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CAPSULE

21 DIE AFTER BURIAL OF COVID VICTIM IN SIKAR

Jaipur: Around 21 persons lost their lives at a village in Rajasthan's Sikar district allegedly after the burial of a Covid victim, whose body was brought from Gujarat, without following any Covid protocol.

8 COVID SURVIVORS DIE OF BLACK FUNGUS IN MAHA

Mumbai: At least eight Covid-19 survivors have died due to mucormycosis, a fungal infection, during treatment in Maharashtra, a senior official said, adding the total 200 such patients are being treated.

NO TOLL FEE FOR TANKERS CARRYING OXYGEN: NHAI

New Delhi: The National Highways Authority of India on Saturday announced exempting tankers and containers carrying liquid medical oxygen (LMO) from user fee at toll plazas across national highways.

'APPROVAL FOR CHINESE VACCINE AN ACHIEVEMENT'

Beijing: WHO's China chief has termed the conditional approval granted by the global health body to China's first Covid-19 vaccine Sinopharm as a "milestone achievement" which will create an opening to significantly increase the global supply of vaccines.

SC transfers Health Min's Covid duty to task force

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a clear disapproval of the way the Centre handled the Covid-19 situation, specially the oxygen shortage crisis in the country's hospitals, the Supreme Court on Saturday formed a 12-member National Task Force (NTF) to streamline oxygen allocation to different States, review and suggest measures to ensure availability of essential drugs and medicines, and adopt remedial measures to ensure preparedness for future emergencies.

The NTF which literally took over the existing work of Union Health Ministry and other Ministries like Home Ministry is comprised of 10 reputed doctors of the country. The Union Health Secretary will act as Secretary and the Cabinet Secretary or an officer in the rank of Additional Secretary or above will act as convener of the NTF.

As per the order passed by Justices DY Chandrachud and MR Shah, the 10 members in the NTF are Dr Bhabatosh

12-member NTF to streamline oxygen allocation to States, ensure availability of essential drugs

□ The NTF which literally took over the existing work of Union Health Ministry and other Ministries like Home Ministry is composed of 10 reputed doctors of the country

□ The next hearing in the case is scheduled for May 17

□ Explaining rationale behind setting up the NTF, the apex court said the establishment of such a task force will enable the decision makers to have inputs which go beyond finding ad-hoc solutions to present problems



Biswas, former Vice Chancellor, West Bengal University of Health Sciences, Kolkata; Dr Devender Singh Rana, chairperson, Board of Management, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Delhi; Dr Devi Prasad Shetty, chairperson and Executive Director, Narayana Healthcare, Bengaluru; Dr Gagandeep Kang, Professor, Christian Medical College, Vellore, Tamil Nadu; Dr JV Peter, Director, Christian

Medical College, Vellore, Tamil Nadu; Dr Naresh Trehan, Chairperson and Managing Director, Medanta Hospital and Heart Institute, Gurugram; Dr Rahul Pandit, Director, Critical Care Medicine and ICU, Fortis Hospital, Mulund (Mumbai, Kalyan); Dr Saumitra Rawat, Chairman & Head, Department of Surgical Gastroenterology and Liver Transplant, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Delhi; Dr Shiv Kumar Sarin, Senior Professor and Head of Department of Hepatology, Director, ILBS, Delhi; Dr Zarir F Udawadia, Consultant Chest Physician, Hinduja Hospital, Breach Candy Hospital and Parsee General Hospital, Mumbai.

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DRDO Covid drug speeds up recovery, cuts O2 need

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major boost to fight the Corona pandemic, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed an anti-Covid oral drug for emergency use. The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has approved the medicine which has to be taken after dissolving it in water.

Named 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG), the drug was developed by the Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), a laboratory of the DRDO in collaboration with Dr Reddy's Laboratories (DRL), Hyderabad, the Defence Ministry said here on Saturday. "The drug is expected to save precious lives due to the mechanism of operation of the drug in infected cells. This also reduces the hospital stay of Covid-19 patients," the Ministry said.

Clinical trial results have shown that this molecule helps in faster recovery of hospitalised patients and reduces supplemental oxygen dependence.

A higher proportion of patients treated with 2-DG showed RT-PCR negative conversion in Covid patients.

The drug will be of immense benefit to the people suffering from Covid-19.

Covid +ve report no longer must for hospital admission

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In view of the huge delay in delivery of RT-PCR test reports, the Union Health Ministry on Saturday did away with the necessity of a positive Covid-19 test report for admission to a health facility.

Also, no patient will be refused services on any account, including oxygen and essential drugs, even if s/he belongs to a different city, the Ministry said in its revised national policy for admission of Covid patients to various dedicated health facilities, both public and private.

The move aims to ensure the early treatment of the suspected Covid patients, but it could put further pressure on the already strained health facilities leaving the patients at the receiving end.

For infections are surging each passing day as India reels under the deadly second Covid wave, and there has been reports from across the country about patients with dipping oxygen levels running around from one hospital to another, their relatives pleading with hospital authorities to admit them, while hospitals have been making SOS calls to the Government for oxygen supply.

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TAKEAWAY POINTS NEWLY REVISED GUIDELINES

- Requirement of a positive test for the Covid-19 virus is not mandatory for admission to a Covid health facility. A suspect case shall be admitted to the suspect ward of CCC (Covid Care Center), DCHC (Dedicated Covid Health Centers) or DHC (Dedicated Covid Hospitals) as the case may be
- No patient will be refused services on any account. This includes medication such as oxygen or essential drugs even if the patient belongs to a different city
- No patient shall be refused admission on the ground that he/she is not able to produce a valid identity card that does not belong to the city where the hospital is located
- Admissions to the hospital must be based on need. It should be ensured that beds are not occupied by persons who do not need hospitalisation. Further, the discharge should be strictly in accordance with the revised discharge policy



SC: Release prisoners to decongest jails

New Delhi: Taking note of the "unprecedented surge" in Covid-19 cases, the Supreme Court on Saturday moved to decongest prisons and ordered

the immediate release of prisoners who were granted bail or parole last year.

The court observed that the decongestion of prisons

housing around 4 lakh inmates across the country is a matter concerning "health and right to life of" prisoners and police.

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Over 1 million on oxygen, ventilator support in India



ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Of the total 37,23,446 Covid-19 patients across India, at least 9,02,291 patients are on oxygen support while 1,70,841 are on ventilators. The number of patients in ICU beds is 4,88,861.

Percentage wise this translates to 1.34 per cent of the active case-load in the ICU, 0.39 per cent of them on ventilators while 3.70 per cent of them

are on oxygen support. However, these are just the reported cases that have reached the Government's health set-up and were shared by Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan at the 25th Group of Ministers (GoM) meeting held on Friday.

In actuality the data may be on the higher side as several people have died for want of oxygen support and ventilators as health infrastructure is crumbling across the country.

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PM Modi thanks EU for support in fight against Covid

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday took part in a virtual meeting with the heads of State or Government of all the 27 European Union member states and discussed with them expanding overall cooperation in areas of trade, investment, connectivity, and Covid-19. The EU countries pledged their support to India in its fight against the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

Thanking EU and its member states for their "continued commitment to strengthening relationship with India", Modi said, "I also thank my friend Prime Minister @antonio-costapm for this initiative and according high priority to India during Portuguese Presidency of the EU Council." The PM tagged Portugal Prime Minister Antonio Costa, who hosted the meeting.

The leaders also exchanged views on the Covid-19 pandemic and healthcare cooperation.

"We are opening a new chapter in #EUIndia strategic partnership at the meeting of



EU Leaders with PM @narendramodi," tweeted Charles Michel, President of the European Council.

He said the two sides are launching negotiations on three agreements — trade, investment and geographical indications.

Modi was scheduled to visit Portugal for the leaders' meeting but it was called off in view of the coronavirus crisis and both sides decided to hold the deliberations virtually.

A strategically important grouping, the EU as a whole was India's largest trading partner in 2018. India's bilateral trade with the EU in 2018-19 stood at USD 115.6 billion with exports valued at USD 57.17 billion and imports worth USD 58.42 billion.

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Sonowal or Himanta? BJP in a fix who to pick BJP legislature party meeting in Guwahati today to name new Assam CM

DEEPAK UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

Presented with tough choice of selecting a Chief Minister for Assam, from two equally dominant and influential State leaders — incumbent Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and State Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma — BJP Central held discussion with both leaders in Delhi. The State BJP legislature party will meet at Guwahati on Sunday.

The party is tackling a "difficult task" despite a handsome win as either way "some level of dissidence" cannot be ruled out, sources in the party said.

"Don't ask questions. In short, a meeting of the BJP legislature party is likely to be held in Guwahati tomorrow...you will get your answers then," Himanta retorted when questioned on the CM selection as he left BJP president JP Nadda's residence here after meeting him, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and BJP general secretary (organisation) BL Santosh.

Sonowal and Himanta first met central leaders separately before joining them together for a "long face-to-face discussion".

Sarma was first to meet Nadda and other leaders before Sonowal followed the suit. Both had left Gauwhati by

7 am as they were called by the Central leaders in Delhi by 10.30 to work out the issue as loyal MLAs of each camp sought to rally around their respective leaders since May 2 when the BJP won 60 seats while its alliance partners AGP got nine seats and UPPL six in 126 Assam Assembly.

Himanta, 52, a Brahmin, is known to be aspiring for the Chief Minister's post which was denied to him in the Congress by Tarun Gogoi.

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Chanakya or organiser: Bengal LoP tough choice

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Bengal BJP seems to be a divided house on the question of choosing a Leader of Opposition. While a section of the party wants veteran leader and former Railway Minister Mukul Roy — often considered a "Chanakya" in State politics — to lead the party in the House others want to nominate Nandigram MLA Suvendu Adhikari a "bold and dynamic organiser" on the post.

While the entire team of the BJP Legislators is new and inexperienced both Roy and Adhikari are veterans in parliamentary politics, a State BJP leader who unsuccessfully contested the elections from northern fringes of Kolkata said wondering whether Roy with his health problems would want to accept the responsibility.

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EPS, OPS' camps slug it out over LoP

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

A major rift has emerged in the AIADMK over the choice of the Leader of the Opposition. The newly elected members of the Legislative Assembly had to go back from the party headquarters without electing the LoP due to differences between Edappadi Palaniswami and O Panneerselvam, the two senior-most leader of the party.

While the supporters of Palaniswami wanted him to be the LoP, the camp followers of Panneerselvam argued that the latter was the ideal choice for the post. Sources said both leaders also had a heated argument before the meeting was called off.

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Oxygen did flamboyant Kalra in

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Navneet Kalra, the high-profile restaurateur who is known for living a life of glitz and glamour and is linked with cricket stars and Bollywood celebrities and bookies may have run out of luck this time around after the Delhi Police recovered over 500 oxygen concentrators from his famous Khan Chacha restaurant, Town Hall restaurant and Khullar farms in Chhattarpur.

Kalra's social media accounts are proof of his good connections with cricket stars, top bureaucrats, politicians, and Bollywood celebrities.

A Page 3 personality, Kalra has been in the news several times for wrong reasons, including his alleged links with cricket bookies.



Earlier, Javed and Saleem — sons of Khan Chacha's former owner Haji Banda Hasan — had alleged that Kalra had forged documents and transferred the ownership of the restaurant in his name. Khan Chacha, which has

now become a chain, was first started by Haji Banda Hasan, popularly known as Khan Chacha in the bylanes of Khan Market in 1972. As Haji Banda Hasan's sons Javed and Saleem expanded the business.

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UP Cong spins out of Priyanka's remote control

PREETAM SRIVASTAVA ■ LUCKNOW

In July, last year the Congress indicated that its high-profile general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will shift her base to Lucknow after she was asked to vacate a Government house in Delhi. Uttar Pradesh Congress even claimed that she will shift to Sheila Kaul's house in Lucknow and the same was renovated. But, she never came.

In fact, senior Congress leaders say Priyanka last came to Lucknow in December 2019. In between, she visited UP four times, once in February last year to meet activists injured in the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests in Azamgarh and then in October to meet the family of the Dalit woman gangraped and murdered in Hathras.

She attended Kisan Panchayats in Western UP in wake of recent farmers' laws and a training camp in Rae Bareilly in January 2020.

The rest of the time, she remained in Delhi and controlled UP through twitter. Her insouciant approach and a vertical division between the "new and old" has pushed this oldest political outfit into virtual non-existence in UP in the vote bank politics — this despite Congress being the front runner in staging protests against the State Government.

The poor performance of the Congress in recent panchayat elections in Uttar Pradesh is testimony to the eroding popularity of Priyanka in particular and Congress in general. After the party per-

formed badly in both the by-polls in October 2019 and in November 2020, the writing was clear on the walls that the electorate had rejected Priyanka's twitter politics from New Delhi.

Ironically, since taking the charge from her brother Rahul Gandhi, who first led the party to the new low of winning just 7 seats in 2017 Assembly elections and later losing his own Amethi Parliament seat in 2019 polls, Priyanka attended a three-day training camp of newly-elected district and city presidents held in Rae Bareilly in January 2020.

This kindled a ray of hope that she is building the party. But the hopes dashed as in one year no attempt was made to hold such a meeting.

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Sambhavna turns saviour

SAMBHAVNA SETH, who was last seen in Gudiya Hamari Sabhi Pe Bhari, is now playing the role of a saviour, not on TV but in real life. She speaks with MUSBA HASHMI about how she is busy arranging oxygen cylinders and also highlights a case of black marketing of essentials

■ What made you work so actively to help people by going out of the way?

The realisation that how serious COVID is. Like many, I too wasn't taking COVID seriously until my whole family in Delhi contracted the virus. That was an eye opener. Things turned bad when my father, who is 80, wasn't getting a bed. I took to my social media and posted for help. Immediately, my inbox was flooded with leads, people stood up to help. I would also want to thank Manoj Tiwari and his wife Surbhi for helping me. Thankfully, with all the help, I was able to arrange a bed for my father. He is recovering, but has suffered memory loss. All this coupled with an urge to give back to everyone who needs it made me take this route. I now try and help people from all over the country with oxygen supply, beds and ventilators.

■ Your efforts paid off and you were able to save many lives. How did that feel?

The feeling is amazing. It is not as if I am doing it for appreciation, but when people actually call me to inform that they have got all the essentials and thank me, it feels good. Every life is precious and every human being is priority. Being able to save someone's life is a different feeling. Both my husband Avinash (Dwivedi) and I want to do our bit and do what best is possible. I do all this for my happiness.

■ Do you also receive backlash from people?

There are times when families abuse me when I am unable to help them. It does demotivate me, but I understand their situation and what they are going through. Recently, I reached out to a family who was in need of oxygen cylinders. I called them up to inform where they can get it from, but the man on the phone told me: We don't know who you are, but how do you expect me to leave my father alone and go. I told him that he needs oxygen and I am trying to help him, but he was so upset and for all the right reasons, that he didn't listen. It felt bad, of course. But then I heard his father gasping for air, I took his address and got the cylinder delivered to his place.

■ You recently posted a video about a black marketer of oxygen. How saddening is it to see such cases?

It's bad. More so, when a person who calls someone his sister does it for the sake of money. If you see the video, you will get to know about the whole case. To cut it short, a 29-year-old girl



was in dire need of oxygen in Delhi. Her 50-year-old mother reached out to me for help. She stays in Mumbai. I arranged everything for free, but the person who went to pick up the oxygen cylinder took money from both sides, from the one who needed it and the one who was giving. And then to take everything a notch higher he told the girl's mother that he didn't get it. I called him and gave him a reality check. It's saddening to see such people who are making money even at such a scenario. The good thing is, on the other hand, we do have people like Sonu Sood. He is like a God for many today.

■ A lesson that you learnt during the pandemic.

Help people as much as you can and don't expect anything in return, not even a thank you. Keep doing good and karma will come back to you.

■ People loved you in your last show. Can we expect you back on TV anytime soon?

I did get an offer for a Colors' show sometime back, but they were shooting in Gujarat and I can't travel. I have three dogs, one of which is 17 and he can't see or hear. It is impossible to leave my babies back home and travel. But, having said that, I would love to be back on TV with a dance reality show. If got a chance, I will definitely grab the opportunity.

■ Your YouTube channel is about to hit 2 million subscribers. What has been your success mantra?

I never ran behind numbers. For me, what matters is the love of people which I am getting in abundance. As for my vlogs, I just take up my camera and start shooting. Both Avinash and I are humorous people and that is what is evident in our vlogs too. The audience loves it. I don't prepare a master plan for content, it is all natural. I have always wanted to make people happy and show my unedited self and that is what I am doing on my channel. This can be our success mantra.

■ What is keeping you busy during the lockdown?

This time, the situation is so bad that we are just trying to stay positive. As compared to last year, I am not making any dishes, just don't feel like also because we are on a strict diet. So the recipes have to wait, but our vlogs and laugh will continue.

ACTORS SPEAK

My child is my world. We are one team. Our bond is unique and very special. When I moved to Mumbai, my husband passed away soon after my second film. In such challenging times, my son Katyayan was my pillar of strength. When he looked at me and said, 'Mummy, I want to come to Mumbai with you'. I still remember the innocence and care in his eyes for me. He truly makes me feel on top of the world. The whole motherhood experience has been wonderful. He has been with me through thick and thin. Each day is special with him and has



every step. He is one of the most understanding and supportive people, and I feel blessed to have a son like him! On Mothers' Day, I want to wish for all single mothers' abundance of strength and courage. It is not easy, but the journey is worthwhile when you see your children growing into good people. Single mothers are a perfect example of the ultimate sacrifice that women make so that their children are happy and have everything they need. Kudos to their spirit and strength!

— Himani Shivpuri, who plays Katori Amma in & TV's Happu Ki Ultan Paltan

My mother is a very strong-willed person and I have imbibed her sense of discipline and self-belief. Every year on Mother's Day, I would usually send her flowers, a cake, or any gift that I feel would bring a smile on her face and she would enjoy. She has always guided me and the best advice that I have received from her is to stay grounded and composed irrespective of the changes that might occur in life and I often reflect upon this. One of my fondest memories with her dates back to the time when I used to accompany her to a

Stationery shop on Sunday mornings and those trips were fascinating and fun-filled because my mother would buy me stationery items, some toys and goodies. She rarely asks for anything, that's why during our conversations I take note of things that she might mention which could be of her interest. This year we'll need to celebrate Mother's Day in innovative ways and I'm working on making a special montage video for her.

— Shubhashish Jha, who plays Jijaji in Sony Sab's Jijaji Chhat Parr Koi Hai



Since I was a little girl, my mother has always taught me a sense of independence, which has made me a very independent and strong woman of today's time. I don't believe in celebrating any occasion for a day, other than birthdays. I believe in making people feel special throughout the year by doing little things for them and stay connected. My mother was my first best friend while growing up and is still my Ludo partner. She is very forgiving and always tends to look at the brighter side of things, and the credit for my compassionate nature goes to her. I usually send her a bouquet or try my hands at cooking a meal for her to make her feel special. This year, we won't be meeting, so I plan to send her a cake and flowers and wishes with lots of love and good health.

— Sayantani Ghosh, who plays Dajeet Bagga in Sony Sab's Tera Yaar Hoon Main



From making me understand the value and importance of a family to help me believe in that institution, my mother has taught me all. I strongly feel we should celebrate Mother's Day every day and make her feel special daily. My mother has always advised me to be very respectful towards elders and be honest with work. She has instilled in me the idea of standing up against any injustice happening around, especially with animals. She has made countless sacrifices, and I can't thank her enough for it. My fondest memory goes back to the days of winters when she would lend her warm slippers while waking me up so that I don't have to put my feet on cold flooring. I got her kitchen and house renovated recently, and she was delighted. My mother runs a small NGO back in Kolkata and very actively looks after and takes care of the strays.

— Megha Chakraborty, who plays Garima in Sony Sab's Kaatelaal & Sons

'My biggest achievement is that people recognise me'

RUHANIKA DHAWAN tells MUSBA HASHMI about her excitement to be back on TV with SET's Mere Sai after a hiatus and how she was nervous on the first day of the shoot

■ What is your role in Mere Sai?

I play Rama, a brave and independent girl. She is looking out for her biological parents, who abandoned her outside a temple long back and got adopted by a lady who she calls Aiji.

■ How easy or hard was it to step into the shoe of the character?

It was challenging because I had to speak in Marathi a bit. I found it difficult to grasp, but my director helped me a lot in learning those words.

■ You have returned on TV after a while, how was the experience?

I am thrilled to be back on screen and excited to see how the audience finds it once my story is on air.

■ Were you nervous to be back on the sets after a hiatus?

Initially, I was, but once I started shooting, the fear vanished and now I am feeling happy and confident to be on sets.

■ Being the youngest, do you get that extra pampering on the sets?

No, not really. All the actors are treated equally but yes, it's fun shooting with Tushar (Dalvi) sir.

■ As a child actor, how has your journey been so far?

My journey so far is so amazing and I look forward to roles that are unique and



different. The biggest achievement for me is that people recognise me by name and wait to watch me on TV. This is the only thing I could have asked for.

TELLY TALE

TERRENCE PUTS STAGE ON FIRE



SET's *Super Dancer - Chapter 4* continues to mesmerise the judges, the audience and especially the guest judges who witness such young talents give top-notch performances. This weekend judges — Geeta Kapur and Anurag Basu will be accompanied by guests Malaika Arora and Terence Lewis.

While all the dance performances amazed all the four judges, there was one contestant that compelled Terrence to get on stage and perform with her. Spruha Kashyap from Morigaon Assam stunned the judges with her contemporary dance performance on the song *Janam Janam* along with super guru Sanam Johar.

Malaika Arora said: "Outstanding, I can't believe it. It is very difficult to perform a dance act of this genre with a kid, but Sanam, you made it look so delicate. Spruha, you are a very dedicated student. You are a delight, Spruha".

Terence Lewis: "I have known Sanam for years now, he has got years of experience, but Spruha, you have matched Sanam so beautifully. At such a small age you can do this, it is incredible. It's superbly executed act. I wish to be born again with the kind of flexibility Spruha has."

Anurag *dada*, who seemed proud of all the contestants said: "The act was poetry in motion. I am speechless. We all are missing Shilpa, so on her behalf, let us get the *seedhi*". Terence and Malaika both got on the *seedhi* (ladder) along with Spruha. Geeta Kapur did *sajda* and said: "We listen to music, but today, I saw music on this stage."

'I'M THRILLED TO PLAY A COP'

It's only been a few hours and the trailer of Amazon Prime Video's first-ever

supernatural thriller, *The Last Hour* has been making the right noise, with the audience eagerly waiting for the show to premiere on May 14, 2021. The story follows cop Arup Singh played by Sanjay Kapoor and Lipika Bora played by Shahana Goswami who try to uncover the mysterious deaths that take place in the valley with the help of a Shaman played by Karma Takapa.

Talking about the show, Shahana said: "When I read the script, I was really in awe. It felt like I was reading a thriller book which I couldn't put down. I really liked how something as complex as shamanic traditions was weaved in, in a beautiful and subtle way."

Sharing more about her experience of playing the role of a cop, Shahana quips how that was another motivating factor for her to be a part of this show. She says: "I have never played the role of a cop in my entire career. So when I was offered the part, that was a big draw for me as well. I hadn't ever held a gun and got to hold a real gun! This show gave me the opportunity to tick that off the list."

The Last Hour which stars Sanjay Kapoor, Shahana Goswami, Karma Takapa, Raima Sen, Shaylee Krishen and Robin Tamang premieres on May 14, 2021 on Amazon Prime Video in 240+ countries. The series is created, written and produced by Amit Kumar and Anupama Minz, and executive produced by Amit Kumar and Academy Award and four-time BAFTA award winner, Asif Kapadia.

SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM DREW



The Covid-19 crisis in India has

garnered global attention with support from all corners of the world. This time, it is none other than Hollywood's A-list celebrity herself who has joined the cause. An award-winning actor, businessperson, mother, humanitarian, and a cultural icon — Drew Barrymore has shared a personal, heartfelt message dedicated to the people of India. Known for being a beacon of hope, positivity and full of optimism, a candid Drew takes a moment to share her love and connection with India and the concern around the current situation. In a video shot on the sets of her latest *The Drew Barrymore Show* that airs in India on Zee Café, the actor makes an appeal to help as she urges people to have faith in the light at the end of the tunnel. Here it goes.

This one's a special message to the people of India. A lot of you guys already know of my deep-rooted connection with the country and how I've always loved India for its culture, its people and so much more! It truly holds a very special place in my heart. In my visits, I've met so many wonderful people who've truly inspired me as a person which propelled me to write a chapter in my book too. Today, as we cope with the worldwide situation, my heart goes out to the people of India who're trying hard to hold it together. My sincere wishes and prayers to you to stay strong and believe that we will come out stronger together.

I came across a couple of articles online that truly invigorated a sense of faith and positivity in me, like a 110-year-old Covid-19 survivor in India, or how a man donating his entire life's savings towards relief. Countless people, celebrities and organizations coming together and pledging support, people starting food centres and relief groups — and this is truly the need of the hour. A small contribution could really help and make a giant difference, and even save a life!

I'm doing my bit and urge you to do whatever is in your capacity.

Most importantly, I'm sending you a lot of love, healing and prayers and faith in the light at the end of this dark tunnel.

ANJUM ALL PRAISE FOR HER MOTHER

Anjum Fakih has entertained the audience over the past decade with her infectious gusto and exquisite acting. She has worked across a range of TV shows, however Zee TV's *Kundali Bhagya* gave her the fanfare and recognition that she deserved. The actress has impressed one and all as Srishri, but did you know that she had to face a lot of challenges on the family front to be an actress? Initially, her family and relatives weren't supportive of her decision, but they are proud of her now and through this all, the important life lessons that she learnt from her mom guided her through the testing phase of her life. On



Mother's Day, the actress opens up about how important her mother has been for her and how she learnt different languages so that Anjum could get the best education possible.

Talking about the things that she learnt from her mother, Anjum revealed: "Over the past few years, my mom and I have grown close. She is my best friend and confidante and I share everything with her. She is my go-to person. One life lesson by my mother that is etched on my mind and has become a part of my personality is when she told me to never lie. She has instilled the value of speaking the truth and standing up against the wrong in us and that value has stayed with us since our childhood. It helps me stay true to my craft too and be a good and trustworthy person and I can't thank my mom enough for it."

Anjum also spoke about how her mom went the extra mile for her, as she added: "One memory that I have of my mother is of her putting in the efforts to make sure that we have a good education. Although she studied in an Urdu medium school, she studied English, Hindi and Marathi to ensure that she can teach us, and we get the best possible education and become independent. She has been a strong support system for us all."

This Mother's Day I would like to thank my mom for all that she has done and all that she does for us selflessly. Today we are what we are because of the values she has instilled in us. Her efforts and love have made us stronger and independent. Thank you Mom for taking that leap of faith and the unwavering support."

CM: Give us 2.6 cr job doses to inoculate all in 3 months

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal demanded the Centre to supply of around 2.6 crore vaccine doses for inoculation of all people above the age of 18 in the national Capital in the next three months.

"Delhi is not getting an adequate amount of vaccines and if it were to get the required amount of doses then the Delhi Government will be able to vaccinate all within three months," he said.

Addressing the media, Kejriwal said that in Delhi's two crore population, more or less 1 crore fall in the 18-44 age group, 50 lakh are under-18 and 50 lakh are above 45. Therefore roughly 1.5 crore people are above 18, he said, adding that over three crore doses will be required to vaccinate all people in Delhi, out of which around 40 lakh have already been received.

The Chief Minister requested the Central Government to provide Delhi with the required amount of vaccines. He said that vaccination is the only Suraksha Chakra that can stop the third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in India.

"Today, in Delhi, approxi-



mately 1 lakh vaccines are being administered daily - around 50,000 to those below 45 and about 50,000 to those above 45. Thus, more or less one lakh vaccines are being administered daily in Delhi. Due to good arrangements in Delhi, people from NCR towns like Noida, Ghaziabad were also reaching here to get the vaccines. So, Delhi will require a little more than three crore doses, he said.

"We have been reading reports that the Prime Minister's principal scientific advisor has issued an advisory, a warning of sorts that a third wave is looming at large. The Supreme Court has also expressed its concerns on this and naturally the general public is extremely anxious about this considering that the second

wave has proven to be very dangerous. Therefore, to protect ourselves from the third wave, a complete vaccination drive is imperative to protect ourselves from the third wave," he said. "The Delhi Government is making efforts in this direction. I'm hopeful that the Central Government will provide assistance. We are particularly concerned about children. Youngsters and children under 18 cannot get vaccinated right now.

I appeal to all experts and the Centre to arrange a vaccine for them too so that they can also get inoculated. As of today, we have 5-6 days of vaccine left that we are rapidly administering. I hope that the adequate vaccine is sanctioned for the people of Delhi as soon as possible," he added.

Officers working 24 hrs to monitor supply of O2: Govt

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Government hospitals consumed about 9.39 per cent of the total allocated oxygen, the Delhi Government hospitals consumed 20.20 per cent and private hospitals consumed 50.20 per cent. Remaining 15.67 per cent is reserved for the emergency SOS calls. 3.03 per cent quota was given to districts as a lumpsum for providing the facilities to the citizens, Delhi Government said on Saturday.

Furthermore, a dedicated team of officers is working 24x7 to monitor the status of demand and supply of the oxygen in the national Capital. "More than 1100 cylinders were distributed on May 7 for the patients in home isolation who need this supply of oxygen.

Ashish Kundra, Principal Secretary Transport and OSD Health, said that an average of 29 percent oxygen is supplied by the Railways, an average of 71 percent oxygen is supplied through roadways. An average of 507.5 MT of oxygen is supplied to Delhi on a daily basis.

A total number of 10 SOS calls were received on May 7. As many as 114657 Covid-19 vaccinations were administered in

Delhi on May 7. This is the highest number compared to previous days, he said.

Underlining the various facets of donation of oxygen, it was highlighted that citizens can log on to delhi.gov.in to access cylinders donation sheet and can also book cylinder refilling at <https://oxygen.jantasamvad.org>. Moreover, Niti Aayog is the central focal point to supervise the total number of donations of oxygen cylinders, Kundra said. A network team has been formed which is giving real time information from different parts of the country on the oxygen management system. District Magistrates are tracking through their teams that the oxygen is reaching the earmarked hospitals and institutions on a timely basis, he added.

More than 1100 cylinders were distributed on 07.05.2021 for the home isolation patients needing the oxygen supply. 174 hunger relief centers are formed by the Delhi Government across the city. This initiative of the Government will make sure that the poor and needy are being given food on a daily basis. In the last one week close to 09 lakh meals have been distributed for the needy in the city, Kundra said.

Maintain 700 MT of oxygen supply, Sisodia asks Centre

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Saturday claimed that the quantity of oxygen received by the city has dipped to 577 MT on Thursday and further 487 MT on Friday.

He urged the Centre to maintain 700 MT of medical oxygen supply to Delhi. "Delhi immediately requires 700 MT of oxygen allocation from the Central Government in order to manage oxygen supply to hospitals in the capital. It is my humble appeal to the Government of India to increase Delhi's oxygen allocation to 700 MT as soon as possible" he said.

"At present, Delhi requires a minimum of 700 MT oxygen supply to cater to patients and an increase in Covid beds and health infrastructure would need oxygen allocation of 976 MT in the city. Delhi received 730 MT of oxygen for the first time ever on 5th May however, we saw a persistent decline from 6th May onwards," he added.

Sisodia further said, "During court proceedings, the Central Government claimed that India continues to



receive a surplus in oxygen. A need has emerged for the Central Government to streamline their processes, manage supply better and ensure that all States receive supply in better quantities so that they do not have to fight for oxygen supply."

Senior AAP leader and national Spokesperson Raghav Chadha said "We are somehow managing the situation even with 488 MT. Staff are working on efficient and effective distribution and management of oxygen.

Their good governance is helping us moderate even the shortage that we are facing today because of decreased supply by the centre. However, if we do not receive 700 MT every day, a huge problem will befall upon us," he said.

Top cop reviews action against Covid fraud

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police Commissioner DSN Shrivastava on Saturday reviewed the action against hoarding and black marketing of medicines, injections and oxygen cylinders in the national Capital. The CP also reviewed the cases of fraud taking place on pretext of providing Covid help, besides the effective enforcement of the lockdown in a virtual meeting.

The CP appreciated police actions on black-marketing, hoarding and covid help cheating. He told the district's DCsP to obtain orders from courts as early as possible for release of seized medicine, concentrators and oxygen cylinders for use by needy patients.

Shrivastava asked the DCsP to intensify action of covid online fraudsters in coordination with the cyber cell and crime branch for interstate investigation as most of the calls involved in cheating are originating from Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, MP and Mewar.

In view of the tendency observed from certain pockets of public to come out unnecessarily in violation of the lockdown, district DCsP were instructed to identify the areas and specific spheres which are problem areas in lockdown implementation.

Min Gautam inspects old age home

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Cabinet Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam on Saturday conducted a surprise inspection of old age home in Bindapur and reviewed the facilities being provided to the senior citizens in old age home including food, healthcare, sanitation etc. The Minister interacted with all the residents of the old age home to know the quality of these facilities and if they are facing any issue.

Bindapur Old Age Home is run by Delhi Government and has a capacity of 50 residents. "All senior citizens are being provided nutritious food as well as all kinds of medical facilities. The elderly living in the old age home informed me that they get food, milk, food, fruits on time and all their facilities are being taken care of," said Gautam.

Number of jab centres will be increased to 300 from 100: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said the number of Covid-19 vaccination centres will be increased to 300 from 100 by the Government.

Talking to the media, the chief minister said that to achieve the target of vaccinating the entire Delhi in three months, three lakh vaccines need to be administered daily. He visited a vaccination centre at Chirag Delhi on Saturday and spoke with the youngsters who appreciated vaccine arrangement by the Delhi Government.

Kejriwal said that the Delhi Government is going to increase the vaccination centres from 100 to 300 to achieve the capacity of applying three lakh vaccines daily. He said that if the entire Delhi has to be vac-



inated in three months, we need a monthly dose of 80 to 85 lakh vaccines.

The Chief Minister said that the Central Government has always extended its help and expressed hope that it will do the same in this case too. "The vaccination drive in Delhi is in full swing. "Since the day the vaccination drive began for

those below the age of 45, I have witnessed great enthusiasm amongst the youth, many of whom are getting vaccinated. The people are visibly happy with the arrangements made by the Government. We have made these arrangements in around 100 schools and are going to increase it about 250-300 schools," he said.

Three arrested for black marketing of O2 concentrators

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested three men from west Delhi's Janakpuri area for allegedly black-marketing oxygen concentrators in the city. Police said that 19 imported oxygen concentrators, three cars and ₹7.80 lakh have been recovered from the possession of the accused.

The accused have been identified as Bharat Agarwal (42), a resident of Janakpuri, Ishant Gosain (31), a resident of Pitampura and Ranbir Singh (29), a resident of Rohini.

According to Urvija Goel, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), west district, on Thursday, information was received that one Bharat Agarwal was selling oxygen concentrators at exorbitant prices.

"Police laid a trap near parking of District Center, Janakpuri and apprehended



the accused persons. The accused were selling these concentrators at ₹1,30,000 per piece, however, the market value of per piece is around ₹30,000 to ₹50,000," said the DCP. In another incident, the Delhi Police claimed that they have arrested a person from Punjab for allegedly cheating people on the pretext of providing oxygen cylinder.

The accused has been identified as Ran Vijay, a resident of Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh.

Due to the ongoing oxygen crisis, the accused started sending messages to people with the assurance to arrange oxygen cylinders.

Ministry of Women forms task force to help Covid-hit children

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has constituted a task force at district level to solve the issues and grievances of children affected by Covid-19.

Minister Rajendra Pal also convened a web based orientation session for the same. He also paid tributes to the front-line workers of Delhi 'Integrated Child Development Services' who lost their lives.

Recognising the vulnerability of children during Covid pandemic, especially those who lost their parents or families, thereby losing meager source of income, the department has recently initiated a series of measures for strengthening its efforts for protection and care of vulnerable children, a senior official said.

Amongst one of the initiatives is the constitution of a district task force for each district

to attend to issues and grievances related to children affected by Covid-19, he said.

An orientation cum stakeholders meeting was organised by the Department in virtual mode with the district task force members and other stakeholders on May 7th. The meet was addressed by Chairperson, JJC Justice Rajiv Shakhder, Rajendra Pal Gautam, Minister, Women and Child Development, Anurag Kundu, Chairperson (DCPCR) and Madhu garg, Secretary of WCD.

The objective of this meet was to develop a common understanding on roles and responsibility of the district task force to bring coordination with other concerned agencies to provide immediate care and protection to all vulnerable children in their districts affected due to Covid and for effective management of child care institutions.

Afghan couple held with ₹860 cr heroin

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested an Afghan couple from western part of the city and recovered over 100 kilograms of heroin worth ₹860 crore in the international market.

The accused have been identified as Mohammad Shafi (48) and Tareena (36), both natives of Kandhar in Afghanistan. According to Urvija Goel, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), West district, police recovered 125.840 kilograms

heroin worth ₹860 crore in international market.

"On Friday, police received specific inputs that two persons would come from Wazirabad with heroin in their car and they will go towards Khyala. Later, a trap was laid and the accused were apprehended around 4.35 pm from Ganda Nala Road, near Gas Agency, Khyala area," said the DCP.

"A total of 125.840 kg heroin has been seized from the car which was kept in seven plastic bags. During interrogation, Shafi disclosed that he was sup-



plying heroin from Wazirabad to Khyala and thereafter to Punjab," said the DCP.

Tareena is his wife and he took her with him for help in

supply of heroin and both were going to deliver the recovered drug, police said, adding that further investigation is underway.

17,364 Covid-19 cases, 332 deaths in 24 hours

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi recorded 17364 new Covid-19 cases and 332 deaths on Saturday. The positivity rate, however further dropped to 23.34 per cent.

A total of 74384 tests, including 62,921 RT-PCR tests and 11,463 rapid antigen tests, were conducted the previous day, according to the bulletin issued by the Delhi health department on Saturday.

The national capital has so

far recorded 1310231 cases, of which over 1203253 have recovered. The death toll due to the viral disease stands at 19071, the bulletin stated.

The case positivity rate (23.34 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, it said.

At the beginning of this month, 31.6 positivity rate was recorded on day one, which came down to 28.3 on 2nd May, followed by a positivity rate of 29.6 on 3rd May. On May 4th, the positivity rate stood at 26.7, on the fifth, this was 26.4, on 6th it was 24.29 and on 7th it was 24.92 per cent.

"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," a senior official added.

Initiative of Haryana Government

Govt. of Haryana

"We have to fight against these challenging circumstances of Covid-19 pandemic with courage. The State Government is committed to make every possible effort for the patients of Covid, with this motive various important decisions have been taken to provide financial assistance to the poor patients of Covid."

- Manohar Lal
Chief Minister, Haryana

COVID-19 patients of Haryana who fall below the poverty line (BPL) and are not availing Ayushman Bharat scheme will be given a **subsidy of Rs. 5000 per day up to a maximum of Rs. 35,000** if they undergo covid treatment in any authorised private covid hospital in Haryana. This amount will be reduced from the final bill of the patient at the time of discharge

Private hospitals (authorized by state govt. for Covid treatment) will be paid an incentive amount of **Rs.1000 per day per patient and up to a maximum of Rs. 7000 for the admitted patients of the State.** This amount will be sent to the bank accounts of hospitals after the discharge of the patient

All BPL covid patients undergoing home Isolation will be **provided a lump sum one-time medical assistance of Rs. 5000.** This amount of medical assistance will be directly transferred to bank accounts of patients

Private hospitals must upload the information of such patients on the portal <https://gmdahrheal.in/>

Helpline For Assistance Regarding Covid-19

8558893911

(for Entire State)

& 1075

(Except Gurugram & Faridabad)

S Sanitization

M Mask

S Social Distancing

Parivar Pehchan Patra of the beneficiary COVID-19 patient is mandatory

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana | www.prharyana.gov.in | @Cmohry | @DiprHaryana

Eight Covid survivors die of black fungus in Maha: DMER

Mumbai: At least eight Covid-19 survivors have died due to mucormycosis, a fungal infection, during treatment in Maharashtra, a senior official said on Saturday, adding the total 200 such patients are being treated.

According to Dr Tatyrao Lahane, who heads the Directorate of Medical Education and Research (DMER), cases of mucormycosis are on the rise.

"Eight out of 200 such patients treated so far in various parts of the state have died due to mucormycosis, also known as a black fungus. They survived Covid-19 infection but the fungal infection attacked their weak immune system which proved fatal," Dr Lahane told PTI.

Niti Aayog Member (Health) V K Paul on Friday said mucormycosis is caused by a fungus named mucor, which is found on wet surfaces.

He had also said when the same Covid-19 patient is put on oxygen support, which has a humidifier containing water, the chances of him or her getting the fungal infection increase.

Dr Lahane said the fungal disease is already known but the cases are increasing because of Covid-19 related complications, wherein the use of steroids elevates the sugar level in blood while some medicines result in suppression of immunity of patients.

"In such a scenario, the black fungus infects the patient easily and spreads. If the fungus reaches the brain of the infected person, it can prove fatal. In one such case, one of the eyes of a patient had to be removed permanently to save his life," he said.

Dr Lahane said mucormycosis is a serious fungal infection that is found among people with a low level of immunity as well

as among those suffering from chronic diabetes, or those who have gone through a kidney transplant among others.

"Though this fungus is present in the environment, people with suppressed immunity as well as who have received steroids during Covid-19 treatment are more susceptible to it. Covid-19 patients with co-morbidities are also vulnerable and can catch the infection early," he explained.

Dr Lahane said the general symptoms of mucormycosis include headache, fever, pain under the eyes, nasal or sinus congestion, and partial loss of vision among others.

Speaking about treatment, he said, "A patient generally needs a particular type of injection to be given for 21 days. The basic cost of this injection comes around Rs 9,000 per day. Treatment expenditure escalates with other facilities, medicines etc". **PTI**

Big surge in Covid deaths, cases in Andhra

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh saw a big surge in Covid fatalities and new cases during the 24-hour period ending 9 a.m. on Saturday.

The virus claimed 96 lives during this period while 20,065 new cases were detected in this 24-hour cycle.

The fresh fatalities pushed the state's cumulative death toll to 8,615, while its overall case tally rose to 12,65,439.

West Godavari district accounted for the maximum deaths (14), followed by 12 in Visakhapatnam, 10 each in Anantapur and Guntur, nine each in East Godavari and Vizianagaram, seven each in Kurnool and Nellore, six in Chittoor, five in Kadapa, four in Krishna and three in Srikakulam.

According to state health officials, the government and private laboratories in the state tested 1,01,571 samples during the 24-hour period. **IANS**



Ridge road wears a deserted view during the Covid-19 curfew in Shimla on Saturday **PTI**

SC: Release...

From Page 1
A bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana said all those who were allowed to go out on bail in March last year by the high-powered committees of states and Union Territories (UTs) be granted the same relief without any reconsideration to avoid delay.

"Further we direct that, those inmates who were granted parole, pursuant to our earlier orders, should be again granted parole for a period of 90 days in order to tide over the pandemic," the bench, also having Justices L Nageswara Rao and Surya Kant, said in its order uploaded on the apex court's

website on Saturday.

There is a serious concern about the spread of Covid-19 in "overcrowded prisons where there is lack of proper sanitation, hygiene and medical facilities," the bench said, adding "there is a requirement for effective management of pandemic from within the prison walls so as to defeat this deadly virus."

The top court took note of its March 23, 2020, order by which it had directed all states and UTs to constitute high-powered committee (HPC) to consider releasing on parole or interim bail prisoners and the under trials for offences entailing up to 7-year jail term to decongest prisons in the wake of coronavirus pandemic.

Covid +ve report ...

From Page 1

Shortage of basic medicines and medical facilities like the availability of ambulances has made the matter worse for the patients. The toll is surpassing each passing day.

As per the guidelines which the Ministry termed as "patient-centric measure aimed to ensure a prompt, effective, and comprehensive treatment of patients suffering from Covid-19," hospitals under the Central Government, State Governments and UT administration, including private hospitals managing Covid patients shall ensure that requirement of a positive test for Covid-19 virus is not mandatory for admission to a Covid health facility.

"A suspect case shall be admitted to the suspect ward of Covid Care Centre (CCC), Dedicated Covid Health Centre (DCHC) of Dedicated Covid Hospital (DHC) as the case may be," the

directive to all the States and UTs said.

It said no patient will be refused services on any count which includes medications such as oxygen or essential drugs even if the patient belongs to a different city.

"No patient shall be refused admission on the ground that s/he is not able to produce a valid identity card that does not belong to the city where the hospital is located," it said.

The Ministry also said admissions to the hospital must be "based on need".

"It should be ensured that beds are not occupied by persons who do not need hospitalisation. Further, the discharge should be strictly in accordance with the revised discharge policy," it said.

The Ministry said it has advised the chief secretaries of States/Union territories to issue necessary orders and circulars, incorporating these directions within three days, which shall be enforced till replaced by an appropriate uniform policy.

Oxygen did flamboyant Kalra...

From Page 1

In 2010, the family joined hands with Navneet Kalra. However, in 2016 after running the restaurant successfully, the partnership split and the two sides fought a bitter court battle over Khan Chacha trademark. The brand name is currently being used by Kalra, while Haji Banda Hasan and sons have launched a new eatery chain.

Going through the social media profile of Kalra, one can see photos of him with politicians and celebrities including Sushmita Sen, Shahrukh Khan, John Abraham, Harbhajan Singh, Virat Kohli, Yuvraj Singh, Gautam Gambhir, Rohit Sharma, and several others who had visited his restaurants Town Hall, Mr Choy, Ju, and the most famous Khan Chacha.

The 51-year-old legacy Dayal Opticals runs over 15 stores in Delhi-NCR with Kalra at the helm. And it's not just Dayal Opticals, Kalra also owns many of the stores in Delhi's posh Khan Market.

After the arrest of Gaurav, Satish Sethi, Vikrant and Hitesh, who is manager of one of the restaurant, from South Delhi's Lodhi Colony area, the Delhi Police conducted raids and 96 oxygen concentrators were recovered from Khan Chacha Restaurant and nine were seized from Town Hall restaurant on Friday.

SC transfers Health...

From Page 1

The next hearing in the case is scheduled on May 17.

Explaining the rationale behind setting up the NTE, the apex Court said the establishment of such a task force will enable the decision makers to have inputs which go beyond finding ad-hoc solutions to present problems. The order also said that Solicitor General Tushar Mehta has appraised the Bench about the consent of Central Government and its members on the formation of the NTE.

The likely future course of the pandemic must be taken into contemplation at the present time. This, the court emphasised, will ensure that projected future requirements can be scientifically mapped in the present and may be modulated in light of experience.

"Estimating projected needs is crucial to ensure that the country remains prepared to meet future eventualities, which will cause a demand for oxygen, medicines, infrastructure, manpower and logistics. The establishment of the Task Force will provide the Union Government with inputs and strategies for meeting the challenges of the pandemic on a transparent and professional basis, in the present and in future," the order said.

The apex court further said the Task Force would be at liberty to draw upon the human resources of the Union Government for consultation and information, including a member of NITI Aayog to be nominated by the Vice-Chairperson; Secretaries from Ministry of Human Affairs; Industries, Transport and Highways, Director of AIIMS, Delhi, DG of ICMR, DG of Health Services, DG of NIC and Head of Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC).

UP Cong spins out...

From Page 1

She even appointed Ajay Kumar Lallu as the new State president and made a new team of office bearers removing all the veterans as if making them responsible for the poor shows of the party in the hustings. However, the seriousness of Priyanka to boost the prospect of the Uttar Pradesh Congress was exposed as since January 2020, she distanced herself from UP politics and started taking more interest in the national politics especially when Rahul quit as party president.

"There was euphoria among party workers when news came that Priyanka will set up her base in Lucknow. There was the belief that she will now lead the party from Lucknow. You would not believe that a separate office for her was also constructed in Nehru Bhawan (UPCC headquarters). But she never came and now party workers are feeling disappointed," an old-timer in the party said.

"The approach Priyanka has undertaken is baffling," said another veteran leader. "She is in Delhi and has appointed some leaders with Communist bent of mind to manage the show in Lucknow. State Congress president's role is confined to sitting on dharna or staging protest. Nobody is sparing a thought about party organisation. The old-timers who had an organisational skill were either sidelined or expelled from the party," he said.

Congress leaders of all ages agree that the party organisation is in shatters. Priyanka needs to build the structure from booth to district and to State-level brick by brick. "If you want to make the Congress strong, bring the foot soldiers back. They will help her to win the war. Otherwise, it is a requiem for the party," a veteran leader said.

Chanakya or...

From Page 1

"Mukul da is already the vice-president of all-India party ... He could be an effective Opposition Leader but may be doubtful because of his health," the leader said.

Another senior leader and a party MP said "strongest argument in Adhikari's favour is that he has defeated none other than Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee" to win the Nandigram seat by a (wafer-thin) margin of 1,953 votes. "Besides, he is young, a good organiser and energetic with vast ministerial experience."

Both Roy and Adhikari had been two closest aides of Mamata Banerjee and left the Trinamool Congress to join the BJP. While Roy joined the BJP in 2017, Adhikari, a State Minister with multiple portfolios left his party a few months before the elections.

The backers of Adhikari also want to provide some kind of "immunity" against any "possible victimisation" by the Chief Minister, inside sources say quoting information that "files are being readied" to pin him down.

The Chief Minister had already said in election rallies that after returning to power her Government would probe irregularities in some of the institutions that were chaired by Adhikari.

The old guards in the BJP do not want Roy or Adhikari. They want an RSS man to be chosen for the post. This to send across a message that the BJP does not rely on turncoat politics only.

A top functionary of the RSS said, "We had built a ground for the BJP that resulted in our massive win in the 2019 elections ... but those advances were lost as we went to break the TMC (by engineering defections) rather than strengthening our own organisational network ... taking turncoats clearly backfired... now the party should go back to basics and appoint a pure RSS man as the Opposition Leader."

He is also skeptic of the "migratory birds" saying, "you do not know when they will fly back ... mind you none of them have clean track records ... Such rumors had already been doing the rounds about some of the BJP leaders like Mukul Roy after May 2 when the election results were declared.

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) CONST. DIVN. NO. II, JAMMU

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Short e-NIT No. 11/2021-22/Div-2 Dated 29-04-2021

For and on behalf of the **Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir** e-tenders are invited on **item rate basis** from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory of J&K, CPWD, Railways, MES and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works:-

S.No. 1 Name of Work :- Providing / laying 50mm thick BM, 25mm thick & 30mm thick SDBC on following City roads. (a) Panjirthi to Indira Chowk via Civil Secretariat & Indira Chowk road from Library Chowk to Rambhishwar temple Chowk including Parade CPO Chowk to Mian Dedo Chowk including Karan Nagar Internal link = **Rs. 82.75 lacs** (b) Panjirthi to Sidhra Bridge = **Rs. 79.75**

Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Const. Div. No. II Jammu
Advised Cost (Rs. in lacs):- 162.38, **Cost of document (in Rs.) :-** 6000, **Earnest Money :-** Bid Security Declaration on notarized affidavit, **Time Allowed for completion :-** 02 Month, **Time & date of opening of tender :-** (1400 Hrs) on or after 11-05-2021 (opened in office of Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Jammu), **Class of Contractor :-** 'A' Class / Hot Mix Plant Holder

S.No. 2 Name of Work :- Providing / laying 50mm thick BM, 25mm thick & 30mm thick SDBC on following City roads. (a) Upper Gujjar Nagar and lower Gujjar Nagar Jammu = **Rs. 24.75 lacs** (b) Indira Chowk to MIA Hotel, Indira Chowk to BC road, Gujjar Nagar to Fortune Hotel via Exh. Ground JDA Parking = **Rs. 74.75 lacs**

Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Const. Div. No. II Jammu
Advised Cost (Rs. in lacs):- 99.68, **Cost of document (in Rs.) :-** 1000, **Earnest Money :-** Bid Security Declaration on notarized affidavit, **Time Allowed for completion :-** 1 1/2 Month, **Time & date of opening of tender :-** (1400 Hrs) on or after 11-05-2021, **Class of Contractor :-** 'A' Class / Hot Mix Plant Holder

S.No. 3 Name of Work :- Providing / laying 50mm thick BM, 25mm thick & 30mm thick SDBC on following City roads. (a) J.P Chowk to Dogra Chowk via fortune Hotel Chowk, V.N Chowk to Raghunath Temple via Sunder Singh road and V.N Chowk to J.P Chowk = **Rs. 49.75 lacs** (b) Raghunath Temple to DC Office via Wazarat road, Residency road, Mansar Hotel road, Ghass Mandi Chowk to Sehgal Chowk via Lakshada Bazar Jammu = **Rs. 41.75 lacs** (c) J.P Chowk to Dogra Chowk via Baghat Singh Chowk and Vinayak Bazar internal links = **Rs. 23.75 lacs** (d) City Chowk to Sehgal Chowk via Purani Mandi (Old Hospital Road) = **Rs. 18.75 lacs**

Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Const. Div. No. II Jammu
Advised Cost (Rs. in lacs):- 134.36, **Cost of document (in Rs.) :-** 6000, **Earnest Money :-** Bid Security Declaration on notarized affidavit, **Time Allowed for completion :-** 1 1/2 Month, **Time & date of opening of tender :-** (1400 Hrs) on or after 11-05-2021, **Class of Contractor :-** 'A' Class / Hot Mix Plant Holder

S.No. 4 Name of Work :- Providing / laying 50mm thick BM, 25mm thick & 30mm thick SDBC on following City roads. (a) internal roads of Bakshi Nagar Gurah, Resham Ghar colony, Rehari, Sarwal and Subash Nagar = **Rs. 86.75 lacs** (b) Internal links of new rehari, Meridian palace to rehari bridge via PWD store at New Rehari Jammu = **Rs. 52.75 lacs**

Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Const. Div. No. II Jammu
Advised Cost (Rs. in lacs):- 139.45, **Cost of document (in Rs.) :-** 6000, **Earnest Money :-** Bid Security Declaration on notarized affidavit, **Time Allowed for completion :-** 1 1/2 Month, **Time & date of opening of tender :-** (1400 Hrs) on or after 11-05-2021, **Class of Contractor :-** 'A' Class / Hot Mix Plant Holder

S.No. 5 Name of Work :- Providing / laying 50mm thick BM, 25mm thick & 30mm thick SDBC on following City roads. (a) Lohan Paloura Park to Paloura Chowk, Thather Mohalla OP. Baba Mast Ram Ashram Lohan Mohalla = **Rs. 61.75 lacs** (b) Sulab Toilet Complex to Rama Colony Phase-III, Suraksha Vihar Paloura Top road, Toph Bridge to Subash Nagar near Petrol Pump Chowk Peer Baba road. BSF Gate to Paloura Top & Paloura to Jaggi Darbar. OM Palace to Shiv Nagar back side AG Office = **Rs. 84.75 lacs**

Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Const. Div. No. II Jammu
Advised Cost (Rs. in lacs):- 146.56, **Cost of document (in Rs.) :-** 6000, **Earnest Money :-** Bid Security Declaration on notarized affidavit, **Time Allowed for completion :-** 02 Month, **Time & date of opening of tender :-** (1400 Hrs) on or after 11-05-2021, **Class of Contractor :-** 'A' Class / Hot Mix Plant Holder

S.No. 6 Name of Work :- Providing / laying 50mm thick BM, 25mm thick & 30mm thick SDBC on following City roads at:- Tawi Bridge to Shankulita crossing Via General Bus Stand (B.C Road), St. Peter School to Maheshpura Chowk Via Super Speciality Hospital Jammu.

Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Const. Div. No. II Jammu
Advised Cost (Rs. in lacs):- 79.77, **Cost of document (in Rs.) :-** 1000, **Earnest Money :-** Bid Security Declaration on notarized affidavit, **Time Allowed for completion :-** 01 Month, **Time & date of opening of tender :-** (1400 Hrs) on or after 11-05-2021, **Class of Contractor :-** 'A' Class / Hot Mix Plant Holder

Position of AAA :- Accorded vide Order No. 16 of 2021 Dt. 29-04-2021
Position of T.S :- Under Process
Major Head of Account :- City & Town Programme

The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website <http://jtenders.gov.in> as per below schedule:

1. Date of Issue of Tender Notice :- 29-04-2021
2. Period of downloading of bidding documents :- From 01-05-2021 to 10-05-2021 upto 1800 Hrs
3. Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting :- 06-05-2021 at 1300 Hrs. in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Const. Divn. No. II Jammu
4. Bid submission Start Date :- 01-05-2021
5. Bid Submission End Date :- 10-05-2021 upto 1800 Hrs
6. Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online) :- Sr. No. 02 to 06 of NIT 11-05-2021 on or after 1400 Hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Const. Divn. No. II Jammu Sr. No. 01 of NIT (opened in office of Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Jammu)
7. Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online) :- To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed

Sd/- (Er. Rajesh Bhagat)
Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Const. Div. No. II

No. DIP/J-1147/21
Dated: 08.05.2021

Sonowal or Himanta? BJP ...

From Page 1

He crossed over to the saffron party in 2015 and charmed its leaders, particularly Shah, whom he is known to be close to and backed by Himanta's challenge to the West Bengal Chief Minister on "exodus" of victims of the alleged TMC violence is seen by some as his "rising confidence".

Sonowal, 59, the incumbent CM hails from the dominant Kachar tribe, and has the credit of leading BJP to a successive second win in Assam, the biggest state in the north-east and is thus a "natural claimant" to the top post, said a BJP leader. All in the BJP aver that Sonowal has a "clean image" via-a-vis his his contender who is currently seen as a trouble-shooter for the party and is also heading the Northeast Democratic Alliance (NEDA). NEDA was floated by Sarma to unite non-Congress parties in the North-East.

BJP's decision not to name incumbent Sonowal as party candidate for the top post has triggered a strong buzz that his Cabinet colleague Sarma is backed by the leaders "who matter in the party".

However, Sonowal, who had a much longer stint in the party and been able to beat anti-incumbency against him makes the task of ignoring him an uphill task for the BJP leadership. BJP vice-president Jay Panda who is State in-charge had said after meeting elected MLAs in Gauwhati that BJP's parliamentary Board would decide the issue. The Board had, so far not met.

Over 1 million...

From Page 1

Data speaks: In the last 24 hours, 4,187 people died, taking total deaths to 2.38 lakh while India recorded 4.01 cases on Friday, taking the active caseload to 37,23,446 as India witnessed the second Covid wave is more lethal and infectious.

Unlike the earlier Group of Minister's meetings, Dr Harsh Vardhan did not share data to the GoM on the number of beds available for the critical patients in the statement issued by the Ministry on its website.

For instance, in 24th GoM held last month, to be precise on April 9, the Minister had said that of the total 4,68,974 total Covid beds available in them, 2,63,573 are isolation beds, 50,408 are ICU beds and 1,54,993 are oxygen supported beds.

Also, 4,043 (Centre:85 and States: 3,958) dedicated Covid health centres have been set up. It consists of 3,57,096 total Covid beds, out of which 2,31,462 are Isolation Beds,

25,459 are ICU Beds and 1,00,175 are Oxygen Supported Beds. Total 12,673 quarantine centres and 9,313 total Covid Care Centres have also been set up with 28 Covid Care Centres alone in Delhi with 9,421 total isolation beds, the Minister had said, as per the statement.

The Union Health Minister also requested States to set aside 70 per cent of vaccines received through the Central Government route for administration of the second dose.

Also, 5.32 million vaccine doses are in the pipeline and will be supplied to the States shortly, said the Minister. "84,08,187 doses are still available with the states while a total of 53,25,000 doses are on the pipeline and will be supplied to the states soon."

"The cumulative number of Covid-19 vaccine doses administered in the country has crossed 16.73 crore as on Saturday. A total of 17,49,57,770 doses have been delivered to the States, out of which 16,65,49,583 doses have been consumed."

The Union Health Ministry

had earlier asked the States and Union Territories to identify districts that should be considered for taking intensive and local containment measures.

"The districts/metropolis of Bengaluru (Urban), Ganjam, Pune, Delhi, Nagpur, Mumbai, Ernakulam, Lucknow, Kozhikode (Calicut), Thane, Nashik, Malappuram, Thrissur, Jaipur, Gurgaon, Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, Chandrapur, Kolkata, and Palakkad are the top 20 contributors of active cases in the country," as per the statement.

The meeting was attended by Union Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar, Union Minister of Civil Aviation Hardeep S Puri, Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways and Chemical and Fertilizers Mansukh Mandaviya and Minister of State, Ministry of Home Affairs Nityanand Rai.

Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State, Health and Family Welfare and Dr Vinod K Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog were present virtually.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(See Section 82 Cr. P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person **Asif S/o Sheek Sammin R/o H. No. B-1/431, Nand Nagri, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **F.I.R. No. 858/20 u/s 376D/506 IPC** dated 07.12.2020 registered at P.S. Nand Nagri, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon that the said **Asif** could not be found and where it has been shown to my satisfaction that the accused **Asif** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Asif** is required to appear before the court to answer the said complaint on or before **09.06.2021**.

By Order
Shri Animesh Bhaskar Mani Tripathi
Metropolitan Magistrate-03,
Room No.19, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ

E-Tender Notice No.: 05/2021
Dated: 05.05.2021

E-TENDERING TENDER NOTICE

North Central Railway, Agra

Sr. DSTE/ North Central Railway, Agra acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites "Open Tender" through online only (E-Tendering) for the following work:-

Sr. No.	E-Tender No.	Name of work	Approx. Cost of Work	Tender Closing Date
1	AGRA-ST-2021-11	Hiring basis 04 No. Truck of 04 MT capacity full body make TATA or similar for transporting of Railway material & staff from any place to any place in UP, Haryana & Rajasthan of Agra Division including driver, fuel and maintenance etc for a monthly running of 2000 Km approximately for S&E/Tele at Agra division for a period of 21 months. (Nature of work: 24 Hrs. per day without any Holiday/Rest).	Rs. 12,90,323.58	07.06.2021
2	AGRA-ST-2021-12	Hiring of 01 No. Truck of 04 MT capacity full body make TATA or similar for S & T depot at AGC in Agra Division for a period of 24 months.	Rs. 14,14,194.72	07.06.2021

Note: For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railway Website www.ireps.gov.in in Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids through web portal www.ireps.gov.in up to 15:00 hrs. on above mentioned date. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

524/21 (P)

North central railway www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @CPRONCR

PM Modi thanks EU for support in fight against Covid

From Page 1
In the 15th India-EU summit in July last year, Prime Minister Modi had pitched for bringing out an "action-oriented" agenda to further expand ties between the two sides.

In a series of tweets, Modi said the India-EU "collaboration is essential to stopping the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuring a sustainable and inclusive recovery in a more digital and greener world".

"Our stronger partnership is essential for achieving peace and prosperity for our peoples. We welcomed the resumption of negotiations for Trade and Investment Agreements, as well as our new Connectivity Partnership," he tweeted.

This was the first such interaction between the Indian PM and the

country was being ravaged by the pandemic last year, the sources said.

Belgian PM Alexander De Croo reportedly greeted PM Modi, asking "Kem Chho" (the Gujarati for 'how are you').

"We deeply condole the loss of lives and expressed the deepest sympathy with the families of the victims of this pandemic in India, Europe and the rest of the world," a joint statement on the India-EU leaders' meeting said.

"India appreciated the EU's its Member States' quick support & assistance, coordinated through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, thus keeping the spirit of solidarity and cooperation that has been the hallmark of India-EU relations," it added.

EPS, OPS' camps...

From Page 1

Palaniswamy and his followers claim that the party could retain a respectable figure in the new assembly because of the hard work put up by him. They claim that the AIADMK made a clean sweep in South West districts of Tamil Nadu, home to Vellala Gounder, the community to which Palaniswamy belongs.

But the supporters of Panneerselvam argue that the failure of Palaniswamy to accommodate TTV Dhinakaran and his Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) led to the AIADMK losing 21 seats in southern seat. "Had the AMMK been with us, we would have been rich-

er by 20 or more seats," said a leader who was present during the meeting.

Govindarajan Satyamurthy, a political commentator who has an in-depth knowledge of the functioning of the AIADMK, says the end is near for the party. "The AIADMK will soon disintegrate. But I cannot tell you the exact date. The leaders are enchanted with power and wealth and the perks associated with the position of the leader of opposition," said Satyamurthy who is leading a retired life at Coimbatore.

Gokula Indira, former Rajya Sabha member and a minister in Jayalalitha's Cabinet refuted all such prophecies of doom and said that the party would come back with renewed vigour.

A first! 83 women jawans inducted



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major step towards providing employment opportunities to women, the first batch of 83 women jawans or soldiers were inducted into the Army on Saturday. These women will serve in the Corps of Military Police. The Corps plans to induct nearly 1,000 women soldiers in the next two to three years.

Giving details here, Army officials said the Corps of Military Police Centre & School (CMP C & S), Bengaluru held the attestation parade of the first batch of 83

women soldiers at the Dronacharya Parade Ground on Saturday. The parade was conducted as a low-key event while observing all Covid protocols.

The Commandant of the CMP Centre & School while reviewing the parade complimented the newly attested women soldiers for their impeccable drill and congratulated them on their successful completion of the intense 61 weeks of training on aspects related to Basic Military training, Provost training to include all forms of policing duties and manage-

ment of prisoners of war, ceremonial duties and skill development to include driving and maintenance of all vehicles and signal communications.

While extolling the virtues of dedication to duty, righteousness and selfless service to the nation, he expressed his confidence that the training imparted to them and the standards achieved would hold them in good stead and help them prove to be a force multiplier at their new units, located across varied terrain and operational conditions in the country.

Vehicles carrying O₂ exempted from paying toll fee on highways

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In order to provide uninterrupted passage for tankers and containers carrying Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) across National Highways, the user fee for such vehicles at Toll Plazas has been exempted.

Keeping in view the current unprecedented demand for Medical Oxygen across the country due to Covid-19 pandemic, containers carrying Liquid Medical Oxygen will be treated at par with other emergency vehicles such as ambulances for a period of two months or till further orders.

Besides the Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) Ministry has also made it mandatory for oxygen containers, tankers and vehicles to be fitted with Vehicle Location Tracking (VLT) devices.

GPS tracking will ensure proper monitoring and protection of these tankers, besides ensuring that there is no diversion or delay.

Although the toll plazas have nearly zero waiting time after implementation of FASTag, National Highways Authority of India is already providing priority passage to such vehicles for quick and seamless transportation of medical oxygen, said a MoRTH statement.

Instructions have also been issued by NHAI to all its officials and other stakeholders to

The outbreak of Covid-19 has created huge demand of Liquid Medical Oxygen across the country

assist the Government and private efforts to fight the pandemic in helping them in proactive manner.

The outbreak of Covid-19 has created huge demand of Liquid Medical Oxygen across the country.

During the ongoing crisis, the timely delivery of Liquid Medical Oxygen to hospitals and medical centers is of paramount importance to save lives of patients critically affected by Covid-19. Exemption of payment of user fee at the Toll Plazas will ensure faster movement of Medical Oxygen on the National Highways, said the order.

In order to meet the time of the life-saving oxygen, the MoRTH has made it mandatory for Oxygen containers/tankers/vehicles to be fitted with Vehicle Location Tracking (VLT) devices. "GPS tracking will ensure monitoring and protection of these tankers, besides ensuring there is no diversion or delay," the Ministry officials said.

China's Covid jab gets WHO nod for emergency use

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The World Health Organisation (WHO) on Friday finally granted conditional approval for China's Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use — the first Chinese jab to receive the WHO's green light. China was eagerly awaiting the global health body's nod for it to aggressively push the vaccine among different countries.

The WHO on Friday said it had validated the "safety, efficacy and quality" of the Sinopharm jab developed by the Beijing Institute of Biological Products. China's Sinopharm vaccine was authorised by 45 countries and jurisdictions for use in adults, with 65 million doses administered. But many countries hesitated using the vaccine as it has not secured recognition from the WTO.

The WHO said the addition of the vaccine had "the potential to rapidly accelerate Covid-19 vaccine access for countries seeking to protect health workers and populations at risk". The two-jab vaccine is an inactivated vaccine called SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine (Vero Cell). Its easy storage requirements make it highly suitable for low-resource settings, the WHO press release said.

The decision on Friday to approve the vaccine for emergency use was made by the WHO's technical advisory group, which reviewed the latest clinical data and manu-



The WHO noted that a few adults over the age of 60 were included in clinical trials, so efficacy could not be estimated for this age group

facturing practices. It said the vaccine's efficacy for symptomatic and hospitalised cases of Covid-19 was estimated to be 79%.

The WHO noted that few adults over the age of 60 were included in clinical trials, so efficacy could not be estimated for this age group. But it said there was no reason to think that the vaccine would act differently in older recipients.

However, the WHO has okayed Sinopharm usage from 18 years and above, clarifying lingering doubts about its usage for people above 59 years.

With little data released internationally early on, the effectiveness of the various Chinese vaccines has long been uncertain. Besides China, it is being used in Algeria, Cameroon, Egypt, Hungary, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Peru, the

United Arab Emirates, Serbia and Seychelles, among others. An emergency use listing by the WHO paves the way for countries worldwide to quickly approve and import a vaccine for distribution, especially those states without an international-standard regulator of their own.

A decision is expected in the coming days on another Chinese vaccine developed by Sinovac, while Russia's Sputnik vaccine is under assessment.

WHO also listed the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for emergency use on 31 December 2020; two AstraZeneca/Oxford COVID-19 vaccines on 15 February 2021, produced by AstraZeneca-SKBio (Republic of Korea) and the Serum Institute of India; and COVID-19 vaccine Ad26.COV2.S developed by Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) on 12 March 2021.

IMA raps Govt over Covid, demands national lockdown

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Medical Association (IMA), a body of professional doctors in the country on Saturday, went down heavily on the Union Health Ministry, questioning its role in handling coronavirus second wave across the States even as it battled for complete lockdown.

Terming the response of the Ministry extremely lethargic, the IMA alleged that advisories and suggestions made by health professionals were not paid heed and the government is taking decisions without realising the ground realities.

Citing instances of many experts requesting the government to impose nationwide lockdown, the IMA said that refusal of the central government to impose lockdown has led to 4 lakh daily Covid-



19 cases in the country.

The IMA also said that individual lockdown by different states and night curfews were ineffective in breaking the chain of Coronavirus.

On the vaccination front, the IMA said that despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of phase 3 vaccination rollout from May 1, the Health Ministry

failed to chart out a proper road map and arrange vaccine stock which has led to the suspension of vaccination drive at several vaccine centres in the country.

The health professionals' body also criticised the differential pricing system for vaccine purchase by states and private medical institutions. Citing the instance of smallpox

and polio vaccination drives in the past, the IMA said that the country had been able to succeed on account of free vaccine provision for all age groups across the country.

On the oxygen shortage, IMA said that despite enough production of Oxygen in the country large numbers of private hospitals are bearing the shortage brunt due to faulty distribution management of the life-saving gas.

Questioning the government data on the number of new cases and covid-19 mortalities, the IMA wondered why the government was hiding actual Covid-19 statistics. Citing an example of false RT-PCR negative tests, the IMA said that health authorities are not adding Covid-19 cases that are getting traced through CT-scan reports.

The statement signed by National President, IMA Dr. J A Jayalal concluded that there should be a complete revamp of the entire Covid-19 management by the central government ranging from containment measures, vaccine shortage, drugs shortage, and manpower shortage among others.

CWC to meet on Monday to discuss Assembly poll loss

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

With the rout in the recent Assembly elections in Assam, West Bengal, Kerala and Puducherry, the Congress Working Committee (CWC), the highest decision making body of the grand old party, will meet on Monday to discuss the issue.

In a letter to all CWC members, Congress General Secretary (Organisations) K.C. Venugopal said, "A meeting of CWC will be held on May 10 at 11 a.m. via video conferencing."

The notice of the CWC meeting comes a day after the Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) meeting was chaired by party chief Sonia Gandhi on Friday with all the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha MPs partici-

pating.

During the CPP meeting on Friday, Congress president Sonia Gandhi termed her party's performance in the state assembly elections "unfortunate, disappointing and unexpected".

In the recently concluded assembly elections, results of which were declared on May 2, the Congress could not register win in any state, and its only consolation was in Tamil Nadu where the party contested along with DMK as its partner, and managed to win 18 seats.

Addressing the party MPs on Friday during a virtual meeting, she said, "Most unfortunately, our own performance in all the states was very disappointing and if I may say, unexpectedly so.

India-EU agree to strengthen strategic, bilateral cooperation

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

In its first ever meeting with India in the EU+27 format, European Council on Saturday agreed to strengthen the "India-EU Strategic Partnership" based on a shared commitment to democracy, fundamental freedoms, rule of law and multilateralism.

India and the EU also agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation on digital and emerging technologies such as "5G, AI, Quantum and High-Performance Computing including through the early operationalization of the Joint Task Force on AI and the Digital Investment Forum".

At the invitation of President of the European Council Charles Michel, Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the India-EU Leaders' Meeting that was virtually held in a hybrid format with the participation of leaders of all the 27 EU Member States as well as the President of the European Council and the European Commission.

A statement issued from Prime Minister's Office mentioned that it was the first time that the EU hosted a meeting with India in the EU+27 format. The meeting was the initiative of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The leaders noted with satisfaction the growing convergences on regional and global issues, including counterterrorism, cybersecurity and maritime cooperation. The leaders acknowledged the importance of a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific and agreed to closely engage in the region, including in the context of India's Indo-Pacific Ocean's Initiative and the EU's new strategy on the Indo-Pacific.

During the meeting, the leaders exchanged views on three key thematic areas— foreign policy and security; Covid-19, climate and environment; and trade, connectivity and technology.

They discussed forging closer cooperation on combating the Covid-19 pandemic and economic recovery, tackling climate change, and reforming multilateral institutions.

India appreciated the prompt assistance provided by the EU and its member states to combat its second Covid wave.

The leaders welcomed the decision to resume negotiations for balanced and comprehensive free trade and investment agreements. Negotiations on both the Trade and Investment Agreements will be pursued on parallel tracks with

India appreciated the prompt assistance provided by the EU and its member states to combat its second Covid wave

an intention to achieve early conclusion of both agreements together.

This is a major outcome which will enable the two sides to realise the full potential of the economic partnership.

India and the EU also announced dedicated dialogues on WTO issues, regulatory cooperation, market access issues and supply chain resilience, demonstrating the desire to deepen and further diversify economic engagement.

India and the EU launched an ambitious and comprehensive 'Connectivity Partnership' which is focused on enhancing digital, energy, transport and people-to-people connectivity.

The Partnership is based on the shared principles of social, economic, fiscal, climate and environmental sustainability, and respect for international law and commitments. It will catalyse private and public financing for connectivity projects. It will also foster new synergies for supporting connectivity initiatives in third countries, including in the Indo-Pacific.

India and the EU leaders reiterated their commitment to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and agreed to strengthen joint efforts for mitigation, adaptation and resilience to the impacts of climate change, as well as providing means of implementation including finance in the context of COP26. India welcomed the EU's decision to join CDRI.

Coinciding with the Leaders' Meeting, an India-EU Business Roundtable was organised to highlight the avenues for cooperation in climate, digital and healthcare.

A finance contract of Euro 150 million for the Pune Metro Rail Project was signed by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India, and European Investment Bank.

India-EU Leaders meeting has set a significant milestone by providing a new direction to the Strategic Partnership and giving a fresh impetus for implementing the ambitious India-EU Roadmap 2025 adopted at the 15th India-EU Summit held in July 2020.

India's daily domestic oxygen production increased to 9,400 MT

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

The production of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) has been maximised to meet the present demand of Covid-19 patients and the domestic production currently exceeded 9,400 Metric Tonne per day, the Government said on Saturday.

Giridhar Aramane, Secretary, Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways informed while presenting the current scenario of LMO production, allocation and supply during the 25th meeting of the high-level Group of Ministers (GoM) on Covid-19 through video-conference.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan chaired the meeting that was also virtually attended by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep S. Puri, Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways and Fertilizers Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai, and Minister of State for Health Ashwini Kumar Choubey. Vinod K. Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog was present virtually.

At the outset, the Health Minister apprised other members of GoM about the steadily growing trajectory of daily recoveries and also observed that "180 districts have showed no fresh cases in the last seven days, 18 districts in 14 days, 54 districts in 21 days and 32 dis-

tricts were bereft of any fresh cases in the last 28 days."

The number of critical cases thus far includes 4,88,861 patients who required ICU beds, 1,70,841 patients who required ventilator support and 9,02,291 patients who were given oxygen support, the Minister added.

As on date, Vardhan said, 1.34 per cent of the active caseload is in ICU, 0.39 per cent of them are on ventilators and 3.70 per cent of them are on oxygen support.

Vardhan informed the GoM that, "the cumulative number of Covid-19 vaccine doses administered in the country has crossed 16.73 crore on Saturday which includes nearly 23 lakh doses given on Friday."

"A total of 17,49,57,770 doses have been delivered to the states, out of which 16,65,49,583 doses have been consumed and 84,08,187 doses are still available with the states," said the Minister, adding a total of 53,25,000 doses are on the pipeline and will be supplied to the states soon.

He requested the states to set aside 70 per cent of the vaccines received through GoI channel for administration of the second dose.

On the tests being conducted in India, the Health Minister noted that the country has reached a testing capacity of 25,00,000 tests per day.

BJP lost in Bengal as Central leadership ignored party cadre, allege local leaders

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Despite increasing its tally from three seats to 77 in the 294 member Assembly, many West Bengal BJP leaders feel that the Central leadership's failure to gauge the mood on the ground and ignoring the local leadership were the main reasons for losing the high stakes battle to the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress (TMC).

Listing the reasons for the party's failure to form the government in West Bengal, which was considered the last frontier by the saffron party along with Kerala, West Bengal leaders told IANS that there was little involvement of the state leadership in the decision making, there was too much deployment of central leaders from other other parts of the country, especially from North India, and a failure to present a credible and effective Bengali leadership.

A section in the West Bengal BJP unit feels that if the Central leadership had heard the local cadre the result could have been better. "Local leaders are well connected with the people and aware of issues concerning them and by ignoring them the Central leadership completely disconnected itself from the ground," claimed a BJP leader.

Former West Bengal BJP Chief and former Governor of Tripura and Meghalaya,

Tathagatha Roy openly criticized the ticket distribution and the role of central appointees for affairs of the state unit. Blaming state in-charge Kailash Vijayvargiya, co-incharge Arvind Menon, Shiv Prakash and state unit Chief Dilip Ghosh, Roy had tweeted, "These people have heaped the worst possible insults on ideologically driven BJP workers and devout Swayamsevakas who had been relentlessly working for the party since 1980s."

Other West Bengal BJP leaders including a few who lost in the Assembly polls said, "All the Central leaders assigned to manage the party's poll affairs had failed to do their homework and worked as dictators, ignoring the feedback from the local cadre."

A West Bengal BJP leader claimed that the party strategists failed to present a credible local face and made it Bengali (Mamata Banerjee) versus non Bengali (Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah). "TMC used it and continuously attacked us and called the Prime Minister and Home Minister tourists.

Most of the star campaigners including Modi, Shah and others had addressed voters in Hindi. This helped Banerjee's narrative that the BJP is an outsider party with no respect for Bengali identity and culture," he said.

The local BJP unit also

believed that by not presenting a local credible face the party failed to attract the state's intelligentsia and the Bengali Bhadrakalok in the urban areas.

The saffron camp in West Bengal feels that sidelining of the local leaders had worked against the party. "Most of the local leaders, instead of working on the ground engaged in overseeing and arranging logistics of leaders sent by Delhi and they behaved like a king giving orders to the local cadre," another leader said.

The West Bengal BJP workers pointed out that the leadership also failed to gauge the mood of women voters. "Welfare schemes of the Modi government did not work in our favour but women welfare work of Mamata in the rural areas worked magic for the ruling party.

From the very start the central leadership insisted that like Bihar, women voters in West Bengal would vote for the BJP but it did not happen," he said.

Sexist comments like the 'Didi O Didi' remark of the Prime Minister and Ghosh's comment that Mamata should wear shorts also worked against the BJP, claimed a party leader.

Another leader suggested that the party should now start identifying candidates for the next general elections in 2024 instead of parachuting in outsiders.

EC needs reform: Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Relentless with her attack on the Centre and the Election Commission, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday advocated reforms in the poll panel itself.

Making her first speech in the State Assembly in her third term as the Chief Minister, Mamata said the way the agencies including the Election Commission were being used by the Centre a time had come when EC reforms should be considered.

Attacking the poll panel for its "biased approach" towards a specific party Chief Minister said, "I can challenge that they (BJP) could not have won even 30 seats had the Election Commission not helped them directly. In this election, rigging took place in some places under the watch of the poll panel," adding there was a strong need to bring about a reform in the Commission itself.

She said the "defeat of BJP has saved not only Bengal but



India ... many states are now feeling relieved that they have been restrained ... the TMC has saved India."

Attacking the Centre for sending a central team and shooting off strong letters "within 24 hours of my government taking the charge," Banerjee said "failing to digest the defeat they are spreading rumors of violence by posting fake videos," warning "those posting videos would be strictly dealt with."

In an apparent bid to use the massive electoral victory in Bengal as a launch pad for 2024 general elections Banerjee continued her tirade against the Centre wondering why it failed to tackle the pandemic.

She said "I had written to

the Centre repeatedly about setting aside Rs 30,000 crore which is nothing for them ... I told them to go for free vaccination during this national crisis ... but they would not do that to save the lives of common man ... while on the other hand they can spend Rs 50,000 crores for purchasing luxury air craft for Prime Minister's residence and construction of new parliament etc."

"I wrote four letters but none was replied," she alleged saying how "Bengal is being deprived of vaccines and oxygen... they are taking away oxygen produced here ... they are not sending vaccines," she alleged.

The BJP is boycotting the Assembly session alleging rampant violence. Meanwhile in continuing violence a TMC man was killed at Dubrajpur in Birbhum when a skirmish took place between the BJP and Trinamool supporters, police said. The violence took place hours after the central team visited the spot.

21 die in Raj after Covid-19 victim's burial sans protocol

Jaipur: Around 21 persons lost their lives at a village in Rajasthan's Sikar district allegedly after the burial of a Covid victim, whose body was brought from Gujarat, without following any Covid protocols.

The incident was reported recently from Kheerva village in Sikar, the Assembly constituency of Rajasthan Congress chief and state Education Minister Govind Singh Dotsara.

Officials said that the corpse was brought from Gujarat and around 21 people, who came in contact with the body, lost their lives in the days after the final rites were performed in the village.

According to the officials, the Covid victim's infected body was brought to the village on April 21 and over 100 people attended the funeral which was conducted without following the Covid guidelines.

The body was taken out of the plastic bag and many people had touched it during the burial, they said.

However, Lakshmanaraj sub-divisional officer Kulraj Meena said that out of the 21 deaths, only 3-4 deaths occurred due to Covid-19.

"The other deaths have been reported from the older age group. We have collected samples of 147 members of families where deaths have been reported to check whether it is a case of community transmission," Meena told the media.

Meena and other officials visited the village after receiving the report along with a medical team which directed for immediate sanitisation of the village. Medicine kits were also distributed to cure the other infected people.

Sikar district collector Aviral Chaturvedi said that officials visited the village and made the people aware of the fact that all social gatherings, including for last rites, should follow the proper Covid protocols.

Door-to-door survey was also conducted to know the actual situation, he said, IANS



Labourers carry out restoration work of historical Hawa Mahal in Jaipur on Saturday

PTI

Vijayan blames local bodies for mishandling Covid

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

A Kerala diagnosed 41, 971 new persons with Covid-19 and 64 patients succumbing to the pandemic on Saturday, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan blamed local self-governments like panchayat and municipalities for their complacency and lethargy in dealing with the emergency situation.

The Chief Minister, who in his daily press briefings till yesterday has been highlighting the shortcomings in the help from the Centre. But on Saturday, he said the local self-bodies in the State had failed in mobilising emergency facilities like transport, pulse oxy meters and emergency medical staff to attend to the patients afflicted with Covid-19.

Situation is really shocking in Kerala as four out of the 14 districts have more than 4,000 covid patients each. The virus that is causing the pandemic in Kerala is unique as it is capable of causing Covid of extremely serious nature. But what I see is thoroughly unprepared local self-bodies and their complacent and lethargic attitude," said Vijayan.

The chief minister was caught in an embarrassing situation on Friday when there

were reports about Covid afflicted persons in serious condition were transported to hospitals in two-wheelers because of the non-availability of ambulance. The incident happened in a first line covid treatment centre in Alappuzha where there were no medical attendants or vehicles to shift the patient who was gasping for breath to the nearest hospital. Two volunteers who had dropped in at the centre had to carry him in their two wheelers and this picture went viral in the social media.

According to Vijayan, there were shortages of Covid Treatment Centres as well as medical professionals in the State. "Each of the local self-bodies should have at least five ambulances on round-the-clock basis in times like pandemic. But as on today, our local bodies do not have these arrangements," said the chief minister.

A former panchayath secretary to the Government of Kerala, who was watching the chief minister's media briefing said the latter was trying to 'pass the buck' to government employees and local self-government bodies. "It is more than a year since the Covid struck Kerala. The chief min-

ister who has been claiming everything was fine all these months have made a volte face today and blames the local self-government bodies. This can never be justified," said the retired secretary who did not want his name to be quoted.

With the death of 64 persons on Saturday, the toll in the State reached 5,746. There were 4,17, 101 Covid-19 patients across the State. Even the serene and beautiful villages in Keala, known for their scenic landscapes, ponds, rivers, lakes and backwaters have been infected with the pandemic.

Saturday's press briefing by the chief minister was more of dos and donts meant for the local self-governments. He repeatedly said that there was severe shortage of vaccine in the State. Many emergency surgeries in the Regional Cancer Centre had to be postponed due to oxygen shortage," said the chief minister.

The none-day long total lockdown declared by the State administration came into effect early Saturday morning. Normal life in the State has come to a standstill following stringent measures announced by the administration as part of the measures to counter the spread of pandemic.

J&K logs 60 more deaths

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Despite augmenting patient care facilities across different hospitals in Jammu & Kashmir in recent days the death toll due to Covid-19 is on the rise. On Saturday, 60 patients died, 42 across Jammu region and 18 across Kashmir while 4788 fresh cases of coronavirus were detected taking the tally of active positive cases to 46535.

The overall positivity rate stood at 10.23 per cent on Saturday.

To tide over the shortage of covid beds the UT administration in Jammu decided to reserve at least 50 per cent beds across four leading nursing homes for Covid patients. Meanwhile, work has been initiated on ground zero to establish two 500 bedded covid hospitals by DRDO in the coming days. According to the media

bulletin, out of 4788 new positive cases of novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), 1529 were reported from Jammu division and 3259 from Kashmir division. With 60 more deaths the death toll due to covid 19 Saturday touched 2672.

On the recovery note, 2500 more COVID-19 patients were recovered and discharged from various hospitals including 910 from Jammu Division and 1590 from Kashmir Division. As a large number of people continue to remain in home isolation the death rate too is increasing alarmingly. On Saturday 10 patients were declared brought dead as they arrived very late in the hospital. The UT administration is spreading awareness across different platforms to immediately report symptoms of coronavirus to a specialist and avoid delay in receiving treatment to contain the death rate.

TN announces total lockdown from May 10

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Since there is no sign of any abatement in the ever growing number of daily Covid-19 cases, Tamil Nadu Government declared total lockdown all over the State from May 10 for a fortnight.

As on Saturday evening, the State diagnosed 27, 397 new persons with Covid-19 while the pandemic claimed 241 lives across Tamil Nadu. This took the death toll in the State till date to 15,412.

Eateries could serve only parcel food while Amma Restaurants are allowed to function. Banks and other offices have been allowed to operate with 50 per cent staff while medical stores, milk

booths and vegetable vendors have been given green signal to function without restrictions.

The decision to go for the fortnight-long lockdown was taken after Chief Minister M K Stalin took stock of the situation with the district collectors and superintendents of police.

Out of the 27, 397 cases of Covid diagnosed on Saturday, Chennai accounted for 6846, while Chengalpattu came second with 2458 patients and Coimbatore followed closely with 2117.

There was a rejig in the State bureaucracy immediately after Stalin took charge at Fort Saint George (Tamil Nadu's centre of power) on Friday. V Irai anbu, a 1988 batch IAS officer was brought

in as Chief Secretary supplanting incumbent Rajeev Ranjan who has been shunted out as the managing director of Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Papers Ltd.

Stalin also brought in four senior IAS officers to control the Chief Minister's Office. They are T Udhayachandran, P Umanath, M S Shanmugham and anu George. Umanath, who was the managing director of Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation, earned encomiums from all over for building the capacity and capability of hospitals across the State by ensuring that they had sufficient stock of oxygen, kits for testing the pandemic and the necessary drugs to combat Covid-19.

UP Govt to hold funerals of Covid victims free of cost

Lucknow: With the bodies of deceased Covid-19 patients piling up in large numbers, the Uttar Pradesh Government on Saturday passed an order according to which it would hold the funerals of all those persons who died of the virus without charging any money. This Government order would be applicable within the Municipal Corporation limits.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced this decision after reviewing the matter with Team Nine about the exorbitant amount of money charged for a funeral following death due to Covid-19 in several districts.

Additional Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh has sent a letter to all the municipal corporations and civic bodies directing them to arrange free funerals of deceased Covid patients falling within the limits of the urban bodies.

The municipal corporations will bear the expenses of funerals at all crematoriums, cemeteries and cremation grounds falling within the limits of the corporation.

It has been made mandatory to follow Covid-19 protocols while conducting such funerals.

The expenditure incurred on the funerals will be met by the urban bodies from their own resources or from the State Finance Commission. A maximum amount of ₹5,000 will be spent on each funeral.

IANS

Goa Govt urged special Covid centres for differently-abled

PTI ■ PANAJI

The Goa Government has been urged to set up special Covid-19 centres in the State for people with disability and their family members.

Demand has also been made to prioritise vaccination for persons with disability in the age group of 18 to 45 years and to administer jabs at home for those differently-abled who have no one to take them to health centres.

"We are receiving complaints from persons with disability and their family members that COVID hospitals and care centres are not accessible for persons with disability, the staff is not sensitised to handle persons with disability and the family members are not allowed to stay with the special children," Disability Rights Association of Goa (DRAG) chief Avelino De Sa stated in a letter written to State Commissioner for Persons with Disability. DRAG is an NGO working for the cause of differently-abled people in the state.

"We request you to direct concerned authorities to open special COVID centres (one in each district) of at least 15 beds capacity for persons with disability and their family members," the DRAG said.

These COVID centres should be equipped with oxygen and ventilator facilities, De Sa added.

As of May 7, Goa's Covid-19 tally stood at 1,12,462 and the death toll was 1,557, health officials had said.

82,266 patients discharged on Saturday in Maharashtra

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A record 82,266 patients were discharged from various hospitals in Maharashtra on Saturday after their full recovery from Covid-19, even as the State crossed a grim milestone of 75,000 deaths and 50 lakh infections, after the pandemic claimed 864 more lives and left 53,605 infected.

Amid the continued surge in the number of deaths and infections, Maharashtra witnessed an overwhelming 82,266 recoveries which took the total number of people discharged from various hospitals after full recovery to 43,47,592. As a result, the recovery rate in the state climbed from 85.36 per cent to 86.03 per cent.

A day after the state recorded 898 deaths and 54,022 new cases, the number of deaths dropped marginally by 34, while the 53,605 new infections on Saturday, as against 54,022 new cases recorded on Friday.

With 864 new deaths, the total number of deaths in the state climbed crossed 75,000 mark as the number of cases climbed from 74,413 to 75,277. Similarly, with 53,605 new infections, the total number of cases crossed 50 lakh mark as the cases rose from 49,96,758 to 50,53,336. The infections in Mumbai continued

to remain below 5,000 mark as the daily cases dropped from 3,040 to 2,664 on Saturday. With the new infections, the total caseload in the metropolis increased from 671,125 to 673,235. There has been a vast improvement Covid-19 situation since April 4, when the metropolis had recorded highest-ever record 11,206 cases.

Similarly, the Covid-19 deaths dropped from 71 on Friday to 62 now and the total fatalities in the metropolis climbed from 13,651 to 13,713.

The total "active cases" in the state dropped substantially from 6,54,788 to 6,28,213. The fatality rate in the state stood static at 1.49 per cent.

While Pune accounted for a maximum 1,06,829 "active cases" in the state, Nagpur stood second 62,159, followed by Mumbai with 52874, Thane (43,510) Nashik (40141), Chandrapur (26,245), Ahmednagar (24,427), Satara (22,607), Solapur (22,438), Beed (13,859), Jalgaon (13,484), Aurangabad (12,411), Parbhani (10,971), Latur (10,565), Buldhana (8,914), Bhandara (7,519), Jalna (7,041) Nandurbar (6,771), Nanded (5,802) and Osmanabad (4,990).

Of the 2,91,91,331 samples sent to laboratories, 50,53,336 have tested positive (17.31 per cent) for COVID-19 until Saturday.

Don't panic, Tripura has enough oxygen stock: Deb

Agartala: Tripura Chief Minister

Bioplal Kumar Deb on Saturday said the State has adequate stock of oxygen for treatment of Covid-19 patients and urged people not to panic amid the raging coronavirus pandemic.

The State has a stock of 4,000 oxygen cylinders and 750 concentrators, he said.

"We have adequate stock of oxygen and people of the state should not be worried about the availability of the life-saving gas. The recovery rate among coronavirus patients in Tripura is at 92 per cent, which is better than several other states," Deb said.

The health department has taken a slew of steps to make sure sufficient supply of oxygen to all the districts and sub-divisional hospitals, the CM said.

He visited an oxygen plant at Bodhjunnagar here and took stock of the supply situation from the facility.

Deb said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had assured all help to the state in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The chief minister stated that

his government has taken measures to speed up the vaccination drive and appealed to people above 45 years of age to get inoculated immediately.

"Tripura is one of the first two states in the country to have the highest vaccination rate. We will soon start the immunisation drive for people in the age group of 18 to 44 years and have placed orders to procure vaccines for the purpose," he said.

Around 14 lakh people have been inoculated in the state so far, a health department official said.

Senior minister and cabinet spokesperson Ratan Lal Nath said the government has decided to appoint 164 doctors through Tripura Public Service Commission on a contractual basis to strengthen human resource in hospitals across the state. As many as 148 posts of doctors are vacant in state-run medical facilities, he said.

At least 359 more people tested positive for Covid-19 in Tripura on Saturday, pushing the tally in the state to 37,208, the official said.

PTI



Shikaras anchored at Dal Lake during Covid-induced curfew in Srinagar on Saturday

PTI

PM lauds Maha for fight against second wave

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Amid the ruling Shiv Sena's severe criticism of the Modi Government for its "ineffective" handling of the Covid-19 crisis at the national level, Prime Minister Narendra Modi — in a telephonic conversation with Uddhav Thackeray — on Saturday commended Maharashtra for its efforts in countering the "second wave" of pandemic in the State.

Hours after the Shiv Sena mouth-piece "Saamana" in its editorial tore into Modi for the sloppy manner in which he handled the Covid-19 crisis in the country and called for practice of "politics-free nationalism", Sena president and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and the Prime Minister interacted with each other on telephone over the Covid-19 situation in the State.

Simultaneously, Uddhav wrote to the Prime Minister about matters relating to the supply of vaccination, technical glitches on the CoWin App &

developing a state-level app for citizens' vaccination registration.

In tweets put out after Uddhav's telephonic conversations, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) tweeted, "In a telephonic conversation with CM Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray, the Hon'ble PM @narendramodi sought details about Maharashtra's fight against Covid and commended its efforts in countering the second wave."

"The CM requested more linkages in the procurement of oxygen for the state, gave information about several measures taken & plans to counter the third wave. The CM thanked the PM for continuous guidance & for accepting various requests made by the State," the CMO said in another tweet.

Meanwhile, in a letter written to the Prime Minister, Uddhav stated, "The vaccination drive in Maharashtra has been one of the fastest and most efficient in the country with every stock of vaccine that the Union

government has kindly supplied to the State at various times in the past few months".

Among other things, the chief minister — in his letter — spoke about the State Government's plans to "open up" the vaccination for 18-45 years' age group by way of procuring the vaccines from its resources, touched up on the technical glitches noticed in the CoWin App and proposed to the Centre about the need for a separate App for States or a CoWin App for each State.

"Seeing the sudden surge of the number of citizens wanting to register nationally, there is a fear about the App malfunctioning or crashing as it did on the day 1 of the (vaccination) registrations," the chief minister stated.

"We therefore propose either a separate App developed by the states where the data can be shared with the Union government's Ministry of Health or a Co Win App developed and assigned by the Government of India. This would ensure better

interface and experience for the citizens who are really keen to take the vaccine shot," Uddhav wrote.

Dwelling upon the challenge faced by the state government in getting vaccine supplies, the chief minister said that the state government was willing to procure vaccines stocks in a single procurement if possible so as to safeguard our citizens and to give a boost to the country's vaccination programme.

"However, the producers do not have enough stocks... If the states are allowed to procure (vaccines) from other manufacturers as well, we would be able to cover a larger population in a shorter time and help reduce the impact of the possible third wave," the chief minister said.

Uddhav proposed that the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) set up medical framework for the respective FDAs of each starve, within which the states would be able to cover a larger population in a shorter time and help reduce

the impact of the possible third wave in the country.

In a related development, the Shiv Sena's mouth-piece "Saamana" — in its editorial — stated that with the Covid-19 triggered death of astounding 36,110 people during the past 10 days, India had left most severely affected countries like United States and Brazil behind. "The fear that India aroused in the minds of the governments in other is of immense nature. They have stopped their people visiting India for trade and business. In India, there are restrictions on air and general travel," the editorial stated.

"As a result, India has suffered huge financial losses. If the country is struggling along, it is because of the contributions of Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, P. V. Narasimha Rao, Manmohan Singh and their visionary policies. It is time now for Modi to take steps in the interests of the country. He should begin practising "politics-free nationalism," the Saamana stated.

Blast kills 30 near girls' school in Kabul

AP ■ KABUL

A bomb exploded near a girls' school in a majority Shiite district of west Kabul on Saturday, killing at least 30 people, many of them young pupils between 11 and 15 years old, Afghan government spokesmen said. The Taliban condemned the attack apparently aimed at civilians, and denied any responsibility.



Afghan school students are treated at a hospital after a bomb explosion near a school in west of Kabul on Saturday

The explosion is being investigated, said Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian who added the death toll could rise further.

Ambulances were rushing to evacuate wounded from the scene of the blast near Syed Al-Shahda school, in the Shiite majority neighborhood of Dasht-e-Barchi, Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian said.

Residents in the area said the explosion was deafening. One, Naser Rahimi, told The Associated Press he heard three separate explosions, although

there was no official confirmation of multiple blasts. Rahimi also said he believed that the sheer power of the explosion meant the death toll would almost certainly climb.

While no one has claimed responsibility for the bombing, previous brutal attacks in the same neighborhood have been

Drone attack on Iraqi base hosting American troops

AP ■ BAGHDAD

In mid-April, a drone strike early on Saturday targeted a military base in Iraq that hosts US troops, causing only minor damage and no casualties, Iraq's military and the US-led coalition said.

The pore-dawn attack damaged a hangar, tweeted coalition spokesman Col. Wayne Marotto. He said the attack was under investigation. An Iraqi military statement also said no losses were reported. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

The US has blamed Iran-backed militia groups for previous attacks, most of them rocket attacks that have targeted the American presence in Baghdad and military bases across Iraq.

Drone strikes are less common. In mid-April, an explosive-laden drone targeted the military section of the international airport in Irbil, in Iraq's northern Kurdish-run region, causing no casualties or

The US has blamed Iran-backed militia groups for previous attacks, most of them rocket attacks that have targeted the American presence in Baghdad and military bases across Iraq

damages. The base also hosts US troops.

The attacks have been frequent since a US-directed drone strike killed Iranian General Qassem Soleimani near the Baghdad airport last year.

Iraqi militia leader Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis was also killed in the attack. The strike drew the ire of mostly Shiite Iraqi lawmakers and prompted parliament to pass a non-binding resolution to pressure the Iraqi government to oust foreign troops from the country.

The Biden administration has resumed strategic talks with Baghdad, initiated under President Donald Trump, in which the future of US troop presence in Iraq is a central point of discussion.

Palestinians, Israel police clash at Al-Aqsa mosque

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Palestinian worshippers clashed with Israeli police late on Friday at the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, a major holy site sacred to Muslims and Jews, in an escalation of weeks of violence in Jerusalem that has reverberated across the region.

The Palestinian Red Crescent emergency service said 136 people were wounded in clashes with police there and elsewhere in Jerusalem, including 83 who were hospitalised. It says most were wounded in the face and eyes by rubber-coated bullets and shrapnel from stun grenades. Israel said six police officers were wounded.

Earlier on Friday, Israeli troops shot and killed two Palestinians and wounded a third after the men opened fire on a base belonging to Israel's paramilitary Border Police force in the occupied West Bank, the latest in a series of deadly confrontations in recent weeks that has coincided with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. More unrest appears likely next week.

Tensions have soared in recent weeks in east Jerusalem, which is claimed by both Israel and the Palestinians. At the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, Israel blocked off a popular gathering spot where Palestinians traditionally socialise at the end of their daylong fast. The move set off two weeks of clashes



Israeli border police officers detain a Palestinian demonstrator during clashes with Palestinian protesters, in east Jerusalem on Friday

before Israel lifted the restrictions.

But in recent days, clashes have resumed due to Israel's threatened eviction of dozens of Palestinians in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in east Jerusalem, who have been embroiled in a long legal battle with Israeli settlers trying to acquire property in the neighbourhood.

The United States said it was "deeply concerned" about the heightened tensions and called on all sides to work to de-escalate them. It also expressed concern about the

threatened evictions.

"It's critical to avoid unilateral steps that would exacerbate tensions or take us further away from peace. And that would include evictions, settlement activity, and home demolitions," US State Department spokeswoman Jalina Porter told reporters in Washington.

The Al-Aqsa mosque compound is the third holiest site in Islam. The site is also the holiest site for Jews, who refer to it as the Temple Mount and revere it as the spot where the biblical Temples stood.

Medics: 200 Palestinians hurt in clashes with police

AP ■ JERUSALEM

A night of heavy clashes between Palestinians and Israeli police at the Al-Aqsa mosque compound and elsewhere in Jerusalem left more than 200 Palestinians wounded, medics said on Saturday, as the city braced for even more violence after weeks of unrest.

Nightly protests broke out at the start of the holy month of Ramadan over police restrictions at a popular gathering place and have reignited in recent days over threatened

eviction of dozens of Palestinians from their homes in east Jerusalem, which is claimed by both sides in the decades-old conflict.

It was unclear what set off the violence at Al-Aqsa, which erupted when Israeli police in riot gear deployed in large numbers as thousands of Muslim worshippers were holding evening prayers at the sprawling hilltop esplanade.

Hindu woman in Pak cracks prestigious Central Superior Services examination

Islamabad: In a first, a Hindu woman in Pakistan has cleared the country's prestigious Central Superior Services (CSS) examination and has been selected for the elite Pakistan Administrative Services (PAS). Sana Ramchand is an MBBS doctor, hailing from rural area of Shikarpur district in Sindh province, which has the largest Hindu population in Pakistan.

stage when final merit is determined.

After the result, Ramchand tweeted: "Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh", and added, "I'm pleased to share that by the grace of Allah Almighty, I have cleared the CSS 2020 and been allocated to PAS. All credit goes to my parents."

The pass percentage in the latest CSS has been less than 2 per cent which shows the tough competition as well as the rigorous standards applied by the Federal Public Service Commission responsible for these recruitments. The PAS is the top tier often followed by Pakistan Police Services and Foreign Services of Pakistan and others.

Maldives: Islamic extremists behind attack on ex-Prez

Male: A top official in the Maldives said on Saturday that Islamic extremists were responsible for an explosion earlier this week that critically wounded former President Mohamed Nasheed, as police said they arrested two of four suspects.

Hospital officials said Saturday that Nasheed is conscious and no longer needs breathing support.

Two of his bodyguards and two apparent bystanders, including a British citizen, were also wounded in Thursday's blast. Prosecutor General Hussain Shameem told reporters that investigators still do not know which extremist group was behind the attack, which left Nasheed, 53, in critical condition.

US pipeline company halts some operations after cyberattack

Washington: A company that operates a major US energy pipeline says it was forced to temporarily halt all pipeline operations following a cybersecurity attack. In a statement, Colonial Pipeline said the attack took place Friday and also affected some of its information technology systems.

The company describes itself as the largest refined products pipeline in the United States and transports roughly 45 per cent of all fuel, including gasoline, diesel fuel and home heating oil, that is consumed on the East Coast.

The Alpharetta, Georgia-based company said it hired an outside cybersecurity firm to investigate the nature and scope of the attack and has also contacted law enforcement and federal agencies.

Philippine troops drive away armed rebels from public market

AP ■ COTABATO (PHILIPPINES)

Dozens of Muslim militants occupied a public market overnight in the southern Philippines before fleeing after a tense standoff with government forces, officials said on Saturday. The Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters did not take any hostage or put up resistance when army troops and police took positions at dawn Saturday near the public market in the farming town of Datu Paglas, said military spokesman Lt. Col. John Paul Baldomar.

"They went into the market and stole food but got stuck inside when they saw that our forces have taken positions to ensure other buildings could not be threatened," he told reporters. There were no immediate reports of injuries or deaths.

The rebel group broke off from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the largest Muslim rebel group in the south, after it entered into peace talks and later signed a Muslim autonomy deal with the Government in 2014.

EU says US stand on patent virus waiver is no 'magic bullet'

Porto: European Union leaders cranked up their criticism of the US call to waive Covid-19 vaccine patents Saturday, arguing the move would bring no short or midterm relief.

They instead urged Washington to lift export restrictions if it wants to have a global impact on the pandemic.

"We don't think, in the short term, that it's the magic bullet," said EU Council President Charles Michel on the second day of an EU summit in Portugal. French President Emmanuel Macron insisted that giving any priority to discussing intellectual property rights now, "is a false debate."

Instead, they joined previous EU calls for US President Joe Biden to start boosting US vaccine exports to contain the global Covid-19 crisis, insisting it was the most urgent need.

"We encourage all the partners to facilitate the export of (vaccine) doses," said Michel. France added its weight.

"I'm very clearly urging the US to put an end to the ban on exports of vaccines and on components of vaccines that are preventing them being produced," Macron said. Hundreds of components can go into a vaccine. He mentioned the Curevac company, saying it could not produce a vaccine in Europe because components are blocked in the United States.

While the US has kept a tight lid on exports of American-made vaccines so it can inoculate its own population first, and the UK has acted similarly, the EU has become the world's leading provider, allowing about as many doses to go outside the 27-nation bloc as are kept for its 446 million inhabitants. AP

Indian variant spreads to neighbouring countries

PTI ■ DHAKA/COLOMBO

India's neighbours - Sri Lanka and Bangladesh - have reported the first cases of the Indian variant of coronavirus, also known as B.1.617, prompting authorities to exercise caution to contain its spread.

Bangladesh overnight detected six people, who had recently visited India, infected with the Indian variant of the Covid-19. Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) spokesman Professor Dr Nazmul Islam Munna said on Saturday.

Out of the six people, two were detected in the national capital Dhaka. All of them are currently kept under quarantine.

"Six people have been found to be carrying the Indian variant so far and we expect more people to be detected with identical types of virus in the coming days," Munna told PTI.

"This development means we in Bangladesh need extreme caution, perfect compliance of health guidelines... If we maintain the guidelines, no variant - deadly or not - can cause major problems," Munna said. Following the detection of the Indian variant, Bangladesh on Saturday extended the closure of land borders with India for 14 more days.

GLOBE TROTTER

7 KIDS CRUSHED TO DEATH IN PAKISTAN

Peshawar: At least seven children from a family were killed on Saturday when a water tank collapsed on them while they were playing beneath the structure in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said. The tragic accident happened in Ambar teshil of Mohmand tribal district on Saturday afternoon when seven children aged between 4 and 12 were playing beneath the water tank when it collapsed suddenly. Seven children died on the spot while another was severely injured.

UK PM BORIS WELCOMES WINS IN LOCAL ELECTIONS

London: UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson was enjoying an election bounce on Saturday as many of the local and by-election results went in favour of his ruling Conservative Party. In what is seen as a result in support of the vaccination event as well as the handling of Brexit, the Opposition Labour Party faced a crushing by-election defeat in a traditional stronghold of Hartlepool in north-east England, which the party had held for many decades.

PAK OPP LEADER STOPPED FROM FLYING ABROAD

Lahore: Pakistan's Opposition leader Shahbaz Sharif was on Saturday barred from flying to the UK by the country's top investigation agency though a top court here allowed him to seek medical treatment abroad, his party spokesperson said. Shahbaz was scheduled to leave Lahore for Doha on Saturday morning, after which he was to leave for London after a 10-day quarantine in Qatar.

INDIABULLS RURAL FINANCE PRIVATE LIMITED (CIN : U74140MH1993PTC074596)				
Extract of the audited financial results for the half year and year ended 31 March 2021				
Particulars	(Rs. in crores)			
	6 months ended 31 March 2021	Current year ended 31 March 2021	Previous year ended 31 March 2020	
	(Refer note-2)	Audited	Audited	
Total income	11.71	35.49	39.59	
Net profit for the period (before tax, exceptional and extraordinary items)	2.59	15.55	10.72	
Net profit for the period before tax (after exceptional and/or extraordinary items)	2.59	15.55	10.72	
Net profit for the period after tax (after exceptional and/or extraordinary items)	2.22	11.82	8.00	
Total comprehensive income for the period [Comprising profit for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive income (after tax)]	2.43	11.97	8.00	
Paid-up equity share capital	41.80	41.80	41.80	
Reserves (excluding revaluation reserve)	94.13	94.13	82.16	
Net worth	135.93	135.93	123.96	
Outstanding debt	49.56	49.56	83.30	
Debt equity ratio	0.36	0.36	0.67	
Earnings per share before extraordinary items (Face Value of Rs. 10 per Equity Share) (EPS for the half year are not annualised)				
- Basic (Rs)	0.53	2.83	1.91	
- Diluted (Rs)	0.53	2.83	1.91	

Note to the financial results:

- The above results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and subsequently approved at the meeting of the Board of Directors held on 08 May 2021.
- Figures for the half year ended 31 March 2021 represent the balancing figures between the audited figures for the full financial year and published reviewed year to date figures upto first half year of the financial year.
- The above presentation is an extract of the detailed format of half yearly / annual financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 52 of the SEBI (Listing and other disclosure requirements) regulations, 2015. The full format of the half yearly / annual financial results are available on the company's website (<http://indiabullsruralfinance.com>) and on the website of BSE (<http://www.bseindia.com>).

Registered Office : One International Center, Tower-1, 4th Floor, S. B. Marg, Elphinstone(W), Mumbai, 400013

Place : Gurugram
Date : 08 May 2021

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors
Vijay Kumar Agrawal
Whole Time Director

SORIL INFRA RESOURCES LIMITED (CIN : L52190HR2005PLC077960)				
Extract of consolidated audited financial results for the quarter and year ended 31 March 2021				
Particulars	(Rs. in crores)			
	3 months ended 31 March 2021	Current year ended 31 March 2021	Previous year ended 31 March 2020	3 months ended 31 March 2020
	(Refer note-3)	Audited	Audited	(Refer note-3)
Total income	50.41	193.06	231.06	48.07
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before tax, exceptional and extraordinary items)	0.52	23.72	10.39	(0.89)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after exceptional and/or extraordinary items)	0.52	23.72	10.39	(0.89)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after exceptional and/or extraordinary items)	0.40	19.35	6.66	(1.12)
Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive income (after tax)]	0.53	19.75	10.90	(1.02)
Paid-up Equity Share Capital	31.50	31.50	31.50	31.50
Reserves (excluding revaluation reserve)	-	229.42	208.83	-
Earnings per share before extraordinary items (Face Value of Rs. 10 per Equity Share) (EPS for the quarters are not annualised)*				
- Basic (Rs)	0.13 *	6.14	2.01	(0.36) *
- Diluted (Rs)	0.13 *	6.14	2.01	(0.36) *

Note to the financial results:

- The above results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and subsequently approved at the meeting of the Board of Directors held on 8 May 2021.
- Key Standalone financial information of SORIL Infra Resources Limited:-

(Rs. in crores)				
Particulars	3 months ended 31 March 2021	Current year ended 31 March 2021	Previous year ended 31 March 2020	3 months ended 31 March 2020
	(Refer note-3)	Audited	Audited	(Refer note-3)
Total income	47.09	160.78	194.19	42.35
Profit / (Loss) before tax	0.44	7.57	(4.89)	(1.92)
Net Profit / (Loss) after tax	0.80	7.57	(4.89)	(1.92)

Figures for the quarters ended 31 March 2021 and 31 March 2020 represent the balancing figures between the audited figures for the full financial year and published reviewed year to date figures upto third quarter of the respective financial year.

The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly / Annual Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly / Annual Financial Results are available on the company's website (<http://sorilinfraresources.com>) and on the website of BSE (<https://www.bseindia.com>) and NSE (<https://www.nseindia.com>).

Registered Office: Plot No. 448-451, Udyog Vihar, Phase-V, Gurugram - 122016

Place : Gurugram
Date : 8 May 2021

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors
Anil Malhan
Executive Director

WESTERN RAILWAY

CONSTRUCTION OF 2 LANE ROAD OVER BRIDGE AND LHS

Deputy Chief Engineer (Construction), Western Railway, RATLAM (MP) invites offer through E-tender portal www.ireps.gov.in under Two packet system for the following tender:

Tender No.: RTM/DY.CE(C)ROB/8R (141&177). **Name of work:** Construction of 2 lane Road Over Bridge at km: 341/06-07 in lieu of L-bridging no. 177, near Jaora station, between Jaora - Dhodnar section and at km: 275/1-2 in lieu of L-ling no. 141, near Pipila station between Malharagarh - Mandsaour section and construction of Limited Height Subway using air pushing method below relieving girders, near Jaora station between Jaora - Dhodnar section of Raitam Division Western Railway. **NIT Cost (Rs.):** 148993046.72. **EMD:** Submission of Bid Security Declaration. **Bid submission closing date:** 07.06.2021 at 15.00 Hrs. **Bid opening date:** 07.06.2021 at 15.30 Hrs. **Instruction to tenderers:** 1. Only E-offers submitted online through E-tender portal will be considered. Please note that printed offers will not be entertained. 2. The date of tender, terms & conditions, and scope of work are uploaded and are available only in electronic format in our website www.ireps.gov.in

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WESTERN RAILWAY

DEVELOPMENT MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OF FAMILY MALL AT DADAR

E-Tender Notice No. & Date : CA11_Family_Mall_DDR. dtd. 06.05.2021. **Work and location:** Tender for Development, Maintenance and Operation of Family Mall at Dadar (DDR) station of Mumbai Division for a period of 05 (five) years. **Approx. cost of work Rs.:** 11,09,44,833/- for 5 years (Excluding Taxes, etc). **EMD Rs.:** 22,18,900/-. **Website where Tender form available:** www.ireps.gov.in **Date & Time of closing of online submission:** Upto 15.00 Hrs on 07.06.2021. **Date & Time of opening of e-tender:** At 15.30 hrs on 07.06.2021. **Note:** Please visit our website www.ireps.gov.in to download the tender document, corrigendum and further details. Cost of tender and EMD shall be accepted only through online net banking or E-payment gateway. Bidder should regularly visit website to keep themselves updated.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified for information that M/s Amolik Residency LLP (Company) has cancelled bookings of the following units' allotment due to reasons mentioned therein:-

A) Project: Amolik Sankalp having License No. 21 of 2019, under RERA registration no. HRERA-PKL-148-2019, Dated 10.09.2019.

SI No.	Unit No	Applicant	Reason
1	Flat No. 002/C1/T3	Keshav Bansal	Flats removed in revised approved building plan
2	Flat No. 002/C1/T4	Ekta & Sandeep Saxena	
3	Flat No. 003/C1/T4	Ashwani Sharma	

B) Project: Amolik Residency having License No. 10 of 2019, dated 31.01.2019, under RERA registration no. HRERA-PKL-FBD-98-2019 Dt. 25.02.2019.

SI No.	Unit No	Applicant	Reason
1	Plot No. 8	B S Chaudhary	Payment Default
2	Plot No. 9	B S Chaudhary	Payment Default
3	Plot No. 24	Kishan Lal Verma	Payment Default
4	Plot No. 30	Lokesh Arora	Payment Default
5	Plot No. 155-FF	Sonia Malhotra	Reallocated 154-FF
6	Plot No. 155-SF	Akansha Dhall	Reallocated 154-SF
7	Plot No. 155-TF	Dinesh Butola	Reallocated 154-TF
8	Plot No. 155-4F	Anjali Shama	Reallocated 154-4F

The cancellations for payment default have been done after repeated request and follow-up for payment were unsuccessful and as per policy. The applicants are informed that they shall henceforth have no right on the mentioned units. They have been issued various documents pertaining to the allotment of mentioned units which may be in their possession. They are notified that Company has forthright cancelled all such documents and its unauthorised use shall be illegal and punishable. The applicants are notified to come forward to the Company and apply for refund of their booking money in prescribed form which will be refunded after deduction of any due interest / damages.

For Amolik Residency LLP
Authorised Signatory

Last wild macaw in Rio is lonely and looking for love

AP ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

Some have claimed she's indulging a forbidden romance. More likely, loneliness compels her to seek company at Rio de Janeiro's zoo.

Either way, a blue-and-yellow macaw that zookeepers named Juliet is believed to be the only wild bird of its kind left in the Brazilian city where the birds once flew far and wide.

Almost every morning for the last two decades, Juliet has appeared. She swoops onto the



zoo enclosure where macaws are kept and, through its fence, engages in grooming behavior

that looks like conjugal canoodling. Sometimes she just sits, relishing the presence of others. She is quieter - shier? more coy? - than her squawking chums.

Blue-and-yellow macaws live to be about 35 years old and Juliet - no spring chicken - should have been flying a like-long mate years ago, according to Neiva Guedes, president of the Hyacinth Macaw Institute, an environmental group. But Juliet hasn't coupled, built a nest or had chicks, so at most she's "still just dating."

CBIC allows import, export of goods

WITHOUT FURNISHING BONDS TO CUSTOMS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Central Board of indirect taxes and customs

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) on Saturday allowed businesses to import and export goods without furnishing bonds to the customs authorities until June-end, a move aimed at ensuring no delay or disruption in EXIM trade due to COVID-19.

In a circular, the CBIC said importers and exporters will have to furnish an undertaking to the Customs authorities in lieu of the bonds till June 30.

The indirect tax body said it has received representation from traders to accept undertaking in lieu of bonds in certain cases of Customs clearance, in view of the difficulties being faced in the ongoing lockdown/constraints imposed in different regions of India.

To expedite Customs clearance of goods and for maintaining balance between Customs control and facilitation of legitimate trade, the CBIC said it has approved relaxation of the requirement to submit bonds.

...The Board has decided to restore the facility of acceptance of an undertaking in lieu of bond by Customs formation ... Till June 30, 2021. Importers/exporters availing this facility shall ensure that the undertaking furnished ... Is duly replaced with a proper bond by July 15, 2021," the CBIC said in a circular.

Last year too in the wake of COVID pandemic, the CBIC had allowed businesses to import and export goods without furnishing bonds to the customs authorities. AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said due to the resurgence of the pandemic, customs has yet again eased out certain customs procedures. "These measures would facilitate international trade and ensure continuance of business operations," Mohan added.



Big relief to jewellers on mandatory hallmarking

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The Nagpur Bench of Bombay High Court passed an interim order on May 7 which stops Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) from taking any coercive action on jewellers across India or impose penalty on those who may not comply with BIS Act, 2016 regulations, Section 29(2) on mandatory hallmarking due to the lack of adequate infrastructure in terms of assaying and hallmarking centres.

The Court ruled: "The contention is that the new regulation making it compulsory to hallmark gold jewellery before it is stored or sold, which has to come into force w.e.f. 1st June 2021, is likely to result in great hardships to lakhs of jewellers in India and their number is stated to be 5 lakhs."

The writ petition was filed by All India Gem & Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC), which is the industry's apex domestic Council that ensures promotion, protection and progress of jewellers. GJC was represented in court by counsel, Rohan Shah.

Ashish Petha, Chairman, All India Gem & Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC) stated, "Courts have seen the hard-

ship of the jewellers. The order stated that further contention is that in proportion to such multitude of jewellers in India - the percentage of hallmarking centres available in India, is just about 34% of the 733 districts in the country and that there are at least 488 districts in the country, which do not have any hallmarking centres. It is further submitted that there are about 6,000 crore pieces of jewellery, which still need to be hallmarked."

Nitin Khandelwal, Past Chairman, GJC, said, "Courts have been reasonable and strict with BIS as further contention is that if there is any breach of the said mandate of law as provided under Sections 14 and 15 of the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016 (BIS Act), there is a penalty in offence as provided under Section 29 of the BIS Act, 2016 punishable with maximum imprisonment of one year.

It is also submitted that within the time available, it could not be possible for all the jewellers and for every piece of jewellery presently available to be hallmarked before these provisions of law come into force."

Saiyam Mehra, Vice Chairman, GJC, commented, "It is further submitted that



there are also other problems arising out of the present COVID restrictions, which prevent a person to travel from one district to another district and that there are several districts, which do not have any hallmarking centres yet.

And the court has in the meanwhile, directed that no coercive action shall be taken against the jewellers under Section 29(2) of the BIS Act, 2016, till next date of hearing on 14th June 2021.

This is a big relief to the jewellers who shall now be fully protected from any actions from BIS even though they may wish to still go ahead with mandatory hallmarking."

Indian industry will welcome resumption of India-EU FTA talks: CII

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Implementation of the proposed free-trade agreement between India and the European Union (EU) will benefit both the sides and the domestic businesses will welcome the resumption of formal negotiations on the long-stalled pact, industry body CII said on Saturday.

The proposed Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) between the two sides has been stalled since May 2013 as both sides are yet to iron out differences over several issues. The BTIA is a kind of comprehensive free trade agreement being negotiated by the two sides.

Speaking at the EU-India Business Roundtable, CII Director-General Chandrajit Banerjee said that BTIA will really benefit the EU with better access to the huge and rapidly growing Indian market and India with technology and innovation access.

"Several rounds (of talks) held until 2013, but the negotiations could not be completed as differences remain over some key issues. But Indian industry will welcome a resumption of formal negotiations for the BTIA and is ready to support the negotiations in any way possible," he said.

He also said that both the regions need to focus on investment facilitation and protection.

Speaking at the function, Markus J. Beyrer, Director General of Business Europe - Confederation of European Business, said he

completely agreed with CII Director General on resuming the FTA talks.

Confederation of Portuguese Business President António Saraiva informed that CII has inked a MoU with them to increase business cooperation between the two countries. India's exports to EU member countries stood at about USD 54 billion in 2019-20, while imports aggregated at USD 52 billion.

Bandhan Bank's net profit falls 80% on higher provisioning

FIANS ■ MUMBAI

Bandhan Bank on Saturday reported an 80 per cent decline in its net profit for the quarter ended March at Rs 103.03 crore.

During the same period of the FY20, the bank had reported a net profit of Rs 517.28 crore.

The sharp decline in profit came on the back of higher provisioning. During the last quarter of FY21, Bandhan Bank's provisions rose to Rs 1,594.30 crore, compared to Rs 827.36 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal.

The bank's net interest income (NII) rose 4.6 per cent at 1,757.0 crore as against a 1,680 crore in Q4FY20.

The Net Interest Income (NII) for the quarter grew by

4.6 per cent to Rs 1,757.0 crore as against Rs 1,680.0 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

Its gross non-performing asset (GNPA) as on March 31, 2021 was at 6.8 per cent against 7.1 per cent as on December 31, 2020.

Chandra Shekhar Ghosh, Managing Director and CEO of Bandhan Bank said: "A very challenging year ended on a positive note with growth and collection coming back to normalcy. With accelerated provisioning and write off, we are now well placed as we enter FY 22. We remain cautious but confident as we deal with the Covid-19 second wave.

"We remain committed to our strategy that we have presented last quarter of granular, diversified and quality growth," Ghosh said.

FinMin asks PSU banks to keep high vigil on any attempt to seize funds

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The finance ministry has asked public sector banks (PSBs) to be on high vigil against any attempt being made to seize their overseas deposits to recover USD 1.2 billion that the UK's Cairn Energy plc has been awarded against India levying retrospective taxes, sources said.

Cairn had previously stated that it can seize Indian assets abroad if it is not paid USD 1.2 billion plus interest and cost that an international arbitration panel had awarded against levy of retrospective taxes.

Cash of Indian banks lying in nations such as the US and the UK are said to be easy target for seizing and enforcing the arbitration award.

To guard against such cash being taken over, the

finance ministry has asked PSBs to be extra vigilant and immediately report back any attempt Cairn makes to legally attach the deposits, two sources aware of the matter said.

This will allow the Indian government to quickly take legal recourse to prevent the assets from being taken over, they said adding that this has been done out of abundant caution and funds with banks are not of Govt of India but of public. A nodal officer has been appointed to deal with this subject in the finance ministry for escalating the matter to the competent authorities for the further action, the sources added. The sources also said banks are keeping enough funds in their nostro account so that they can carry on activity of trade finance and other overseas businesses.

Conditional exemption for experimental drone delivery of vaccines

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre is providing conditional exemption for experimental drone flights for vaccine delivery as part of its endeavour to enhance the scope of drone usage in the country and assist the fight against Covid-19 pandemic, said an official statement.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Directorate General of Civil Aviation have granted conditional exemption to the Government of Telangana for conducting experimental Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) drone flights for delivery of vaccines. Exemption has been granted from Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Rules, 2021.

This exemption shall be subject to complete adherence

to the conditions and the directions or exemptions issued by the ministry.

This exemption shall be valid for a period of one year from the date of approval of the SOP or until further orders, whichever is earlier, said the statement from the Civil Aviation Ministry.

Last month, the Government of Telangana was granted conditional exemption for conducting experimental delivery of Covid-19 vaccines within Visual Line of Sight (VLOS) Range using drones.

To accelerate the drone deployment process to formulate application-based models, the grant has been extended to Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS).

The trials may commence by end of May 2021.

Rajasthan Refinery Hospital: 15 acres of land to be allotted free of charge

Jaipur: Chief Minister Mr Ashok Gehlot has approved the proposal of allotting 15 acres of land in village Sambhara of Pachpadra tehsil for the construction of a hospital to HPCL Rajasthan Refinery Limited, a joint venture of the central and State Government.

With the approval of Shri Gehlot, the personnel working in the refinery area and the regional people will be able to get better medical facilities.

completely agreed with CII Director General on resuming the FTA talks.

Confederation of Portuguese Business President António Saraiva informed that CII has inked a MoU with them to increase business cooperation between the two countries. India's exports to EU member countries stood at about USD 54 billion in 2019-20, while imports aggregated at USD 52 billion.

S Korea to expand investment for chip sector

Seoul: South Korea has said it plans to expand investment and tax incentives for the semiconductor segment in line with efforts to foster the non-memory chip industry and cope with the global supply shortages of automotive chips. "To cope with the supply shortages in the automotive chips, we plan to focus on expanding support for the 8-inch wafer foundry industry," new Industry Minister Moon Sung-wook said during his visit to Silicon Mitus, a local fabless company.

Govt should incentivise use of clean fuels'

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

With the government imposing a green tax on old polluting vehicles, Indian Auto LPG Coalition (IAC) is advocating the need for this deterrent to be accompanied by incentives to people shifting to cleaner alternative fuels such as auto LPG.

The Union Ministry for Road Transport and Highways recently approved a proposal to levy a 'green tax' on old vehicles in a bid to curtail pollution and push consumers to switch to environmental-friendly alternatives.

Notably, hybrid vehicles and vehicles running on clean alternative fuels such as LPG, CNG and ethanol will be exempt from this tax. The initiative aims

to make polluters pay for environmental pollution in India's choking cities.

While welcoming the move as a step in the right direction, Indian Auto LPG Coalition has suggested that penalising polluters should be accompanied by reward for users of clean fuels.

"India's choking cities need to shift a large number of their private vehicles to clean alternative fuels immediately and pushing consumers to switch their existing vehicles to clean alternatives is the quickest way to achieve this. This is why a penalty for polluters must also be accompanied by reward or incentives for citizens switching to clean fuels to make it more impactful," said Suyash Gupta, Director General, Indian Auto LPG Coalition.

₹198.64 cr given to sugar mills to make payment to farmers

Dehradun: The Uttarakhand Govt on Saturday said an amount of ₹198.64 crore has been given to public and cooperative sector sugar mills for making immediate payment to sugarcane growers. The amount was made available after Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat was apprised with the situation, the state's Minister for Sugarcane Development and Sugar Industries Swami Yathishwaranand said.

ORIENTAL NAGPUR BETUL HIGHWAY LIMITED					
Regd. Off.: OSE Commercial Block, Asset 5B, Aerocity, Hospitality, District, IGI Airport, New Delhi-110037					
Tel: 91-11-46044604, Email: spv.ose.secretarial@gmail.com					
CIN: U45400DL2010PLC203649					
(AUDITED HALF YEARLY FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31ST MARCH 2021)					
(Amount in Rs in Lakhs)					
Sl. No.	Particulars	Half Year Ended 31.3.2021 (Audited)	Half Year Ended 31.3.2020 (Audited)	Year Ended 31.03.2021 (Audited)	Year Ended 31.03.2020 (Audited)
1	Total income from operations (net)	27,786.10	29,836.43	55,600.53	64,527.55
2	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before Tax and Exceptional Items)	11,989.09	12,828.69	24,860.21	31,069.94
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional Items)	11,989.09	12,828.69	24,860.21	31,069.94
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional Items)	11,825.83	9,169.63	21,608.65	22,402.53
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	11,825.83	9,169.63	21,608.65	22,402.53
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital	181.35	181.35	181.35	181.35
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	121,266.58	113,711.05	121,266.58	113,711.05
8	Net Worth	123,080.03	115,524.50	123,080.03	115,524.50
9	Paid up Debt Capital	41,035.22	41,035.22	41,035.22	41,035.22
10	Debt Equity Ratio	2.05:1	2.36:1	2.05:1	2.36:1
11	Earnings Per Share (of Rs 10/- each)				
	1. Basic:	65.21	50.56	119.16	123.54
	2. Diluted:	65.21	50.56	119.16	123.54
12	Debtenture Redemption Reserve	0.00	58,151.75	0.00	58,151.75
13	Debt Service Coverage Ratio	1.32:1	1.30:1	1.36:1	1.44:1
14	Interest Service Coverage Ratio	1.96:1	1.97:1	1.98:1	2.21:1
Notes:					
a) The above is an extract of the detailed format of half yearly unaudited financial results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulations 52 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations 2015. The full format of the half yearly audited financial results are available on the websites of the Stock Exchange(s) and the listed entity. (URL of the filings).					
b) The above financial results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors of the Company at their meeting held on May 08, 2021.					
c) Ratios have been computed as follows:					
(i) Debt Equity Ratio = Paid up Debt Capital/Equity, where,					
* Equity represents issued, subscribed and paid up share capital and other equity					
* Paid up Debt Capital represents long-term and short-term borrowings excluding deferred payment liabilities and finance lease obligations.					
(ii) Interest Service Coverage ratio = Earnings before finance costs, tax and depreciation / finance costs.					
(iii) Debt Service Coverage ratio = Earnings before finance costs, tax and depreciation / finance costs + net principal repayment of paid debt capital during the period/year.					
(iv) Net worth represents Equity.					
(v) Paid up equity capital represents issued, subscribed and paid up share capital.					
d) For the items referred in sub-clauses (a), (b), (d) and (e) of the Regulations 52(4) of the SEBI (Listings and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, the pertinent disclosures have been made to the NSE Stock Exchange (s) and can be accessed on the URL (specify URL).					
For and on behalf of Board of Directors of Oriental Nagpur Betul Highway Limited					
Sd/-					
Nikhil Dhingra					
Director					
Place: New Delhi					
Date: 08.05.2021					
DIN - 07835556					

Appeal for Identification



General Public is hereby informed that a male dead body Name: Unknown, S/O Unknown, R/O: Unknown, Age: about 28-30 years, Height: 5'4", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Oval, Built: Medium, Wearing: Blue Check Shirt & Brown Pant. Found Footpath Ring Road Opp Red Fort Monkey Bridge Delhi. In this regard

DD No. 08A U/s 174 CrPC, Dt. 05.05.2021 has been lodged in PS Kotwali, Delhi.

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., Kotwali, Delhi

DP/1171/N/2021 Ph. : 011-23977100, 8750870121

WESTERN RAILWAY

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE No. S/17/2021 Date 05.05.2021

S.N.	Short Description of Item	Quantity	T.O.D.
335	Flange Cover for Discharge Pipe Flange	4140 Nos.	19.05.2021
336	Shackle Lock	2000 Nos.	19.05.2021
337	Pay Out Spring	117 Nos.	20.05.2021
338	Coupler Rod for BCNHL Wagon	120 Nos.	20.05.2021
339	Enhanced Capacity Screw Coupling	61 Nos.	21.05.2021
340	Rubber Pad for Longitudinal Bump Stop	1912 Nos.	21.05.2021
341	Traction Centre	66 Nos.	21.05.2021
342	Primary Bump Stop	4272 Nos.	21.05.2021
343	Secondary Spring Outer	85 Nos.	21.05.2021
344	Secondary Spring Inner	142 Nos.	21.05.2021
345	Brake Block	10000 Nos.	21.05.2021
346	Coronary Tray Consist of 13 Items	1 Set	21.05.2021
347	Neproscope	1 No.	21.05.2021
348	Bolster outer helical spring	170 Nos.	22.05.2021
349	Door Check Springs	1164 Nos.	22.05.2021
350	Pressure Gauge	321 Nos.	24.05.2021
351	Single Piece FRP Louver Shutter	1334 Nos.	24.05.2021
352	Ball Joint Traction Lever	3708 Nos.	24.05.2021
353	Ball Joint Roll Link	1500 Nos.	24.05.2021
354	Lateral Bump Stop	1790 Nos.	24.05.2021
355	Standardized Brake Disc	160 Nos.	24.05.2021
356	Wide Jaw Adapter	1792 Nos.	24.05.2021
357	Primary Spring Outer	372 Nos.	24.05.2021
358	Spring for Side Bearer Arrangement	1458 Nos.	24.05.2021
359	Lock for Upgraded High Tensile CBC	5321 Nos.	24.05.2021
360	Cast Steel Bolster with Liner	14 Nos.	24.05.2021
361	Side Bearer Top for BCN wagon	60 Nos.	24.05.2021
362	107 Sq.mm Catenary Wire	78750 Mtr.	25.05.2021
363	Filter element	380 Nos.	25.05.2021
364	K Type High Friction Composite Brake Block	86843 Nos.	25.05.2021
365	Axle Box Pivot Bush	3571 Nos.	25.05.2021
366	Rubber Spring	1264 Nos.	25.05.2021
367	Secondary Vertical Damper	653 Nos.	25.05.2021
368	Wheel set earthing equipment	870 Set	25.05.2021
369	Branch Pipe 20 N.B	30 Nos.	25.05.2021
370	65 Sq.mm Catenary Wire	91240 Mtr.	26.05.2021
371	Centring Disc	76 Nos.	26.05.2021
372	Centering Disc for Primary Suspension	100 Nos.	26.05.2021
373	Bolster Outer Helical Spring	130 Nos.	26.05.2021

Regarding detailed notice EMD, Purchase restrictions and detailed tender conditions, please visit website www.ireps.gov.in. and www.westernrailways.gov.in.

For Principal Chief Materials Manager Like us on: facebook.com/WesternRly follows us on: twitter.com/WesternRly

Yaari Digital Integrated Services Limited				
(Formerly known as Indiabulls Integrated Services Limited)				
(CIN: L51101HR2007PLC077999)				
Extract of Consolidated Audited Financial Results for the quarter and year ended 31 March 2021				
(Rs. In Crores)				
Particulars	Quarter ended 31-Mar-21 (Refer note 3)	Year ended 31-Mar-21 Audited	Quarter ended 31-Mar-20 (Refer note 3)	Year ended 31-Mar-20 Audited
Total Income from Operations	82.83	247.22	106.62	348.03
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Minority Interest and Share of Profit / (Loss) of Associate, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(8.15)	(74.74)	(31.73)	(266.74)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Minority Interest and Share of Profit / (Loss) of Associate (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items))	(8.15)	(74.74)	(31.73)	(266.74)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after Tax, Minority Interest and Share of Profit / (Loss) of Associate (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(11.58)	(87.65)	(52.06)	(293.18)
Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	(170.32)	125.81	(374.78)	(1,125.91)
Equity Share Capital	17.51	17.51	17.87	17.87
Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the audited		486.27		375.15
Balance Sheet				
Earnings per Share (EPS) before extraordinary items				
- Basic (Amount in Rs.)	(1.31)	(10.58)	(5.78)	(33.08)
- Diluted (Amount in Rs.)	(1.31)	(10.58)	(5.78)	



CORONA FAQs

The second and the more dangerous wave of COVID-9 has raised many queries. From the use of common drugs like Favipiravir and Remdesivir, to lung CT scans and to getting vaccinated, people have a plethora of questions. Doctors answer these FAQs

COMMON QUERIES

What is this new strain?
Viruses and other pathogens are known to mutate and differentiate by nature. According to the WHO, a virus replicates or makes copies of itself, which is usual. These changes, by definition, are called "mutations". A virus with one or more new mutations is referred to as a variant of the original virus. Mutations in viruses — including the coronavirus causing the COVID-19 pandemic — are neither new nor unexpected. All RNA viruses mutate over time, some more than others. For example, flu viruses change often, which is why doctors recommend that you get a new flu vaccine every year. The three infamous COVID variants which are said to carry the most risks — ones which have emerged from Kent, UK (B.1.1.7 variant), South Africa (B.1.351 variant) and Brazil (B.1.1.28.1 or P.1 variant) are all variations of the original virus strain. A double mutation, however, emerges when two mutations of a virus strain come together to form a third, super infectious strain.

Should blood thinners be taken? For whom?
Doctors decide on the use of blood thinners on patient to patient basis. Blanket use of blood thinners on every COVID patients can be harmful.

Should lung CT be done? Who qualifies?
COVID-19 pneumonia is seen in a particular pattern on HRCT and is a quickest way to direct treatment. However RT PCR is the gold standard test to establish diagnosis. The test is recommended only to those who need it. Inexplicable exposure can lead to cancer risk. The timing and the patient selection is paramount.

What is the purpose of lung CT as opposed to a cbc blood test which will show infection in any case?
CT Scan helps doctors decide about the severity of disease. Also in some cases where RT PCR is negative we treat patients on the lines of COVID if HRCT suggests do. The timing and the patient selection is very important when it comes to CT Scanning.

— Dr Arunesh Kumar, Senior Consultant & Head Respiratory Medicine/Pulmonology, Paras Hospital



COVID-19 Response

NO SYMPTOMS		SYMPTOMS	
RT-PCR		RT-PCR	
Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
Precautions: 1. Isolate yourself 2. High Protein Diet 3. Keep eye on oxygen saturation & temperature every four hours		1. Fever 2. Cold & Cough (with or without sputum) 3. Headache	
Treatment: 1. Tab Azithromycin 500 mg (Once daily for 7 days) 2. Tab A to Z (Once daily) 3. Tab Vitamin C + Zinc (Once daily) 4. Tab Dolo 650 mg (Incase of fever & bodyache)		Treatment 1. Tab Doxy 100 mg (twice daily- five days) 2. Tab Ivermectin 12mg (Once daily after dinner for five days) 3. Tab Montair LC (1tab daily before sleeping 1week) 4. Tayo 60k sachet (once a week with water) 5. Tab Dolo 650mg (3times daily) 6. Tab PAN-D (once daily empty stomach for a week)	
		Severe Conditions: 1. If fever is more than 101 degree F Start Methyl Prednisolone 16 mg (steroid, to be taken under prescription) twice daily for three days 2. Followed by 16mg once for another three days 3. Followed by 8 mg once for another three days	

ALL ABOUT STEROIDS

Are steroids helpful?
Corticosteroids, or a more commonly used term steroids, are a type of anti-inflammatory drugs. This drug is used to treat many conditions in which the body's defense system doesn't work properly and causes tissue damage. Steroids have proven to help patients in the COVID-19 fight. But if the patient does not have serious systemic inflammation, a steroid might backfire. It may hamper the immune system's ability to fight the virus.

When does one start them?
CRP tests (Blood levels of a substance called C-reactive protein (CRP), a marker of inflammation) are standard. If patients' CRP is high, treatment with steroids, on doctor's advice, can cut the risk of death or ventilation by 77 per cent. However, the AIIMS Director has warned against taking steroids in the early stages of the infection, which can lead to severe viral pneumonia.

What are the steps/precautions to be taken by people with comorbidities?
By definition, Comorbidities is when a person has more than one underlying health-related conditions at once. If patients with milder symptoms but comorbidities consume steroids with medical consultation can lead to increased risk for medication-related adverse effects such as delirium. In such cases the viral infection may less likely to benefit from corticosteroids.

Under what conditions are they to be taken?
It has been seen that patients with severe COVID-19 can develop a systemic inflammatory response that can lead to lung injury and multisystem organ dysfunction. In such cases, corticosteroids of certain potency can help in preventing or mitigating the deleterious effects.

What is potency?
Only a certified medical practitioner can suggest the potency of a particular steroid. A patient's blood reports and appropriate CT scan can help the doctor to decide the right dose of the steroid.

What do Diabetics do?
It has been reported that steroids can increase blood glucose levels. These levels need to be controlled to avoid secondary bacterial and fungal infections. Therefore, experts have suggested rational use of steroids in diabetic patients.

Why are steroids being recommended now and how are they to be tapered?
After closely observing its effects, the Union Health Ministry has mentioned the use of steroids for the treatment of COVID-19 patients in moderate to severe stages of illness among other therapeutic measures. Time and duration of the medication can only be monitored by a treating doctor.

Can they be taken without prescription?
No. If these drugs are not taken under the doctors' guidance, it may hamper affect natural course of Covid treatment & lead to patients reporting additional side-effects.

— Dr Deepak Verma, Internal Medicine, Columbia Asia Hospital, Ghaziabad (Unit of Manipal Hospital)

KNOW THIS TOO

Are Fabiflu and Remdesivir really helpful?
Fabiflu and remdesivir are weak antivirals. Remdesivir, as we all know, is being sold in black all over as is fabiflu, which is very sad. Remdesivir was made 10 years ago as a medicine for hepatitis C. Unfortunately, it didn't work out well. And then it was tried for Ebola as well. About 500 patient trials showed that there was no benefit of Remdesivir and now it has been given emergency approval for COVID as well. But the biggest trial that WHO did, solidarity trial which had more than 12,000 patients showed no benefit of Remdesivir in any patient on mortality or outcomes. So WHO actually removed the placebo from its list of authorised medicines not just for COVID

but for any disease, but still FDA has given it approval so it is the only FDA approved drug without any effective trials in place. And that is why it is being prescribed everywhere for COVID ICU patients. And that is the reason the demand has shot up so much. Similar is the case with favipiravir which is available as Fabiflu, there is no actual trial to show that it is beneficial. But still, doctors are prescribing and people are buying it.

Should everybody wear a mask at home, at all times?
Wearing a mask every time at home maybe too much if there is no infection and if people are not going out, but if somebody is going outside and there is a chance that he may bring the infection home, then wearing a mask is advisable. Also, if somebody is ill at home then wearing a mask should

definitely be the norm rather than the exception.

Should children below 10 also wear masks, if a family member tests positive?
Yes, everyone should be wearing masks if there is a patient in the house even children, because this particular strain is causing the disease in children as well. We have seen children as young as 10 months old being affected.

If you tested positive when to take vaccine?
If you have tested positive, it is better to wait for some time before you take the vaccine. So the recommendation is that you should wait for 45 days after you've tested positive and even longer if you have serious disease. So if you've been in ICU you can wait for as long as 90 days.

Can a Covid positive person, after 14 days step out for a test? Is he vulnerable to infection again?
There is no need to get a test done after you have got infected. You can actually continue your routine work after 17 days, and there is no need to get retested. But if you do step out, of course, you can get infected again, there is a very little chance less than 1 per cent. Also, there is a chance that when you step out, you can touch surfaces which have been touched by an infected person and the virus can be on your hands. It may not infect you, but your hands and your clothes can still carry the virus. This way you can definitely bring the virus home. Hence, you have to be very careful once you come in. Change your clothes, have a bath, discard your mask, wash your self thoroughly and put your clothes in hot water.

— Dr Shuchin Bajaj, Founder Director, Ujala Cygnus Group of Hospitals

VACCINE TALK

Is it mandatory to take the vaccine?
Anyone above the age of 18 can get the vaccine in accordance with the Government guidelines. So, it is advisable that everyone take the vaccine as soon as they possibly can. Since the vaccine builds up immunity, it is in everyone's interest to get vaccinated.

How long do those having recovered from COVID-19 have to wait before they can get their vaccine? Can a person test Covid positive soon after getting vaccinated?
The waiting period for the vaccine is one month post recovery. If exposed to the virus, a person may get Covid positive as it takes time to build immunity against the virus after vaccination. Although the severity of infection reduces drastically after the second dose to an extent that they may be asymptomatic. In general, a person will be immune from infection, two weeks after the second dose of vaccine. But they may infect others, so it is advised to still follow masking, hand hygiene and social distancing norms for the safety of others.

Should people be empty stomach before taking the jab?
They can eat, stay hydrated, and take their medications as well. There are no special prerequisites to taking the vaccine.

What are the tips for those suffering from such conditions as hypertension and sugar problems if they feel sick after getting their jab?
When they come for vaccination, they must ensure that their blood pressure and sugar levels are normal and under control. If due to some reason, the levels are fluctuating, they should avoid taking the vaccine until under control. They should ensure that they take their medications on time, even on the day of vaccination.

If after vaccination, they do experience any complication, they must contact their doctors immediately. Post vaccine precautions are same for everyone.

Is it better to donate plasma/ blood before getting the vaccine or after?
Donating plasma or blood depends on when a person gets infected with Covid and receives an RT PCR positive report. The most appropriate time to donate plasma or blood is one month post recovery from infection, as the immunity is at its peak at that time.

How soon can a person, who has been vaccinated for some other infection like anti-rabies, get vaccinated?
There must be a two-week gap between the Covid vaccine and any other such vaccine. Hence, one can get the job two weeks after their current vaccine or they can get another vaccine only two weeks after their Covid vaccine.

Are there any precautions that one needs to observe post vaccination?
It is advised to take rest for a day or two as one may develop mild fever, body ache or a headache or may even feel dizzy. Therefore, it is appropriate to rest post a jab.

What are the commonly experienced side-effects post vaccination?
The common side effects observed post Covid vaccine are headaches, body aches, mild fever, inoculation pain or stiffness in the arm and dizziness.

Who all are not eligible for the vaccine?
Anyone experiencing high fever should any way not be taking the vaccine

The following need to consult their doctors before taking the vaccine:

- Those already infected with Covid
- Pregnant women and lactating mothers must

consult prior to taking the jab

- Those with autoimmune disorders
- Those with allergies to a particular food item
- Those who are immuno-compromised and on steroids
- Those on blood thinning medication
- Those having got a rare case of severe allergic reaction to the first vaccine

Is it safe for women to get vaccinated during their periods?
Menstruation is a completely natural process which doesn't hamper the immunity level. Similarly, there is no clinical evidence to suggest any adverse effects of vaccination during menstruation. Hence it is advisable for all women to get vaccinated without worrying about their menstrual cycle.

Tips for pregnant women and lactating mothers on vaccination.
Vaccines used in international studies are different from the ones available here, and we have no data to suggest that vaccine use is advisable for pregnant women. We also lack any data corroborating the safety of vaccination in lactating mothers. However, pregnant women and lactating mothers can consult their gynaecologist to ascertain if the risk of exposure to Coronavirus is greater than the risk of vaccination and decide accordingly if they should opt for vaccination. Since there is no clinical evidence to suggest that the pregnant or lactating women are more likely to be infected by COVID-19 than the general population, they should maintain a nutritious diet, high on vitamins, micronutrients and proteins, wash hands regularly, wear mask if going out and maintain social distancing.

Is it safe for the baby in the womb if the pregnant mother takes the vaccination?

Several international studies have proved that vaccination has no clinical effect on the foetus. Even the United States based Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has advised that pregnant women can get vaccinated. However, no such clinical data is available about the vaccines currently available in India. Hence it is advisable that pregnant women consult their personal gynaecologist before making their decision.

If one is on medications for ailments like cancer, diabetes, hypertension etc., can they still take the vaccine?
This population is at a higher risk of complications from Covid infection hence, it should be a priority for all of them to get vaccinated as soon as possible so that they can build immunity against Covid at the earliest.

What precautions must severe asthma patients take before getting their jabs?
Asthma is an allergic condition, so some asthmatic patients may have certain allergies like allergy to a particular drug, hence they must inform the vaccine officer about this and accordingly get the jab. If they have faced an allergic reaction to any vaccine (not COVID) in the past, they must inform the vaccine officer about this as well. They also should take their regular medications, even on the day of vaccination.

Can people with skin diseases such as psoriasis and vitiligo get the vaccine?
There is no evidence to support that people with skin diseases should avoid vaccination against Covid-19. The vaccine is safe for patients on immunosuppressive or biologic drugs such as Omalizumab, Secukinumab etc. as well. People with allergies to food/ pets/ dust/ pollution/ latex etc. can also take the vaccine safely. They are

however advised to wait at the vaccination centre for 30 minutes after receiving the shot to ensure that no adverse reaction occurs. Patients who have had a history of severe allergic reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) after a previous dose of a COVID-19 vaccine or any of its components, are advised to avoid vaccination.

How many doses of COVID-19 vaccines are given?
Two vaccination doses, 4 to 8 weeks days apart, must be received to complete the COVID-19 vaccination schedule.

Can I take over-the-counter pain killers before or after COVID-19 vaccination?
It is not recommended to take pain killers before COVID-19 vaccination. However, you can take such medication after COVID-19 vaccination, unless contraindicated by your vaccine administrator.

When will I develop antibodies after taking the vaccination?
Protective antibody levels are generally developed after two weeks of receiving the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?
No. COVID-19 vaccines are free from any live virus. The currently available vaccines are prepared from a small RNA piece (free from virus). It helps in activating a person's immune cells to manufacture antibodies against the viral spike protein, signifying that if or when a person gets exposed to the virus, he or she will already have defensive antibodies in their system.

Can COVID-19 vaccine cause infertility in men or women?
There is no scientific evidence that COVID-19 vaccine causes infertility in men or women.

— Max Healthcare

India to leave for UK on June 2

Players will be allowed to have families for company on marathon tour

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian cricketers will complete an eight-day hard quarantine period in Mumbai before leaving on June 2 for a marathon tour of United Kingdom, where they will play six Test matches including the marquee World Test Championship final against New Zealand.

The BCCI is still carrying out negotiations regarding the duration of 10 days of soft quarantine (training allowed) for players after reaching the UK where they will be based for three and half months.

"Indian team will have eight days of hard quarantine (confined to hotel rooms) in India with mandatory negative RT-PCR reports on second, fourth and seventh day required to board the flight," a senior BCCI official said on Saturday.

"Since we have a bubble to bubble transfer, it needs to be seen if the duration of the 10-day quarantine can be reduced a bit. However players during soft quarantine can go for training. In any case, Hotel Hilton where the teams will be put up in Southampton, is a part of the Ageas Bowl property," the source added.

In case it's a 10-day quarantine, the Indians will be allowed to move around the city from June 13 while the WTC final against New Zealand will start on June 18.

It is also learnt that looking at the length of the tour, players' families will accompany them.



However it is still not clear whether the WAGS and children will join from the start of the tour or come after the WTC final when there is a substantial gap of more than a month before the start of the Test series on

CSK arrange oxygen concentrators

Chennai: IPL team Chennai Super Kings has extended support to the people of Tamil Nadu in their fight against Covid-19 by arranging for the delivery of 450 oxygen concentrators for the affected patients.

Chennai Super Kings Cricket Ltd (CSKCL) Director R Srinivasan handed over an Oxygen concentrator to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, on Saturday in the presence of TNCA president Rupa Gurunath.

Bhoomika Trust, an NGO involved in Covid-19 relief operations, helped CSKCL in arranging the supply of the Oxygen concentrators and will also coordinate in the distribution.

August 4.

PRASIDH & VACCINATION

The BCCI is also confident that all the players will get their first dose of vaccine before embarking on their journey to the UK. However it will be difficult for Prasadidh Krishna, who has tested positive, to get vaccinated before leaving for UK.

"You have a gap between the time you test negative for Covid-19 and get your vaccination. So even if Prasadidh tests negative by May 18th or 20th, he would need a four week gap before he gets his first dose," the source said.

If all Indian players get Covishield vaccine in India, it will be easier to get

the second jabs in the UK as it's the Oxford vaccine.

GANGULY, SHAH TO BE IN UK

BCCI president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah are expected to be present in Southampton for the WTC final.

"Both president and secretary are supposed to be present during the World Test Championship final as of now," the source added.

One could expect them having some discussions with ECB brass with regards to the option of hosting the remaining 31 games of IPL in the United Kingdom apart from various ICC policy decisions.

Nagwaswalla didn't expect his selection

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Left-arm pace bowler Arzan Nagwaswalla was "speechless" before his eyes were filled with tears on Friday when he received news of his selection as a standby to Indian squad for the England tour.

"I called up mom and dad the first thing after I came to senses. I was so excited," Nagwaswalla said from Nargol on Saturday.

The 23-year-old player was returning from Delhi where he was a net bowler with the Mumbai Indians, after the Indian Premier League was postponed due to the raging Covid-19 pandemic.

"I did not expect the call. Everyone has confidence that I would get through one day or the other. I also had that confidence. (But) this was very unexpected and surprising," said Nagwaswalla.

Nagwaswalla thinks of himself being a left-arter was an advantage that helped him make cut. "Maybe because I am a left-arm fast bowler (I was picked). I am young. That is the only thing. Also, my last season went well," he said.

The pace bowler, who represents Gujarat in Ranji Trophy, has picked 62 wickets in 16 first-class matches. He took 41 wickets in eight matches in the 2019-20 Ranji Trophy season.

Former Gujarat coach Vijay Patel calls him a "swing bowler and someone who has come through age-group cricket".

"Yes, I am a swing bowler. My speed is 130-135, but I try to swing the ball," Nagwaswalla explained.

While

India's first-choice left-arm pacer T Natarajan, who played the fourth Test against Australia in Brisbane, is injured, Nagwaswalla could be in line to follow the path of the Tamil Nadu pacer.

Natarajan went as an uncapped player to Australia but made debut in all three formats and also impressed.

India play the World Test Championship final in June and then five Test matches against England in August-September. An injury to a bowler could provide Nagwaswalla with an opportunity.

Nagwaswalla calls the stint at MI nets fruitful.

"It was a great experience. I got an opportunity to bowl to some good batsmen. I spoke to Zaheer sir. If I would have remained at home, nothing would have happened because of the lockdown. So, it was great that I could practice and keep doing training," he added.

It was a dream come true to be with former India pacer Zaheer, MI director of cricket operations, since he had followed him while growing up and was inspired by him.

"He didn't do much on the bowling aspect. He said it is fine, just that if you train well, you will see more benefit in your bowling. He asked me to train well. He told me certain technical things," said Nagwaswalla.

"I was left-handed. That was my advantage. We didn't have too many left-armers in our district or even state level. I used to watch Zaheer and I got interested in bowling fast," he said. The pacer could become the first cricketer in India's main squad from the Parsi community after 46 years since Farokh Engineer played in 1975.



KKR's Prasadidh, Seifert test Covid +ve

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

New Zealand's wicketkeeper-batsman Tim Seifert, who represented Kolkata Knight Riders in the postponed 2021 edition of IPL, has tested positive for Covid-19 and will not be on the charter flight back home with other players and support staff.

He will, instead, stay in isolation in Ahmedabad before returning to Chennai, where he will be treated at a private hospital. Seifert failed both his pre-departure RT-PCR tests and "is experiencing moderate symptoms."

New Zealand Cricket (NZC) chief executive David White said Seifert had returned seven negative tests in the 10 days leading



Prasadidh Krishna @KKRiders

up to his pre-departure protocols, and was confident he would be receiving the best of care from

his franchise. "It's really unfortunate for Tim and we'll do everything for him that we can from this end, and hopefully he will be able to test negative, and be cleared and approved for discharge as soon as he's well again."

Once Seifert serves the statutory period of isolation and tests negative for Covid-19, he will be transferred back to New Zealand where he will serve the mandatory 14-day period of managed isolation.

KKR pacer Prasadidh Krishna also tested positive for coronavirus and is in quarantine in his home town Bengaluru, a BCCI source said.

The 25-year-old Krishna, who was named in the Indian squad for the England tour as a

stand-by on Friday, is the fourth KKR player to have contracted the dreaded virus.

"Prasadidh is Covid positive and currently in home isolation in Bengaluru," a BCCI source said.

According to the BCCI source, both Krishna and Warrior contracted the virus from Chakravarthy during one of the training sessions. He said Krishna is Chakravarthy's close friend.

"Prasadidh like all India players left bubble on May 3 after getting two negative results. However on reaching Bengaluru he tested positive," the source said.

The BCCI is hoping that by the time the UK-bound players enter the bio-bubble in India on May 25, Krishna will test negative.

Abid headlines Pak's dominant day

AFP ■ HARARE

Pakistan took total control on the second day of the second Test against Zimbabwe at Harare Sports Club on Saturday, outclassing the home side with both bat and ball to take a big step towards sealing a 2-0 series victory.

Zimbabwe were 52 for four at the close in reply to Pakistan's 510 for eight declared, 458 runs behind.

Opening batsman Abid Ali made 215 not out and Nauman Ali slammed 97 before being stumped off a wide.

The Zimbabwe innings got off to a bad start when 36-year-old debutant Tabish Khan struck in his first over before a run had been scored.

Three more wickets fell before the close and Zimbabwe looked in desperate trouble with Roy Kaia not coming out to bat after being struck a heavy blow on his left knee while fielding at short leg on



Friday.

Kaia was Zimbabwe's top-scorer with 48 when Zimbabwe were routed by an innings and 116 runs in the first Test of the two-match series.

Zimbabwe's bowlers competed reasonably well until

lunch on Saturday but took a hammering during the afternoon as Abid and Nauman plundered 169 off 199 balls for the eighth wicket.

The innings ended in bizarre circumstances.

Nauman was 93 not out at tea. He hit the first ball after the interval for four but lifted his back foot after left-arm spinner Tendai Chisoro bowled a wide.

Wicketkeeper Regis Chakabva reacted quickly and took off the bails, with a television replay confirming that Nauman was out.

He had hit 97 off 104 balls with five sixes and nine fours.

Having scored most of his runs behind or square of the wicket in scoring his first 150, Abid blossomed with some handsome drives during the afternoon.

Abid faced 407 balls and hit 29 fours in beating his previous highest score in Tests of 174 against Sri Lanka in Karachi in 2019/20.

Postponed IPL should be held in UK: Pietersen

AFP ■ LONDON

Former England captain Kevin Pietersen wants the remaining matches of this year's postponed IPL to be shifted to the United Kingdom in September, instead of the UAE.

Pietersen feels moving the IPL to UK would be the best decision as there is a window in September just after England host India in a five-match Test series that concludes on September 14.

"I have seen people talking about the UAE as a possible destination to finish the IPL in September, but I actually think the IPL should move to the UK."

"There is a window in September after the England vs India Test series has finished. All the best Indian players would already be there, and all of the best English players would be available as well," Pietersen wrote in a column for *Betway*.

The 40-year-old said the weather in September would be ideal to host cricket matches in

England. "Mid-to-late September is the most beautiful time in the UK. They could use Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and the two London grounds. There is also a good chance that crowds will be allowed in the grounds. And there will be great atmospheres."

"The IPL has been to the UAE; it's been to South Africa, and I think England would now be the perfect place to house the remaining fixtures," Pietersen said.

PANT DONATES

India wicketkeeper batsman Rishabh Pant on Saturday joined the fight against the raging COVID-19 pandemic, pledging an undisclosed amount to procure oxygen cylinders with beds and kits for the affected patients. The 23-year-old said he will donate the amount to Hemkunt Foundation, a Gurugram-based NGO. PTI

100th pole for Hamilton



AFP ■ BARCELONA

World champion Lewis Hamilton celebrated his 100th pole on Saturday after setting the fastest time in qualifying for the Spanish Grand Prix.

The Mercedes driver's latest milestone puts him 32 clear of Michael Schumacher in the all-time pole chart and leaves him in prime position to secure a

record-extending 98th win in Sunday's race.

"I'll always remember that one," he beamed. Alongside the 36-year-old Briton on the front row is Mercedes teammate Charles Leclerc for Ferrari on the second row.

Hamilton reached his century 14 years after securing his maiden pole in the Canadian Grand Prix in 2007, which he

went on to win to take the first step on the road to becoming Formula One's most successful driver.

He drew level and overtook Schumacher's record haul of 91 wins last season and leads the drivers' standings this season as he goes for an unprecedented eighth world crown.

Verstappen, eight points behind Hamilton in the nip and tuck battle for the drivers' crown after the first three races, at last has a car up to the job of mounting a serious title challenge.

The Dutch driver got to within 0.036sec to Hamilton's fastest lap on Saturday to join him at the head of the Montmelo circuit grid, with Valtteri Bottas in the second Mercedes and Charles Leclerc for Ferrari on the second row.

Hamilton has a superb record in Catalonia, winning the race in each of the last four years with five wins altogether.

Seema wins Gold at Olympic qualifiers

PTI ■ SOFIA

Seema Bisla added a Gold medal to her Olympic qualification but India's Greco Roman wrestlers drew a blank at the World Olympic Qualifiers as none of them could earn a Tokyo Games quota, here on Saturday.

Seema, who secured her Olympic qualification on Friday, took the 50kg Gold without getting on mat as her rival from Ecuador, Lucia Yamileth Yopez Guzman withdrew from the final due an injury.

It is first International title for 29-year-old Seema since she triumphed at the Yasar Dogu event in July 2019.

In the Greco Roman competition, India's brightest hope



was Gurpreet Singh but he was ousted after losing his 77kg pre-quarterfinal in just 48 seconds to 2020 European champion Rafiq Huseynov from Azerbaijan.

All Greco Roman wrestlers cut a sorry figure as none of them could win a bout.

'Nothing can stop Olympics from going ahead'

AFP ■ SYDNEY

International Olympic Committee vice-president John Coates was adamant on Saturday that nothing could stop the Tokyo Olympics from going ahead, despite ongoing risks from Covid-19.

Asked if there was any scenario in which the Games, which are due to start on July 23, could be cancelled or postponed again at this late stage, he replied: "No, there's not."

"The Prime Minister of Japan said that to the President of the United States two or three weeks ago. He continues to say that to the IOC."

"We're working with him (Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga) on all of the safety measures. It's going ahead."

Suga held talks with US



Seiko Hashimoto, second left, president of the Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee, Sebastian Coe, third from left, president of World Athletics pose for a photograph with other officials ahead of a meeting on Friday.

President Joe Biden in April and stressed the Asian nation is doing everything possible to contain Covid-19 infections and hold a "safe and secure" Olympics. But questions continue to

be raised about the viability of the Games, given the ongoing pandemic and a virus state of emergency in Tokyo and other parts of Japan being extended on Friday.

While Japan's Covid-19

outbreak remains much smaller than in many countries, with just over 10,500 deaths, its vaccine rollout is moving slowly and polls show most Japanese people support cancellation or another delay.

Coates, the point man for the Games as head of the IOC's coordination commission, said a huge amount of work had been done to ensure the safety of athletes and the Japanese public.

"We spent the first half of last year identifying all the worst-case scenarios," he told reporters in Sydney on the sidelines of the Australian Olympic Committee's annual general meeting.

"We spent the next six months looking at the countermeasures that are necessary."

"We're implementing those countermeasures, predicated on there being no vaccine, so that situation has improved. The Games will go ahead."

Rani, six teammates recover from virus

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian women's hockey captain Rani Rampal, her six team-mates and two support staff members have recovered from Covid-19 infection after spending two weeks in quarantine at the Sports Authority of India's (SAI) Centre in Bengaluru.

The six other India players are Savita Punia, Sharmila Devi, Rajani, Navneet Kaur, Navneet Kaur and Sushila while the two support staff are video analyst Amrutprakash and scientific advisor Wayne Lombard.

"Thank you everyone for the love and mental support through messages/calls during the last two weeks. Me and my teammates and support staff are fully recovered from the Covid now," Rani said in a statement on her Twitter handle.

Alonso ruins City title party

Marcos' injury-time winner helps Chelsea stun the hosts

AP ■ MANCHESTER

No title celebrations yet for Manchester City, just so much frustration. Losing to Chelsea 2-1 on Saturday left City still needing one win from its remaining three games to clinch a third English Premier League title in four seasons.

Surely that's enough breathing space to hold on to top spot and for Sergio Agüero not to be regretting the fluffed penalty when City's lead could have been doubled in first-half stoppage time just after Raheem Sterling's opener.

Rather than blasting the kick into the net, City's record scorer nonchalantly chipped a *Panenka* penalty centrally lacking pace so that it was easily saved by Chelsea goalkeeper Edouard Mendy with one hand.

No wonder on the substitutes' bench Fernandinho threw his arms in the air and Eric Garcia flung a fluorescent bib over his head.

In the second half, the City subs were howling in frustration again, flinging their arms up. This time, their target was referee Anthony Taylor.

Chelsea defender Kurt Zouma clipped Sterling in the penalty area but no second spot kick was awarded, however much City manager Pep Guardiola berated fourth official Jonathan Moss — appealing in vain for a full VAR review.

"I don't know how it's not been a penalty or reviewed



Chelsea's Timo Werner, centre, and Chelsea's Marcos Alonso, front, celebrate after winning the Premier League match against Manchester City at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester on Saturday

properly," Sterling said. "I thought the VAR was here to help."

In 2012 it was a stoppage time goal — by Agüero — that sealed City's first Premier League trophy with almost the last kick of the season. Nine years later, it was Marcos Alonso scoring in injury time

for Chelsea that spoiled the party.

There's still time to get the job done. In fact, the title could be won before City plays again on Friday if second-placed Manchester United loses any of its three games before then.

There's a significance to

this victory for Chelsea away from the title race, as the west London club moved into third place having been five points from the four Champions League places when Frank Lampard was fired in January and Thomas Tuchel was hired.

Winning the Champions League would clinch a spot in

the competition regardless of the domestic placing, but Chelsea would have to overcome City again in three weeks in the final.

It wasn't much of a dress rehearsal for the Champions League final. More of a stage for understudies.

How much is Guardiola regretting making nine changes from the City side that beat Paris Saint-Germain here on Tuesday?

"We played a system we're not used to," Sterling said after Guardiola played Rodri as the only midfielder.

But Tuchel also made five changes from Wednesday's victory over Real Madrid and it paid off.

Spurs top 4 hopes all but over

Leeds: Leeds beat managerless Tottenham 3-1 on Saturday to put a huge dent in Spurs' ambitions of securing a coveted Premier League top-four spot.

Son Heung-min cancelled out Stuart Dallas's early goal for Leeds midway the first half but Patrick Bamford restored the home side's lead shortly before the break and substitute Rodrigo struck late on.

Spurs, who sacked Jose Mourinho last month, remain seven points behind fourth-placed Leicester and now have just three games left.

It means Tottenham, beaten Champions League finalists in 2019, are almost certain to miss out on playing in Europe's elite club competition for a second consecutive season.

They even face a fight to qualify for the Europa League after their first league defeat under interim boss Ryan



Mason. "Leeds know what they're doing, they play a certain way and it took us a while to get into the game," Mason told BT Sport. "In the second half we were the better team. The moments we had, you have to take them in these games."

"Today was a massive game for us, to lose it hurts. It's difficult to win in the Premier League but we've got to have our full attention on next week now." Meanwhile, Leeds climbed above Arsenal into ninth place with the win. AFP

Newcastle dent Leicester's CL bid

AFP ■ LEICESTER

Newcastle United derailed Leicester City's bid to qualify for next season's Champions League with a 4-2 win on Friday that all but secured their place in the Premier League.

Defeat left Leicester fourth, a point behind Chelsea and five ahead of West Ham, with Hammers having a game in hand over the Foxes. Only the top four at the end of the Premier League season qualify for the Champions League.

Joe Willock, on loan from Arsenal, fired Newcastle in front



in the 22nd minute at the King Power Stadium as he scored in his fourth successive top-flight game for the Magpies. And the visitors doubled their lead before half-time with a rare goal from Paul Dummett.

Callum Wilson appeared to put the result beyond doubt with two second-half goals for Newcastle.

Marc Albrighton and Kelechi Iheanacho however, both scored inside the final 10 minutes for Leicester before Newcastle saw out the game.

Leicester, who face Chelsea in the FA Cup final next week-

end, are now in danger of fresh Champions League heartache after they missed out on the top four of the final day of last season.

Their three remaining league games are all against teams currently in the top six, with Brendan Rodgers' men travelling to Man United on Tuesday before they face Chelsea and Tottenham after their Wembley clash with the Blues.

"We lacked concentration and if you do that against good teams and good players they punish you," Rodgers told Sky Sports.

Deutsch dominance

Bayern win 9th successive Bundesliga title

AP ■ MUNICH/DORTMUND

Bayern Munich clinched its record-extending ninth consecutive Bundesliga title without even kicking a ball, then celebrated with a 6-0 rout of Borussia Mönchengladbach on Saturday.

Robert Lewandowski's hat trick lifted his season tally to 39 goals, just one off the all-time record of 40 by Bayern great Gerd Müller in the 1971-72 season.

Bayern was already assured of the title thanks to old rival Borussia Dortmund beating second-placed Leipzig 3-2 earlier.

"I think it's the first time in history that the German champions were crowned in the bus," Dortmund coach Edin Terzic said.

Bayern moved the celebrations to the field.

Lewandowski got the newly crowned champions off the mark in the second minute and Jamal Musiala pulled the ball back for Thomas Müller to score the second goal in the 23rd. Müller crossed for Lewandowski to score his 200th goal for Bayern with a scissors kick in the 34th, and still the home side looked for more.

Lewandowski set up Kingsley Coman for the fourth before the break, then completed his hat trick with a penalty in the 66th.

Bayern ended the game with 10 men after Tanguy Nianzou was sent after a VAR consultation for taking down Breel Embolo as the last defender in the 73rd.

It made no difference. Serge Gnabry set up Leroy Sané to complete the rout in the 85th.

DECISIVE DORTMUND

Leipzig's defeat meant it could no longer overhaul Bayern, which held a seven-point lead before the late game. Two rounds remain after this weekend.

"Of course they deserve to be German champions, after this very good season, very consistent season," Terzic said of Bayern. "But we're happier about the points that we got today."

Jadon Sancho scored twice for Dortmund to move to fourth after captain Marco Reus fired his team into a seventh-minute lead. Sancho capitalized on some lackluster defending to make it 2-0 in the 51st.

Germany defender Lukas Klostermann pulled one back for the visitors in the 63rd, and Leipzig's equalizer came in the 77th when Hwang Hee-chan shrugged off Mats Hummels' challenge to set up Dani Olmo.

But Sancho saved the best for last, playing Raphaël Guerreiro in with his heel

before running to accept the ball back and score in the 87th.

The injured Erling Haaland celebrated enthusiastically. Dortmund is hoping the star striker will be fit for Thursday, when the teams meet again in the German Cup final.

Leipzig coach Julian Nagelsmann, who is taking over at Bayern next season, was evidently disappointed his current team couldn't push the Bavarian giant harder.



Champions Inter crush Sampdoria

AP ■ MILAN

Inter Milan fans celebrated their Serie A title before the match against Sampdoria and the players marked the occasion by turning on the style in a 5-1 win.

Inter won its first league title since 2010 last weekend after Atalanta failed to beat Sassuolo on Sunday.

Thousands of fans celebrated in the streets of Milan then, and they did so again in front of San Siro on Saturday.

Around 3,000 fans were outside the stadium to welcome the Inter team buses. They started gathering a couple of hours before, chanting and singing as they jumped and clapped with little heed to coronavirus restrictions.

They waved flags and banners and lit flares. The Inter players were given a guard of honor by Sampdoria when they went out on to the pitch.

Roberto Gagliardini scored in the fourth minute, Alexis Sánchez added two in the first half, either side of a Keita goal



for Samp. Andrea Pinamonti netted his first goal for Inter in the 61st, and Lautaro Martínez added a penalty following a handball by Samp midfielder Adrien Silva.

NAPOLI GO 2ND
Victor Osimhen scored twice as Napoli

beat Spezia 4-1 to move second in Serie A on Saturday to keep in the chase for a return to Champions League football next season.

Piotr Zieliński had opened the scoring after a quarter of an hour against the Ligurian side with Osimhen getting two more in the first half and then setting up Hirving Lozano for a fourth with 11 minutes to go.

Napoli are one-point ahead of three teams — Atalanta, Juventus and AC Milan — who are tied on 69 points before they play this weekend.

Gennaro Gattuso's side had lost 2-1 to Spezia in Naples back in January, but hit back against the relegation-threatened side to extend their unbeaten run to 12 consecutive games.

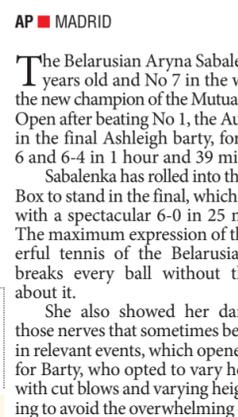
Sabalenka reigns supreme

AP ■ MADRID

The Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka, 23 years old and No 7 in the world, is the new champion of the Mutua Madrid Open after beating No 1, the Australian in the final Ashleigh Barty, for 6-0, 3-6 and 6-4 in 1 hour and 39 minutes.

Sabalenka has rolled into the Magic Box to stand in the final, which opened with a spectacular 6-0 in 25 minutes. The maximum expression of the powerful tennis of the Belarusian, who breaks every ball without thinking about it.

She also showed her dark side, those nerves that sometimes betray her in relevant events, which opened a way for Barty, who opted to vary her game with cut blows and varying heights trying to avoid the overwhelming dynam-



ics of the rival. It gave him to scratch the only set yielded by the winner.

Sabalenka was about to give up Madrid due to some physical discomfort. That is why he appreciated the help of the physiotherapist. In his favor also how he reacted in the third sleeve, when Barty began to show the solidity of other days. He lifted two break balls with 1-2, once again yelling out the tension.

At 4-4, suddenly a bad game from Bary, including a double fault, and Sabalenka unleashing himself to victory, her 10th WTA tournament in 15 finals, her second of the season, which she successfully opened in Abu Dhabi. A Masters 1000 WTA in his record, the best square in the ranking rising from the seventh to the fourth and a heel of 315,180 euros.

Neymar extends PSG contract

AFP ■ PARIS

Neymar has signed a contract extension that will see him stay at Paris Saint-Germain until the end of the 2024-2025 season, the reigning French champions announced on Saturday.

The Brazilian has claimed three Ligue 1 titles with PSG since arriving in 2017 from Barcelona for 222 million euros in what remains the most expensive transfer in history.

"I'm really pleased to continue my adventure at Paris Saint-Germain," the 29-year-old said in a club statement after signing a contract extension until June 20, 2025.

"I'm very happy in Paris, and proud to be part of this squad, to work with these players, a great coach and to be part of the history of this club."

PSG coach Mauricio Pochettino said in a press conference: "Everyone in the PSG family is happy that a player of Neymar's talent has extended his contract."

Neymar has also won two French Cups with PSG, but the major honour that he was bought by the Qatari-owned club to win, the Champions League, continues to prove elusive.

He helped PSG to reach last season's



Champions League final where they were beaten by Bayern Munich but the club's chances of reaching the final again were crushed by Manchester City on Tuesday — and Neymar was ineffectual in the 2-0 semi-final second-leg defeat in England.

There has frequently been speculation in Spain that Barcelona wanted to re-sign him, but Neymar's decision to extend his

Lille tighten grip

Lens: Ligue 1 leaders Lille held their nerve to win 3-0 at local rivals Lens on Friday and put the pressure back on their pursuers who play later in the weekend.

Lille took early control when veteran Turkish striker Burak Yilmaz converted a second-minute penalty.

They cruised to victory after Lens defender Clement Michelin was sent off for the second time in the Derby du Nord this season.

Lille have two matches left and the victory puts them four points ahead of reigning champions Paris Saint-Germain, who visit Rennes on Sunday evening. Third-place Monaco are eight points behind with three games to play.

Lens, meanwhile, surrendered their hold on a guaranteed Europa League place, dropping below Marseille on goal difference. AFP

deal in the French capital is not a surprise as he has looked increasingly settled at PSG in recent months.

Zverev returns to Madrid Open final

AFP ■ MADRID

Alexander Zverev produced an impressive display to beat Dominic Thiem in straight sets on Saturday and book his spot in the Madrid Open final.

Fifth seed Zverev, who stunned five-time champion Rafael Nadal in the quarter-finals on Friday, saw off Thiem 6-3, 6-4 in a repeat of the 2018 final, which was also won by the German.

"It is going to mean a lot to me (if I can win the final) I am definitely looking forward to it," said the 24-year-old Zverev, bidding to win the title without dropping a set, as he did three years ago.

Thiem threatened a late fightback after trailing 4-1 in the



Alex Zverev, right, embraces Dominic Thiem after winning the semi-final

second set, but had too much to do to reach a third Madrid final.

The Austrian third seed will now turn his attentions to Rome next week and then the French Open which starts later this month, where he is also a two-time runner-up.

The tournament has seen a welcome return to form for Zverev, who had won only two matches in his previous three events since lifting the Acapulco title in March.

The world number six will be a strong favourite in Sunday's final.

It was Zverev and Thiem's first meeting since the latter's dramatic triumph in the 2020 US Open final, when he came back from two sets down to win in a deciding-set tie-break.

GOOD SAMARITANS

The number of COVID-19 cases continue to rise with May 7, 2021 clocking over 4.14 lakh cases pan India with over 3,500 deaths. Amidst this, there are people who have gone a step forward and are doing what they can to help others. SHALINI SAKSENA chats up COVID warriors who are delivering food to people infected with the virus or can't afford to feed their families

The rising numbers of COVID-19 in the country say it all — that there is chaos, carnage and cries for help all around. Coronavirus is killing humans but humanity is not dead. People from all walks of life have stepped out from the safety and comforts of their homes to help those in need. Besides helping people get lifesaving medicines, these COVID warriors are also cooking food and sending it to families who are unable to cook during these testing times.

One such person is Sarika Malhotra Yadav in Anand Lok in the Capital. For Yadav, the journey started last year, as soon as the lockdown began. "Last year, due to the pandemic, when the nation-wide lockdown was announced, I started distributing free food to people who were in need, especially the labour class who found itself jobless, no money and hence no means to feed their family. Come April 2021, the situation is even worse. It is not just the poor who are in need. This is when I requested my full-time maid if she would help me to cook food and send it to those in need. Usually, she cooks for four people but she would end up cooking for 30-odd people everyday which is not easy given that it is breakfast, lunch and dinner. She readily agreed," Yadav says.

Since then, Yadav has been supplying food 30 meals daily. While it may not sound as if it is a big number but it does involve a lot of time. "I prepare a three-day menu in advance since I don't want people to feel as if they are eating the same *daal* or vegetable. Then there are the aged who want to eat light food; the young want their *rajma*. So, I add *rajma* to the *daal*. Young people like *kadhi*. The elderly don't want to eat it. Instead, I made a quick *paneer bhurji* with *panchrani* *daal* with *jeera tadka*. This is easy to cook and it is nutritious. My work starts at 8 am with breakfast which is delivered by 10:30, lunch by 1:30 pm and dinner by 8:30 pm. I also send *kada*. I tell them what I put and if they want, they can drink it," Yadav tells you.

In this endeavour, Yadav is being helped by her son, studying in IIT who help her to pack. Her daughter, in Class XI, helps to organise everything else that is needed. Yadav who has an IT company, has put her work on hold to provide this service to those who need it. "I am not a professional chef. I have an IT company. Our aim is to help out people in their time of need in our area. I try to restrict myself to two-three km to supply food. But then I got a request from a family in Jor Bagh that their son is wheat intolerant and could provide meals that were gluten-free



Sarika Malhotra Yadav (middle), Home staff (Chef): Sushita (extreme left), Children: Yuvraj Yadav and Aadaa Yadav

for him. I agreed. I have tied up with a delivery app. I charge a nominal amount from those who can afford to pay and provide free food to those who can't. These include security guards," Yadav says who is supplying vegetarian food only.

She tells you that sometimes the pressure gets to her and her maid, Sushita, due to the demands that some people make. "I tell her that it is a matter of time. There are days when people want to eat sprout *cheela* or even *besan cheela*. I tell my kids as well to eat whatever has been cooked for the day instead of what they want to eat," Yadav says.

It is not just food that she provides. Once she is done with cooking and sending off meals, the rest of her time is spent in making arrangements of medicines and oxygen for her staff, family and friends. Her son spends time verifying the information that comes on social media. "He and his friends verify information that comes over various social media platforms, make an Excel sheet and share it with parents and family to circulate so maximum correct information reaches people," Yadav says.

Elsewhere in RK Puram, Swapan Jain, (39) is out delivering food to those in need. He lost his friend to COVID-19 a couple of days back but for Jain, his commitment made to the people is more important. "I have been



Swapan Jain

lucky that till now nobody in my family has suffered the way I see people suffering today. I lost my friend to the virus last week. Sadly, I couldn't be part of his last journey nor can I go to his house to pay my condolences in person. But such is life," Jain says.

He saw a flier on his WhatsApp group 10-15 days back requesting people to come forward and provide home-cooked food to those in need. "I immediately contacted the number and offered my services. I have two people who help me in my endeavour. It takes around three hours to prepare the meals — from sorting to cutting to final cooking. We prepare the meals and even deliver it ourselves to make sure people don't have to pay extra for delivery. We cater to RK Puram, Moti Bagh, Shanti Niketan and Munirka and provide 50-60 meals daily — lunch



Bonku Roy, part of HoK

and dinner," Jain says.

He tells you that it would be much easier if he could just do simple *daal*, *chawal*, *roti* and *sabzi*. "Unfortunately, this is not the case people do come up with their demands and we try to take care of what they want. Sometimes, there are limitations so it is not always possible to give what they want. We have no option but to apologise. The only complaints that we got in the beginning was related to delivery," Jain says.

Bonku Roy, who is part of the House of Kitchens (HoK) that started last year during the lockdown, and stays in Mayur Vihar Phase I has been providing food to families in East Delhi. "I am part of the House of Kitchens group of home chefs. The group was looking for people who could provide food in East Delhi, I readily agreed to do the same.

From day one calls started coming in and the process began. People requesting for lunch and dinner. To begin with I was providing 60 meals daily. But then it got too much. I was all alone and it got to me. Now, I only do lunch. I have tied up with a couple of delivery apps. Since I have this tie-up, it makes it easy to deliver within seven-eight km," Roy says.

He ensures that the meals are cooked with minimum oil and it is vegetarian so that the patient can easily digest it. "I set a menu and stick to it. It is thali concept and has four things — *daal*, *chawal*, *roti* and *sabzi*. *Daal* and *sabzi* are different each day. There are people who need an early meal or our Diabetic and can't eat rice. Many of the people I cater to our Jains, they don't want garlic or onions. I try to accommodate everyone's needs. I make a standard meal that works for everyone. As it is, it takes me three-four hours from cutting and cleaning to cooking," Roy tells you.

He also provides free meals to a few elderly who can't afford to pay; for others, who can afford to pay the charges are ₹110 per meal. There is an interesting story about how he learnt to cook. "When I went abroad, I didn't even know how to make tea. It was a struggle for me. I learnt how to cook. I then became part of the home chef for HoK. While this is on hold for now, I will get back to it as soon as possible," Roy says.

'It all started with people becoming home chefs'

The nation-wide lockdown due to the present pandemic last year led to many people experimenting with food and trying out new dishes. So much so that they excelled at it and more and more people got inspired with what these people were doing and more home chefs grew. From baking breads to Dalgona coffee to made from scratch thin crust pizzas, the list was endless. Groups came up where friends and family shared what they had made that day. One such group — House of Kitchens — came up in Panchsheel Enclave in the Capital with Anupriya Singh as its founder.

"When the lockdown happened last year, almost everyone was experimenting with new dishes at home. People were scared to order out. We have a group of 200 in my colony where the women shared what they had made that day. It is a group to share information and nothing else is allowed to be shared here. But due to the COVID-19, there was a relaxation. People started posting photos of what they had cooked. Then a competition was announced. After three weeks of lockdown and things didn't open, people started selling the food. Kids are used to ordering out so they started ordering food from them. Parents allowed it since it was home-cooked and safe," Singh recalls.

This mutual exchange kept everyone happy and continued for some time. But there was a problem. The colony is small and how often could one order the same dishes again and again even though they were excellent. Two glaring issues came up. First, these people were unable to post what they were doing. The texts were long messages detailing what they were doing for that week. One didn't want to read such long messages. What was missing was a visual that would attract people and make things easier.

"I launched House of Kitchen (HoK) with an aim that I would be able to provide these home chefs very nominally priced design services. They could either reach out to people on their own or join my platform with a delivery service and reach out to people living in GK 1, or Nehru Place or CR park or Defence Colony. By September I had 500 customers and chefs with different groups for areas like Gurugram, Noida, Delhi had two groups. To avoid conflict of interest I don't add-on chefs from the same area serving the same good. Take an example. If I have four bakers in South Delhi, I will not add a fifth. I can fill the group but no one will get a sale. This continued till April this year. That is when people started asking if COVID meals could be provided. 'I am down with the virus. Can you provide food?' My chefs were providing exotic dishes. I reached out a few chefs in GK who agreed to provide meals in their area," Singh recounts.

This started something totally different. There were people who were writing in from Patel Nagar asking if there was



Anupriya Singh, Founder HoK

someone who could provide home-cooked food because the entire family was down with the virus. Singh only had bakers in that area but she asked if they could provide this service at a nominal rate. Some agreed and the list of demands kept going up. A list was prepared that had 12 chefs with their numbers from HoK willing to provide home food and circulated on social media.

"In a few hours, I was bombarded with calls and messages that we needed food and if you could deliver it there. The list was intended for 500 members on my HoK. I never realised that it would spiral so much. Messages kept pouring in from volunteers as well willing to provide meals. I kept asking people to check the latest date. No one did. I had no option but to pull down my website. All that it has is a list of 300 home chefs providing food. We keep adding the numbers but there is no time to verify this since we are all so busy. Many people thought that this was a great way to establish a home food business. But this service is not for this purpose," Singh explains. A call is made for a quick interview with a tour of the kitchen to see the level of hygiene.

She recently got a request from the Bar Association of Delhi to sponsor meals to the lawyers down with COVID-19. From April 18, 2021 till May 3, 2021, they have sent out 2.75 lakh meals by 300 home chefs across Delhi. This is not all. Singh has a Meals of Wheel initiative as well.

The van carries 100 lunches and 100 dinner meals to LNJP hospital. "To begin with we would send the van to other hospitals as well since we didn't know where the need was. But then we went to LNJP and we realised that there was a genuine need. So now, the van goes directly to this hospital. These meals are free of cost. But I can't sponsor 100 meals each time. We asked people if they would sponsor. We now get sponsors for these meals. We got help from a lady in Singapore who helped us set up the system and sent ₹90,000. Another lady who sent ₹1.5 lakh. Now people ask how many days left. The minute we are down to two days, we get money to get this initiative going," Singh says.

TO ALL THOSE WHO MOTHER

To celebrate the spirit of motherhood this Mother's Day, SUNDAY PIONEER lists ways that can help make your loved one's day all the more special

MOM SHOULD BE CELEBRATED EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR, MOTHER'S DAY IS A SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW HER A LITTLE EXTRA LOVE. PERK UP MOM'S MORNING WITH A DELICIOUS CUP OF COFFEE & CAKES — NO TRIP TO THE COFFEE SHOP NEEDED IF YOU TRY THESE SIMPLE STEPS AND SHOW YOUR BARISTA AND BAKING SKILLS AT HOME.

SAFFRON LATTE

If she loves a latte, adding a few threads of Kashmiri kesar the world's most expensive spice adds a subtle sweetness and heady aroma that she's sure to adore.

The subtle sweetness and earthy flavor of saffron pairs beautifully with this creamy espresso-based latte.

- Ingredients:**
- 3/4 cup whole milk
 - 3 to 4 saffron threads, crushed
 - 30ml espresso

Directions:

- In a small saucepan, heat milk and saffron over medium-low until hot and just bubbling around edges, three to five minutes.
- Remove from heat; whisk until thick and foamy.
- Pour espresso into a mug, top



with saffron milk and serve. ■ If you don't have espresso at home, you can try with 40ml decoction of Il Matino Vivace brewed in a filter.

CLASSIC MOCHA WITH MINT

Coffee + chocolate + mint + whipped cream = this ultimate mocha coffee recipe for your mom if she loves chocolate.

- Ingredients:**
- 40 coffee (moka pot/ espresso/ filter)
 - 1 cup whipping cream
 - 2 teaspoons mint syrup
 - 2 teaspoons chocolate syrup
 - 1 sprig mint, for garnish

Directions:

- While the coffee is brewing, whip up the whipped cream to soft peaks, add 1 teaspoon of mint syrup.
- Once coffee has finished, mix in two teaspoons of chocolate syrup and one teaspoon of mint syrup. Top the coffee with the mint



whipped cream and a sprig of mint before serving. ■ You can garnish with some extra chocolate chunks. — Abdul Sahid Khan, Head Trainer, Lavazza India

NO OCCASION IS COMPLETE WITHOUT A GIFT, AND IF ITS MOTHER'S DAY IT IS ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT TO TREAT ALL THOSE WHO CARE FOR YOU WITH SOMETHING SPECIAL. HERE'S A LIST TO CHOOSE FROM.

Time for self care: Mother isn't just something you are. It's something you do. It's all about loving, listening and teaching. Motherhood isn't only to do with Biology. So here's to mothers everywhere — whoever they may be. The step-moms, aunts, caretakers, neighbours and everyone else who mothers. Show them you care this year with a gift from The Body Shop. Because nothing says



"Thanks for checking-in on me, always" like a moment to themselves with some self-care. Range: ₹725 – ₹4,295

Gift immunity: This Mother's Day, give a gift of good health, wellness and strong immunity to your mother. VAHDAM India with its premium, high quality teas sourced directly from farms and blended with 100 per cent natural, native Indian spices, herbs and other ingredients, makes for a thoughtful gift that exudes warmth, care and love. These tea gift sets contain the very best that your mother will cherish



every day. Packed in luxurious, exquisite and regal boxes in vibrant golds, greens, reds and yellows makes it a very unique gift to present.

Celebrating precious gems: The epitome of love & fascination, presenting Paragon by Kohinoor Jewellers Agra. A collection of jewels in coloured gemstones that truly are second to none, with matchless design prowess. Fashioning elegant conversation starters with unsurpassed class & craftsmanship, that are masters at stealing hearts at first sight, this assemblage is a compelling reminder that Kohinoor Jewellers Agra inventively fuses fine metal & gemstones into wearable works of art. Brand's unrivaled expertise of realising the priceless emotion & bond that women share with fine jewellery, into coveted picturesque adornments, is at the core of its competitive advantage. Celebrating one precious with another. This Mother's Day Kohinoor Jewellers Agra brings



forth enthralling gifting options for the most precious lady! Salute the unconditional love of mothers & amaze her with an unparalleled prized possession to cherish for the rest of her life. Fill this dedicated day with reverence by expressing your love for the most valuable person, with one of the most eloquent gifts and witness her beam with joy & pride. Second to none, mothers & fine jewels, both complement each other with grace.

I remember how to
be a person by
being around them
— Natalie Portman



Climate Change & India

India should focus on avoiding emissions by setting key sectors on a low carbon growth path, with robust climate institutions and laws

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Saraswati & Ganapati connect

True wisdom can be acquired only when explored with a sense of detachment from all tempting worldly influences



GLOOM & DOOM

The second wave of the pandemic has hit the hospitality industry in more ways than one. It has made a mockery of all the insights, predictions and readiness. By the time, this ends and some sort of normalcy prevails, we will all be starting from a sub-zero level, writes TARUN SIBAL

Restaurants are built for social contact. Eating out gives joy, it allows people to create memories that last a lifetime. I am optimistic that if we are able to survive this period, we will resurge. We will not be the same; the numbers will be different, the discussions will be different, but we will have something new that we can build upon. Once the vaccine is available, all this will be behind us.

I wrote this about a year ago and till about February 2021, it was all falling into place as predicted. The worst was over, or so we presumed. The Vaccine Drive, the flattening of the curve, the return of the positive consumer sentiment, revenge buying, new launches in the restaurant and dining-in ecosystem, and our favourite food awards all seemed to indicate that after languishing in the deep end after the first coronavirus wave, the restaurant industry had finally found its feet again.

We also saw leniency in travel restrictions, the hospitality industry investing heavily in digital-first initiatives, a rise in staycations, all-inclusive packages, contactless dining, chef-led delivery models, restaurants full to (the new) capacity, return of the big fat Indian weddings, the Sunday night bazaars, tourism regaining acceptance in the Maldives, Mussoorie and Goa. We saw it all and became a part of the counter punch. We were close to the end of the tunnel and it seemed there was enough light there to make it through.

It became an exciting time for food and beverage players as the vertical got some due course correction. People who did not have their skin in the game moved out, the investors moved out, the sharks moved out. There was a return to hardcore hospitality that was product and content centric. We had no surprises on the places that did well post the first lockdown. These were establishments that were built on the core competencies of hospitality, product and service orientation.

The second wave has done damage in more ways than one. It has made a mockery of all our insights, predictions and readiness. By the time, this ends and we attain herd immunity, and some sort of normalcy prevails, we will all be starting from a sub-zero level. For the Food and Beverage Industry vertical, globally things have improved drastically. People are back to eating out, spring break is almost back, and summer set to bloom. For us in India, the vision will take its time.

The Indian Food and Beverage Industry that brings in roughly 60 billion dollars annually and employs around 7 million people (or I may say 7 million families), was directly impacted when the first wave hit. The fraterni-

ty was deeply worried and the sentiment to survive was breaking down on an hourly basis. We were the first to close, and last to open. Half of us closed never to open our doors again, but the rest fought back. We paid our dues, gave license fees, rents, salaries, electricity bills, got down to a 50 percent capacity, invested in new technology, invested to ensure guest and employee safety, worked on contactless everything, surface cleaning, digitised menus and payment gateways, reduced staff, immunity boosting menus, helped guests to cook at home, gave back to the community and even became Covid warriors ourselves.

Were we prepared for it the first time around? Absolutely not, but we came out with plausible solutions, swinging hard to knock down our opponent. We were ready to embrace and build the new normal as per the new rules of engagement, and the consumer played ball too. It was all coming together, the salaries were almost back to pre-Covid days, sales were up to 70%, the staff strength was increasing, the grandiose caterings were happening and the sentiment to celebrate was back. Within the industry we started using the term "Post Covid" and I think we jumped the gun.

SURPRISE SURPRISE

I can't say it happened overnight but the turn of events was extremely swift. From a fast-paced road to recovery to being the #1 country "in covid terms" broke us badly. For the fraternity, it meant us going back to the drawing board without new answers to the same old problem that has now returned with a vengeance. As I write this piece, we are closed. We started with a night curfew (surprisingly cinemas were on during this time) and are now down to a "delivery only" that features as a part of essentials. "Bars" cannot deliver alcohol but have recently been made to pay the full increased excise license fee for the entire year. It is *déjà vu* with one change — a lot more people you know are testing positive, many more have lost their loved ones, and the infrastructure that is meant to curtail all this, is crumbling. Covid is all around us, and it is time for sheer survival and nothing else.

PREPPED UP THIS TIME?

For sure we were, while hoping that this preparedness never comes into effect. When I say 'prepared', it does not mean that we have a magic wand. We are just more cognizant of the fact that we will lose more business, more time will be taken, we will yet again need to invest both in product and in the sentiment. We were ready this time to accept things and be patient,

“THE INDIAN FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY THAT BRINGS IN ROUGHLY 60 BILLION DOLLARS ANNUALLY AND EMPLOYS AROUND 7 MILLION PEOPLE (OR I MAY SAY 7 MILLION FAMILIES), WAS DIRECTLY IMPACTED WHEN THE FIRST WAVE HIT. THE FRATERNITY WAS DEEPLY WORRIED AND THE SENTIMENT TO SURVIVE WAS BREAKING DOWN ON AN HOURLY BASIS. WE WERE THE FIRST TO CLOSE, AND LAST TO OPEN. HALF OF US CLOSED NEVER TO OPEN OUR DOORS AGAIN, BUT THE REST FOUGHT BACK



we were ready to manage inventories well, keep our costs down, halt our expansion plans, renegotiate terms of trade, and more importantly, sit this one out. This time, we knew how the ball will roll.

Rahul Gomes Pereira, a celebrated Chef and a friend believes, "the F&B industry has taken to this wave much better than the first. The industry as a whole is going through almost a purge of sorts. Good food, great drinks won't go out of style and that's the only trend that's going to survive. From the perspective of a chef, he feels that chefs should understand the importance of being involved with the business and understanding the numbers even more post this pandemic. It is important to be self-reliant and not at the mercy of investors or restaurant owners."

HOW AND WHY?

There is no point debating this further. Lives win hands down when it is Lives versus Livelihood. We will surely fight the livelihood battle once we win the first war. It's time to be safe, keep your loved ones safe, keep your employees safe, customers safe, and take it one day at a time, one win at a time. If we somehow get over this wave, get over the gloom, the road to economic recovery in this sector should not be a cause for concern and we have seen this happening in the last eight odd months.

Srijan Vadhera, GM Hilton Hotels Bangalore, is as seasoned Hotelier. As he puts it: "Travel is an essential part of our everyday lives and travel makes the world a better place to live in. While there is a temporary pause, it's inevitable that travel will resume sooner than later across the globe. With most governments across the world having started the vaccination drives and Indian government opening up the vaccination for citizens who are 18+ years old, I'm fairly optimistic that some amount of normalcy may return to our markets in Q3 or Q4 (FY22). Food & Beverage are going to be the drivers of recovery for most hospitality establishments once again in a few months."

STAYING AFLOAT

Delivery has become a choice for some and a necessity for the others. For some, it means a business vertical extension and for others it means to be relevant in the consumer's mind space. Irrespective of how and why, ever since the pandemic struck, the case for "dining-in" has become really strong, almost like a service game in tennis "Advantage Delivery". Your favourite dishes that tantalised your taste buds and got you salivating were suddenly available only via delivery.

Chef Anuj Wadhawan feels that in order to survive or stay afloat, "every restaurant should have a permanent delivery module as well as a proper business plan and not as a backup plan. The backup plan always takes the back-burner and this is what we saw last year — every restaurant came up with delivery but once things seemingly reverted to normal, it was just a backup plan. If this plan would have been executed last year in full force, then this year it must have showed some result."

Saurabh Khanijo, CEO, Kylin Experience, started delivery under the brand "House of Kylin" and is of the opinion that the delivery business will grow four times from where it was pre-Covid and the route to success is to deliver restaurant level taste at delivery pricing.

THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Once we address the elephant in the room, there will be multiple road maps for recovery and every restaurant establishment, hotel chain etc. will create its own unique path. Some will take more time than the others, some might change the offering, and some might change their location.

From a consumer perspective, safety assurance will be the focal point when making a dining out decision. The consumers will make informed choices basis what has been shared with them. Even more than the information, it will be the on-ground implementation of the laid-out hygiene and safety standards that will bounce back leaner and stronger. A new normal yet again awaits the industry and the country, and it would be exciting and extremely fruitful.

I am an optimist and believe that the places that will survive the Covid onslaught will bounce back leaner and stronger. A new normal yet again awaits the industry and the country, and it would be exciting and extremely fruitful.

THE ONE REQUEST

We need the government to acknowledge that the Food and Beverage industry that is roughly 3 percent of our GDP and possibly the single largest employer is in trouble. We need the governments, both State and Central, to act now and tell us that we will be taken care of. We have been waiting for over a year now. Liquidity is our biggest problem and a rebate or a waiver in statutory dues, compliances could be one of the things that governments can re-evaluate. Things like license fees, VAT, GST inputs, interest on tax, and electricity bills could all be looked at to improve liquidity. Lastly, once we survive the pandemic, we will need policy changes that are pro-business and pro-tourism. We hope our voice will be heard. *The writer is a celebrated chef, restaurateur, food and beverage entrepreneur*



CLIMATE CHANGE IS THE EVEREST OF ALL PROBLEMS, THE THORNIEST CHALLENGE FACING HUMANKIND
 — LEWIS GORDON PUGH



CLIMATE CHANGE & INDIA

A rapidly growing and changing country like India should focus on avoiding emissions by setting key sectors on a low carbon growth path, with robust climate institutions and laws, writes MOHIT GARG

As the world faces the dual challenges of Covid-19 and climate change, there has been growing acceptance of the fragilities of our energy, economic and health systems. India has been hailed as a global leader by Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations for its Covid-19 response efforts of supplying critical medicines to more than 150 countries. During the 19th Darbari Seth Memorial Lecture, Mr. Guterres also acknowledged the role of India as an emerging superpower in the fight against climate change. During the pandemic, India's proportion of Renewable Energy (RE) rose from 17% to 24% while coal-fired power declined from 76% to 66%. This has been a phenomenal leap for India that pushed for 'Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities' based on historic emissions in 1990s and championed the idea that industrialised nations (global north) must reduce their emissions and create an institutional mechanism for climate action funding for global south to augment their mitigation capacities (without binding

commitments) while not hindering their economic growth. India is one of the fastest growing economies with third highest GHG emissions in the world. According to the first ever climate change assessment report of India prepared by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), India's average temperature has already risen by 0.7°C between 1901 and 2018 due to Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and is expected to rise by 4.4°C by 2100. Climate change has multiple repercussions on development, food and water security, health, gender equity and poverty alleviation efforts of India with a densely populated 7500 km coastline susceptible to extreme weather events like sea-level rise, storms and floods, third largest ice mass in north — the Great Himalayas, biodiversity rich Western Ghats and North East and nearly one billion people living in rural areas whose livelihoods depend on climate sensitive sectors like agriculture, fisheries, livestock and forests. India ranked fifth in the Global Climate Risk Index 2019. Earlier seasonal snowmelt, depleting glaciers and uncertainties in

monsoon patterns threaten agriculture output and fresh water supplies. Rapid urbanisation, rising temperatures, changes in precipitation, extreme rainfall events, altered coastlines, depleting water tables and destroyed biodiversity hotspots affect migration, conflicts and spread of diseases. Around 44% of India is under various degrees of drought conditions. The worst affected are the poor, marginalised, indigenous, women and the future generations. While much of climate change crisis in India is a result of the excesses of industrialised world, there are domestic drivers as well. Primarily the overwhelming reliance on thermal power in energy generation which accounts for roughly 68% of total GHG emissions, and an inefficient agricultural policy which encourages high yield, low nutrition, excessive water guzzling crops like rice and wheat in arid and semi-arid regions which exacerbates any climate change induced monsoon variations. About 90% of its groundwater goes into irrigation and about 80% of it goes to rice and wheat. According to Research Institute of Humanity and Nature Japan, poverty alle-

ACCORDING TO CLIMATE ACTION TRACKER, INDIA IS THE ONLY MAJOR COUNTRY WHOSE ACTIONS TO COMBAT EMISSIONS ARE COMPATIBLE WITH THE GOAL OF LIMITING GLOBAL WARMING TO 2°C

viation measures would result in 50% increase in GHGs. But this increase can be contained by designing adequate food, energy and transport policies. India has potential to raise its RE capacity from the initial goal of 175 GW to 500 GW by 2030. Switching to RE would reduce dependency on uncertain coal and gas supplies while at the same time reduce GHG emissions of the country and create more employment. Co-benefits like improved air quality, water use, land use and biodiversity; improved social sustainability related to livelihoods, income distribution, migration and housing has incentivised political support. India has pledged to invest USD 100 billion in clean energy over five years. The Smart Cities and Smart Mobility plans coupled with policies like Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME-II) would ensure that India embarks on a sustainable transport growth. India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) at Paris COP21 includes pledge to reduce its emissions intensity by 33-35% over 2005 levels, produce

at least 40% of its energy from renewable and sequester additional 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO2eq through afforestation by 2030. According to Climate Action Tracker, India is the only major country whose actions to combat emissions are compatible with the goal of limiting global warming to 2°C. While India is on its way to fulfil first two pledges, it needs to reorient some of its policies and regulations to fulfil the third pledge along with tackling food and water insecurity and ecosystem damage. The administrative planning levels like states and districts do not usually match up with the relevant agro-ecological zones or catchments. The probabilistic forecasting, urban resilience and adaptive capacities of states are usually very weak. The Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) is done by consultants hired by project proponents themselves and around 20% of the project fees is made only on grant of approval, which results in increased possibility of manipulation of documents by underplaying the environmental and social impacts of the projects under consideration. If small and marginal farmers plan to switch to hardy crops like sorghum and pearl millet, they face constraints of timely credit, seeds, irrigation, labour, insurance & market access leading to high and unsustainable cost of cultivation. Focus on forests and urban green spaces could mitigate climate change through carbon sequestration, enhance resilience to droughts, flash floods and landslides, improve resilience of coastal infrastructure, reduce vulnerability to extreme heat by reducing ambient temperatures and support native wildlife and biodiversity. Drip irrigation and water sprinklers coupled with solar pumps, mulching and bed plantation can boost water availability at a fraction of the cost of large bridges and irrigation projects. Old water harvesting structures like water tanks and check dams should be rejuvenated for water harvesting and conservation, which suits local ecology and managed by local communities. Government can encourage shifting away from rice and wheat by providing appropriate scientific support and financial incentives (like MSP) to the farmers. Switching to Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) from EIA would be instrumental in evaluating ecological ramifications of projects and ways to address them at the initial stage itself, by making regional plans rather than individual project assessments to evaluate the cumulative impact of the projects in a region, by hiring independent consultants for individual large project EIAs and by ensuring public participation to improve assessment and scrutiny. While India is committed to NDCs till 2030, it needs long term goals for sustainable, equitable and carbon free growth to follow a 1.5°C path through confluence of technology, policy, financial and social actions. In the build up to Glasgow Climate Summit, a rapidly growing and changing country like India should focus on avoiding emissions by setting key sectors on a low carbon growth path, with robust climate institutions and laws. This would help in further garner political support for enhanced mitigation and setting net-zero targets which are achievable and credible. The writer is Fellow, Anant Fellowship for Climate Action and Superintendent of Police, Narayanpur District, Chhattisgarh

Gender and Disasters: The India story

Integrating gender in disaster management & recovery is of utmost importance. Awareness & advocacy of disaster risks and vulnerabilities among all stakeholders from local to national level should be key in disaster reduction, writes SHREYA BASU

One of the grave realities and challenges of today's time and era is Climate change. It has become integral at all levels of the existing world. Just like Newton's third law — "Every action has an equal and opposite reaction", Climate change is the consequence of our various actions which is constantly affecting and altering our living systems. One such long term alteration has been the increase in frequency and severity changes in extreme weather such as hurricanes, heatwaves, wildfires, droughts, floods, and precipitation; and cloud and vegetation cover changes. These disasters are occurring at a continuous pace and pose critical harm to the environment and society at large. According to Climate Risk Index 2019 by German watch, in the past 20 years 5,25,000 people have been killed by more than 11,500 extreme weather events and trillions of dollars have been lost in damages. Disasters do not occur in silos. Whether it is a natural or man-made disaster, other than being an environmental phenomenon, it is also an amalgamation of economic, social and cultural phenomenon. We often associate disasters with loss of lives and damage to the environment and the property. But we seldom tend to forget that it is deep rooted in the social and cultural phenomenon when it comes to vulnerability, risk and resilience. Before moving on, let us try and define the terms vulnerability, risk and resilience. According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR),

Vulnerability describes the characteristics and circumstances of a community, system or asset that make it susceptible to the damaging effects of a hazard. Risk (or more specifically, disaster risk) is the potential disaster losses (in terms of lives, health status, livelihoods, assets and services) which could occur to a particular community or a society over some specified future time period. Resilience is the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions. For every term explained above, community and society are the central themes where Gender of an individual plays a very important factor in shaping the needs of these societies. Gender identities determine opportunities, responsibilities and resources, as well as powers associated with being, male, female, transgender, agender etc. Gender also defines the relationship between these individuals. Difference in the socio-economic and cultural background with distinct vulnerabilities make a man, woman, girl, boy, eunuch etc. of different age groups shape their risks and recovery during and post disaster in a unique way. They are context and time-specific and changeable too. Understanding and sensitising gender differences before, during and post a disaster is critical and crucial.



Gender sensitisation provides a space to understand the inequalities of exposure, risks and the ability to adapt to one gender over the other. Several research studies and observations have shown that both communities of developed and the developing world have indicated a skewed representation of facilities, resources, opportunities and access when it comes to gender. The decisions taken in pre and post disaster management are skewed in favour of the male gender in majority of the times. Women or girl child or transgender or any other gender knowingly or unknowingly have to bear

the brunt of these "not so thought" decisions. Due to differences in adaptive capacities according to situations and contexts, any gender other than the male gender has been on the receiving end of miseries from a very long time. While assessing risk, one can argue that a woman, girl or transgender etc, fall in the most vulnerable category. They are the main victims of natural disasters. There are several examples from all over the world where these genders have faced incidences of violence, sexual abuse, injustice and deaths during the disaster recovery phase. Women and girls tend to have

higher mortality rates than men in the wake of a natural disaster which affects them more adversely if the intensity of a disaster is very strong. Having said that, the socio-economic status also determines the life expectancy of the female gender. Lower the socio-economic strata more the gap between male and female deaths and higher the socio-economic strata, lesser the gap between male and female deaths. In developing countries where societies are more patriarchal in nature it has been observed that women tend to remain within the premises of their own house and take care of the household whereas

men down the role of the bread earner of the house. They take care of the belongings that happen outside house premises. When disaster strikes in such settings, women find themselves incompetent and are at risk more when it comes to face danger. They lack skills like swimming or climbing the trees which are traditionally taught to men. They are reluctant to move to shelter places as these communal facilities are devoid of private spaces for them. In some countries, the women also have lesser intake of nutrition leading them to be weaker than men in strength. They are unable to cope up with harsh adversities increasing in the number of deaths. Post disaster many women, girls, transgenders face brutal circumstances where they are sexually assaulted, raped and are beaten to death. Human trafficking also increases in certain scenarios. Living in communal tents and shelter homes, they are constantly harassed for sexual favours to gain access to relief or recovery assistance. In a lot of societies men being the sole earner of the family face a lot of depression when they lose their source of income. They feel ashamed in asking money from the lenders or working at a lower position than before. In these circumstances, the increased workload puts a burden on the females of the house. They must take care of both households and earn a living. Thus, integrating gender in disaster management and recovery is of utmost importance. Awareness and advocacy of disaster risks and vulnerabilities

amongst all stakeholders from local to national level should be key in disaster reduction. Capacity building from the perspective of gender keeping in mind the socio-economic and cultural phenomenon should be approached. Basic life saving skills should be taught at all levels like swimming, climbing tree, first-aid, etc., irrespective of gender. Risk assessments should also be done through a gender focused lens. Toolkits like surveys, questionnaires and software should be developed to train and equip individuals for risk prevention and emergency preparedness. Gender-responsive recovery should also be taken up. Financial aid becomes crucial for the communities and the individuals post a disaster. Not only from the perspective of supplying food, water and temporary shelter, the governments should also help the affected people to set up their own source of livelihood. For example, In Haiti, post 2008 hurricanes and tropical storms, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted post-disaster recovery support by uplifting the women's position in the society by giving them access to funds to restart their businesses and revive their agricultural fields which in turn helped in reviving the Haiti economy. Therefore, to have a holistic and a comprehensive way forward in disaster risk reduction and recovery, one should realize and remember the power associated with any Gender in every aspect of life. The writer is Fellow, Anant Fellowship for Climate Action

Senkaku: New flashpoint in East China Sea

The Senkaku Islands have emerged as the new flashpoint between Japan and China in the East China Sea (ECS). While China has intensified its campaign to assert its claim over the territories they call the Diaoyu Islands, Japan has tried to make the US back its sovereign rights over the area.

Both the nations are gearing up to enhance their military preparedness, particularly the radar and missile systems around the region. The total area of disputed islands is around 81,000 square miles and the number of islands is eight. As per the record of the US Energy Information Administration, the ECS has an estimated 200 million barrels of oil.

Historical records say that Japan formally claimed the Senkaku Islands in the year 1895. And some of the Japanese individuals have been occupying these islands for the last 120 years. However, only during the Second World War, America occupied these territories from Japan. But afterwards, Japan brought them back under its control. Until 1960s, China hardly paid any attention to Senkaku, as per archival records. However, the year 1969 turned out to be a decisive moment for China in the recent history of Senkaku. The offshore oil development potential attracted China's attention towards the Island chain. China had in 1979 discovered that there was huge field of hydrocarbon in the area, experts claim.

In January, China passed its Coast Guard Law to increase its presence in and around the Senkaku Islands. This set off the Yoshihide Suga Government to revise the Japanese Coast Guard Law so as to shoot any intruder that tries to land in these islands. What has changed the status quo in favour of Japan was the buying of three islands of the Senkaku group by the Government from a private citizen who owned them in 2012. Since then the presence of Chinese Coast Guards around the islands has increased. Precisely, the routine confrontation between the two nations over the islands has reached flashpoint.

China's territorial claims over the ECS is unsubstantiated. But China points to historical documents to buttress its claim over these islands. Way back in 2013, as per media reports, Chinese Foreign Ministry claimed: "The Diaoyu Islands are about sovereignty and territorial integrity. Of course, it is China's core



interest."

This kind of statement is rare from the Chinese Government, and when they are released, they really indicate something serious. In Chinese political lexicon, "core interest" is meant to be a zone of vital importance to the country's territory and sovereign identity. The terms "core interests" are specifically reserved for top security-related and troubling areas such as Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, Tibet and Taiwan. Therefore, it is strictly maintained that on such areas there is no room for any manoeuvrability. It brings home the message that Beijing treats the dispute over Senkaku Islands as a major concern in bilateral relations with Tokyo.

The American position on the Senkaku Islands is noteworthy. Since the coming of Richard Nixon to power in 1969 as the 37th President, the US has been maintaining that the territorial sovereignty over the

Senkaku Islands must be settled by the three conflicting parties involved i.e. Japan, Taiwan and China. This stance continued till 1995. But 1996 onwards, during the reign of President Bill Clinton, the US policy makers came up with a new perspective on the disputed island. The American diplomats aired the view that the Senkaku Islands are covered under Article 5 of the US-Japan Security Treaty as Japanese administered territory. From this position, Washington took a pro-active step in 2014 under Barack Obama Presidentship. He became the first sitting American President to declare that the US will defend the "Japanese islands" if attacked. This made the country's position completely clear on these disputed islands. Further, President Donald Trump in February 2017 took one more step to affirm America's commitment towards the security of the Senkaku Islands. In a formal joint declaration released

with then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Trump expressly highlighted that the US-Japan Security Treaty is applied to the Senkaku Islands. And also, the declaration made it public that the US opposes any unilateral action aimed at contesting Japan's administration over Senkaku Islands.

In fact, the Trump-era China policy was nothing less than a great war of sort against Beijing's sustained aggressive attitude both towards its neighbours and to the major powers of the world, particularly the US. His policies towards China symbolised two featured separate tracks: one, policies Trump personally pursued, and two, the policies spearheaded by China experts serving in his administration. It was a like virtual war against the regime of Xi Jinping. Therefore, when then US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Japan in October 2017, he had issued a public call to counter China by

forming an "alliance of democracies". Again, US-Japan joint military exercises around the Senkaku Islands under Trump strengthened preparedness for any armed intervention from China. In fact, Lieutenant General Kevin Schneider, the commander of the joint military exercise in October 2017 made the real intentions behind the drill clear, when he said: "The United States is 100 per cent absolutely steadfast in its commitment to help the Government of Japan with the situation of defending the Senkaku Islands. That is 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, seven days a week." Thus Tokyo has all ensured the support of Washington for its continued control and safeguard of these mineral rich islands in the East China Sea.

The overwhelming US support to Japan over the islands was more than sufficient for China to understand what actions will follow in case

Beijing tries to force its rule over Senkaku.

However, the so-called normalisation of Sino-Japanese relations is a misnomer. In 2018, China and Japan celebrated the 40th anniversary of the signing of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship, but then global situation soon deteriorated as the Covid-19 came with a barrage of charges against China for spreading the pandemic. In the same year, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang paid a maiden visit of Japan in May, and in October then Prime Minister Abe visited China.

On the ECS, China and Japan agreed to strengthen maritime crisis management, establish a diplomatic consultation mechanism and sign a maritime rescue agreement. However, Sino-Japan relations will always be troublesome as there are several potential face-off points. The problems in the South China Sea and in the East China Sea, the traditional rivalry between the two Asian giants, an increasing and sustained presence of US military support behind Japan, and a new alliance called QUAD -- a grouping of the US, Australia, India and Japan to prevent grand Chinese expansion in the region -- have certainly strained Sino-Japan bilateral relationship.

Therefore, the current crisis in the ECS is just the tip of the iceberg. China's claim over the Senkaku Islands will only deteriorate the bilateral relations with Japan. Xi's massive expansion plans, whether in the form of Belt and Road Initiative or China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, all threaten peace and tranquillity in and around the region. Further, long suppression of democratic rights in Hong Kong, Taiwan's continued claim for sovereignty, Tibetan's long drawn war for the recognition of their uniqueness, the torture on the Uighur Muslim minorities and other ethnic groups in Xinjiang, and finally, a contested claim of many neighbours over the South China Sea are the permanent troubled issues for Beijing.

Xi's muscle power and economic debt trap in the name of aid have not yielded the desired results for China to claim a global leadership role. Forget about the world, in Asia itself, few nations are ready to accept the hegemony of Beijing.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)

The current crisis over the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea is just the tip of the iceberg. Xi's massive expansion plan in the form of BRI or CPEC threatens peace and tranquillity in and around the region. Further, long suppression of democratic rights in Hong Kong, Taiwan's continued claim for sovereignty, Tibetan's long drawn war for the recognition of their uniqueness, the torture on the Uighur Muslim minorities and other ethnic groups in Xinjiang, and finally, a contested claim of many neighbours over the South China Sea are the permanent sore points for Beijing



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Need to promote diversity in judiciary

With a sanctioned strength of 34 judges, including the Chief Justice of India, presently, the Supreme Court has only one Muslim judge, one woman judge, one Parsi judge, one Christian judge, one Dalit judge, but no Sikh, no Buddhist, no Jain, and no Adivasi. There has never been a woman Chief Justice of India. A diversified Supreme Court will have a far-reaching impact on the public trust in the apex court which must reflect the make-up of the country



LOKENDRA MALIK

As an institution whose decisions shape and impact the everyday lives of Indians, we must do better. We must ensure the diversity of our country finds reflection in the make-up of our court... having a more diverse judiciary is an end; a goal in itself, and worth pursuing its own sake," stated Supreme Court judge Justice DY Chandrachud while speaking on the occasion of Justice Indu Malhotra's retirement from the Supreme Court in March this year.

The judge-makers of our country should not miss these words when selecting the judges for the constitutional courts. Fortunately, now Justice Chandrachud has also become a member of the collegium. Hopefully, he would take some initiative in this regard. With a sanctioned strength of 34 judges, including the Chief Justice of India, presently, the Supreme Court has only one Muslim judge, one woman judge, one Parsi judge, one Christian judge, one Dalit judge, but no Sikh, no Buddhist, no Jain, and no Adivasi.

It sends a wrong message to society. Ever since its establishment, the Supreme Court has had several brilliant Muslim judges. Out of them, four judges namely Justices M Hidayatullah, MH Beg, AM Ahmadi, and Altamas Kabir graced the office of the Chief Justice of India. Other Muslim judges of the Supreme Court were: Sayeed Fazl Ali, Ghulam Hasan, Syed Jafar Imam, Syed Murtaza Fazl Ali, Baharul

Islam, V Khalid, Fathima Beevi, Faizanuddin, S Sagir Ahmad, SS M Qadri, Aftab Alam, MY Eqbal, FM Ibrahim Kalifulla.

Presently, Justice Abdul Nazeer is the only Muslim judge in the top court. Besides this, two High Courts have Muslim Chief Justices — Justice Kureshi in Tripura and Justice Mohammad Rafiq in Madhya Pradesh, today. There is a general belief in society that the Supreme Court should have an inclusive and diversified Bench that could demonstrate the collective image of the country. Let us throw some light on this issue of great public importance.

In India, Muslims constitute around 15 per cent of the population, but their representation in the higher judiciary is invisible. Currently, the Supreme Court has only one Muslim judge. Many legal luminaries and thinkers believe that Muslims should get adequate representation in the higher judiciary so that the minorities could have faith in the highest judicial institution that decides the legal destiny of the nation.

In addition to this issue, women also constitute around half of the population in the country, but the Supreme Court has only a single woman judge who will retire next year. This is very disturbing news. There has never been a woman Chief Justice of India even after seven decades of the Supreme Court's inauguration. In this kind of scenario, women genuinely deserve more representation in the constitutional courts, particularly the



Supreme Court, to maintain the gender balance and to strengthen the legal empowerment of women. The Supreme Court collegium has to take a serious note of this issue.

Under the existing practice and procedure of judicial appointments, the Supreme Court collegium headed by the Chief Justice of India has the conclusive power to appoint the judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts after the Second, Third, and Fourth Judges cases.

The unanimous recommendations of the Supreme Court collegium are binding on the President of India who acts on the advice of the Prime Minister and Union Law Minister to issue the formal

warrant of appointments.

However, the Central Government has also a role in the process of judicial appointments. It checks the antecedents of the recommended persons deeply through the Intelligence Bureau and other agencies and sends its report to the collegium for its consideration by mentioning the cogent reasons and objections along with the supporting material. But, if the Supreme Court collegium reiterates its recommendations, the Central Government and the President will have no option but to act on the same.

So, it is the collegium that is the actual judge-maker in the country. This is why it becomes necessary on the part of the

collegium to maintain a balance in making judicial appointments to give adequate representation to all sections of society, including the women and minorities, in the Supreme Court.

Let me highlight one more important issue that has been highly ignored by the Government as well as the judiciary. Under Article 124 of the Constitution, the appointments to the Supreme Court are made from three categories — judges, lawyers, and professors.

Mostly, the judges of the High Courts and lawyers are appointed to the Supreme Court based on their seniority, professional competence, integrity, and merit. Even after

70 years of the Supreme Court's establishment, no appointment of a distinguished jurist has been made in the Supreme Court despite the availability of constitutional provisions to this effect under Article 124(3)(c).

The President of India has to identify a "distinguished jurist" in consultation with the Central Government which requires the approval of the Supreme Court collegium that has the final say in judicial appointments. Admittedly, India has many brilliant law professors who have made a wonderful contribution to the legal system and can contribute more if the collegium provides them opportunities on the Supreme Court Bench.

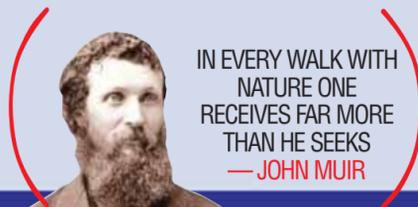
The time has come when the collegium should consider the appointment of an eminent law professor as a Supreme Court judge. This provision to appoint distinguished jurists as judges in the top court was incorporated in the Constitution by our founding fathers who were inspired by some foreign jurisdictions that had appointed eminent law professors as judges in their top courts.

Has not the time come when a dormant constitutional provision should be activated to include the professors of law in the judicial adjudication process in the country?

Given the above discussion, it is submitted that the Supreme Court collegium should consider diversifying the Bench by appointing more judges from different sources, communities, and regions of the country to sustain public trust and credibility of the judiciary.

As of now, the collegium needs to appoint six judges immediately in the Supreme Court, and four judges will retire by the end of this year. In toto, within a year, the collegium will have to recommend the appointments of around ten judges in the Supreme Court. This is a great opportunity to promote diversity on the bench of the top court of the country. It will have a far-reaching impact on the functioning and performance of the apex court which must reflect the make-up of the country.

(The writer is an advocate, Supreme Court of India.)



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

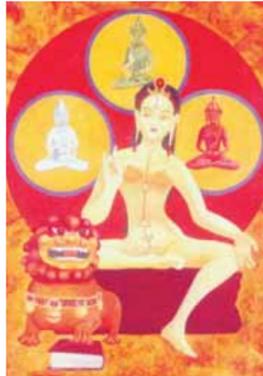
MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

You have been working hard to meet the challenges of life. Slow down the speed and look after your health. Your efforts bring you what you want in life. Overall, your vitality is very strong and you have the force behind you. This is an excellent time to begin or amp up your fitness plan. At work, you are bold and courageous in your undertakings and actions. Your creative energies are high, and you have a good sense of your life direction. You may head a meeting, conference, or just lead a project which requires group activities and handle it with command. Things are not so good on the love front. You may face disappointments and depression. Research before you get into personal relationships.

Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Yellow
Lucky day Thursday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

You will be mentally strong this week. Your open-mindedness and straightforwardness will help you grow. Add generosity and a pinch of kindness to your attitude. Showing your authority is important, as is being gentle. On the professional front, you are giving more in terms of your time and energy to the organisation you are working with. A powerful person is likely to support you. Overall, your career front is looking up. On the personal front, you may be a little detached. This week romance and close personal relationships are too bright. Listen to your inner voice. Stress levels need to be taken into consideration. This is a temporary phase, you will be on the right track soon.

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour Maroon
Lucky day Wednesday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week you will feel renewed energy and charm in your life. The care and attention you have been providing to your body will leave you in high spirits. You will experience a cheerful and happy state of mind. It is also time to rely on divine faith. New direction and protection make you trust now that the divine spirit is working in your best interest. Professionally, you feel a new spark, a new sense of creativity within yourself. You are more confident and aggressive in your approach and decision making now. Recognition, praise from friends and authorities, promotion are likely to take place. On the personal front, limited conditions from the past might have made you detached from the world. You feel cheated and deceived in a relationship.

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Silver
Lucky day Monday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week you grow even stronger and ready to face any obstacle in your life. Even when facing serious health challenges, a positive attitude can work wonders. Your firm stand and taking all care about health will be in your favour. On the professional front, good news is on the cards. Your connections with people will increase. You are an expert at fitting things together in new or unusual ways and that makes the work a lot smoother. If you're looking for a job you are about to find the right fit. You are very balanced and organised workwise. On the relationship front, co-operation and harmony will be your major concern this week. Be a good listener, trust your instincts, and connect with your innermost desires.

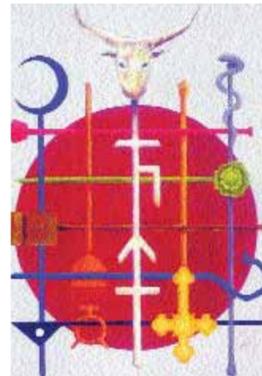
Lucky number 20
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Friday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week you are disciplined and know the needs of your body, mind, and spirit. You have a clear vision of your inner sense of values. Your concentration during this time is commendable. Your creativity will make you move constantly. You should use your positive energy in creative works, as an inner sense of satisfaction will give you more confidence. On the career front, other people may not understand or support your new ideas or proposals, but if you know that you're right, go ahead, and try to make them understand what your point of view is. Love relation is under question. It is important to give your partner time & space. You need to share your feelings with the one who you trust and find out the possible solution.

Lucky number 21
Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Wednesday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week you feel fresh, rejuvenated, and inspiring to move ahead. The health remains good, and you are in the process of making it even better. A good diet, nutrition, exercise, and living life natural is into your resolution. Spiritually and emotionally you feel fulfilled. Your enthusiasm and charm are even more increasing making many of others. On the career front, you find the situations are not favourable at the workplace and make up your mind for a change. You may be holding yourself back because you fear moving into the future. Seek new opportunities, for a better future. On the personal front, you should be flexible and go with the flow right now. Stick to your principles at the same time honour other's intelligence as well.

Lucky number 19
Lucky colour Purple
Lucky day Tuesday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

Your health will require attention. A family member's health needs your attention too, do not neglect it. You need to let go of old wrongs and wounds to move forward. Help your loved ones to see the truth. Learn to express yourself; don't suppress your feelings and requirements. This is a good week career-wise. The businessperson will see financial stability and gains in financial ventures. People will respect you more and your popularity will increase. Your social status shall enhance. For those who are in a job, favour from the boss is likely, your works and endeavours are taken into consideration and appreciated. This period may see you restless in your relationship area. You must make sincere efforts to make your partner happy.

Lucky number 15
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Tuesday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

Some negative forces are at play and you must fight with them this week. Seasonal ailments might make you inactive and dull. Proper diet, exercise and rest is the mantra of a healthy life. Do not compromise with the basics or you may have to face the repercussion of it. The working environment is not favourable and makes you frustrated at times. Don't waste your time and precious energy plotting revenge. Just get on with the next phase of your life. If you're looking for work, a potential position that you'd pinned your hopes on may not come through. On the relationship front, this week you can be the master and a mentor in your relations. You are attracted to people who are very creative and maybe more than usually focused on your career now.

Lucky number 25
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Sunday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

You need to be cautious about your health. You are likely to be under stress from a combination of factors, so it's particularly important to be gentle with yourself. If you're angry, allow yourself to express it, release your anxiety rather than turning your anger and sorrow on yourself. Professionally things are not in your favour. Some false allegations, interference from higher authorities, and interrogations might be faced this week. You may need some assistance to find a better approach to work. Don't hesitate to ask. If you're looking for work, this too may show a need to look in a different way or a different field than the one you've been pursuing. Love and marital affairs occupy your mind but you are unable to find a smooth going.

Lucky number 18
Lucky colour Black
Lucky day Saturday



CANCER June 21-July 22

Health is likely to suffer this week. Consider a second diagnosis if you are not sure about the first diagnosis of health. Get another health professional's opinion before you take any final decision. Be open to spiritual healing. Those struggling with a serious illness, know that a cure is not always linked with healing. You may require some therapy or surgery. On the career front, the businessperson will make a considerable stand. Hold your head up high and know that you are bringing to the table. Financially you may do better than you had ever dreamed. You need to be trustworthy and reliable otherwise a rise in mental distress and misunderstanding with the family is indicated. Be extra careful to avoid arguments.

Lucky number 28
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Saturday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week confusion will prevail. Several issues concerning health might crop up this week. There may be some hidden matters to deal with. An ENT problem may surface that will make you run to the doctor and consume most of your time. You must learn to prioritise things. On the career front, you share a good bonding with your colleagues and people at work. This is the right time for conferences and negotiations. Your compromising attitude will land you a good opportunity. Relationshipwise, this is a good week for building relationships. You will learn a whole lot about how you can take your relationship further. You will be able to make room for new people and new experiences. Love will blossom.

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Mustard
Lucky day Tuesday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

Your physical well-being depends on your mental well-being. This is a time when you need to be very conscious of your intuitive urges and reactions and bring them into balance with the greater good and meaning in life. This is not a time to act out in rage or hatred but instead to look at the situation from a place of love and compassion. Career-wise, pay more attention to what people around you are doing. Be cautious of politics at the workplace. Some negative forces are at play at your workplace to put you down. Avoid making important decisions now. You will have delays and over pending problems in all your works. And this will affect your relationships too. Be practical and bring balance in life that is mandatory currently.

Lucky number 30
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Saturday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Saraswati & Ganapati connect

Mother Goddess Saraswati is shown to be moving freely in a water body, with beautiful Lotus flower around. Lotus blooms in muddy waters. This is in acknowledgment of the fact that the earthly matter acquired its form-existence when aided by water element, and so does Lotus. Lotus acquired its beauty and dynamism out of the *Sakti* provided by the consciousness element, contextually symbolised by Mother. The Lotus flower here symbolises both creativity and lustre evident with knowledge. Though born in muddy waters, not even a drop of water or mud particle can stick to the lotus leaves. It, thus, implies a sense of detachment.

So, true wisdom can be acquired only when explored with a sense of detachment from all tempting worldly influences. Otherwise, it will be difficult to remain focused on the subject matter under consideration. The sense of duality driving a human mind does not let it identify the thin line dividing truth and untruth. This makes it difficult to acknowledge eternal truth it stands. As a matter of habit, it tempts us to get into comparison mode and judge things based on preconceived notions.

The Mother uses a peacock as her carrier for moving about in the skies. This indicates that we cannot afford to lose sight of the forces routed through the infinite, inaccessible and indestructible *Akasa* ether. It is important to note here that the world is a unified organism, covering the living world as well as all existences in the cosmos. And, obviously tracking down the information laid in the space above is no easy task.

Remember, the prized feed of a peacock is poisonous snake. When the peacock digests the snake, it leads to changes in its body chemistry. That holds the key to the beautiful colours of peacock's plumage. Similarly, knowledge acquisition cannot be an easy task. It implies that only those who take the pains associated with learning process kindly, are able to acquire the knowledge and wisdom vital to turning life into a beautiful experience.

Belief driven people may observe Saraswati *puja* in a ritualistic mode every year on the date specified for the purpose in our annual calendar. But nothing tangible would be achieved. If, however, we understand the concept underlying the imagery of Goddess Saraswati and follow



its script in real terms on a regular basis, we shall be able to acquire the wisdom necessary to ensure a smooth run of life with ease and comfort.

LORD GANAPATI: ACQUIRING WORLDLY WISDOM

Despite acquiring necessary wisdom by following the script laid down in the imagery of Goddess Saraswati, the journey of life in real terms may not be that easy. Particularly, given the enormity and diversity of the living world, and with people displaying varied interests, some of them even disparate. Bear in mind, each one of us is born unique, carrying varying mind-traits. That leads to arousal of competing interests. With mind, guided by an indwelling sense of duality, a being becomes subject to self-excited conflicting thoughts as well. The world, thus, remains a natural breeding ground for arousal of conflicting thoughts and competing interests. Amidst all this, we ought to conduct and perform, with ease and comfort. How does this work? you may ask.

The answer lies in becoming aware of the conduct rules of life — how to engage with the world around and the

issues in hand. But mere awareness is not enough. The concept needs to be drilled in the deep realms of the mind and absorbed well, for it to spontaneously outplay in our day-to-day conduct.

To do so, one must meditate with focus on Lord Ganapati on a regular basis. Meditating regularly on his imagery helps educate the mind to conduct smartly in life.

The story line running around Ganapati throws light on some vital truths of life. Seeing its importance in our day-to-day conduct, this imagery has been accorded special status. Ganapati is perceived as *Vighnavinasaka* (destroyer of evil). Keep in mind: difficulties could be kept at bay only through intelligent and balanced conduct, which this imagery very well symbolises. No wonder, no ritualistic *puja* in Indian tradition begins without first remembering Ganapati.

Let me add here that the concept underlying Goddess Saraswati and Ganpati runs hand in hand.

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