers arrested by #DelhiPolice SouthDist. Further raids on," Delhi Police said in a tweet.

Police said Matrix Cellular is one of the companies which was involved in importing the machines from China and the cost of these concentrators was between Rs 16,000 to Rs 22,000. Some of them were five liters and some of nine liters, police said.

One Gagan Duggal is the owner of the company and he is also under investigation. "Navneet Kalra is a partner of Dugal in this venture and was instrumental in driving up prices by black marketing for Rs 12,000 to Rs 70,000," said a source.

They were importing the concentrators from October last year and when the demand was increased in February 2021, more oxygen concentrators were imported by them and stored at different restaurants, police said. The accused were selling those concentrators through online portals and messages were also being circulated on WhatsApp. They recently go the lot of 650 concentrators, of them, 524 have been recovered, police said.

# ₹13.5K cr Central Vista...

**From Page 1**

The Environment Ministry's expert appraisal committee (EAC) granted the necessary clearance for the Central Vista project designating it as an "essential service", hence getting exemption from the lockdown restrictions in the national Capital which is severely hit by the pandemic.

This has drawn strong objections by Opposition parties and activists with many raising concerns regarding the well-being of construction workers.

According to the CPWD's submission to the Ministry, the work on the new Parliament has been scheduled to be completed by November 2022, the Vice-President's enclave by May 2022, and the PM's residence and the SPG building by December 2022.

A plea has also been filed in the Delhi High Court seeking immediate suspension of construction activity in Central Vista during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic to protect the life of the workers and those involved in the project.

The Congress has been asking the Government to shelve its plans on the Central Vista project and give priority to improving medical infrastructure during the Covid-19 pandemic to save people's lives.

Earlier in the day Rahul said the PM and his Government's lack of a clear and coherent Covid and vaccination strategy, as well as its hubris in declaring premature victory as the virus was exponentially spreading, has placed India in a highly dangerous position.

The Congress also conveyed to Modi that in times of crisis, various stakeholders must be taken into confidence so all can work together to safeguard India.

He also said the Government's failures have made another national lockdown almost inevitable, and to prevent a repeat of the manifold suffering caused by last year's lockdown, the Government must act with compassion and provide critical financial and food support to "our most vulnerable people".

# Bengal moves SC for uniform national vax...

**From Page 1**

The hearing on vaccine policy is likely to take place next Monday. The State's plea before the Supreme Court is in sync with an order passed by it questioning the pricing mechanism of vaccines, experts said.

The court had said that "prima facie", the rational method of proceeding in a manner consistent with the "right to life under Article 21 would be for the central government to procure all vaccines and to negotiate the price with vaccine manufacturers."

Apart from moving the highest Court of the land Banerjee has also written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi --- for the third time in a row --- seeking increased supply of medical oxygen to the State.

While the ruling Trinamool Congress circle "strongly believes" that their Chief Ministers too "will back Banerjee in her effort to secure a uniform vaccination policy" experts would not rule out chances of her finding for herself a bigger role in the national politics, more so ahead 2024.

# Corona invades rural India with...

**From Page 1**

Rural areas of Maharashtra's Amravati district are now reporting higher number of cases than urban areas with authorities claiming that Amravati city on Tuesday registered 249 new Covid-19 cases while the rural areas of Amravati registered 947 fresh cases. In fact, Amravati city has recorded 504 Covid-related fatalities while the rural areas of the district have seen 521 deaths since January this year.

Similarly, in Jharkhand rural areas, from the first outbreak last year till March 31 this year, 1,113 people died of Covid while this April alone, 1,282 more deaths have been recorded.

Raja Bhैया, convener of the Vidy Dham samiti, an NGO in Banda in Lucknow, talked about Covid situation in Uttar Pradesh. "Death is very quick in the villages. The locals ignore fever and body ache and

treat them as seasonal fever which they think will go with a passage of time. Before they can realise it is corona, they die." "I cannot quantify as to how many people have died in the Attara block in the last one week but I can tell you there is a beeline in Banda crematorium to cremate the bodies. This was never seen in Banda before," Raja Bhैया said adding that in the absence of space in cremation grounds people are cremating people in the fields.

Not only Banda, the reports of death of people are pouring in from the outskirts of Lucknow. Doctors in PHC Chhatrapur vouch that almost 50 people have died of fever in Juggaur in the last fortnight. In Raddauli half a dozen villagers died in Pakkaudi village.

Similarly, in Haryana's Titoli village, 40 people reportedly died due to Covid-19 in ten days. The family members of the deceased are now being

# Cong playing...

**From Page 1**

In a series of tweets, the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister, whose Ministry is executing the Government's ambitious project, said the Central Vista is not a new project and alleged that during the UPA Government, Congress leaders had written about the need for a new Parliament.

"Congress doesn't stop at hypocrisy. Look at their shameful double face. During UPA, Congress leaders wrote about the need for a new Parliament. The Speaker in 2012 wrote a letter to Urban Development Ministry for the same. And now they have the gall to oppose the same project?" he said.

"They want to distract people from monumental governance failures in their States by spreading lies. So they indulge in cheap politics despite knowing this project creates direct &

indirect employment for thousands of skilled, semi-skilled & unskilled workers in these times," he alleged in another tweet.

Puri also accused the Congress and its allies of splurging on reconstructing an MLA hostel in Maharashtra and building a new Legislative Assembly building in Chhattisgarh, adding that "If this is fine, what is the problem with Central Vista?"

Earlier in the day, Congress leader Rahul alleged in a tweet, "Central Vista is criminal wastage. Put people's lives at the centre - not your blind arrogance to get a new house!"

Puri said there are hundreds of projects being executed by various departments and added that governance has not come to a standstill, unlike the Congress's times of policy paralysis. "...Central Vista is just another ongoing project. It's only the Congress that's obsessed about it, nobody else." Puri said.

**कार्यालय नगर निगम भोपाल**  
उद्यान शाखा  
// निविदा सूचना //

निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु इस कार्यालय द्वारा प्रयत्न "अ" प्रतिस्तर दर उपर्युक्त श्रेणी में पंजीकृत टेकेदारों/फर्म से निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा से संबंधित अन्य सतें वेबसाइट [www.mptenders.gov.in](http://www.mptenders.gov.in) पर देखा जा सकता है।

निविदा क्र.	कार्य का नाम	आनुमानित लागत	धरोहर राशि	निविदा प्रश्न मूल्य	कार्य अवधि
2021_UAD -141780_1	भोपाल शहर के विभिन्न उद्यानों की स्तलों, सेन्ट्रलबॉ, सहैडबॉ, वॉटिकल बॉट एवं पार्क आदि हेतु अकृतात श्रमिक उपस्थित कराने वाले काल। कुल 100 श्रमिक	1,00,60,000/-	1,00,600/-	12500	01 वर्ष

निविदा की शर्तें :-  
01. निविदा में धरोहर राशि ऑनलाईन जमा करना होगा।  
02. सशर्त निविदा मान्य नहीं होगी।  
03. ऑनलाईन निविदा के साथ संलग्न नियम एवं शर्तों का अवलोकन कर ही दरे प्रेषित की जावे।

कार्यालय नगरी उद्यान शाखा नगर निगम भोपाल  
फि.क्र. 74/021/022

**B-70**

**Government of Odisha**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**CUTTACK (R&B) CIRCLE, CUTTACK**  
( 'e' - PROCUREMENT NOTICE )

E-mail: id-sectorb\_2006@yahoo.co.in  
Tel/Fax :- 0671-2301751/2392751

**Bid Identification No. S.E.Ctc.(R&B) 2/2021-22.**

- The Superintending Engineer, Cuttack (R&B) Circle, Cuttack on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites on Percentage rate basis bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for Road & Building work as mentioned below.
- No. of work :- 1 No.
- Nature of work :- Building work.
- Class of contractor :- Special & Super Class.
- Tender paper cost :- Rs. 10000/- (online)
- Available of bid documents :- From 17.05.2021 to 16.00 Hours of 01.06.2021 in the web site.
- Date of opening of bid :- 22.06.2021 at 11.00 Hours.
- The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said web site.

Sd/-  
Superintending Engineer  
Cuttack(R&B)Circle

OIPR-34012/11/0003/2122

**OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF,**  
**RURAL WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION,**  
**JAL "O" PARIMAL BHAWAN, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR-751001, ODISHA**  
Tel: 0674-2395734, FAX: 0674-2394946, e-mail: cerwssodisha@gmail.com

**INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)**  
**BID IDENTIFICATION NO. EIC/RWSS/07/2021-22**  
**NO. 4244 Date: 05.05.2021**

- The Engineer-in-Chief, RWSS, Odisha, Bhubaneswar, on behalf of Governor of Odisha invite tenders in double cover system in ONLINE MODE only for "Execution of PWS to village Bilipada & its adjoining villages under Pipili Block including 5 years O&M of Puri District, Odisha" on turn-key basis.
- Nature of work :- Execution of PWS to village Bilipada & its adjoining villages under Pipili Block including 5 years O&M of Puri District" on turn-key basis
- Estimated Cost(Approx.) :- Rs.6.398Cr.
- Cost of Bid Document :- Rs. 10,000/- (Non-refundable).
- Class of Contractor :- Special Class.
- Availability of Bid Documents in the portal for Online Bidding :- From 11:00 AM of 17.05.2021 to 5:00 PM of 17.06.2021
- Date of opening of Bid in Online :- 22.06.2021 at 11:00 AM
- Name & address of officer inviting Bid: Engineer-in-Chief, RWSS Jal "O" Parimal Bhawan, Unit-V, Bhubaneswar Ph: 0674-2395734/ 0674-2531533 e-mail: cerwssodisha@gmail.com
- The bidders have to participate in ONLINE Bidding only for which the bidder must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of Class II or Class III. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>

Sd/05.05.2021  
Engineer-in-Chief, RWSS

OIPR-26040/11/0004/2122

# Visit job centres, relief camps, CM directs DMs

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday directed District Magistrates (DMs) to pay surprise visits to vaccination centres and relief camps in order to review the preparations done for the convenience of the people.

Kejriwal also directed the officials to ensure that all eligible people are vaccinated within the next three months. The direction came in a high-level meeting chaired by the Chief Minister on the current situation of Covid-19 in Delhi on Friday.

The Chief Minister directed the officials to ensure no death because of the shortage of oxygen in the national Capital. "Now that Delhi has received oxygen, no one in Delhi should suffer because of shortage of oxygen. All the hospitals in Delhi should increase their beds and every DM should arrange new oxygen beds in their districts so that no deaths happen due to lack of oxygen in Delhi," he said.

Kejriwal said, "The 48 oxygen plants coming up should be installed immediately as soon as they reach Delhi. These 48 oxygen plants have an oxygen production capacity of 40 tonnes. This will further help in improving Delhi's oxygen situation. We have to prepare long-term plans and build the capacity of oxygen storage on a very large scale in Delhi. We should also create a special storage capacity for the storage of oxygen."



In the meeting, officials reportedly informed the CM that the biggest difficulty at present is supplying oxygen and that both the companies should be asked to supply oxygen at the earliest.

"All DMs have been directed to make surprise visits to vaccination centres in their districts every day to review the functioning of the centres. At the same time, all DMs have been instructed to visit hunger relief centres located in their districts every day to ensure that the poor are not facing any problem with food and all facilities and treatments are being provided in shelter homes, old-age homes, and orphanages," the chief minister said in a statement.

Kejriwal also expressed his displeasure in the meeting as all home isolation patients were still not being given oximeters at their homes. "In any case, it should be ensured that oximeters are given to all patients recovering from Corona in home isolation," he said.

"We will be able to stop the third wave of Corona from coming to Delhi. We need to recruit retired doctors, nurses, and medical staff on a large scale. Whoever wants to help the society should join the Government and contribute to helping in this difficult situation," he said.

# Got 9 O<sub>2</sub> SOS from hosps: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the hospitals in the city struggled with a shortage of oxygen amid a spurt in coronavirus cases, the national Capital received 577 metric tonnes of life saving gas on Thursday which is less than 153 MT supplied a day before, said AAP national spokesperson Raghav Chadha.

Chadha, who is also the vice chairman of Delhi Jal Board, said authorities received 9 SOS calls from hospitals over oxygen shortage on Thursday and 5.1 MT of the life-saving gas was provided to these healthcare facilities.

Senior AAP leader said that oxygen reserves are being built in Delhi on the instructions of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for supplying oxygen to hospitals in emergency situations.

"When the supply of oxygen cannot reach any hospital, the Delhi Government delivers oxygen from the reserve stock. Oxygen reserve response points will be made in multiple parts of Delhi," he said.

"We are working on a war footing to formulate all plans and policies to increase the number of beds further, which is possible only if a regular supply of oxygen is maintained."



This demand of 976 MT is not one-time or temporary but a quantity that we need on a daily basis.

This demand has also been proved and backed by the Supreme Court and High Court time and again.

I would like to request the central government that like they delivered 730 MT on May 5, similarly, they should supply oxygen to us in sufficient amounts on a regular and continuous manner," he said.

Chadha, while underlining the many aspects of oxygen supply in Delhi, said, "The HC

and SC have constantly mentioned that just by supplying 730 MT on one single day. We cannot be transferring sufficient oxygen and giving it to our patients on one day because of their increased supply and completely deprive them on another day because the centre decreased our supply."

I would like to reiterate that this demand of ours isn't one-time or temporary, but a quantity that we need on a daily basis.

This demand has also been proved and backed by the

SC and HC time and again." Elucidating upon the need of sufficient supply of oxygen to increase the number of beds in Delhi, he said, "In this fight against the covid-19 pandemic, a normal bed, in which a mattress will suffice, with just merely two medicines and the patient will recover. In this pandemic, a normal bed is synonymous to an oxygenated bed."

Hence, with a normal bed also, we need the patient to be supplemented with sufficient oxygen, so that he/she can recover at the earliest," he said.

# Cremation grounds capacity increased

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In view of increasing number of deaths of Covid positive patients in Delhi, the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) has augmented the existing capacity of all nine cremation grounds.

"Pyres are being increased at all cremation centres and burial grounds. Earlier there were 436 platforms were reserved to perform last rites of deceased Covid patients which now have been increased to 507," a senior SDMC official said. "Platforms have mainly been increased at SDMC-run cremation centres located at Punjabi Bagh, Subhash Nagar, Lodhi Road, Sarai Kale Khan, Dwarka Sector 24 and Green Park," he said. The official said that an additional 80 pyres are constructed at Sarai Kale Khan cremation ground to cope up with demand. The Public Health Department of the SDMC has been monitoring the situation and making additional arrangements as per the need, he said, adding that the SDMC is augmenting the existing capacity so people could not wait for long while performing last rites.

# 4 held for selling Remdesivir at high prices

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In separate incidents, the Delhi Police has arrested four persons for allegedly selling Remdesivir injection at high prices in the national Capital. In the first incident, a 34-year-old security guard of a private hospital was arrested for selling injections at high prices after stealing them from the Covid ward.

The accused has been identified as Prahlad Kumar, a resident of Rohini Sector-7.

According to a senior police official, an information was received about a person coming near Nangloi Metro Station to deliver Remdesivir injections at exorbitant price following which a trap was laid near Nangloi Metro Station on Thursday and one person was apprehended.

"Police also recovered three Remdesivir injections from his possession. Interrogation revealed that Kumar works as a security guard at Agrasen International Hospital, Sector-22, Rohini for the last two years. His duty was at Covid ward," he said.

"The accused took injec-

tions from the tray of patients admitted in the Covid ward while they were asleep. He came to deliver three injections at Rs 20,000 for each, while the MRP of one such injection is Rs 3,490, police said.

Meanwhile, the outer district police said they have arrested two men for allegedly selling fake Remdesivir injections.

The accused have been identified as Kamal (25) and Deepak (29), both residents of Shalimar Bagh.

"Police received a police control room (PCR) call on Wednesday that one person was selling duplicate Remdesivir injection. The victim was contacted who told police that he got the information from internet and reached out to him as he required the injection for his uncle who was hospitalised due to COVID," said police.

The suspect called Rahul in Rohini area on May 1 to finalise the deal where he was handed over one Remdesivir injection at Rs 30,000. His uncle, however, passed away before using the injection. The victim



noticed something to be suspicious on injection and called police, police said.

During investigation, the details of the suspect were collected from the complainant and later two persons were apprehended. Police recovered 15 fake Remdesivir injections, Rs 34,000 cash, one car and one oxygen concentrator machine were recovered from their possession, police said, adding that further investigation is underway.

Kamal works as dialysis staff at a hospital in Shalimar Bagh. Deepak is his roommate and runs a firm to provide nurse and attendant to home care patients, police added. Similarly in southeast dis-

trict, a tuition teacher was arrested for allegedly overcharging the Covid related medicines, police said.

The accused has been identified as Abhishek Pruthi, a resident of Govindpuri. He is a private tuition teacher.

On Tuesday, Kalkaji police station got information that one Abhishek Pruthi demanding higher rate for Remdesivir injection.

During investigation, a raid was conducted and the accused was nabbed from his residence. Pruthi disclosed that his family members had become Covid positive and at that time, he purchased numerous Covid related medicines, police said.

After recovery of his family members, he decided to earn money by selling these medicines at higher rates and publicize it through WhatsApp status. The complainant contacted him for medicines but deal could not be finalized and he made PCR call, police said.

One mobile phone and medicines and steroids used in treatment of coronavirus recovered from his possession, police added.

# 19,832 +ve, 341 deaths in 24 hrs

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital recorded 19,832 new cases while the positivity rate dropped below 24.92 per cent. At least 341 Covid-19 deaths were also reported in a day taking the total tally to 18,739 on Friday.

A total of 79,593 tests, including 65,663 RT-PCR tests and 13,930 rapid antigen tests, were conducted the previous day, according to the bulletin issued by the Delhi health department on Friday.

The case positivity rate (24.92 per cent) is lowest since April 16, when it was 19.7 per cent. It is also significant that Delhi's Covid positivity rate has fallen each day during these nine days.

On 27th April, the positivity rate of Delhi was 32.7 per cent on 28th April, it was 31.8, on 29th April, it was 32.8, and on 30th April, the Covid positivity rate was 32.7 per cent.

At the beginning of this month, 1st May recorded a 31.6 positivity rate, which came down to 28.3 on 2nd May, followed by a positivity rate of



An under-construction temporary Covid-19 Care Centre with oxygen support, amid the ongoing second wave of coronavirus pandemic, at Ramtilia Maidan in New Delhi on Friday. PTI

29.6 on 3rd May.

On May 4th, the positivity rate stood at 26.7, on the fifth, this was 26.4 and on 6th it was 24.29 per cent.

From this drop in the positivity rate, it can be concluded that in Delhi the case positivity rate of COVID-19 has dropped by approximately one per cent each day in the last 10 days.

This is the fourth time in the last four days that the

number of new cases remained below 20,000. During these days, the Delhi government has not only ramped up testing but also worked relentlessly in increasing the number of beds across Delhi.

The government is also giving an aggressive push to the vaccination drive, which will further help bring down the positivity rate in the coming days.

According to health bul-

letin, the city had witnessed 335 deaths on Thursday, 311 deaths on Wednesday, 338 on Tuesday, 448 on Monday, the highest so far; 407 on Sunday, 412 on Saturday, 375 on Friday, 395 on last Thursday and 368 on Wednesday last week.

It has so far recorded 129,287 cases, of which over 118,309 have recovered. The death toll due to the viral disease stands at 18,739, the bulletin said.

# Update Covid details on Delhi Corona App, hospitals told

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant step towards preventing hardships faced by the public regarding availability of beds in various hospitals, the Delhi Government has directed all healthcare facilities in the national Capital, including private hospitals, to ensure updated status of different categories of beds regularly on the designated portal and Delhi Corona App.

"It has been reported that many hospitals are not updating the status of different categories of beds regularly on the designated portal and Delhi Corona App. This is creating great hardship to the public who in the absence of reliable information are forced to spend time and energy in searching for vacant

beds and are subjected to great harassment and agony," the Health department stated in its order to all hospitals and nursing homes functioning as Covid facilities.

It also asked the Hospitals to update the bed occupancy and availability status as frequently as possible but not later than every two hours.

"Medical Directors and Superintendents or Directors of all hospitals and nursing homes functioning as Covid hospitals are directed to update the status of beds on portal/Delhi Corona App as frequently as feasible but not later than two hourly," it said.

Nodal Officers and in-charges of the hospital shall be personally responsible for ensuring compliance, the department said in the order.

# Real estate firm comes forward to establish Covid centres in Gurugram, Nuh

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

In an endeavour to combat the shortage of beds for coronavirus patients, the M3M Foundation, is establishing a 150-bedded Covid Care Centre in Gurugram.

The real estate major has also supported with 50 hospital beds at Covid Care Facility at the General Hospital Mandikhera in the Nuh district of Haryana. This Covid facility will be run and managed by the General Hospital Mandikhera at Nuh.

"The sharp surge in coronavirus cases across India has put a strain on India's healthcare system. The shortage of beds and oxygen has caused untold hardships to coron-

avirus patients and their facilities. From time to time, M3M Foundation has undertaken various initiatives for the welfare of the marginalised and vulnerable sections of society. We have provided 50 beds at Nuh to combat the shortage of beds for patients in Haryana. We are also establishing a similar facility in Gurugram. The initiative is in line with our commitment to augmenting the government efforts to tackle the pandemic," said, Roop Bansal, Trustee, M3M Foundation.

The development comes amid more than four lakh Covid-19 cases added across India in the past 24 hours. Out of these, over 4000 have been recorded from Gurugram alone.

# Hospitals in G'gram with 50 beds told to arrange oxygen themselves

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Gurugram, Dr Yash Garg on Friday issued directions to hospitals with capacity of more than 50 beds in the district to arrange their own liquid oxygen requirements.

For this, they can either set up a liquid oxygen plant or arrange a Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA).

These fresh directions were given by the DC during a virtual covid-19 review meeting held on Friday.

"To fulfill oxygen needs in Gurugram it is planned to set up 6 oxygen plants in the district.

Apart from this, the

administration is also trying to set up an oxygen plant under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). By the time these plants are operational, the administration is also arranging oxygen concentrators to increase the supply of oxygen.

The administration has already got about 50 concentrators and efforts are on to arrange 250 to 300 concentrators in the next 7 to 8 days," Garg said.

Besides this, Chief Medical officer Gurugram, Virender Yadav informed that PSA based 1,000 LPM Oxygen Plants will be set up at Civil Hospital, Gurugram and in addition, PSA based 200 - 200 LPM capacity plants will be set up at Sub Divisional Hospitals, Sohna and Pataudi.

# Our timely response to O<sub>2</sub> shortage SOS helped save many lives: Govt

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Friday claimed that its timely intervention in supplying oxygen to hospitals instantly through SOS calls helped to overcome the situation and saved many lives.

"The Government has managed to end the respiratory crisis with better management of oxygen. The steps taken by the Kejriwal Government during the Corona pandemic have brought relief to hospitals from the oxygen problem. Kejriwal Government's Ministers, MLAs, officers are moving ahead and helping people by putting their own lives at risk. So that people of Delhi do not have to face the difficulties, the officers and employees of Delhi Government are working day and night, a statement from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) quoted.

"Our officials received an

SOS call from Indian Spinal Hospital at 14 : 30 hours on Thursday. In this urgent call, immediate oxygen was demanded.

One metric tonne of oxygen was provided to the hospital immediately from the oxygen response point," a Government official said.

"Another SOS call was received from Lok Nayak Hospital at 12 noon. The hospital's oxygen demand was met without delay and two metric tonnes of oxygen was made available to them. Similarly, Irene Hospital in Kalkaji asked for oxygen at around 4.30 pm. By sending 3 cylinders on behalf of the Kejriwal government, the oxygen crisis was overcome by team Kejriwal. Similarly, Kukreja Hospital called SOS at 10.05 am and asked for immediate oxygen. In such a situation, three cylinders were taken from the Rajghat depot to the hospital," he added further.

# Govt to conduct free jab drive for journalists

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Friday said that it will vaccinate journalists against the Covid 19 and bear the entire cost.

"The Government has decided to organise a mass Covid19 vaccination drive for all the media houses (electronic, digital and print media), the Government will organise vaccination drive at their offices and bear the cost," a statement from Delhi Government quoted.

Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Karnataka Government have also announced journalists as frontline warriors and announced vaccinations to them at priority. The Uttar Pradesh Government had said that media officials will be given priority during the vaccination drive against Covid-19. The State Government has said that journalists should be allotted separate centres for inoculation, adding that necessary arrangements should also be made at their workplace to administer the vaccine for

free of cost if required. Besides, the government has directed that family members (18+) of journalists should also be given a vaccine against Covid-19 for free of cost after following all Covid-19 protocols. The order added that all necessary steps should be taken to ensure the safety of media professionals and their family members during the exercise.

Many journalists have lost their lives in their battle against Covid19 covering ground zero amid an unreceptive environment.

# Doctor who also owns ambulance charges ₹1 L from Covid +ve, held

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested a 29-year-old ambulance owner, who is also an MBBS doctor, for allegedly charging over ₹1 lakh from a person to transport a Covid patient to Ludhiana in Punjab from Gurugram.

The accused has been identified as Mimoh Kumar Bundwal, a resident of Dashgarha Village, Inderpuri.

The patient's family member told reporters in Ludhiana that as ambulances were not readily available, they somehow

managed to contact one Delhi-based operator who agreed to take the patient to Ludhiana but demanded ₹1.40 lakh initially.

However, he agreed to charge ₹20,000 less after being told that the family had the oxygen stock with them. An amount of ₹95,000 was paid to the ambulance operator as advance while the remaining ₹25,000 was paid immediately upon reaching Ludhiana, the patient's daughter said.

According to Urvija Goel, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), West district, on

Thursday.

Information was received that a company Cardeacare Ambulance Pvt Ltd at Dashghara Village, Inderpuri was providing ambulance service and looting people by charging two to three times more than the actual rent for transportation of Covid-19 patients.

"During investigation, police traced Bundwal who runs the ambulance service company. He has been arrested in a case registered at Inderpuri police station," said the DCP.



# Call all-party meet on Covid, Sonia tells PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Friday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to urgently convene an all-party meeting on the Covid-19 situation in India. Addressing the Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) meeting, Sonia said the parliamentary panels must be convened to ensure collective action to combat the pandemic better.

The meeting was attended by Congress's Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MPs where she also reviewed and expressed disappointment over the party's performance in just concluded assembly polls. During her initial address, Sonia Gandhi said the Modi Government must urgently call an all-party meeting on the Covid-19 situation in India. "The system hasn't failed but Modi Government has been unable to constructively channelise India's many strengths and resources. The Modi Government has failed the people of our country," alleged Sonia.

Congress president further alleged that the Modi Government has refused to strengthen the supply chains for oxygen, medicine, and ventilators. "Centre failed to place

## CWC to meet soon to review debacle

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Friday expressed her disappointment over the party's performance in the just-concluded Assembly elections. She said it was "unexpectedly so" when she addressed the party MPs during the CPP meeting. Sonia said the CWC (Congress Working Committee) — the party's highest decision-making body — would meet soon to review the results. "But it goes without saying that we, as a party collective, must draw

sufficient orders for vaccines in time to meet the needs of our people," she said. Blaming the Centre for the Central Vista redevelopment project in Lutens Delhi, Sonia Gandhi said that the Modi government allocated thousands of crores for non-essential projects that have nothing to do with the people's well-being.

In her statement, the Congress president also said,

appropriate lessons from this setback in a spirit of humility," Sonia mentioned.

On the occasion, Sonia congratulated Mamata Banerjee for retaining West Bengal and wished the best to MK Stalin for taking his party DMK to a big win.

"Unfortunately, our own performance in all the states was very disappointing and if I may say, unexpectedly so. The CWC is meeting shortly to review results..." Sonia said.

Congress drew a blank in West Bengal, and in Assam — widely seen as a Congress

stronghold until it was breached in 2016 — the party did marginally better, winning 29 of 95 seats it contested. In Kerala, the Congress at least held its ground, losing just one seat from 2016 to finish with 41.

In Tamil Nadu, the party was part of the winning DMK-led alliance and performed relatively better, winning 18 of 25 allocated seats. It, however, failed to return to power in Puducherry — where its Government crashed days before polling — after the NR Congress-BJP pairing won 16 of 30 seats.

Meeting for the first time since the Budget Session of Parliament, the CPP also discussed performance of control rooms set up by the party leaders at state and district level. The Congress president appealed to the party leaders step up relief and support services. She also praised the Youth Congress and said that the efforts by its leaders and volunteers have been particularly noteworthy.



# CRPF to upgrade VIP security training curriculum to SPG level



RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The CRPF has plans to upgrade the training course curriculum of the VIP Security Training Centre (VSTC) to the level of Special Protection Group (SPG) that exclusively secures the Prime Minister.

The CRPF secures a host of high profile VIPs including former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Congress President Sonia Gandhi, her son Rahul and daughter Priyanka besides Union Ministers like Amit Shah and Nitin Gadkari among others.

During a recent visit to the Group Centre at Greater Noida where the VSTC is also located, the CRPF Chief Kuldeep Singh directed the Inspector General of the VIP Security to compare the course curriculum with the SPG and upgrade equipment and training needs

at par with the latter.

The DG also directed the IG to designate days of working in a week for the two locations of the VIP Security Headquarters so that the functioning and record maintenance can be streamlined. The VIP Security Headquarters functions at Delhi and Greater Noida camps.

Presently, the VSTC mainly imparts training in total body strengthening exercise, rope battling, aggression determination persistence (ADP) drills, proximate use of force (PUF), attack and defence tactics besides walk about drills, motorcade drills and rostrum drills, according to the minutes of the DG's visit to the VSTC.

The Blue Book of PM's security is updated by the Secretary (Security) under the Cabinet Secretariat and the specifics, including that of the

**The Blue Book of PM's security is updated by the Secretary (Security) under the Cabinet Secretariat and the specifics, including that of the SPG, are classified due to the information being sensitive in nature, officials said**

SPG, are classified due to the information being sensitive in nature, officials said.

During the DG's visit, the issue of Low Medical Category/overweight personnel in the Force was also highlighted. The medical officers have been directed to not only advise that the men should reduce weight but also suggest techniques to get the desired outcomes, they said.

A point regarding unwillingness of the personnel/officers for induction in VIP security duties due to non-applicability of special allowances was also discussed during Singh's visit to the Group Centre. The officials emphasised that if a person is suitable in all respects for VIP security duty, their unwillingness does not matter. Such persons are bound to perform the duties assigned to them, officials added.

# CAPSI writes to PMO over biological security certification



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Association of Private Security Industry (CAPSI) has written a letter to the PMO on an MoU on biological threat security certification.

CAPSI Chairman K Vikram Singh said that his organisation has signed a MoU with the International Security Industry Organization (ISIO) to offer first-of-its-kind "Certified for Biological Threat Security" (CBTS) certification to master trainers of the private security industry to enhance biological threat security in view of Covid-19 pandemic.

"To deal with biological threat security, we have well-structured plan to equip private security industry with the expertise of dealing with ever emerging biological threats. CAPSI and ISIO jointly formulated a module to train master trainers who can equip the security personnel who manage security protocols on the ground," CAPSI conveyed to PMO.

# Armed forces take up Covid fight on war footing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Armed forces have stepped up their efforts to fight the corona pandemic by way of ferrying oxygen, essential medicines and related equipment to various parts of the country. The IAF, so far, carried out more than 400 sorties airlifting nearly 5,000 metric tons of oxygen while nine warships are now moving towards the Indian shores carrying oxygen.

Moreover, the Army has set up a 500-bed corona specific hospital in Patna while retired doctors of the armed forces have been roped in to provide consultation through telephone to the needy.

Giving details of the nationwide operations conducted by the armed forces, official said here on Friday as of now the C-17 aircraft of the IAF have conducted 400 sorties from within the country, including 351 to airlift 252 oxygen tankers of total capacity of 4,904 Metric Tonnes (MT).

The cities covered were Jamnagar, Bhopal, Chandigarh, Panagarh,



Indore, Ranchi, Agra, Jodhpur, Begumpet, Bhubaneswar, Pune, Surat, Raipur, Udaipur, Mumbai, Lucknow, Nagpur, Gwalior, Vijaywada, Baroda, Dimapur and Hindan.

The IAF aircraft also conducted 59 international sorties to airlift 72 cryogenic oxygen storage containers of 1,233 MT total capacity along with 1,252 empty oxygen cylinders. The containers and cylinders were procured from Singapore, Dubai, Bangkok, UK, Germany, Belgium and Australia. In addition, the C-17 and IL-76 aircraft were also deployed to airlift cryogenic oxygen containers, oxygen generators and ventilators

from Israel and Singapore.

As regards the naval effort, they said INS Talwar, INS Kolkata, INS Airavat, INS Kochi, INS Tabar, INS Trikanth, INS Jalashwa and INS Shardul are deployed to ferry oxygen containers/cylinders/concentrators and related equipment from friendly foreign countries. They include Bahrain, Doha and Singapore.

The Kuwait Embassy here said on Friday, INS Kolkata carrying 40 MT oxygen will return to India from Kuwait on May nine. In total, 215 MT oxygen and 2,600 oxygen cylinders have been sent to Indian so far, the embassy said.

It also informed INS Kochi and INS Tabar departed from Kuwait with a total of 100 MT oxygen and 1,400 cylinders and are expected to reach Mumbai on May 11. Moreover, a commercial vessel carried 75 MT oxygen and 100 oxygen cylinders from Kuwait and expected to arrive in India on May, the embassy said.

In a related development, ex-doctors will now provide online consultation on e-Sanjevani OPD to all citizens of the country. Veterans have come forward to answer the call of the nation and offered their services to help the people needing medical care.

Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar and Director General of Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) Surgeon Vice Admiral Rajat Datta addressed the veterans who have come forward to offer their services, through video conferencing on Friday, officials said.

The e-Sanjevani OPD is a flagship telemedicine platform of the government, developed by the Centre for Development of Advance Computing (C-DAC), Mohali under the aegis of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).

It provides free consultations to Indian citizens and is functioning extremely well. However, due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, the demand for doctors is up while the supply has reduced as doctors are being pulled out for Covid ward duties. This is where the defence veterans are stepping in to help.

# Post-election violence in Bengal part of plot: Hosabale

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

RSS General Secretary Dattatreya Hosabale on Friday described the post-poll violence in West Bengal as "well conspired" and urged the Union Government to take "necessary and all possible steps" to ensure peace there and "to make State Government act" to establish rule of law.

Stating that the violence was "contrary to the Indian principle of peaceful coexistence", the RSS leader said "everywhere from Coochbehar to Sundarbans, there is a widespread fear psychosis among the common people" and thousands of people have been rendered "homeless and looking for refuge."

Hosabale alleged that the state-wide violence unleashed soon after elections "is not only highly condemnable but appears to be well conspired also", he said.

"The anti-social elements active in this abhorring violence, misbehaved with womenfolk in most barbaric and despicable manner, brutally killed the innocent people and torched the houses, shamelessly looted the shops and malls," said the RSS leader in a statement.

"That the role of state administrative machinery was completely passive and they remained mute spectators was the most heinous part of this unabated and inhuman violence", he further said.

# One in three women may have lung damage after one year of recovery from Covid: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

One in three patients particularly women hospitalised for Covid-19 infection even after recovery from the infection may develop lung damage even after a year, according to a study published in The Lancet Respiratory Medicine.

As if this is not enough. Though not part of the study, doctors in India have noted that the pathogen not only harm the lungs but can also cause dangerous blood clots which need to be immediately retrieved to save limbs in some cases.

First about the Lancet study: it showed that even after a year, a third of patients' measures of lung function were reduced, particularly how efficiently oxygen is transferred in the lungs into the blood. This was more frequently found in women than in men.

In around a quarter of patients, CT scans showed there were still small areas of change in the lungs, and this was more common in patients with more severe lung changes at the time of hospitalisation. About 5 per cent of patients still reported breathlessness, found researchers from the University of Southampton in the UK.

"The majority of patients with severe Covid-19 pneumonia appeared to fully recover, although for some patients this took many months. Women were more likely to

have persistent reductions in lung function tests and further investigation is needed to understand if there is a sex-specific difference in how patient's recover," said Mark Jones, Associate Professor in Respiratory Medicine at the varsity.

"We also don't yet know what happens beyond 12 months and this will need ongoing study," Jones added.

The team worked with collaborators in Wuhan, China, to investigate the natural history of recovery from severe Covid-19 pneumonia up to one year after hospitalization. About 83 patients were recruited after they were discharged from the hospital following severe Covid-19 pneumonia and were followed up after three, six, nine and twelve months.

The research provides evidence that routine respiratory follow-up of patients hospitalised with Covid-19 pneumonia is required. It also highlights the need for exploring treatment strategies, including the role of exercise programmes to prevent the development of long term Covid-19 related lung changes.

Hospitals in India are reporting cases of Covid-19 and blood clotting issues as well. In a statement here, Dr Ambarish Satwik, vascular and endovascular surgeon at Delhi's Sir Ganga Ram Hospital said, "We are dealing with five-six such cases per week on average. This week it has been one day of such complications."

# States told to depute AYUSH professionals for Covid mgmt



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move that might raise eyebrows of doctors of modern medicine, the Union Ayush Ministry on Friday issued advisory to the States and UTs asking them to deploy the trained AYUSH human resources available with them for clinical management of Covid-19 cases.

The move aims to augment human resources for the management of Covid-19 cases with the availability of a pool of 8 lakh qualified AYUSH professionals.

Ministry of AYUSH is also supporting States/UTs in the development/ conversion of AYUSH hospitals to Covid appropriate facilities. "This could add 50,000 beds, 750 Ayush hospitals (presently AYUSH medical colleges), and 86 clinical facilities (at National Institutes and Research Units of Ministry of AYUSH) to the Covid-19 infrastructure

"The decision to deploy Ayush professionals to the frontlines of the Covid-19 war is in continuation of decisions taken a few days back to boost availability of medical personnel to fight the virus such as postponement of the NEET-PG Exam, giving priority to medical personnel completing 100 days of Covid duties in forthcoming regular Government recruitments and deployment of medical interns in Covid Management duties under the supervision of their faculty," said an official from the Ministry.

He said that Ayush doctors are institutionally qualified professionals, well-trained in various aspects of medical care. They have already proven their competence in various Covid-19 management roles in different institutions across the country.

Some of the institutions under the Ministry of AYUSH like the All-India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi which functions as a Covid-19 Care Centre, are efficiently managing Covid-19 cases at present, he added.

Further, States/UTs have trained nearly 1.06 lakh AYUSH professionals in different aspects of Covid-19 management, and 28,473 professionals have been deployed for Covid-19 activities.

Training to AYUSH professionals in different aspects of Covid-19 management was also provided, said the official.

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01	13/05/21 at 0900 Hrs	GC, CRPF, Srinagar (J&K)	29 Bn (Budgam) J&K	01	Below 70 years as on date of Walk-in-interview	Rs. 75,000/-	● MBBS ● Internship
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			24 Bn (Kulgam) J&K	01			
			162 Bn (Kupwara) J&K	01			
			92 Bn (Sopore) J&K	01			
			180 Bn (Pulwama) J&K	01			
			182 Bn (Pulwama) J&K	01			
			25 Bn (Budgam) J&K	01			
			35 Bn (Budgam) J&K	01			
			44 Bn (Srinagar) J&K	01			
			53 Bn (Baramulla) J&K	01			
			96 Bn (Anantnag) J&K	01			
			176 Bn (Badgam) J&K	01			
			CH, CRPF, N/DLI	PDG			
CH, CRPF, Jammu	CH, CRPF, Jammu	01					
<b>Total</b>			<b>18</b>				

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# Air India to operate flight from London to Mumbai from May 16 to May-end

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Air India on Friday announced that it will operate flights between London Heathrow airport to Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru from May 16 to May end. Passengers who are already booked on these dates and wish to travel, will be required to revalidate their bookings. The national carrier has issued a list of days on which the flights won't operate and have advised passengers to revalidate their bookings accordingly.

For instance, though Air India flights connecting Mumbai to London Heathrow will operate from May 16 to May 30, flights on this route will not be available on May 17, 19, 24, and 26. For flights between Delhi to London Heathrow, Air India said that they will operate from May 16 to May 31, except on May 22 and 29.

Similarly, Air India flights from London Heathrow to Mumbai will operate from May 17 to May 31, except on May 18,



23, 25, and 30. Air India has further informed that flights from Bengaluru to London Heathrow will operate on May 17, 19, 24, 26, and 31, and those from London Heathrow to Bengaluru will operate on May 16, 18, 23, 25, and 30.

"With reference to recent guidelines announced by UK Government, passengers before planning their travel are requested to read the guidelines carefully. Updated advisory available at <http://airindia.in/United-Kingdoms.htm>," Air India said in a tweet.

"It will be the sole responsibility of the passengers to ensure his/her eligibility to enter the destination country. Air India will accept no liability in

this regard," it added.

"To book Air India flights to and from London, flyers can visit the official Air India website, mobile app, booking offices, call centre, or authorised travel agents. Flyers have been advised to check the UK government guidelines carefully before booking their tickets," it said.

Earlier on April 23, the United Kingdom had banned the entry for travellers from India after Public Health England (PHE) confirmed 55 more cases of the so-called double mutant Indian variant, B.1.617, from all coronavirus cases tracked until April 14, taking the total for the Variant Under Investigation (VUI) in the UK to 132.

# UNSC must include India for credible global leadership: Govt

IANS ■ NEW DELHI/NEW YORK

The Government on Friday reiterated that India should be included in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) if the international body wants to be seen as a credible global leader.

In his statement at the high-level meeting of the UNSC on 'Maintenance of international peace and security: upholding multilateralism and the United Nations-centered international system,' Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla said, "At the core of India's call for reformed multilateralism, lies the reform of the UN Security Council, reflective of the contemporary realities of today." When power structures continue to reflect the status quo of a bygone era, they also start reflecting a lack of appreciation of contemporary geopolitical realities, he said.

# BJP to boycott Bengal Assembly session

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

## POST POLL VIOLENCE

The Bengal BJP has said that it will continue to boycott the Assembly session till the incidents of post-poll violence throughout the State on its workers ends.

Emerging from a meeting of the BJP Legislature party members Bengal party president on Friday said that "our workers and supporters are being attacked every day and their houses and lives are under threat just because they voted against the TMC ... we have decided that we will not attend the Assembly session until the this violence stops."

BJP will not attend the swearing-in ceremony of the Assembly Speaker on Saturday and the subsequently the State Ministers on May 11, sources said.

According to reports Biman Banerjee will be sworn

in as the Speaker for the third time in a row. There was no other nomination for the post, sources said.

Ghosh's statement came even as violence continued with an ABVP supporter being beaten up at Barasat and a TMC supporter getting attacked at De Ganga. Party MP Locket Chatterjee who too contested the Assembly elections unsuccessfully was attacked on Friday she said.

"The kind of violence we are witnessing is unprecedented ... our MLAs cannot come to Kolkata and those who have come here cannot return to their places ... besides they have to make arrangements for the workers who have been rendered homeless ... so we cannot attend the Session," Ghosh said.

The State BJP's decision

came on a day when the Union Home Ministry team visiting Bengal to inquire into the alleged violence on Friday visited Satgachia and Noda Khali area of South 24 Parganas.

Dismissing Ghosh's claims senior Bengal Minister Partho Chatterjee said that "the BJP has no face to attend the Assembly after such a defeat ... They are a frustrated lot ... so they are trying make an alibi violence."

Another senior Minister Firhad Hakim said that "the BJP has no respect for democracy which proved by their decision to boycott the swearing-in of the Speaker which is unprecedented."

Meanwhile 10 people had so far been arrested for attacking the convoy of Union Minister V Muralidhar on Thursday.

# STALIN SWORN IN AS 26TH CM OF TN

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Sixty-nine-year old MK Stalin, president of the SDMK, was sworn as the 26th Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in a simple function held at Chennai Raj Bhavan on Friday morning.

Governor Banwarilal Purohit administered oath of office and secrecy to Stalin who introduced himself as Muthuvel Karunanidhi Stalin while he read out the oath. It was an emotional moment for Durga, Stalin's spouse, who was sitting in the VIP row in Raj Bhavan watching her husband mantling the role of the chief minister. Durga, who had undertaken pilgrimages to all famous holy shrines in South India for the health and strength of Stalin, was seen weeping with joy as her husband was sworn in.

Stalin's son Udhayanidhi and his family, daughter Senthamarai and her industrialist husband Sabareesh and their children were present during the swearing in ceremony.

Along with Stalin, 33 of his colleagues were sworn in as ministers. Some of the departments have been renamed in view of the changed times and to drive home the new priorities.

Durai Murugan, the number two in the Cabinet, has been designated as Minister for Water Resources, Irrigation Projects and Small Irrigation instead of the traditional Public Works Department.

All close confidantes of Stalin have been assigned crucial departments while M Subramanian, the former Mayor of Chennai, who had been given the task of promoting Udhayanidhi in the party hierarchy, has been assigned the charge of medical and family welfare.



"Subramanian is expected to play a major role in devising strategies to take on the pandemic."

The Chief Minister's first decision after the swearing in was to declare financial aid of ₹4,000 to each family holding rice ration cards. He also issued orders bringing the treatment cost for Covid-19 under the Chief Minister's Health Insurance Scheme," Prof S Vincent, former dean, Loyola College, Chennai who was also the member secretary of Tamil Nadu State Science and Technological Council told "zThe Pioneer.

In two other significant decisions, Chief Minister Stalin brought down the price of milk by ₹3/-per litre and made bus travel free of cost for all women.

A separate department has been set up to ensure the speedy disposal of the memorandums he had collected during the campaign in the first 100 days of office,

"This is a paradigm shift in governance hitherto missing in Tamil Nadu. These are all welcome changes," said Dr Vincent.

The first full fledged cabinet meeting would be held later in the evening at Fort Saint George.

# 5,443 +ve, 50 deaths in J&K in 24 hours

Jammu: With no signs of improvement in the Covid-19 situation, the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir on Friday reported a record single-day spike of 5,443 new cases even as 50 more patients died in the last 24 hours.

Amid reports of shortage of beds across different hospitals in Jammu, Lt Gov Manoj Sinha conducted a tour of several local hospitals including GMC, Jammu to take stock of the infrastructure and patient care management in Covid care hospitals.

During the high level review meeting LG was informed that the trial run of 2400 LPM capacity Oxygen Generation Plant in GMC Jammu is going on and the same would be made fully functional by May 8, 2021 enabling the addition of about 125 Covid dedicated beds in the Government Medical College hospital, Jammu.

Meanwhile, 2752 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals including 954 from Jammu Division and 1798 from Kashmir Division.

According to the media bulletin, out of 5443 new positive cases of novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), 1868 were reported from Jammu division and 3575 from Kashmir division. Also 50 COVID-19 deaths have been reported, 29 from Jammu Division and 21 from Kashmir Division. **PNS**



People buy vegetables in a market ahead of the weekend Covid-19 lockdown in Bikaner on Friday

# Rangasamy sworn in as Puducherry CM

## BJP to be part of Cabinet

Puducherry: AINRC leader N Rangasamy was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Puducherry at a brief ceremony held at the Raj Nivas here on Friday and will lead a coalition Government of BJP members in his Cabinet.

While Karnataka is the lone southern State with the BJP in the ruling saddle, its induction in the UT cabinet allows the saffron party expand its footprint, vis-a-vis power in the region. Incidentally, it fared well in neighbouring Tamil Nadu, where it won four assembly seats in the Dravidian heartland in the April 6 polls.

Union Minister of State for Home and BJP leader Kishan Reddy, who attended the swearing-in ceremony today, told reporters that BJP and AINRC

would have three ministers each and they would be sworn in over the next few days.

BJP's A Namassivayam, who was elected unanimously as the leader of the BJP legislature wing, is tipped to be deputy chief minister.

On Friday afternoon, Lt Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan administered the oath of office and secrecy to Rangasamy, giving him his fourth stint in office of CM.

Rangasamy, the only legislator to be sworn-in today, took the oath in Tamil and in the name of God.

The swearing in of the other ministers belonging to the AINRC and BJP would be held in the next few days, AINRC party sources said.

Of the three BJP members in the cabinet, one would be deputy CM.

A BJP source told PTI that

Namassivayam would be Rangasamy's deputy, in the first such instance of the UT having a deputy CM.

Six Ministers are likely to be sworn in in the next couple of days and this would ultimately bring the strength of the Puducherry Ministry to seven, including Rangasamy.

AINRC won 10 seats and

the BJP six in the 30-member house, giving them the simple majority to form government.

There are six independents elected to the House, who are by and large supporters of Rangasamy.

The DMK emerged victorious from six segments of the 13 seats it contested. **PTI**

## 11 of 183 people at venue of CM's swearing-in test positive

Puducherry: A mobile team of the Health Department of Puducherry examined each of the 183 people at the venue of swearing-in of Chief Minister N Rangasamy on Friday and found 11 of them were infected with Covid-19.

Of the 11, nine were police personnel and the remaining two invitees to the function, a

press release said.

The 11 were denied permission to enter the venue and were sent to a hospital.

The territorial administration observed safety protocols and examined all who turned up for the function.

Admission to the venue was restricted to a limited number of people. **PTI**

# Curfew in Goa for 15 days from tomorrow

PTI ■ PANAJI

The Goa Government on Friday announced a 15-day curfew in the State from May 9 to contain the spread of coronavirus infection.

In another decision, carrying negative COVID-19 test report or a vaccination certificate has been made mandatory for visitors from other states.

During the curfew period, grocery shops can remain open from 9 am to 1 pm while there would be no restrictions on pharmacies and other medical facilities, said Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. The decision to impose curfew had to be taken as people are disobeying existing restrictions, he told reporters.

# FTII students demand suspension of online classes

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Unrest is brewing within the Pune-based Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) campus over the administration's decision to enforce online classes as "mandatory attendance criteria" for the newly admitted 2020 batch students.

Having lodged a informal protest with the FTII administration to this effect, the FTII Students' Association (FTIISA) on Friday demanded that online classes to be suspended immediately in line with a similar decision taken by the Satyajit Ray Film & Television Institute (SRFTI) and other institutions, including the Delhi University.

In a joint statement issued to the media, FTII Students' Association (FTIISA) and its general secretary Rajarshi Majumdar said: "We are witnessing an exponential increase in cases each day and people are struggling to avail medical facilities. FTII administration has been enforcing Mandatory online classes for the newly admitted 2020 batch students.

The students of this batch have been raising various concerns about the online medium of education over the last one month.

"In reply FTII administration is strangling students with mandatory attendance criteria which are a violation of the attendance criteria mentioned in

the UGC guidelines for online classes," the two FTII students leaders said.

Sathvin and Majumdar said FTII chairman Shekar Kapur "is reluctant to meet us and has given us a date 11 days later from now for a meeting to discuss our urgent concerns".

"We are sad and concerned to state students, faculties, staff members and the families are being affected not just by COVID 19 but also by financial and mental health issues associated with it. The students of FTII are from different parts of the country and it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to attend classes amid this health crisis," the two FTII student leaders said.

Sathvin and Majumdar said that the SRFTI administration had withdrawn online classes for the new batch after the students had addressed their concerns. "We are also seeing multiple other institutions including Delhi University which has suspended their online medium of education at this point of the pandemic," they said.

Seeking to make a case for an early meeting with the FTII "to understand our concerns during devastating phase of the pandemic to bring in an immediate suspension of the online classes," the two FTII student leaders said: "We also demand that the administration should stop enforcing mandatory attendance criteria and help the students get the stipulated class hours when we get back to the campus".

# Kerala logs 38,460 new cases

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The number of Covid-19 patients in Kerala crossed the four lakh mark on Friday and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan asked people in the State not to come out of their homes unless it is for an emergency. "There are 4,02,650 patients undergoing treatment for Covid-19 across the State on Friday evening. The last 12 hours saw 38,460 new persons getting diagnosed with Covid-19. The State also saw 54 persons succumbing to Covid-19 during the last 24 hours," said Vijayan in his daily media briefing.

He said the nine-day long total lockdown would come into effect from this midnight and asked the people to adhere without failure to the regulations and controls imposed by the government. Thattu Kada, favorite roadside eatery joints across Kerala have been asked to down their shutters till the end of the lockdown period, said Vijayan.

The situation in the State has reached a flashpoint as the chief minister asked people not to come together even inside their houses. "Even if you are staying inside the house, wear masks and wash hands frequently. Avoid sitting together for prayers and food. Say your prayers and have your food in separate rooms till the pandemic subsides," said the chief minister.

Banks in the State have been asked to open for business on alternate days. "All Banks in the State will function only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays,"

said the chief minister.

The day saw the police head quarters asking the executive not to have any relaxation during the lockdown periods.

This made the administration to ban even inter district travel. Chief Minister Vijayan lambasted a section of the media for spreading fake news that there were no facilities in the crematoriums in the State.

Vijayan said that medical experts have told him that the pandemic has the potential for high speed transmission and this could lead to a further hike in the number of Covid-19 patients and fatalities. "People coming from other parts of the country to Kerala should carry with them the RT-PCR certificates failing which they would have to undergo quarantine for a period of 14 days," said Vijayan.

Elsewhere in the State, the district of Ernakulam which has the highest number of Covid-19 patients would become out of bound for people from other districts. The borders of the district would be closed from tonight and the entire region would be treated as a containment zone. This report itself is dispatched from a containment zone in the district.

The shortage of beds, oxygen cylinders and ventilators in the hospitals continue in Kerala. The Chief Minister deplored media reports about crematoriums getting filled with dead bodies and patients being transported to hospitals in two wheelers.

# Maha to set up 'Covid Paediatric Task Force' to tackle rise in Covid among children

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

With the incidence of coronavirus infections among children on the increase, Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope on Friday announced that the State Government would set up a "Covid Paediatric Task Force" to check and treat the spread of Covid-19 virus among the children.

Four days after Maharashtra's Tourism and Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray mooted the idea of a paediatric covid care wards in Mumbai in anticipation of third wave of the pandemic in the state, Tope made a formal announcement about the formation of "Covid Paediatric Task Force"

Talking to media persons here, Tope said: "The state government will soon form a Covid Task Force of Paediatricians to check and treat the Covid-19 infections among children and also formulate the paediatric treatment protocols, etc".

Currently, more than 10,000 children are undergoing treatment for Covid-19 hospitals in hospitals across the state, a

development that establishes the increasing incidence of pandemic among the children.

The Covid-19 incidence statistics reveal that Maharashtra has till date recorded 149,224 infections among the children in the 1-10 age group and 338,397 in the 11-20 age, which together accounts for 9.97 per cent of the state's total caseload. A

majority of the two age groups - barring those above 18 - have not yet been cleared for vaccination by the Centre.

Tope said that in the midst of "second wave" of Covid-19 in the state, the MVA was gearing up to tackle the "third wave" of the pandemic which many apprehend was in the offing.

## Govt to fill up 16K vacancies in Health dept

Mumbai: Amid the increased apprehension of a "third wave" of Covid-19 hitting the State in the coming weeks, Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope on Friday announced that the State Government would soon fill 16,000 plus vacancies in the Public Health Department.

In his interaction with the media, Tope said that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had given an informal go ahead to the proposal to fill up vacancies in the Public Health Department on "an urgent basis". "A formal decision in this regard will be taken at a State Cabinet meeting at the earliest," he said. Tope said that while 12,000 posts fall in the Groups C & D and the rest 4,000 are equally divided in Groups A & B categories.

Earlier, the state government had allowed 50 percent recruitment to the vacant posts but it could not be implemented owing the Maratha reservations issue before the Supreme Court.

After the Thursday's Supreme Court verdict and also due to the apprehensions about a possible "third wave" of Covid-19 in the state, Tope said that the state government would go ahead and fill up all the vacant posts which would come in handy at a time when there will be a huge need of manpower to combat the pandemic.

# Raj to set up O2 plants across State

JAIPUR: With the objectivity of increasing the availability of medical oxygen in the State, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot decided to make land use conversion free by ensuring 100 per cent exemption in lease amount for setting up oxygen plants on agricultural land.

According to the proposal, oxygen gas plants are to be set up in various district headquarters and other cities of the State by local urban bodies through their resources or private institutions. "As such, under the Rajasthan Urban Areas (Permission for use of Agricultural Land for Non-agricultural Purposes and Allotment) Rules, 2012, 100% exemption will be given in the premium and lease amount payable for land use conversion.

# UP panchayat poll: Wrong candidates declared winners, additional returning officer booked

PTI ■ GORAKHPUR

An FIR has been registered against a Government official deputed as additional returning officer (ARO) in the Uttar Pradesh panchayat polls for allegedly giving winning certificates to candidates who lost, an official said on Friday. Additional returning officer (ARO) Virendra Kumar has been booked for cheating, forgery and fraud on a complaint from Returning Officer Sunil Kumar, a senior police official said.

On Wednesday night, there were incident of arson in Nai Bazar police outpost by the supporters of the candidates who alleged that they was not declared winner due to fraud committed by the official. Police have arrested 18

people and lodged four separate FIRs in connection with vandalism and arson of the police outpost.

After the counting of votes on Tuesday, Ravi Nishad, a candidate of district Panchayat ward number 60, and Kodai Nishad, of ward number 61, claimed they have won the election with over 2,000 votes, but the administration didn't give them certificate.

On Wednesday morning, certificates of victory was given to Gopal Yadav for ward number 60 and Ramesh for ward number 61.

The supporters of Ravi and Kodai held a demonstration at Nai Bazar crossing, pelted stones, and also set ablaze the police post there.

Taking note of the incident, District Magistrate Vijendra

Pandiyam ordered matching of votes booth-wise and declared both Ravi and Kodai winners on Thursday.

"An FIR has been lodged against ARO Virendra Kumar, who is an executive engineer in the irrigation department. A letter recommending action against him would be sent to the State Election Commission," the DM said.

Police said, "Four cases under various IPC sections have been lodged against 60 named and 500 unidentified people in connection with the vandalism. Based on CCTV footage, we have arrested 18 people and are looking for others."

SSP Dinesh P Kumar said strict action would be taken against those involved in the arson.



Trains parked at the Guwahati Railway Station in Guwahati on Friday

# Lion found dead near Gujarat's Gir forest

Ahmedabad: A lion was found dead on the outskirts of a village located close to Gujarat's Gir forest, a forest official said on Friday.

The carcass of a lion, aged between five to nine years, was found by a patrolling party near Navabandar village of Gir-Somnath district on Thursday afternoon, the official said.

While nothing suspicious was found at the spot, canine teeth marks were visible on the carcass, chief conservator of forest D T Vasavada said.

"The field staff also spotted multiple pugmarks of lions at the spot, which confirmed the presence of several animals in that area. The carcass was taken to Jasadhar rescue centre, where a post-mortem was conducted," the official said. **PTI**



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Cryptic message

Swamy's suggestion to Modi on empowering Gadkari has deeper political connotations

He is a rare breed of politicians, among those very few leaders who don't mince words and generally render stinging advice to their own party bosses that often leaves the leadership uncomfortable and red-faced. The BJP's Subramanian Swamy is not exactly famous for toeing the party's line and, true to his image of taking on even the Government if needed, he has recently stated that the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) cannot be relied upon in the war on the pandemic. Going a step further, he also requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make Union Minister Nitin Gadkari the incharge of COVID-19 management. The decision, of course, rests with the Government but Swamy's statements have deeper political connotation. Though the Centre is now seen making all-out efforts to rein in the pandemic, it cannot be denied that the contagion is far from tamed and that the country was caught totally unprepared when the second wave of COVID-19, far more virulent and ferocious than the first, hit us. Our healthcare and related infrastructure is creaking under its killing weight due to the acute shortage of medical oxygen, hospital beds, essential medicines and so on. No doubt, the image of the Government and the Prime Minister has taken a beating among the masses. With Modi being the sole face the BJP banks upon, the party doesn't want to run the risk of the citizenry relating his persona to their plight in the ensuing polls.

Being a seasoned politician, Swamy seems to feel that under the persisting circumstances Modi's face might not augur well for the party's poll prospects, as has been proved by the recent Assembly poll results, and hence it's necessary to project someone else with an independent face value and credibility, such as Gadkari. Obviously, the innate message Swami wants to project is that the BJP is not only about Modi and that there are others who can be relied upon in this hour of crisis. The veteran leader wants to convey that the party is bigger than the PM or the PMO. The assertion that the PMO is "useless" also indicates that Modi is listening too much to the advice of his close courtiers, including top bureaucrats, which might not always be sane and in the larger interest of the party. Perhaps, Swamy wants Modi to rely more on his own wisdom and that of the party stalwarts during these trying times rather than depending upon the bureaucrats and other yes-men who dare not differ with him. The utterances might be a signal to the Prime Minister that it's time to revisit the strategies for tackling the pandemic and give more responsibility to leaders like Gadkari, who are good in management and planning. The nation has expressed confidence in Modi's leadership for two consecutive terms and we expect him to do whatever is imperative to save us from the raging contagion. As of now, successfully defeating the accursed virus is about the only thing that will brighten his prospects and that of the BJP's for a third term.

### PICTALK



Devotees outside the Mecca Masjid on the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan, in Hyderabad

## Touching base

At least 17 mountaineers test positive for COVID at the 17,600-ft Mount Everest Base Camp

When the Coronavirus pandemic broke out last year, no one had imagined that one day it would spread to one of the highest and most difficult-to-access places on the planet, the Mt Everest Base Camp. However, now a whopping 17 climbers have tested positive and more are suspected to be infected. The blame for this Himalayan disaster lies at the door of Nepalese Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli. Just like India, Nepal is in the grip of a major Coronavirus outbreak with the national positivity rate at a staggering 47 per cent, and the nation battling a shortage of vaccines, hospital beds and oxygen. Meanwhile, Oli, in the middle of a political crisis too, is facing stringent criticism for his mishandling of the health emergency. The beleaguered Oli has now appealed for international aid to help the Himalayan country tide over this crisis. Though the help will not be long in coming, Oli and the Government have a lot to answer for. Despite the raging pandemic, his Government did not think twice before opening the doors to foreign climbers who wanted to make the most of the spring climbing season. In fact, Nepal gave nearly 400 permits to foreign climbers by April end, almost the same number as in 2019, before the pandemic hit the world.

Many experts had warned then that it was only a matter of time before the Coronavirus made its way to the world's highest peak, and their worst fears have come true. Now, Nepal is sitting on a super-spreader, not just because of the crowded camps and the rotating crew of porters and yak drivers but also due to the fact that it does not have the wherewithal to handle the spread of the virus at that altitude. Besides, the fact that the High-Altitude Pulmonary Edema — which a lot of mountaineers face — resembles the COVID-19 symptoms makes it more difficult for the disease to be diagnosed correctly and contained. It is evident that the Nepal Government's reliance on Mt Everest as a source of revenue overruled better judgement; it has already collected more than \$3.8 million in fees from climbing permits this year, and the amount that climbers spend in the country typically accounts for over \$300 million. Though the Government is trying to deny the Base Camp outbreak, it is again being forced to close its doors to the world. One wonders if the revenue earned from the climbers and tourism was worth it.

# Recognising the Armenian pogrom



PRİYADARSHI DUTTA

The US has formally acknowledged the 1915 genocide but, for obvious reasons, Turkish President Erdogan isn't happy about it

Belatedly but formally, the US has recognised the Armenian Genocide (1915-17). President Joe Biden, on April 24, 2021, recalled how "one-and-a-half million Armenians were deported, massacred or marched to their deaths in campaigns of extermination" in Ottoman Turkey. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, along expected lines, has deplored the American stand. Calling it "opening a wound that's hard to fix in our relations", Erdogan has appealed for reversal of the genocide recognition.

Turkey, an important NATO member, has always been dismissive of the Armenian genocide allegation. In the past, the US had refrained from antagonising its stalwart ally. On February 28, 1990 — in the face of a vigorous opposition by Turkey — the Senate blocked a resolution proposed by Senator Bob Dole calling upon the US Government to commemorate the mass death of Armenian civilians during World War I. The demand resurfaced six years later when a group of 100 prominent American scholars and writers signed a petition dated February 2, 1996, that dubbed the "denial of genocide as the final stage of genocide". This petition resulted in a hearing on the "History of Armenian Genocide" before the Committee on International Relations, the House of Representatives.

Levon Marshallian, a professor of history at the Glendale Community College, California, appearing as a witness before the Committee, reminded it how the genocide was acknowledged in contemporaneous Turkey. In 1919, the National Congress of Turkey had accepted overwhelming evidence provided by the US on the genocide. It had declared that the "guilt" of the Turkish officials who "conceived and deliberately carried out the infernal policy of extermination and robbery is patent". The official Turkish gazette, *Takvimi Vekayi*, published the verdict of post-war Ottoman trials of those officials. The Turkish court ruled that the intention of the Ottoman



leaders was "organisation and execution" of the "crime of massacre". In 1951, Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet had described those incidents as a "black stain on the forehead of the Turkish people".

In 1933, Austrian-Bohemian writer Franz Werfel wrote *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* (originally in German) which focuses on self-defence measures taken by a small community of Armenians living in Musa Dagh, a mountain vilayat (province) of Aleppo, southern Turkey, against the Young Turk Government's marauders. It was adapted into a film in 1982.

America's insular character in the pre-World War I era notwithstanding, Americans have been vocal about the ordeal of Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire even in the 19th century. In 1896, Reverend AW Williams of Chicago, in collaboration with MS Gabriel of the Armenian Patriotic Alliance in New York, produced a tome *Bleeding Armenia: Its History and Horrors under of Curse of Islam*. The same year, Frederick Davis Green conjured up the horrors inflicted on Armenians in *Armenian Massacres of the Sword of Mohammed*. But such "thrilling accounts

of terrible atrocities and wholesale murders committed by Mohammedan fanatics" were demonstratively coloured by religious prejudices. The authors were no less actuated by the desire of quick sale of those titles than by Christian piety. However, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (1918) by Henry Morgenthau, the US Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire (1913-1916), is considered as the first definitive report on the Armenian genocide. Morgenthau was Jewish who could not be suspected of Christian susceptibilities. In earlier times, the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire were not allowed to bear arms. They were easy targets of butchery, rapine and rape by the Turks. However, the Young Turk Movement (July 1908) that liberalised the Ottoman Government also gave the Christians the right to bear arms. Every Turkish city contained thousands of Armenians, trained as soldiers and possessing weapons. Therefore, the massacres during World War I attained a character of warfare than wholesale butcheries of defenceless men and women. The Armenian genocide

tells more about Turks than about Armenians. It reveals how the transformation of a Caliphate into a 'secular' republic in Turkey promoted racial exclusiveness rather than fostering tolerance, inclusivity and the rule of law. While secularism stripped the Christian subjects of the autonomy of *millat*, enjoyed under the Ottoman emperors, it failed to accommodate them as equal citizens. While it is still possible to speak of "Arab Christians" (despite the ordeal of Christians in Arab States), it is never possible to speak of "Christian Turks" even though Kemal Ataturk founded the nation-State of Turkey on the ideals of secularism. The extermination of the ancient Greek community in Smyrna by the Young Turks in September 1922 — described by George Horton in *The Blight of Asia* (1926) — was another tragedy comparable to the Armenian genocide. The foundational legacy of the modern republic often returns to haunt Turkey. No wonder, Erdogan wants to shelve the debate on Armenian genocide.

(The writer is an author and independent researcher based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### PREPARE TO DEAL WITH THE THIRD WAVE

Sir — We all have failed to contain the second wave of the COVID pandemic. Our preparedness to fight the lethal virus has been in a shambles and the gruesomeness of the pandemic continues with no sign of a let-up. It is during these trying times that the Principal Scientific Advisor to Prime Minister announced the possibility of a third wave without specifying the possible timeline or the probable target age group. This announcement makes little difference as we are not prepared at all for the upcoming danger in the form of a third wave and are too occupied in dealing with the current crisis. People are facing immense trouble due to overcrowded crematoriums and graveyards. We are still not working on logistics and mobilisation of resources to deal with the future third wave which can invade us sooner than later. Being indifferent to impending danger doesn't make it less damaging or lethal.

The Centre and the States now have to be ready with a rational plan to manage the next wave. The whole country needs a plan for the supply of all critical care components, including testing kits and medicines. The Centre has to urgently ramp up testing and vaccination, without which we will be left paralysed. Amid this shameful state of affairs inside the country, the fact that those in External Affairs Minister Jaishankar's team turned positive after reaching London has become matter of embarrassment for us worldwide.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

### HANDLE THE COVID SITUATION IN HARYANA

Sir — Kudos to the Supreme Court and the Delhi High Court as because of these courts the Delhi Government has managed to get its quota of medical oxygen. Whereas, on the other hand, Capital's neighbouring State Haryana is facing crisis and has come to a position where it can only beg for its allocated quota of oxygen. The hospitals and nursing homes in the State are facing shortage of medical oxygen and people are struggling for it. The

## Proud of our real heroes



Doctors, nurses and paramedics are frontline workers during the pandemic and they are our heroes. Even philanthropists, who donate millions of dollars to the Government to help the nation during a crisis, are no match to the selfless service by our healthcare workers who risk their lives to save COVID patients. But there are other real-life heroes also, who have gone out of their way to aid the distressed and the needy during these difficult times. They are ordinary in appearance and living, but are the real unsung heroes of our country. Courageous human beings do the right thing even when nobody is noticing. They do not hesitate to lend a helping hand whenever it is sought. They are oblivious to plau-

dist that may come their way when their virtuous deeds are spotted. The sole intention of these real heroes is to make our country a better place to live in at a time when scarcity of essential services has become the rule. People have even offered their commercial establishments for treatment purposes. Further, oxygen 'langars' are being organised to help the hospitals and patients. Free medical consultations, free food and medicines, free ferrying of patients and relatives — good samaritans are helping everyone everywhere. The helping tendency of our heroes in these testing times, to provide succour to the disadvantaged and the ailing, goes beyond the imagination of mere mortals and are stories of hope and confidence for the country. Comforting others comes at a huge cost: putting one's own finances and routine on the line. Many a time, the real-life heroes are subjected to vilified campaigns by social media commentators. However, these noble men and women don't give a hoot to the unemployed slanderers.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

### PUNISH HOARDERS, BLACK MARKETEERS

Sir — The healthcare system in the country has not collapsed but it is overburdened by the excessive number of COVID cases. In the face of pandemic, the biggest sufferers are poor, however when people are struggling to find beds in hospitals and arrange oxygen cylinders for their loved ones there are many ambulance drivers

who are charging exorbitantly (upto 500 per cent of normal charges) for rendering their services. Further, injections like Remdesivir are sold in black market at high prices, oxygen cylinders are also available to those who are ready to pay several times more than the normal price. When people are grieving, profiteering and black marketing by some anti-social elements is real disservice to the nation. The need-of-hour is that the Government should not be a mute spectator to these anti-national acts and take a strict action against profiteers, black marketeers, hoarders and ambulance drivers who charge in excess, by slapping the National Security Act against them.

Ramesh G Jethwani | Bengaluru

## SOUNDBITE

The administration and arrangement of oxygen plants should be handed over to the military and the paramilitary for their safe and smooth functioning.

Haryana Home Minister — Anil Vij

We are committed to ensuring the security of our ally, the Republic of Armenia. This has been confirmed in your talks with President Putin.

Russian Foreign Minister — Sergey Lavrov

The beauty of the Nilgiris and the creative exchange with my co-actors that I had during the shoot of 'Out Of Love 2' will always stay with me.

Actor — Rasika Dugal

The 2021 T20 World Cup should be held in India only if it is not going to be a drain on the country's resources in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Australian cricketer — Pat Cummins

Most unfortunately, our performance in all the States was very disappointing and, if I may say it, unexpectedly so.

Congress president — Sonia Gandhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

**FIRST COLUMN**

**JAGMOHAN WAS A MULTIFACETED MAN**

Not once did he allow his political considerations to outweigh his administrative propriety



AMOD KANTH

In 1973, I came to Delhi, almost an ignorant stranger, for the first time, to work and study with my old friends, some of them from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus at Sapru House Barakhamba Road and some others coming from Delhi University (DU) campus. I lived in the hostel of Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) which became the favourite joint of my friends for its inexpensive food and we divided our time between the Sapru House canteen and library. Along with my friends who were getting indoctrinated in the JNU culture and budding scholarships alongside Civil Services preparations, I used to spend considerable time in the famous Sapru House library. The new JNU campus was yet to come up. While my friends from the School of International Studies were deep into their research and highly romanticised lives, I was developing my own interest in urban planning and governance. I met some scholars and the librarian to find who was the most knowledgeable to introduce me to the city of Delhi. Without exception everyone pointed at a bespectacled person, named Jagmohan, sitting alone in one corner of the library, deeply engrossed in some books.



When I told Jagmohan that I wanted to meet him to learn about the past and contemporary Delhi from a planning and public administration angle, he asked me not to speak in the library and led me outside. He took me to the Sapru House canteen where, as if on cue, the waiter brought two cups of tea. Jagmohan asked me a few searching questions about my academic background and experience. He liked my somewhat weird profile and my keenness to learn. I was facing Jagmohan as a student and he was the teacher and task-master as we spent a highly focussed 45 minutes in the cafeteria. That was my first learning about all aspects of Delhi, including the brief story of its seven historical cities, which got built and destroyed — yet remained present as monuments across the 1485 square kilometers (sq km) of the present National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi.

I remained associated with Jagmohan from that time until a couple of years ago when I used to meet him at the India International Centre (IIC) which became his second home and the main study point, whenever he had free time from his extremely tumultuous career. When I met Jagmohan in the early 1970s he was Commissioner in the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and finally when I started meeting him at the IIC, nearly 45 years later, he was deep into his reading and writing as a highly dignified retired bureaucrat-politician scholar. Among his numerous academic and policy documents the most important shall ever remain the master plan of the city. Jagmohan's extraordinary career spanning over 60 years, saw extremely volatile ups and downs as the creator and Vice-Chairman of the DDA and the Chairman being the Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) of Delhi himself. Becoming Delhi's best known L-G twice; twice the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir during its most violent and difficult times; joining active politics, between the Congress and the BJP, but always remaining more of an administrator than the Union Minister of Urban Affairs. Since I joined Indian Police Service (IPS) in 1974 and got allocated the Union Territory (UT) — now Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and UT (AGMUT) cadre — working in Delhi as Deputy Commissioner, Additional Commissioner and Joint Police Commissioner, I had numerous opportunities to face controversial and politically-sensitive situations, involving me on the job reaching out to Jagmohan — as a politician or as an administrator. Without writing in detail about those highly explosive situations about Jagmohan and myself, I must say, not once did he allow his political considerations to outweigh his administrative propriety.

(The writer is a retired IPS officer and social activist. The views expressed are personal.)

# Did we lose the plot on Coronavirus?

Once the situation eased, people came out and started celebrating life, believing that everything was normal. The Government, too, lowered its guard



BISWAJEET BANERJEE

One of the top painters of Lucknow, Rajendra Karan, had a sore throat and a slight fever. He consulted a doctor who advised medicines. His fever came under control but the sore throat continued. Believing that his condition would improve he did not go for a COVID test. On April 21 — three days after his symptoms were visible, he felt breathless. His son Rohitas Karan did not wait for the ambulance. He took his father to a private hospital in his own car. "Go get a referral slip from the Chief Medical Officer's (CMO's) office. Only then can we admit the patient," said the receptionist at the Integral Medical College and Hospital in Lucknow. "My father was gasping for breath. I could see he was in pain. But I was curtly asked to get a referral slip," Rohitas says. He called a few of his friends, requesting them to arrange the referral slip for him. He was told that he must register at the Integrated Central Command Centre (ICCC). However, before he could get his father registered and get a referral slip from the CMO's office, Rajendra Karan died in the car, outside the hospital, waiting for treatment. "My father would have been alive today if the hospital had admitted him instead of waiting for a piece of paper from the CMO's office," Rohitas says. The Government's rule says that registration of a patient in the ICCC at the CMO's office is mandatory and admission is given to the patient only if s/he has a referral slip from that centre. Hundreds of patients died as they were turned away by the hospital because they did not have the referral slip. After a hue and cry was raised this mandatory clause was withdrawn for admission in private hospitals but this still holds good for admission in State-run hospitals where only 30 per cent of the seats are for open admission while the rest are through the ICCC.

"We know that this is a draconian procedure and is against the spirit of imparting treatment to the patients. We have seen patients dying in the waiting area but we cannot help because they do not have the referral slip," a doctor says with regret.

Now, take the case of Navanita Paramanik Rajput, 37, who was seven months pregnant. She had a cold and slight fever. Her gynecologist gave her medicine. As her condition did not improve she was admitted to a private nursing home. In a day her fever came under control but the oxygen level started dropping. "The gynecologist called me up and said that it would be better if we could shift her to a better-equipped hospital. There is no danger to her life but it is better to shift her," Radha Gobindo Pramanik, her father says. On April 18 she was taken to the King George's Medical College Hospital. She came out of the ambulance smiling. Her husband Varun went for registration and when he returned after a few minutes he saw that his wife was gasping for breath. "We ran to get oxygen. We were told there is no oxygen cylinder in the OPD. I rushed to the emergency and there, too, the doctors said they could not help. I thought of taking her back to the nursing home where at least oxygen was available. The ambulance had left by then. I heard my son-in-law shouting. Before I could understand what was happening she collapsed in the arms of her husband, just at the doorstep of Lucknow's top hospital," Pramanik recalls with tears in his eyes.

"It was my folly that I shifted her from the nursing home. It was a big mistake because of which I lost my daughter," he says sobbing. "I knew there



THERE IS A FEAR THAT THE CORONAVIRUS HAS NOW SPREAD INTO THE VILLAGES BECAUSE OF THE PANCHAYAT ELECTION. THE GOVERNMENT HAS STARTED SCREENING AND TESTING THE VILLAGERS TO ARREST THE SPREAD. HOW MUCH IT WILL SUCCEED IN DOING THIS, ONLY TIME WILL TELL

The writer is Executive Director (News), The Pioneer, Lucknow. The views expressed are personal.

was an oxygen crisis but I never knew that this big Government hospital would have no oxygen cylinders," he says with regret writ large on his face.

On May 6 the Uttar Pradesh (UP) Government claimed that 353 people died of the Coronavirus, with Lucknow recording 65 fatalities in the last 24 hours. On the face of it, the number of deaths in Lucknow looks small when compared with the magnitude of the catastrophe the country is facing. But the line of bodies in the cremation grounds belies this claim. People whose job it is to cremate bodies say that the number of people being cremated is much higher than what the Government is claiming. A rough estimate says that in Lucknow more than 200 bodies are either cremated or buried per day. A Hindi newspaper reported that on April 22, at least 437 bodies were cremated in all the cremation grounds across Lucknow. On April 18 the cremation ground in Lucknow received 187 bodies. So where are these bodies coming from? Is there undercounting of casualties? The local administration realises the pressure that cremation grounds are facing and, therefore, has set up extra platforms for cremation in the two main crematoriums of Bhainskand and Gulalaghat.

PK Srivastava, a resident of Lucknow, says the inflow is so high that the local administration has introduced a token system. "I had gone for a cremation of my relative on Saturday and our token number was 90," he said, adding that it took over 14 hours for the cremation to take place.

Normally around 45-50 bodies are cremated daily. In Lucknow,

bodies of COVID patients are cremated separately. The Government claims that the primary cause of the crisis in the crematoriums is that bodies are also coming in from neighbouring districts. There is no proper system to cremate COVID victims there so people are bringing them to Lucknow.

A little over a month ago — on March 29 — the country celebrated Holi. Throwing all precaution to the wind, people mingled and smeared colour on each other. A day earlier the markets were bustling. Throwing precaution to the wind, people literally jostled with each other to purchase sweets, new clothes and colours. A majority of them were not wearing masks and no one was objecting to it. In one month, the world turned upside down. Almost every mohalla in UP now has COVID case and many houses have reported fatalities too. Then, to add to the troubles, many attended the Maha Kumbh and came back sick.

So, what went wrong? Was it a failure of the Government or the people? For me, it is a failure of both — the Government and the people. Experts at John Hopkins Medicine believe that human behaviour is a major factor for the second wave of the pandemic. They call it "protocol fatigue" under which people were forced to wear a face mask, wash hands regularly and maintain social distance. In some cases the violators of this norm were penalised and as a result of this, people actually ended up spending about one year inside their homes. Once the situation eased people came out and started celebrating life believing that everything was normal. The Government,

too, lowered its guard. Though the senior leaders and doctors warned that COVID had not gone away, the Government allowed opening of schools, the restrictions on parties and social gatherings were lifted and political activities like elections started. The infrastructure which the Government had built in the last one year was dismantled. The ICCC, which was the bulwark in disseminating information about COVID cases and was the only tool to remain in touch with patients was dismantled too. The staff was curtailed and the telephone lines were restricted. In this scenario when the second wave struck UP, the administration was caught unawares.

When the *tandav* of death was going on in the cities, the villages were busy with Panchayat elections. The Teachers' Association says 706 teachers, who were deployed in the election duty, died of COVID. Was it preventable? Yes, it was. In 1991 after the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the Lok Sabha election was postponed for a month. If that election could have been postponed, what prevented the State Election Commission or the State Government from postponing the Panchayat election?

The Government argues that Panchayat elections are held under the direction of the High Court, but the State Government could have moved the Supreme Court. There is a fear that the Corona has now spread into the villages because of the Panchayat election. The Government has started screening and testing the villagers to arrest the spread. How much it will succeed in doing this, only time will tell.

**POINT COUNTERPOINT**

THE STATE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE SWIFT ACTION AS ABOUT 69 LAKH FARMERS OF THE STATE HAVE BEEN DEPRIVED OF THE PM-KISAN SCHEME. —UNION AGRICULTURE MINISTER NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR



I HAVE WRITTEN TO THE PRIME MINISTER. I HOPE THAT THE FUNDS UNDER THE PM-KISAN SCHEME WILL BE RELEASED FOR WEST BENGAL SOON. —WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER MAMATA BANERJEE

# Comics play the role of another COVID-19 helpline

Facts and data presented in the comics medium not only deepen our understanding of the transmission of the virus but also cultivate scientific temper

Along with the print media and online platforms, cartoons, comic strips and hand-drawn posters have played a life-saving role during this pandemic. A near-universal language of lines, coexistence of images and words, the visual economy and sequentiality of comic books and strips not only appeals to children, the illiterate, and adults but is also well-suited to disseminate epidemic-related information and for conveying complex scientific information. In some instances, the very act of creating one's own comic strip or character has therapeutic, coping and healing benefits.

**Comics as a citizen-friendly medium:** Comics clarify, visualise and translate critical public health messages and the findings of medical science into citizen-friendly information, thus bridging art



SATHYARAJ VENKATESAN ISHANI JOSHI

Venkatesan is an Associate Professor and Joshi is a researcher at the National Institute of Technology, Trichy. The views expressed are personal.

and science. Sample this: Argha Manna, a science communicator, in 'Be Aware of Droplets and Bubbles!' conveys the science behind the COVID-19 transference in an engaging and relatable way. Similarly, Lili Todd and Forest Rohwer of the Viral Information Institute at San Diego State University created a series of hand-drawn comics and posters to offer concise scientific explanations for viral infections, vaccinations, and the wearing of N95/KN95 masks.

Maki Naro and Diana Kwon's 'Meet the New Strains' published by 'The Nib' (a leading US online daily comics publication focused on political cartoons, graphic journalism, essays and memoir about current affairs) in February 2021, explain the process of virus mutation in an easy and playful format.

The visually-fascinating and colourful comics explain the otherwise difficult-to-understand mutations of the COVID-19 virus in citizen-friendly ways. Above all, facts, numbers, data, and figures presented in the comics medium not only deepen our understanding of the transmission and prevention of COVID-19 but also cultivate scientific temper and rational approaches to COVID-19.

**Comics as a pedagogical tool:** Given such strengths, it is not surprising that many Governments across the world and international agencies such as the UN have harnessed the power of comics to educate everyone about wearing masks, social distancing, and hand washing. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of the Government of India, for instance, published a mini-comic titled 'Kids, Vaayu &



Corona. Scripted and conceptualised by Ravindra Khaiwal and Suman Mor, Vaayu, an Indian superhero, educates the kids about simple precautions (greeting traditionally, among others) to reduce the chances of contracting COVID-19.

The award-winning artist, Sonny Liew, along with infectious disease expert Professor Hsu Li Yang of NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, Singapore, created two

conversational comic series with anthropomorphic characters to dispel doubts about COVID-19. The first series titled 'Baffled Bunny and Curious Cat' surfaced in February 2020 and was strictly dated to convey the level of information available at that time. Adopting the tone of a public health announcement, Doctor Duck states: "We should all strive to act responsibly."

Similarly, the South African health department in its 'COVID-19 Online Resource & News Portal' communicates medical information through comic characters like Wazi, Duma, and Lunga. Sharing facts and reliable information is vital for handling COVID-19 and comics do that effectively in various formats and styles.

**Comics as personal stories:** The most memorable

are those depicting a range of personal stories describing the fear of contagion, restrictions, touch deprivation, isolation, hope, mental health conditions, angst, among others. Drawn by frontline workers, caregivers, patients, and other stakeholders themselves, these heart-wrenching comics, in styles ranging from fantasy to noir, capture the uncanny that one experiences in the era of COVID-19.

Iranian cartoonist Bozorgmehr Hosseinpour's moving comics which show a physician holding up a patient as he himself goes underwater is a compelling example. Again, the 'New Yorker' cartoonist Jason Chatfield's 'COVID-19 Diary' published on his website, documents in sparse visuals the artist's progression from initial denial to grim acceptance of COVID-

19, culminating in his acceptance of the virus. Depictions like these significantly deepen what is labelled as 'graphic medicine,' a confluence of comics and healthcare. The recently-published 'COVID Chronicles: A Comics Anthology' by 'Graphic Mundi' for the first time, collects such comics and covers a broad range of topics such as racism, health inequities and personal realisations of COVID-19.

In these challenging times, comics have served us in multiple ways: As a coping mechanism, as a therapeutic medium, as a pedagogical tool, as an impactful science communication and finally, as a medium which can affect behavioural change in individuals and communities. Given such merits, it is apt that we consider comics as another COVID-19 helpline.

# Myanmar's Karen insurgents burn another Govt outpost

## Now daily fighting between Government and military forces of Karen and Kachin

AP ■ BANGKOK

Guerrilla soldiers from Myanmar's Karen ethnic minority burned down a Government military outpost on Friday after capturing it without a fight when its garrison fled, a senior Karen officer said.

The position is approximately 15 kilometers (nine miles) from a larger camp that the Karen National Liberation Army stormed and burned 10 days earlier. The KNLA is the armed wing of the Karen National Union, the main political organization representing the Karen minority, whose homeland is in eastern Myanmar.

The Karen and the Kachin in northern Myanmar are the two major ethnic armed organizations that have allied themselves with the movement against the junta that took power in Myanmar after the army ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February.

The role of the ethnic fighting groups has become more important as the number of people joining street protests in Myanmar's cities and towns has declined, in large part due to deadly violence increasingly used by security forces to suppress them. Hundreds of demonstrators and bystanders have died.

There is now daily fighting between the Government and the military forces of the Karen and the Kachin. A shadow National Unity Government formed by the junta's foes announced this week the formation of a "People's Defense Force" intended to serve as a precursor to a "Federal Union Army" of democratic forces including ethnic minorities, underlining the major role they may play.

Video provided to The Associated Press showed KNLA soldiers on Friday inside the U



In this photo provided by Karen National Liberation Army, a Karen National Liberation Army soldier holds a mortar shell while standing next to a cache of mortar shells found at a Myanmar military outpost on Friday in Mutraw district, Karen State, Myanmar

The position is approximately 15 kilometers (nine miles) from a larger camp that the Karen National Liberation Army stormed and burned 10 days earlier. The KNLA is the armed wing of the Karen National Union, the main political organization representing the Karen minority, whose homeland is in eastern Myanmar.

Thu Hta base — a group of wooden buildings and trenches cut into a forest — inspecting mortar shells left behind by the Government military. The camp is close to the Salween River, which marks the border with Thailand.

"Yesterday our troops fired a few shots and today when we approached there was no one there, so we just entered," KNLA Maj. Gen. Ner Dah Mya said by phone Friday.

Fighting between the guerrillas and the Myanmar army

has been increasing since last year but escalated after the military's seizure of power.

The Karen National Union has been fighting for greater autonomy for the region for decades. It has denounced the February coup and given shelter to opposition supporters evading arrest. As well as confronting the army on the battlefield, the KNLA has reportedly been training hundreds of young activists from the cities in the rudiments of guerrilla warfare.

The attack raised the likelihood of retaliatory air strikes by the Myanmar military and a surge of refugees trying to flee into Thailand.

Myanmar military jets have launched around 30 attacks since the end of March, targeting Karen villages as well as KNLA positions, according to aid groups active in the area.

Several thousand people crossed the Salween River into Thailand in April but Thai authorities insisted they go back to Myanmar.

The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said last week that 40,000 people have been newly displaced in Karen territory by intensified fighting between the Government and the KNLA, and by "indiscriminate attacks" by Myanmar's army on civilian areas.

Many of the displaced villagers have been hiding out in jungles, caves and valleys.

### GLOBE TROTTERING

#### UK'S CONSERVATIVE PARTY STRIKE EARLY BLOW

London: Britain's governing Conservative Party has won a special election in the north of England town of Hartlepool, dealing a big blow to the main Opposition Labour Party, which had held the parliamentary seat since its creation in 1974.

#### CHINA TO SEND COVID SUPPLIES TO NEPAL

Beijing: China on Friday said it will send medical supplies and relief materials to Nepal to help the country combat the surge in coronavirus cases.

#### COVID SURGE IN INDIA HEARTBREAKING: HARRIS

Washington: Describing the surge of Covid-19 infections and deaths in India as "nothing short of heartbreaking", Vice-President Kamala Harris said on Friday that India's welfare is critically important to the United States.

#### WHO OK'S EMERGENCY USE OF CHINA'S VAX

Geneva: The World Health Organisation gave emergency use authorisation Friday to a Covid-19 vaccine manufactured by China's Sinopharm, potentially paving the way for millions of the doses to reach needy countries through a UN-backed programme rolling out coronavirus vaccines.

## Maldives police say blast that hurt Nasheed act of terrorism

AP ■ MALE

Police in the Maldives said Friday an explosion that wounded former President Mohamed Nasheed and four others including a British national was an act of terrorism and they are attempting to identify four possible suspects. Australian police said they are ready to assist the investigation.

Nasheed, 53, was wounded in the blast outside his home Thursday night as he was about to get into his car, police said. He is being treated in a hospital in the capital, Male, where multiple surgeries were performed to remove shrapnel, they said. Home Minister Imran Abdulla told a local television station that the injuries were not life-threatening.

Nasheed has been an outspoken critic of religious extremism in the predominantly Sunni Muslim nation, where preaching and practicing other faiths are banned by law. Police Commissioner Mohamed Hameed said police are treating the blast as an act of terrorism against the former president. Two of Nasheed's bodyguards and two apparent bystanders, including a British citizen, were also wounded, he said. Police have not detected any military-grade components in the explosives used, Hameed



Maldivian police officers secure the area following a blast in Male, Maldives, on Thursday

can provide the investigation. The Maldives is known for its luxury resorts but has experienced occasional violent attacks. In 2007, a blast in a park in the capital wounded 12 foreign tourists.

Violence has been blamed on a rise in religious extremism. The Maldives has one of the highest per capita numbers of militants who fought in Syria and Iraq alongside the Islamic State group.

Maldive authorities announced in January that eight people arrested in November were found to have been planning to attack a school and were in the process of building bombs in a boat at sea.

## Top leader of hardline Islamist group arrested in Bangladesh

PTI ■ DHAKA

A top leader of a hardline Islamist group was arrested in eastern Bangladesh's Sylhet city on Friday, as the Government continued to crack the whip on anti-government protesters, according to a media report.

The legal affairs expert of Hefazat-e-Islam, Advocate Maulana Shahinur Pasha Chowdhury, was apprehended by the Criminal Investigation Department officials at Subidbazar in Sylhet, the Dhaka Tribune reported.

However, the police have not disclosed the charges against Chowdhury, who has earlier served as the Member of Parliament from Sunamganj III.

Dozens of Hefazat leaders and activists have been arrested in recent weeks after the hardline Islamist group waged anti-government protests.

Some Hefazat leaders have been charged for instigating violence during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bangladesh visit in March and orchestrating the violent demonstrations in 2013 when several people were killed as the group demanded the enactment of a blasphemy law.

## Talks 'intensify' on bringing US back to Iran nuclear deal

AP ■ VIENNA

World powers held a fourth round of high-level talks Friday in Austria aimed at bringing the United States back into the nuclear deal with Iran, with both sides signalling a willingness to work out the major stumbling blocks.

The talks began in early April and Russian delegate Mikhail Ulyanov tweeted following Friday's meeting that "the participants agreed on the need to intensify the process." "The delegations seem to be ready to stay in Vienna as long as necessary to achieve the goal," he wrote.

The US pulled out of the landmark 2015 deal in 2018 after then-President Donald Trump said the pact needed to be renegotiated. The deal had promised Iran economic incentives in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program, and the Trump administration reimposed heavy sanctions on the Islamic republic in an unsuccessful attempt to bring Tehran into new talks.

Iran reacted by steadily increasing its violations of the deal, which is intended to prevent the country from obtaining nuclear weapons. Iran began enriching uranium to a greater purity, stockpiling more than allowed and beginning to

use more advanced centrifuges in an attempt to pressure the world powers remaining in the deal — Germany, France, Britain, Russia and China — for economic relief.

U.S. President Joe Biden says he wants to rejoin the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, but that Iran needs to return to compliance.

Iran, which insists it does not want to produce a nuclear bomb, has said it is prepared to reverse all of its violations but that Washington must remove all sanctions imposed under Trump.

On the other side is the question of what Iran's return to compliance would look like. Delegates to the Vienna talks concede, for example, that Iranian nuclear scientists cannot unlearn the knowledge they acquired in the last three years, but it is not clear whether Iran's new centrifuges would need to be destroyed, mothballed and locked away, or simply taken offline.

Because the U.S. is currently out of the deal, there was no American representation at the talks. Diplomats involved are shuttling between the Iranian side and a delegation from Washington elsewhere in Vienna.

Between the high-level meetings, expert groups have been meeting to try and come up with solutions to the outstanding issues.

Ahead of the talks, a senior U.S. Official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the U.S. Position, said Washington has laid out the concessions it's prepared to make and that success or failure now depends on Iran making the political decision to accept those concessions and to return to compliance with the accord.

The official said it remains possible to reach an agreement before Iran's June presidential election, which some believe are a complicating factor in the discussions.

Iran's delegate to the talks, Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, told his country's state-run IRNA news agency late Thursday that his team was trying to reach an agreement as soon as possible but would not act in haste and would act in Iran's national interests.

"We are on a specified path about which there are, fortunately, agreements, but there are serious obstacles in the way as well," Araghchi said.

Heading into the talks, Ulyanov tweeted that he saw positive signs from the Iranian minister's statements.

**UJVN LIMITED**  
(An International Core Enterprise)  
H.O.: "UJWAL", Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006  
Tel: 0135-2763808, 2763808, Fax: 0135-2763507 website: www.ujvn.com

Tender No.344 **Corrigendum-01** Date: 07.05.2021

In reference to GoU letter No. 121 (1)XXVII(7)21-32/2007 T.C. Dated 29/04/2021, amendment and date extension in e-tender NIT:01/UJVNL/EE (M&G)/KPS/2021-22 for "Design, manufacture, testing, delivery, installation and commissioning of 12.5 MVA, 6.6/132 kV generator transformer at Kuhl Power House" is hereby made as follows:

- Earnest Money Deposit is exempted. The bidder shall submit Bid Security Declaration on Rs. 100/- Stamp paper "That UJVNL can take appropriate action against firm (—Firm's Name—) if the firm does not accept L/O/Order after becoming L-1 bidder and the firm shall not have any objection in this regard".
- The Performance guarantee shall be 3% of contract value which shall be submitted at the time of agreement.

Last date of submission of bids on website : 18.05.2021, 17:00 Hrs.  
Last date of submission of hard copies of bids : 21.05.2021, 15:00 Hrs.  
Date of opening of tender : 21.05.2021, 16:00 Hrs.  
All other terms and conditions of the tender shall remain unchanged.  
For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal <http://uktenders.gov.in> Executive Engineer (M&G), Kuhl

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

**कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम रायगढ़ (छ.ग.)**  
Phone No.: 07762-222911, Fax No.: 07762-222923  
Email: nraigarh@gmail.com Website: www.nagariniramraigarh.com

क्रमांक 316/वि./न.पा.नि./2021 रायगढ़, दिनांक 07.05.2021

**-: निविदा संशोधन सूचना :-**

जिले में प्रभावशील लॉकडाउन के कारण इस निकाय द्वारा प्रकाशित निविदा सूचना क्र. 75/वि./न.पा.नि./2021 रायगढ़ दिनांक 26.04.2021 एवं E-Tender No. - 76549 में निविदा प्राप्त की अंतिम तिथि संशोधित कर दिनांक 12.05.2021 को समय सायं 04:30 बजे नियत किया जाता है।

आयुक्त  
नगर पालिक निगम  
रायगढ़ (छ.ग.)

**UJVN Limited**  
H.O.: "UJWAL", Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006  
Telephones: 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135-2763508  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvn.com

RO No. 341 **e-Tender Notice (NCB)** Dated: 07.05.2021

Office of the Executive Engineer, Project Civil Maintenance-Dakpathar, UJVN Ltd., Dakpathar (Dehradun) invites online bids from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:

Tender No.: - NCB/01/EE/PCM-DKP/TN/2021-22, & NCB/02/EE/PCM-DKP/TN/2021-22

Name of work: 1- Special repair of Downstream Floor, Energy Dissipation Arrangement (EDA) and placement of CC blocks for protection of toe of EDA of Under Sluice Bays (bay No. 1 to 6) of Dakpathar Barrage.  
2- Special repair of Downstream Floor, Energy Dissipation Arrangement (EDA) and placement of CC blocks for protection of Toe of EDA of Bays (bay No. 7 to 25) of Dakpathar Barrage.  
Estimated cost: 1) 678.27 Lakhs (GST Extra) (2) 1327.64 Lakhs (GST Extra)

Date of availability of bid document on website: From 17:00 hrs of 15.05.2021  
Last date for submission of bids on website: Upto 17:00 hrs of 18.06.2021  
For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal "https://uktenders.gov.in"

Executive Engineer(Project Civil Maintenance)  
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

## Israel says troops kill 2 Palestinian attackers

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli troops shot and killed two Palestinians and wounded a third after the men opened fire on a Border Police base in the occupied West Bank on Friday, police said.

They said the three attackers opened fire on the base near the northern West Bank town of Jenin. The Border Police and an Israeli soldier opened fire in response, killing two of the men and wounding a third, who was evacuated to a hospital.

The violence comes at a time of heightened tensions over east Jerusalem, where dozens of Palestinians are at risk of being evicted following a long legal battle with Israeli



settlers. Palestinian protesters have clashed with police there on a nightly basis in recent weeks.

On Thursday, Israeli forces arrested a Palestinian suspected of carrying out a drive-by shooting earlier this week in the West Bank that killed an Israeli and wounded two others.

## Deadly police shootout prompts claims of abuse in Brazil

AP ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

A bloody, hourslong gunbattle in a Rio de Janeiro slum echoed into Friday, with authorities saying the police mission successfully eliminated two dozen criminals while residents and activists claimed human rights abuses.

It was just after sunrise Thursday when dozens of officers from Rio de Janeiro state's civil police stormed Jacarezinho, a favela in the city's northern zone. They were targeting drug traffickers from one of Brazil's most notorious criminal organizations, Comando Vermelho, and the

bodies piled up quickly. When the fighting stopped, there were 25 dead — one police officer and 24 people described by the police as "criminals."

Rio's moniker of "Marvelous City" can often seem a cruel irony in the favelas, given their stark poverty, violent crime and subjugation to drug traffickers or militias. But even here, Thursday's clash was a jarring anomaly that analysts declared one of the city's deadliest police operations ever.

The bloodshed also laid bare Brazil's perennial divide over whether, as a common local saying goes, "a good criminal is a dead criminal."

## US sends more warplanes to protect pullout from Afghanistan

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The US has deployed a dozen additional warplanes to bolster protection of American and coalition troops making a final withdrawal from Afghanistan as Taliban insurgents step up pressure on Afghan government forces, top Pentagon officials have said.

General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said F-18 attack planes have been added to a previously announced package of air and sea power, including the USS Dwight D Eisenhower aircraft carrier in the North Arabian Sea and six Air Force B-52 bombers based in Qatar, that

can be called upon as protection for withdrawing troops.

Also part of that previously announced package are several hundred Army Rangers. US officials said before the withdrawal began that they expected the Taliban to attempt to interfere, even as the insurgents continue pressuring government forces, especially in Helmand and Kandahar provinces in southern Afghanistan.

"There continue to be sustained levels of violent attacks" by the Taliban against Afghan security forces, Milley said, speaking alongside Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin at a Pentagon news conference.

He said there have been no attacks against US or coalition forces since they began pulling out of the country on about May 1, and he described the Afghan forces as "cohesive," even as speculation swirls around Kabul's ability to hold off the Taliban in the months ahead.

Both Milley and Austin, a retired Army general, are veterans of the war in Afghanistan. "They're fighting for their own country now, so it's not a foregone conclusion, in my professional military estimate, that the Taliban automatically win and Kabul falls, or any of those kinds of dire predictions," Milley said.

## Space rocket 'highly unlikely' to cause any damage on earth: China

Beijing: Breaking its silence on its tumbling space rocket, whose debris is expected to fall on the Earth this weekend, China said most of it would be burnt during the re-entry and it is "highly unlikely" to cause any damage on the ground.

Replying to questions about the Long March 5B rocket, which last week launched the core module of the country's space station and started hurtling down to Earth, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman

Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here on Friday that China will provide timely updates on it. PTI

**GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA CORRIGENDUM**

Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD CORP./AUTH	OLD REFERENCE/NIT NO.	NATURE OF CORRIGENDUM	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	UJVN	CH-SPL-XEN/P-I/PM/ECI-09 DATED 04.05.2021	NOTICE INVITING TENDER NO. 09/UJVN/P-I/PM/2020-21 FOR EMPLOYMENT OF FIRMS FOR SUPPLY OF BLDG. FANS.	ujvn.gov.in	8053428343 cem@ujvn.gov.in

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : [www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in) or [www.etenders.hry.nic.in](http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in) RO No. 2868

# COVID-19 SECOND WAVE Impact on eco to remain muted: Fin Min report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The impact of the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic on the economy is likely to remain muted as compared to the first wave, the Finance Ministry said in its monthly economic report.

Admitting that the second wave of the pandemic has posed a downside risk to economic activity in the first quarter of FY2021-22, the report said "there are reasons to expect a muted economic impact as compared to the first wave. Learning to 'operate with Covid-19', as borne by international experience, provides a silver lining of economic resilience amidst the second wave."

The fiscal position of the Central Government, it said, has witnessed an improvement in the recent months with a revival in the economic activities during the second half of FY2020-21.

As per provisional figures, net direct tax collections for 2020-21 are 4.5 per cent higher than Revised Estimates (RE) and 5 per cent higher than collections in 2019-20 - the significant growth compared to 2019-20 provides an indication of economic recovery since the first wave. GST mop-up registered a good growth and collections exceeded Rs 1 lakh crore in each of the last six months owing to economic recovery,

it said, adding, GST revenue registered another record high of Rs 1.41 lakh crore in April, indicative of continual economic recovery. However, the report noted that the second wave of the pandemic hit the market sentiment as Nifty 50 and the S&P BSE Sensex recorded losses of 0.4 per cent and 1.5 per cent, respectively in April, and the rupee depreciated by 2.3 per cent to reach 74.51 INR/USD in April. This was mirrored by net FPI outflows of USD 1.18 billion in April. Domestic financial conditions, nevertheless, continue to remain comfortable with RBI's support to liquidity, with open market operations worth Rs 3.17 lakh crore carried out in 2020-21, it said.

Launch of G-SAP 1.0 towards stable and orderly management of the yield curve is a significant tool for forward guidance. While overall financial conditions remained accommodative, the report said, credit growth continued to be muted at 5.3 per cent as on April 9, 2021. Sectorally, the report said, agriculture, medium industry and trade services led the credit offtake in March, while credit to small and large industry and NBFC services remained subdued.

To provide further support to small business units, micro and small industries, and other unorganised sector entities adversely affected during the current wave of the pandemic, the RBI has decided to conduct SLTRO of ₹10,000 crore at the repo rate for the SFBs, to be deployed for fresh lending of up to ₹10 lakh per borrower.

The facility will be available till October 31, 2021.

In a statement, the Reserve Bank of India said it will conduct one auction for SLTRO each month.

"The first auction will be conducted on May 17, 2021, for ₹10,000 crore. The unutilised portion of notified ₹10,000 crore will be carried forward in each subsequent auction until fully utilised or till the last auction, whichever is earlier," it said.

# RBI to conduct SLTRO of ₹10,000 cr for small finance banks

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Friday said it will conduct the first auction for special long-term repo operations (SLTRO) of ₹10,000 crore for Small Finance Banks (SFBs) on May 17.

The group will assist the RRA by identifying areas, regulations, guidelines and returns which can be rationalised and submit reports periodically to the RRA containing its recommendations.

"The RRA has constituted an Advisory Group, representing members from regulated entities, including compliance officers, to support the RRA in achieving the objective set forth in the terms of reference of RRA 2.0," said an RBI statement.

The SFBs participating in the scheme will have to ensure that the amount borrowed from the RBI should at all times be backed by lending to the specified segments till the maturity of the SLTRO.

# RBI's Regulations Review Authority sets up advisory group

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Regulations Review Authority of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an advisory group to support it.

The group will assist the RRA by identifying areas, regulations, guidelines and returns which can be rationalised and submit reports periodically to the RRA containing its recommendations.

The RRA has constituted an Advisory Group, representing members from regulated entities, including compliance officers, to support the RRA in achieving the objective set forth in the terms of reference of RRA 2.0," said an RBI statement.

# On-top liquidity facility: RBI asks banks to on-lend to healthcare cos in 30 days of availing credit

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The RBI on Friday asked the banks seeking funding from the special ₹50,000-crore on-top liquidity window to on-lend money to the healthcare service providers within 30 days of availing the credit facility.

Earlier this week, the RBI had decided to open an on-top liquidity window of ₹50,000 crore with tenures of up to three years at the repo rate till March 31, 2022, to boost liquidity for ramping up Covid-19-related healthcare infrastructure and services.

Under the scheme, banks can provide fresh lending support to a wide range of entities including vaccine manufacturers; importers/suppliers of vaccine and priority medical devices; hospitals and dispensaries; and pathology labs and diagnostic centres.

They will also provide finance to manufacturers and suppliers of oxygen and ventilators; importers of vaccines and COVID-related drugs; COVID-related logistics firms; and also patients for treatment. The RBI said requests from banks desirous of availing funds from the central bank will be subject to availability of funds as on the date of application. Funds cannot be guaranteed in case the total amount of Rs 50,000 crore is already availed.

"Furthermore, banks should endeavour to lend within a reasonable period, i.e., not later than 30 days from the date of availing the funds from the RBI," it said in a statement adding that there is no tenure restriction regarding lending by banks under the scheme.

# Forex reserves surge by \$3.91 bn to \$588.02 bn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The country's foreign exchange reserves swelled by USD 3.913 billion to reach USD 588.02 billion in the week ended April 30, 2021, RBI data showed on Friday.

In the previous week ended April 23, the reserves had risen by USD 1.701 billion to USD 584.107 billion. The forex kitty had touched a lifetime high of USD 590.185 billion in the week ended January 29, 2021.

In the reporting week ended April 30, 2021, the rise in reserves was an account of an increase in foreign currency assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves.

FCAs rose by USD 4.413 billion to USD 546.059 billion, as per the weekly data by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

# No immediate plans to raise capital: SBI Chairman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi: SBI chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara said that the bank does not have immediate plans to raise capital as a reasonable profit of the last fiscal would be ploughed back to take care of foreseeable business growth.

"We had raised Tier I and Tier II bonds earlier. Considering the growth we had seen last year, we are having a comfortable capital adequacy ratio," he told PTI in an interview.

# WhatsApp scraps its May 15 deadline for accepting privacy policy terms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

WhatsApp has scrapped its May 15 deadline for users to accept its controversial privacy policy update and said not accepting the terms will not lead to deletion of accounts.

WhatsApp had faced severe backlash over user concerns that data was being shared with parent company Facebook. A WhatsApp spokesperson told PTI that no accounts will be deleted on May 15 for not accepting the policy update.

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# Sensex ticks higher for third day; HDFC top gainer on Q4 show

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks stretched their winning streak for the third session on Friday as robust corporate results and positive global cues propped up risk appetite despite the Covid-19 overhang.

A strong recovery in the rupee, which zoomed 27 paise against the US dollar, also bolstered investor sentiment, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 256.71 points or 0.52 per cent to finish at 49,206.47. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty rose 98.35 points or 0.67 per cent to 14,823.15.

HDFC was the top performer in the Sensex pack, spurring 2.70 per cent, after reporting a 31 per cent jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 5,669 crore for the March quarter.

# Rupee firms up for 2nd day

PTI ■ MUMBAI

M&M, Bajaj Finserv, NTPC, Bharti Airtel, ITC, ONGC and UltraTech Cement were the other prominent winners, rising up to 2.68 per cent. On the other hand, Bajaj Auto, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Kotak Bank and ICICI Bank tumbled up to 2 per cent.

During the week, the Sensex advanced 424.11 points or 0.86 per cent, and the Nifty jumped 192.05 points or 1.31 per cent.

Mumbai: The rupee gained for the second straight day and closed 27 paise higher at 73.51 against the US dollar on Friday, supported by positive domestic equities and weak American currency.

At the interbank forex market, the rupee opened at 73.62 and hit an intra-day high of 73.50 and a low of 73.76.

# Gold rises by ₹474

PTI ■ MUMBAI

New Delhi: Gold rose by ₹474 to ₹47,185 per 10 gram in the national capital on Friday amid strong buying in global precious metals, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at ₹46,711 per 10 gram. Silver also jumped ₹1,050 to ₹70,791 per kilogram from ₹69,741 per kilogram in the previous trade.

# BRIEFS

**SRM TECHNOLOGIES BECOMES AN AUTOSAR ASSOCIATE PARTNER**  
SRM Technologies is pleased to announce that they have entered into a global associate partnership with AUTOSAR, thereby powering their leading automotive services with the consortium's world-class software architecture. With innovation & technology playing an increasingly crucial role in every aspect of the automotive business, companies recognize the need to pursue strategic solutions and ensure they remain on the competitive vanguard. Concepts such as Autonomous driving (AD), connected vehicles, electrification of the powertrain, and shared mobility (ACES) are mutually reinforcing developments in the automotive industry. The SRM Tech-AUTOSAR partnership promises new business models, enhanced product ideation.

**IMP REFORMS BY DOPP FOR PENSIONERS**  
As per Rule 64 of CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972, provisional pension is sanctioned for a period of 6 months, in cases where a Government servant is likely to retire before finalization of his pension. In view of COVID-19 pandemic, instructions have been issued vide OM No.12/9/2020-P&PW(C)-6450 dated 17th July, 2020 for grant of provisional pension in accordance with Rule 64 in all cases where there is a delay in sanction of regular pension. The OM also provides that the payment of provisional pension may be extended, with the concurrence of PAO and after approval by the Head of Department, up to a period of one year from the date of retirement.

**SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY**  
E-tender Notice No. 04 UBL 2021-22  
Date: 04-05-2021  
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Approx. Value
1	Hubbali Division: Rs. 3,86,10,768.50	
2	Hubbali Division: Rs. 5,48,35,484/-	

Last date for submission of bids: Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 31-05-2021  
For details log on: www.reps.gov.in  
Divisional Railway Manager, Works  
PUB/41/AA/PSB/SWR/2021-22 Hubballi

# NFRA prepares provisional database of cos, auditors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) has prepared a provisional database of companies and auditors that come under its regulatory ambit.

NFRA has the mandate to oversee compliance with accounting and auditing standards by certain class of companies, described as Public Interest Entities (PIEs).

In this regard, a verified and accurate database of companies and auditors that come under the regulatory ambit of NFRA is being prepared, an official release said on Friday.

Establishment of the database involves critical steps like identification and verification of the primary data source, and reconciliation of data such as Company Identification Number (CIN) from different sources.

For preparing the database, NFRA has been working with the corporate affairs ministry's Corporate Data Management (CDM) division and three recognised national stock exchanges.

**कार्यालय नगर निगम, भरतपुर**  
क्रमांक: - न.नि.च./निर्माण/2021-22/959 दिनांक: - 04/05/21  
संशोधित ई-निविदा सूचना 1/2021-22  
ई-निविदा सूचना 01/2021-22 क्रमांक न.नि.च./निर्माण/2021-22/08 दिनांक 05.04.2021 द्वारा नगर निगम भरतपुर द्वारा 18 कार्यों की ऑनलाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की गई थी। कोरोना महामारी के कारण उक्त निविदा की दिनांकों में निम्न प्रकार परिवर्तन किया जाता है। निविदा की शर्तें यथावत रहेंगी।

निविदा डाउनलोड एवं अपलोड करने की अंतिम समय तिथि	टेंडर शुल्क, प्रोसेसिंग फीस की वृ.टी. आर. रसीद एवं बिड रिफ्यूजिटी स्टाम्प जमा कराने की समय एवं तिथि	निविदा खोलने की तिथि
दिनांक 24.05.2021 सायं 6.00 बजे तक	दिनांक 25.05.2021 दोपहर 12.00 बजे तक	दिनांक 26.05.2021 दोपहर 12.00 बजे तक

आयुक्त नगर परिषद भरतपुर  
राज.संवाह/सी/1174/2021-22

**APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION**  
General public is hereby informed that this person Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 35 Years, Sex: Male, Height: 5'7", Built: Thin, Face: Oval Wearing: Without Clothes, was found dead in Front of TDI Paragon Mall, Near Office of the Chief Engineer-I, (D.U.S.I.B.) Rajouri Garden, Delhi, on 27.04.2021.  
In this regard a DD No. 47A, dated 27.04.2021, has been lodged at P.S. Rajouri Garden, Delhi. The Dead Body has been kept preserved at DDU 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 P.S. Rajouri Garden, Delhi DP/431/WD/2021(UIDB) Ph.: 011-25448885, 25453990

**APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION**  
The general public is hereby informed that an unidentified person about 45 years of age whose name, residence, and family is unknown had been found unconscious near Olya Masjid, K-Block, Connaught Place, New Delhi on 04.05.2021 at 1:19 PM. He was admitted to LHMC Hospital, where he was declared brought dead by the doctors. In this regard, a vide has been registered with DD No: 34A, dated: 04.05.2021 at PS Connaught Place, New Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to identify the deceased person, but no clue has come to light so far.  
The description of the UIDB is as under:  
Sex: Male, Age: 45 Years, Height: 5'10", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Long, Built: Thin, Identification Mark: A tattoo mark of "Bajrangballi" on the left hand arm, Wearing: Covered by shawl on his waist.  
If anyone has any information about his relatives, kindly inform the SHO/Connaught Place, New Delhi.  
E-mail: c/c@cbl.gov.in Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641 Fax: 011-24368639  
SHO P.S. Connaught Place, New Delhi. Ph. No. 011-23747100, 23363898 DP/269/ND/2021

**APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION**  
General public is hereby informed that an unidentified male Age : About 40 years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Oval, Build: Medium, wearing white colour shirt and blue colour pant, was found injured in road accident on 26.04.2021 at outer ring road, near Rajghat Bus Depot, Daryaganj, Delhi. He was admitted in RML Hospital, during the treatment he died on 04.05.2021. In this regard a FIR No. 115/21 dated 26.04.2021 u/s 279/337 IPC has been registered at P.S. Daryaganj, Delhi. The deceased has been preserved for identification for 72 hours in the mortuary of RML Hospital, Delhi.  
Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.  
SHO : P.S. Daryaganj, Delhi Ph.: 011-23279331, 23274683 DP/789/C/021

**Public Notice**  
I, Kamlesh Kumari Bagai W/o Late Ramesh Chander Bagai and my daughter Kamini Bagai have shifted from my old residence, Mayapuri, New Delhi to our new rented apartment House No.45, Ground Floor, LRC Homes, Kishanpura, Dhakoli, Punjab 160104, hence Hon'ble Courts/ Commissions and General Public is hereby requested to send the Communication/ notice on the new address. Any letter/ notice already being sent, may kindly be resent. Kamlesh Kumari Bagai.

**REDUCTION IN FREQUENCY OF SPECIAL TRAINS**  
It is notified for the information of passengers that Railways have decided to reduce the frequency of following Special Trains as per details given below:-

Train No.	From	To	Days of Operation	Revised Days of Operation	Dates of Revised Frequency
01221	Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (T)	H. Nizamuddin	Daily	Tue, Sat (Bi-Weekly)	07.05.2021 to 29.06.2021
01222	H. Nizamuddin	Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (T)	Daily	Wed, Sun (Bi-Weekly)	08.05.2021 to 30.06.2021
02919	Dr. Ambedkar Nagar	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra	Daily	Mon, Wed, Fri (Tri-Weekly)	07.05.2021 to till further advice
02920	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra	Dr. Ambedkar Nagar	Daily	Wed, Fri, Sun (Tri-Weekly)	09.05.2021 to till further advice
02957	Ahmedabad Jn.	New Delhi	Daily	Sun, Tue, Fri (Tri-Weekly)	07.05.2021 to till further advice
02958	New Delhi	Ahmedabad Jn.	Daily	Mon, Wed, Sat (Tri-Weekly)	08.05.2021 to till further advice

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

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

Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in  
Download RailMadad app.  
RailMadad Helpline No.: 139  
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Visit us at: www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in  
"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"



**Bollywood**  
 Could really use a magic wand right about now  
 —Soha Ali Khan

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/vivacity/>

**SHORTCIRCUITS**



**ARMAAN RALHAN**  
 I got into the movies to play different characters. That is fun — to play people that are different from you. So, for me to play someone who is not me... to me, it is important to be versatile and do different kinds of roles. Sometimes you may play similar roles but the idea is to keep changing and doing different things.



**CHAITANYA TAMHANE**  
 The onus is on the audience to express their choice that they are ready for different kinds of stories. The specificity fascinates me. It adds beauty and cultural context. All stories that are to be told have been told. There are only so many themes in human conditioning that can be depicted and narrated as a story.



**RASIKA DUGAL**  
 It's always heart-warming when viewers appreciate a piece of work that you have been a part of creating. I am so grateful for that warmth, especially in times like these.



**KENDALL JENNER**  
 I was really, really young. No one ever told me that I had anxiety. Maybe three or four years ago it came back completely full-on. I genuinely started having very, very bad panic attacks. I was having frights in the middle of my sleep, literally felt heart palpitations. I couldn't breathe.

**KRISTIN CAVALLARI**  
 I live a very clean lifestyle. I want to make sure everything I'm putting on my body is just as clean. So we decided, let's do a line that really is clean, to our standards, that's still really effective. Instead of having 20 different products, we wanted to give you five that really check every box and get the job done.



**VOGUE**

**PODCASTS OF FUTURE**

Increasingly, hearing a piece is gaining more traction than reading or even viewing it



The last lockdown saw the rising popularity of podcasts. At a time when everyone was juggling housework and WFH, these made perfect sense as a means of keeping abreast of the latest as well as getting entertained. So much so that everyone, especially the younger generation, is hooked to them.

In December 2020, Amazon announced its acquisition of Wondery, a podcasting company. The popular audio firm Spotify has also been acquiring multiple podcast start-ups over the past two years. Ximalaya FM, a Chinese podcasting platform, has earned the unicorn status. This shopping spree by industry giants is a strong indicator of just how big podcasts are set to become globally. India too saw growth in podcast listeners with a 42 per cent increase of users on audio streaming platforms in March 2020.

Another reason why podcasts are increasingly finding listeners is the wide range of genres on offer. From news and talk shows to a variety of audiobooks and lessons on self-improvement, there is no dearth of content for all listeners. While there are a few hiccups such as monetising by transforming the increase in listeners to revenue (only about 1 per cent of users are paid subscribers of the top music apps in India), podcasting platforms are optimistic for the time ahead given the rise in audiences.

growth over the past few years and particularly in 2020, given the Covid-19 scenario. Podcasting events grew in popularity as virtual attendance became the new normal, and the prediction is that such live streams will continue to be popular in 2021. Podcast events not only bring hosts, audiences, marketers together but it also scope for revenue earning as platforms can go on to charge admission entry for listeners.

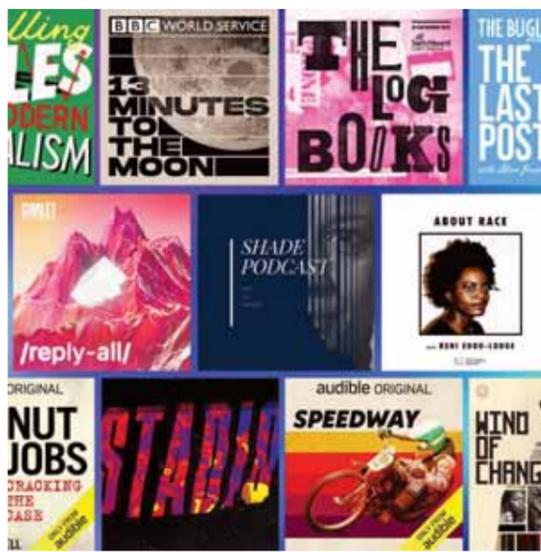
**Growth in podcast ad revenue**  
 Talking about revenue, 2021 will see an increase in earnings for brands since podcasting offers a low-cost yet effective method of advertising. The *Guardian's Podcast Insights 2020* found that the audience not only listens carefully to ads during podcasts but is also more likely to search for the product being advertised or recommend it to people they know. The *WARC Global Ad Trends* report of 2019 estimates that podcast advertising will be worth \$1.6 billion by 2022. Marketers ready to invest so much in podcast ads speaks volumes about the expected ad revenues.

**New and independent entrants into podcasting**  
 The dynamic nature of podcasting makes it easier for new talent to enter the space, and 2021 is expected to witness more new and independent entrants launching podcasts. At the same time, big industry names like Facebook are also adding audio

content to their platforms. Moreover, with people spending more time at home, the demand for innovative and diverse content has opened up podcasting opportunities for independent artists.

**Newer strategies for monetising podcasts**  
 Podcast makers and platforms this year will be looking for new avenues to cash in on the demand and monetise podcasts beyond the usual advertising. Luminary has a subscription model similar to Netflix via Apple Podcasts Subscriptions to access audio content. Platforms also use podcasts to drive the audience to other businesses, such as an audio call to action to visit their website or buy an online newspaper subscription. Podcorn uses a model in which they connect to relevant podcasters for placing ads, a brilliant strategy that helps all podcasters earn money.

**Increase in competition among podcast platforms**  
 It is no surprise that the competition among the various platforms is all set to heat up this year. Brands are using social listening to identify demands and offer endless options to listeners, with genres ranging from pop culture and comedy to true crime. Apple and Spotify have been two of the biggest podcast platforms, and now other players are putting in a good fight for their share of the industry. Recently, Spotify



**Germin8, an AI powered social media listening and analytics platform, share trends for podcasts in 2021:**

Continued rise of live streaming  
 Live broadcasting of interviews, debates, and podcasting events saw

**HELPLINE**

**NEED OF THE HOUR**

Producer-director ADITYA CHOPRA has launched *Yash Chopra Saathi Initiative* to provide support to the industry's daily wage earners affected by the pandemic

The deadly coronavirus pandemic has plagued the entertainment industry since last year and again the Hindi film industry has come to a halt, given the huge spike in COVID-19 cases due to the second wave of infections. Last year, during the lockdown, Aditya Chopra lent his support to thousands of daily wage earners of the film industry by crediting money directly into their bank accounts. The biggest production house of India, Yash Raj Films, has come forward in this moment of need by launching the *Yash Chopra Saathi Initiative* to provide support to thousands of daily workers in the film industry.

Aditya Chopra has taken cognisance of the massive socio-economic and humanitarian crisis that the daily workers of the industry are currently facing and The Yash Chopra Foundation is rolling out the initiative so that thousands of daily wage earners can tide over these turbulent and highly unpredictable times.



Youth Feed India. Through an online application process at <https://yashchoprafoundation.org>, those in need can apply to avail of this support. Akshaye Widhani, Senior Vice President, Yash Raj Films says, "The Yash Chopra Foundation is committed to constantly and relentlessly being a support system to the Hindi film industry and its workers who have been an integral part of our 50-year journey. The pandemic has pushed the backbone of our industry, the daily workers, to a breaking point and YRF wants to support as many workers and their families who are in need due to the loss of livelihood. Yash Chopra Saathi Initiative is aiming to provide support to the pandemic hit workers of our industry who we urgently need to focus on."

As part of the initiative, the foundation will initiate a direct benefit transfer of ₹5,000 to the women and senior citizens of the industry as well as distribute ration kits to workers for a family of four for an entire month through their NGO partners

**ANUSHKA SHARMA and VIRAT KOHLI started a fundraiser for COVID relief by donating ₹2 crore**

India is currently battling the second wave of COVID-19 and people have been coming forward to do their bit to tackle the crisis. Indian Cricket Team captain Virat Kohli and Bollywood actor Anushka Sharma are aiming to raise ₹seven crore for COVID relief in India. They are kickstarting a fundraising campaign #InThisTogether on the crowd-funding platform Ketto and are putting ₹ two crore for this initiative.



#InThisTogether will run for seven days on Ketto and the proceeds raised will be directed to ACT Grants who is the implementation partner for this campaign. ACT has been extensively working towards providing oxygen, medical manpower, vaccination awareness and telemedicine facilities all through the pandemic and the amount raised by Anushka and Virat will aid their exemplary work.

Anushka says, "India is going through an extremely difficult time and the second wave of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic has pushed our country to a state of crisis. It is time for all of us to come together and do our bit for our fellow countrymen who are in serious need for support. Virat and I have been hugely pained looking at the inexpressible suffering that people are going through and we hope that this fund will aid in our fight against the virus that we are all helplessly witnessing. We are praying for everyone's safety. We hope that you join us in our prayers to save as many lives as possible because we are all in this together."

Virat says, "We are going through an unprecedented time in the history of our country and our nation needs all of us to unite and save as many people as possible. Anushka and I have been shocked to see the human suffering since last year. We have been working towards helping as many people as possible all through the pandemic and now, India wants our support more than ever. We are starting this fundraiser with the confidence that we will be able to raise substantial funds to aid those in dire need. We are confident that people will come forward to support fellow countrymen in crisis. We are in this together and we shall overcome this."

Gayatri Yadav, spokesperson ACT Grants says, "ACT Grants powered by India's start up passion is on a mission to help supply oxygen and support our healthcare system, working with the government to address critical medical needs. Having strong voices like Anushka and Virat help drive fundraising efforts will go a long way towards helping us realise this goal. On behalf of India's startup ecosystem, ACT Grants is truly grateful to have them join this mission."

**IMMERSIVE**

*Yaar Julahay*, a forthcoming series of dramatic readings of writers who craft stories with the deftness of master weavers, is all set to premiere on May 15, with the debut episode featuring Pakistani actress Mahira Khan reading Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi's classic story, *Guriya* (doll).

The Zee Theatre series of dramatic readings is spread across 12 episodes and will air on DTH platforms — Tata Sky Theatre, Airtel Spotlight, Dish TV and D2H Rangmanch Active. The name of the series is inspired by a Gulzar poem.

*Yaar Julahay* brings to life the stories of progressive Urdu and Hindi writers like Gulzar, Saadat Hasan Manto, Ismat Chughtai, Munshi Premchand, Amrita Pritam, Qurratulain Haider, Balwant Singh, Asad Muhammad Khan, Ghulam Abbas, Rajinder Singh Bedi and Intezar Hussain. The readers will be stars like Sarmad Khoosat, Sarwat Gilani, Nimra Bucha, Fawad Khan, Sania Saeed, Irfan Khoosat, Yasra Rizvi, Samiya Mumtaz, and Faisal Qureshi.

*Guriya* is the story of two

**Theatrical recreation**

*Yaar Julahay, a forthcoming series, features the dramatic readings of stories written by progressive Urdu and Hindi authors*



best friends Mehra and Bano. Bano has a doll (*Guriya*) that resembles Mehra who doesn't like that doll at all. With time their fondness and hate for the doll grows many fold. Towards the end comes an unorthodox twist to the storyline that subtly unfolds the mystery around the doll.

Qasmi, an Urdu-language Pakistani poet, journalist, literary critic, dramatist and short story author, was born in 1916.

According to Shailja Kejriwal, chief creative officer, special projects, ZEEL, each episode of *Yaar Julahay* features the immersive reading of a remarkable story that is as unique and complex as the subcontinent we live in.

"Each one of the featured writers has processed reality through characters that we can still identify with. It was a joy to work on these classic tales with Kanwal and Sarmad Khoosat because we have collaborated with them before and they always approach a project with a certain artistic sensitivity and deep respect for the material they are working with. Their sensibility was needed for a project as unique as this."

Acclaimed director and actor Sarmad Khoosat says the series is inspired by *Dastangoi*, a tradition of creating and telling stories, that defines South Asia.

He explains, "We have interpreted *Dastangoi* in a contemporary way and there is also live and recorded music along with suggestive details articulating the theme of the story. For instance, when I directed Mahira Khan for the story *Guriya*, the set was strewn with dolls that in a way told their own story. They created an eerie atmosphere that augmented the narration and enhanced the inherent mood of the reading."

Director Kanwal Khoosat adds, "This series attempts to introduce a newer audience to literature through a format that blends *Dastangoi* with the Chamber Theatre technique where a reader has an environment, a minimal stage setting to not just read in but to perform, interpret and deliver a story in. In each reading, we have tried to maintain the integrity of the author's voice even as we amplify it through the digital medium to reach as many people as possible."

—IANS

—IANS

**M O T H E R ' S D A Y S P E C I A L**

# HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE

The Hindi film industry has romanticised the idea of mothers and their relationships with their offsprings. So a day prior, to the one where we celebrate her, we look at some of the famous women and their equally well-known children



**Jaya Bachchan nee Bhaduri--Abhishek and Shweta**

Jaya Bachchan blazed a trail with films like *Abhimaan* (1973) *Mili* (1975) and more. GenZ knows her for playing the mum in *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (2001) and *Kal Ho Na Ho* (2003).

While her son, Abhishek, has proved his acting chops, her daughter too is well-known. Shweta, a celebrity columnist, is often spotted walking the ramp at the fashion week. Her debut novel, *Paradise Towers*, turned out to be a bestseller.

While the ladies happen to be independent, strong thinkers, each possessing a strikingly different personality, they are reportedly very close to each other. Shweta shared how Jaya has been the bad cop amongst her parents. And Jaya revealed she was amazed at the liberties which Shweta extends towards her daughter.

**Neetu Kapoor nee Singh--Ranbir Kapoor and Riddhima Kapoor Sahni**

Neetu, wife of the late Rishi Kapoor, started her career as a child actress at the age of eight under the name Baby Sonia, and made her acting debut in 1966 with the film *Suraj*. She went on to star in several blockbusters, many with her late husband. Her son, Ranbir, is an established actor with whom she shares an incredible relationship. Her daughter, Riddhima Kapoor Sahni, is a well-known jewellery designer. And Neetu's relationship with both is different.

Ranbir has always been very forthcoming about how close he is to his mother and the mother-son chemistry shines brightly even through their pictures.

Neetu, on her part, has revealed that in her darkest hour it was Ranbir who turned out to

be her ultimate supporter, her best friend, and her "only confidant". "I was very troubled in my married life. I think he must have been 15 or so, when Rishi and I went through a really bad patch. I have always felt that while my daughter should be innocent and learn to face life as it comes, my son should be street smart and know everything about life. So I would sit with Ranbir and talk to him," said Neetu, as per media reports.

She believes that sharing details about her hard times with Ranbir changed him and made him a more responsible, mature person.

**Malaika Arora--Arhaan Khan**

Malaika is widely acclaimed as one of the fittest Bollywood celebs ever and no one can imagine that she has an 18-year-old son, Arhaan. Along with regular exercise and yoga, Malaika Arora credits an healthy and balanced diet for her toned body. At the same time, she says that occasional cheat meals are allowed. More than eating food, the actress stated that she has come to love the process of cooking and says that it was only because of Arhaan that she started cooking in the first place. Malaika recently shot for a celebrity cooking show where she revealed that she took up cooking as a challenge after her son questioned her culinary skills.

The stylish mum-son duo make a striking team and happen to be closely followed in the social media circle.

**Gauri Khan--Suhana, Aryan and AbRam Khan**

Gauri Khan has been a diva since eternity and now her daughter Suhana is in full bloom, following her footsteps as well. The pair are quite vocal about how much they love spending most of



**Neena Gupta-Masaba Gupta**

Neena Gupta set many a tongue wagging when she decided to become a single parent to Masaba. She had already done films like *Jaane Bhi Do Yaaron* (1983), *Gandhi* (1982) and more. Neena has been the proud parent who is seen at the front row of Masaba's fashion shows. She also regularly wears clothes designed by her daughter. The duo recently realistically depicted the highs and lows of their relationship in the Netflix series, *Masaba Masaba*.

**Aparna Sen--Konkona Sen Sharma**

Aparna Sen and her daughter Konkona Sen Sharma have a similar career trajectories in front of and behind the camera. Both started their careers as actresses and went on to direct films. Konkona's first outing as director was *A Death in the Gunj* in 2017. After being raised single-handedly by her mother, Konkona finds herself in the same situation with son Haroon Shorey, whom she describes as being "not so little" anymore. Konkona adds, "My mom single-handedly brought up two girls, although my father was also a large part of my life. But that became my template. I felt it to be normal."

Earlier this year it was announced that Konkona, along with Arjun Rampal, would feature in Aparna Sen's next directorial venture titled *The Rapist*. (Compiled by Christy Varghese)

their time together. While Suhana often makes headlines for her resemblance to her father, Shah Rukh Khan, the star kid revealed in a humorous social media post on Mother's Day last year that she is 'kind of mad' that she doesn't look like her mom.

The son, Aryan, is studying abroad to be a director. While, the youngest, AbRam, is happy grabbing the attention of paparazzi and SRK fans alike.

**Sushmita Sen--Renee and Alisah**

Be it her everlasting fitness, her positive spirit or the way she decided to adopt — first Renee and later, Alisah — and bring them up single-handedly, former Miss Universe and actor Sushmita Sen is a trailblazer.

Sushmita believes that while motherhood is tough and raising kids requires a lot of resilience, there are certain things only kids can make you understand. Talking about her children,

Sushmita said that more than her teaching her daughters, there are several ways her own two children have "mothered" her in life.

The actress might not have given birth biologically, but according to her, bringing up Renee and Alisah felt like she gave birth to them from her heart. In an interview last year, she said,

"In a natural birth, the mother and the child connect through the umbilical cord but in adoption, the mother and the child are connected by this higher power, a connection that you cannot cut off. I have had the privilege of experiencing it twice. To become a mother who has given birth from the heart. I have not missed a day of feeling the joy of motherhood. The wisest decision I made at the age of 24 was to become a mother. It stabilised my life. People think it was a great act of charity and wonderful action but it was self-preservation. It was me protecting myself. But I am proud of the 24-year-old because I could have delayed the process,



## Material gifts? Nah...

So, you thought your mother needed jewellery, an expensive perfume or the LV bag? You would be surprised to know that a thoughtful gesture would juggernaut to the top of her list.

Between lockdown and social distancing measures, much like last year, many of your traditional Mother's Day plans — brunch at her favorite restaurant, shopping date, spa appointment, or a family gathering — may not be doable. So, put on your thinking cap and come up with innovative ways to celebrate mom (and the other mom figures in your life) while still keeping safe and healthy.



### Bring the fam-jam together for a game night

Get your whole family together, pick a traditional game online and make a night out of it. Whether you prefer house, trivia, or card games, there are plenty of them on the internet that will ensure your virtual hangout is just as fun as your in-person one and bring a big smile to your mom's face.



### Create a one-of-a-kind memory jar

A gift is a way of expressing love, and nothing will say 'I love you' better than this DIY memory jar. Pen down some of the most cherished memories you have made with mom on bits of paper and put them in a mason jar. On Mother's Day, you both can sit together, read and relive those memories over a cup of masala chai. This memory jar can also serve as a pick-me-up for her when you're away.



breakfast. Sure, you owe that to her, given how many delicious meals she has whipped up at the word go.

### Explore an armchair travel experience

While travel has come to a standstill amid these testing times, technology allows you to visit any place around the world in the blink of an eye. Get an up-close look at Mona Lisa at The Louvre, a legendary art museum in Paris, France; sight some of the big five in Africa's national parks or watch history come to life at the marvelous town of Hampi in Karnataka.

### Breakfast in bed for the queen

Help your mom celebrate her special day in the most delicious way possible — with a lavish breakfast in bed that can double up as brunch too! Bring out some of the pantry basics — flour, eggs, butter, milk, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon, salt, and walnuts — and combine those with mashed bananas to whip up a delish stack of fluffy pancakes. Vegetarians can skip the eggs and let the mashed fruit take the lead in giving this breakfast cum dessert item an airy and light texture. Or if she prefers Indian, why not try your hand at putting together a *poha* or a *vermicelli upma*

### Clean the house!

Not kidding at all. She has told you this 2,68,262 times, and you know this is exactly what she wants you to do. Take a couple of chores off her to-do list and add to yours from this Mother's Day onwards and give her a little extra time to rest.

To say that the past year has tossed a bunch of challenges at all moms would be an understatement. So taking time out and showing her some love and thanking her for all she has done for us through bonding activities like these is the least you can do.

## HEALTH REGIMEN



# Cleaner skincare

**NAINA RUHAIL** offers tips to reduce toxins in your daily routine

Have you ever thought of delving into the details of your beauty product? Or felt helpless in understanding the 'suspicious-six' ingredients mentioned on the fancy packaging? Our ever-evolving beauty industry with all its glamour has toxic truths like animal testing and harmful chemicals associated with it.

Examine the list of ingredients on the label of the product. It is supposed to offer valuable information on what makes the product smell, lather or last on a shelf. Chemicals like sulphates, phthalates, silicones, fragrance, to name a few, should be noted and avoided. Fortunately, there's a clean and

toxin-free way to dash out and shop consciously to add clean, vegan, and non-toxic beauty products to your vanity.

It's not a secret anymore that the trend for toxin-free, vegan beauty is cherished across the globe for its natural skin benefits and eco-friendliness. The soaring awareness has moved the radar towards clean alternatives that are free of harsh chemicals and animal cruelty. Now, if the terms like clean, cruelty free or vegan confuse you and make you think, allow me to break it down for you. Clean skincare products are formulated using ethically sourced, nature-derived ingredients which are toxin-free and are good for you and the planet. Similarly, the products that are not tested on animals or made without any animal by-products make them cruelty-free.

Do you know how much toxic load your body is carrying? From a shower gel to your

moisturiser, every indulgence contributes to a massive accumulation of toxic ingredients in our bodies. Personal care products are listed as one of the major donors of chemicals dwelling in our so-called 'healthy lifestyle'. In a quest to reduce toxins in our skincare regime, take a few steps towards a cleaner beauty regimen to safeguard your skin and your environment equally.

### LOOK FOR HIDDEN TOXINS

Flip your skincare product over and thoroughly read all the toxic ingredients such as perfume (perfume or fragrance). Your divinely fragrant product has perfume in it and there are more than 3,000 ingredients listed under this umbrella, which you cannot be sure of putting on your skin due to the risks these pose to your health. Most perfume constituents like phthalates are responsible for the endocrine disruption that imitates estrogen in the body and can trigger allergy and asthma. Choosing skincare products that are naturally scented or formulated using essential oils can be a wise choice.



### CHOOSE MULTIPURPOSE PRODUCTS

In this time of minimalism, adapting multi-purpose beauty or skincare products with less packaging can do the job for you. Always look out for products that can multitask, like lip and cheek stain or maybe a beeswax lip balm that can nourish your lips and calm your cuticles too. This initiative will prevent stacking up the landfills and will be twice as nice.

### SWITCH TO GOOD STUFF

Ditch your comprehensive chemical-laden skincare steps with nature's goodness. Cutting back on skincare products means picking a routine with some hero ingredients that naturally work on your skin concerns, always focusing on nutrition-defense ingredients will leave your skin nourished and glowing. Essential oils, vitamins, and other organic elements that pack a punch of nature's wealth are a great way to replace toxins from your skincare regime.

— The author is a co-founder of a clean beauty marketplace which brings together natural brands

## CELEB TALK

# United in distress

**KRITI SANON** has spoken of the bright side of gloom in a new video. She says what breaks people somewhere unites them too

Kriti posted the video on Instagram, observing how people were going beyond their capacity to help those in need.

"What breaks us somewhere unites us. Today when I look around it doesn't matter what your caste is or religion is, profession is, rich or poor, which state are you from — nothing matters. At the end of it we are all just human beings who can feel and recognise each other's pain," she says in the video.

"We feel terrible when someone is in need and we are trying our best to spread the word and get help. We are total strangers to each other. We are donating, we are trying to figure a way to end each other's suffering and pain. Just a thought," she adds. Kriti captioned the

image: "I try and see a silver lining in everything... a ray of light in the dark, good in the bad.. Ya.. I am that person.. *Main aur meri tanhaiy aksar baatein kiya karte hain..* Just felt like sharing my today's bedtime thought.. Thank you for being my 'Dear Diary' for the night.. #WeAreInThisTogether."

The actress has just wrapped up shooting for the upcoming film *Bhediya*, which also stars Varun Dhawan. The supernatural film is directed by Aamar Kaushik, and the film is slated to release on April 14 next year.

Besides *Bhediya*, Kriti will be seen in the film *Mimi*, which is based on surrogacy.

She also stars with Akshay Kumar in the action comedy *Bachchan Pandey*, and with Tiger Shroff in the action drama *Ganpath*. Kriti's line-up of films also includes *Hum Do Hamare Do* with Rajkumar Rao and *Adipurush* with Prabhas and Saif Ali Khan.

—IANS



▶ shortpasses

**L'POOL TOP 4 CHANCE MAY BE OVER**  
**LIVERPOOL:** Jurgen Klopp admits Liverpool's chances of qualifying for next season's Champions League may be over with the club languishing seven points behind fourth-placed Chelsea. "I'm not sure there is still a chance but we'll try to make sure that if there is one, we will be there," Klopp said on Friday.

**GULACSI EXTENDS LEIPZIG DEAL**  
**LEIPZIG:** Hungary goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi has signed a contract extension with RB Leipzig until 2025 on Friday. Gulacsi, who turned 31 on Thursday, has made 222 appearances for Leipzig since his transfer from sister club Red Bull Salzburg in 2015.

**UAE 'PREFERRED VENUE' FOR PSL**  
**KARACHI:** The UAE has emerged as the "preferred venue" to host the remainder of the sixth edition of the Pakistan Super League, the PCB announced on Friday.

**SHOOTERS TO TAKE PART IN WC**  
**NEW DELHI:** The last shooting World Cup before the Tokyo Olympics will be held in Osijek, Croatia from June 22 to July 3 and the Indians are set to take part in that event as they would be training in the European country at that time.

**HIMA GETS FIRST VAX SHOT**  
**NEW DELHI:** Star sprinter Hima Das has received the first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine and urged people to do the same to fight the dreaded virus. Hima, who is currently training at the MIS-Patalia is the first top track and field athlete to have received the vaccine.

**SEEMA QUALIFIES FOR TOKYO OLY**  
**SOFIA:** Seema Bisla on Friday became the fourth Indian woman wrestler to qualify for the Tokyo Games by reaching the final of the 50kg competition even as Sumit Malik settled for a silver medal after conceding his final bout.

**SATHIYAN REQUESTS FOR TT TABLE**  
**NEW DELHI:** Leaving no stone unturned for his maiden Olympics, ace Indian paddler G Sathiyam has requested the Government to arrange the table which will be used at the Tokyo Games.

**ROWERS ARJUN, ARVIND QUALIFY**  
**NEW DELHI:** Indian rowers Arjun Lal Jat and Arvind Singh qualified for the Olympics in men's lightweight double sculls event after finishing second in the final race of the Asia/Oceania Continental Qualifying Regatta in Tokyo on Friday.

**NO BIG SIGNING FOR BAYERN**  
**MUNICH:** Bayern Munich president Herbert Hainer has ruled out any big-money signings this summer as the Bundesliga giants tighten their belts due to the Covid-19 pandemic. "We will add to the squad, but not make any expensive transfers," Hainer said on Friday.

**INTER ENTERING 'NEW CYCLE'**  
**MILAN:** Inter Milan, who ended the record reign of nine consecutive titles of Italian champions Juventus, can start "a new cycle", says star striker Romelu Lukaku in an interview published on Friday. "We can still win and grow, start a new cycle." Agencies

# Jadeja, Shami return for WTC final

Vihari also finds place in 20-man squad; Hardik not considered; Kuldeep, Saini dropped

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fit-again all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, senior pacer Mohammed Shami and middle order batsman Hanuma Vihari returned to a 20 men Indian squad announced on Friday for next month's World Test Championship final against New Zealand in Southampton from June 18 and a five-match Test series against England in August-September.

The trio missed the home series against England in February-March due to injuries suffered during away series against Australia earlier this year.

But Baroda all-rounder Hardik Pandya, who was with the team during England series was not considered for selection as "he is still not in a position to bowl". He can play as a specialist batsman in the shorter formats but has to bowl for a place in the Test team.

"Hardik Pandya is still not in a position to bowl. The experiment of selectors to keep him during England and prepare him with bowling workload has failed miserably. He will henceforth not be considered for Test cricket," a BCCI source told PTI.

The selectors also picked four standby players — Abhimanyu Easwaran, Prasad Krishna, Avesh Khan, and Arzan Nagwaswalla, the BCCI stated in a press release.

Opener Easwaran and pacer Avesh Khan were also with the team during the England series



Indian all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, pacer Mohammed Siraj, opening batsman Shubman Gill and Hanuma Vihari

AP/File Picture

while the extra pace did it for IPL regular Prasad Krishna and Gujarat left-arm fast bowler Arzan Nagwaswalla, who had a stellar 2019-20 season. He is the only Parsi cricketer currently playing at the First-Class level in India.

The 23-year-old left-arm pacer has 62 first-class wickets to his credit in 16 matches that he has played since his debut in 2018.

K L Rahul, who underwent a surgery after being diagnosed with acute appendicitis, and wicket keeper batsman Wriddhiman Saha, infected with Covid-19 during the recently-suspended IPL, have been included subject to fitness.

Out-of-form spinner Kuldeep Yadav and pacer Navdeep Saini have been left out of the squad, which is expected to depart for England for the twin assignments in the third week of this month.

Axar Patel has expectedly retained his place as the third spinner after a successful debut series against England.

Batting star Prithvi Shaw has not managed to impress the selectors with his white-ball form and has been overlooked. Also ignored was Bhuvneshwar Kumar, whose fitness woes continue to come in the way of a consistent run.

The WTC final against the Black Caps will be held from June 18 in Southampton followed by the Tests against England from August 4.

The Test series against England will start in Nottingham, followed by matches at the Lord's (August 12 to 16), Leeds (August 25 to 29), The Oval (September 2 to 6) and Manchester (September 10 to 14).

**SQUAD**  
 Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Mayank Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli (Captain), Ajinkya Rahane (vc), Hanuma Vihari, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Umesh Yadav, KL Rahul (subject to fitness clearance), Wriddhiman Saha (wk; subject to fitness clearance).

**Standby players:** Abhimanyu Easwaran, Prasad Krishna, Avesh Khan, Arzan Nagwaswalla.

**VIRAT DONATE 2 CR**  
 India captain Virat Kohli and his actor wife Anushka Sharma have donated ₹2 crore to a fund-raising project, which will raise a total of ₹7 crore to support the country's fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. The two are raising money through crowd-funding platform *Ketto*. The campaign will run for seven days on *Ketto* and the proceeds will be directed to ACT Grants, the implementation partner which will work towards providing oxygen, medical manpower, vaccination awareness and tele-medicine facilities all through the pandemic and the amount.

## Morris relieved to be safely back home

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

South Africa and Rajasthan Royals all-rounder Chris Morris is "relieved" to be safely back home after witnessing "chaos" unfold once Covid-19 cases in the IPL bio-bubble came to light.

Morris, along with his 10 other South African players have reached home, after the IPL was suspended following six cases of Covid-19 — four players and two coaches.

"Look, obviously I'm relieved," Morris, who is currently undergoing a 10-day mandatory quarantine at home, told *iol.Co.Za*.

Morris said they came to know about the Covid cases in Kolkata Knight Riders — Vulkat Chakravarthy and Sandeep Warrier — on Sunday

night.

"The moment we heard that, when players are testing positive, inside the bubble, then everyone starts asking questions. The alarm bells definitely started going off for all of us," he said.

"By Monday when they postponed that game (between KKR and RCB), we knew the tournament was under pressure to continue."

The T20 league was suspended after SRH wicketkeeper-batsman Wriddhiman Saha and Delhi Capitals' Amit Mishra tested positive on Tuesday.

Later, CSK bowling coach L Balaji and batting coach Michael Hussey also contracted the virus.

"I was chatting to our team doctor, whose room was across the hallway from my mine in the hotel, and Kumar (Sangakarra, the Royals' head coach) came around the corner, and drew his finger across his throat, and then we knew it was over," said Morris.

"And then it was chaos! The England guys especially were panicking because they needed to isolate in hotels in England first, and apparently there weren't any rooms."

Gerald Coetzee, who was named the replacement for Australian Andrew Tye, had arrived in India only last week and Morris said he tried to comfort the young pacer as he was panicking a bit.

"I know poor Gerald was panicking a bit, I mean he's only 20 and all this is going on," said Morris, who was the costliest IPL buy ever with a whopping ₹16.25 crore contract. "I tried to keep him under my wing and made sure he was ready when the 12.30am pick up came at the hotel. It was eerie, it was just a

handful of us in that whole hotel at the time."

There was criticism of the league happening at a time when a devastating health crisis was unfolding outside the bubble with more than 3000 people dying everyday in India.

"For me, this was always a two-fold thing: on the one hand we're playing a tournament, all happy and smiling in a bubble, while outside so many people are suffering," Morris said.

"On the flip side of it, there was the fact that by playing, we were ensuring people actually stayed at home, watched us and at least had something to smile about or something else to think about — even if it was being unhappy with how we played in a game — for three hours each night."



## Not comfortable in Delhi, Kane & Co fly out to Male

**New Delhi:** Kane Williamson and three other New Zealanders on Friday flew to Maldives in a departure from their original plan, as they were not feeling comfortable staying in Covid-19 hotspot Delhi.

Sunrisers Hyderabad captain Williamson, Chennai Super Kings' Mitchell Santner and Royal Challengers Bangalore's Kyle Jamison and CSK physio Tommy Simsek took a commercial flight to Maldives.

The four were originally supposed to stay in Delhi in a mini bio-bubble till May 10 and take a flight to the UK ahead of the Test series in England and World

Test Championship final against India from June 18.

"Kane and few others from New Zealand were not feeling safe in Delhi because of the Covid situation there. That is why they decided to fly to Maldives," a Sunrisers Hyderabad official told PTI.

Another Test regular Trent Boult has flown back to New Zealand with the rest of the IPL contingent and will join the team in the UK after spending a week with his family.

Though there is a travel ban from India, New Zealand is allowing its citizens to return home with a mandatory two weeks quarantine. PTI

## 'T20 WC shouldn't be held in India if it drains resources'

PTI ■ MALE

Australian pace spearhead Pat Cummins believes if hosting the ICC T20 World Cup amidst raging Covid-19 pandemic is a "drain on Indian resources" or is "unsafe", it would be prudent to shift it to the United Arab Emirates.

The postponement of Indian Premier League after multiple cases of Covid-19 inside the bio-bubble has led to a big question-mark on whether the marquee ICC event should be held in India where a third wave is expected around that time.

"If it's going to be a drain on resources or it's not going to be safe, then I don't think it's right to play it over here. That's the first question which



Australia and KKR pacer Pat Cummins poses for a selfie with KKR chief mentor David Hussey before they board flight for Male on Thursday. @KKRiders

needs to be answered," Cummins was quoted as saying by the *Age* newspaper.

Cummins said cricket authorities should check with

Indian Government and do what's best.

"It probably too early to say. It's six months away. The priority should be for cricket authorities to work with the Indian Government to see what's best for the Indian people," Cummins said.

**HUSSEY TESTS -VE**

**New Delhi:** Chennai Super Kings batting coach Mike Hussey has tested negative for Covid-19 but remains in quarantine in a Chennai hotel, team CEO Kasi Viswanathan said on Friday.

Australian media outlets reported that Hussey can join fellow countrymen in Maldives if he returns another negative test.

"He tested negative before getting on an air ambulance

from Delhi to Chennai (on Thursday). He is doing fine. All other overseas personnel have left, head coach Stephen Fleming will be flying out tomorrow," said Viswanathan.

Hussey said he is grateful to his IPL franchise for taking good care of him.

"I'm resting well and I'm feeling stronger. I'm hugely appreciative of what CSK have already done and are doing for me," he was quoted as saying by *Sydney Morning Herald*.

"It's horrific what's taking place in India at the moment with the pandemic and I've been blessed with the great support I have received.

"I'm grateful for all the messages of support from cricket fans in India and Australia," he said in a state-

## Zverev stuns Nadal



**Madrid:** Rafael Nadal lost 6-4, 6-4 to Alexander Zverev in the Madrid Open quarter-finals on Friday, casting doubts over the Spaniard's form ahead of this

month's French Open.

Nadal has now fallen early in two clay-court Masters tournaments ahead of the Grand Slam in Paris, after going out in the Monte Carlo quarter-finals last month before winning in Barcelona.

Even in Barcelona, however, Nadal needed to save a championship point to beat Stefanos Tsitsipas in the final.

World number two Nadal is hoping to clinch a 14th Roland Garros title and record-setting 21st major in the French capital.

Zverev's impressive straight-set win at the Caja Magica earns him a meeting with Dominic Thiem in the Madrid semis, in what will be a repeat of last year's US Open final, which was won by Thiem.

After losing to world number eight Andrey Rublev in Monaco, Nadal was convincingly beaten by Zverev and the spotlight will be on the 34-year-old now in Rome next week, his last tournament before heading to Paris. AFP

## Blow for Srikanth, Saina as Malaysia Open postponed

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Malaysia Open Super 750 tournament, one of badminton's last two Olympic qualifying events, was on Friday postponed due to a recent Covid-19 surge in the host country, dealing a severe blow to the qualification hopes of Saina Nehwal and Kidambi Srikanth.

The \$600,000 event was scheduled to be held in Kuala Lumpur from May 25 to 30.

"All attempts were made by the organisers and BWF to provide a safe tournament environment for all participants, but the recent surge in cases left no choice but to postpone the tournament," Badminton World Federation said in a statement.

"BWF can confirm the rescheduled tournament will no longer take place in the Olympic qualifying window. New tournament dates will be confirmed at a later date."

The decision came as a huge setback for London Olympics Bronze-medallist Saina and men's star Srikanth in their bid for Olympic qualification.

Following the postponement of the India Open (May 11-16), Saina and Srikanth's qualification for the Tokyo Games hinged on the Kuala Lumpur event followed by the Singapore Open (June 1-6).

In light of the new development, Badminton Association of India (BAI) on Friday reached out to the world body, seeking clarity on the qualification scenario for its shuttlers.

"It's really unfortunate that the crucial qualifier had to be postponed in this way but that is the time we live in now," BAI General Secretary Ajay Singhania said in a statement.

"Though four of our players have already qualified and there are few more including Saina and Srikanth who can still make it. I have reached out to BWF Secretary Thomas Lund asking for clarity on the future course of action."

With Singapore suspending all flights from Covid-ravaged India, it will be a difficult task for the Indian players, including Saina and Srikanth, to travel to the country for the last qualifier.

BAI said it is in touch with the Singapore Badminton Association and is trying to find a best possible way regarding the mandatory 21-day quarantine rule.

"We will do whatever best possible can be done to find a better way out so that the shuttlers get the chance to secure the Olympic berths if there is any scope and opportunity," Singhania said.

## Lewa focused on breaking Gerd Mueller's goal record

**Munich:** Bayern Munich coach Hansi Flick said on Friday Robert Lewandowski is focused on breaking Gerd Mueller's all-time Bundesliga goal-scoring record as the Poland striker is four short with three games of the season left.

Bayern can be confirmed Bundesliga champions for the ninth straight season at home to Borussia Moenchengladbach on Saturday.

Lewandowski is looking to add to his phenomenal tally of 36 goals from the 26 league games he has played in this term.

He has three matches left to break Mueller's all-time league record of 40 goals netted in 1971/72.

"He (Lewandowski) is fully concentrated and focused on the record, but he also knows the way we tick," Flick said on Friday.

"When we play good football, then he profits the most, because he has enormous qualities. We are talking about a world-class footballer, he is very consistent and is always good for 30 goals and assists.

"He has three games left and then we'll see what happens at the end," Flick added with mid-table sides Freiburg and Augsburg to follow after Gladbach on Saturday.

Many had thought Gerd Mueller's 49-year-old record was near impossible to beat, but Lewandowski came close by scoring 34 goals in 31 league games last season. AFP

## Man Utd vs Villarreal in Europa League final

AFP ■ ROME



Manchester United has finally reached a major final under Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.

A 3-2 loss to Roma in the second leg of the Europa League semifinals on Thursday didn't prevent United completing an 8-5 victory on aggregate. It ended a run of four losses in the semifinals of major tournaments in the last 18 months for Solskjaer, who is under pressure to win United's first trophy since 2017.

Villarreal will be United's opponent in the May 26 final in the Polish city of Gdansk after beating Arsenal 2-1 on aggregate in the other semifinal. The second leg finished 0-0 on Thursday.

Faced with a huge task at the Stadio Olimpico after its 6-2 thrashing at Old Trafford last week, Roma created enough good chances to pull off what would have been a

remarkable comeback. Goals by Edin Dzeko and Bryan Cristante, in the 57th and 60th minute, briefly put Roma 2-1 ahead and were the least the Italian team deserved after regularly breaching United's defense. The visitors were thankful for a slew of saves by David de Gea in both halves, ensuring Nicola Zalewski's 83rd-minute winner on the 19-year-old's debut proved only a consolation for Roma.

Roma couldn't keep United at bay at the other end as Cavani showed his prowess as a finisher, opening the scoring

in the 39th minute by taking a touch from Fred's pass and smashing in a shot from just outside the area.

His second goal, a header from Bruno Fernandes' cross in the 68th, made it 2-2 and came as a relief for United because Roma was threatening to score at will. Winning the Europa League was Roma's only potential route back into the Champions League for next season.

**IST FOR VILLARREAL**

At Emirates in London, Villarreal boss Unai Emery

came back to haunt Arsenal as the Spanish side held out for a 0-0 draw to reach first European final.

Defeat means the Gunners will miss out on Champions League football for a fifth consecutive season with the pressure building on Emery's successor Mikel Arteta.

Sitting ninth in the Premier League, Arsenal are now on the verge of failing to qualify for European football for the first time in 26 years.

"We are devastated," said Arteta. "We tried everything until the last minute. I think we deserved to win the game but the details define these ties."

Aubameyang twice hit the post for Arsenal, while Emile Smith Rowe sliced a glorious chance wide early in the second-half. "We had three big chances, they didn't have anything but they are through," added Arteta, who was forced into a last minute reshuffle when Granit Xhaka picked up an injury in the warm-up.