

**WORLD 7**  
MYANMAR ELECTION CHIEF  
CONSIDERS DISSOLVING SUU'S PARTY

**MONEY 8**  
INDIA'S CONSUMER  
CONFIDENCE WORSENS IN MAY

**SPORT 10**  
LECLERC SECURES  
MONACO POLE

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## Jab drive stumbles; just 3% got 2 doses

Need to raise number of inoculation to 1 cr daily to meet year-end target of vaccinating all

At a time when vaccines are needed the most to survive the deadly second Covid wave, India's nationwide jab drive is stumbling with the data showing nearly 65 per cent decline in vaccination in the last six weeks.

This is despite the fact that more individuals are eligible for vaccination after the nationwide vaccination policy was opened up from May 1 to all age groups above 18 years. The Government had launched the vaccination policy on January 16 this year offering Covaxin and Covishield to people above 60 years of age.

Data speaks: The number of vaccinations per week from April last week has fallen by more than half from a high of 2.4 crore in a week (April 3 to April 9) to 92 lakh reported between May 15 and May 21. (See box) Since the launch of the vaccine drive, a total 19.33 crore people as on May 22 have been vaccinated of which just 4.13 crore have been fully vaccinated. It means only around 3 per cent of the total population has been inoculated so far in nearly five months.

However, experts say the country needs to administer one crore shots daily to inoculate its entire adult population

and make them safe from the virus by year end.

But this seems to be unrealistic given the shortage of vaccines in the near future. On Saturday, the Government said 1,97,70,555 vaccine doses are still available with the States/UTs to be administered, while 25,98,760 vaccine doses are in the pipeline to be given to the States/UTs within the next 3 days.

Around 17 crore Covishield vaccines have been provided while Covaxin share has been comparatively low as 2.05 crore.

A total 23 crore i.e. 22,90,92,816 people have registered with the CoWin for job so far, including over 20 lakh who logged on Saturday itself.

The Government's move to increase the gap between the two doses of Covishield hopes to stave off the burden on providing the second dose amid acute shortage, but those in the age group of 18 plus looking for the first dose have been left disappointed.

As per the weekly data for vaccination as available by the CoWin portal, a total 92 lakh were inoculated in the weekly period between May 15 and May 21 which was abysmally low when compared to 2.07 crore jabs given to people between April 10 and April 16. The data covers the first and second doses given to the three categories, including the health workers and front line workers, those above 45 years and the adult population of 18 plus to 44 age group.

### VACCINATION STATUS OFF THE TRACK

WEEK	FIRST DOSE	SECOND DOSE	TOTAL
May 15-21	75.96 lakh	16.14 lakh	92.10 lakh
May 8-14	61.45 lakh	66.86 lakh	1.28 crore
May 1-7	58.78 lakh	62.84 lakh	1.21 crore
April 24-30	90.36 lakh	64.55 lakh	1.54 crore
April 17-24	1.12 crore	58.18 lakh	1.70 crore
April 10-16	1.77 crore	30.75 lakh	2.07 crore
April 3-9	2.26 crore	21.36 lakh	2.47 crore

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## Delhi Govt to shut vaccination centres for 18-44 yrs from today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government will have to shut vaccination centres for 18-44 years category from Sunday due to shortage of vaccines. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting the Centre to increase vaccine quota for Delhi amid potential

threats of third Covid wave. "The Centre should buy and distribute international vaccines; States should not be asked to procure vaccines and fight with each other on the international stage," Kejriwal said. Delhi needs 80 lakh doses per month, received 16 lakh doses in May, and will receive 8 lakh doses in June. **Detailed report on P3**

## Between 2 waves and surges, prices rise, economy contracts

### Food prices soar

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The prices of essential commodities have continued to rise ever since last spring when the country came into the grip of coronavirus and went into a prolonged lockdown.

In the retail markets, prices of all essential commodities, especially pulses and edible oils, have risen throughout the year. For example, the average retail price of packed mustard oil was ₹117 a kg in March 2020 and went up to ₹180 a kg in May 2021. Similarly, the average price of arhar dal was ₹91 a kg in April last year and went up to ₹108 in May this year.

The average prices of wheat, rice, flour, sugar and milk have also been increasing throughout the year. Of course, prices of vegetables and fruits remained under control except on a few occasions in case of onion and tomato.

According to the Price Monitoring Division of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, the average retail price of urad dal was ₹99 a kg on April 1 last year, which went up to ₹110 in May this year. The Government data has quoted the maximum price of urad dal as ₹100 a kg but in the local kirana market it is selling at ₹120 a kg in most metro cities.

Urad price in Bhuj has increased from ₹60 to ₹110. Indore witnessed an increase of ₹37 and Agartala ₹33 in urad price in a year. In Raipur, it has risen from ₹95 to ₹117 a kg. **Continued on Page 4**

ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES	AVG PRICE 2020	MAX	MIN	AVG PRICE 2021	MAX	MIN
ARHAR	₹91	₹120	₹65	₹108	₹135	₹75
GRAM	₹67	₹110	₹54	₹77	₹100	₹62
URAD	₹99	₹145	₹60	₹110	₹150	₹73
MOONG	₹103	₹140	₹68	₹107	₹162	₹70
MASOOR	₹68	₹106	₹55	₹85	₹118	₹66
MUSTARD OIL (PACKED)	₹117	₹167	₹90	₹167	₹200	₹113
GROUNDNUT OIL	₹139	₹180	₹75	₹177	₹238	₹113
VANASPATHI OIL	₹88	₹118	₹60	₹129	₹187	₹71
SUNFLOWER OIL	₹106	₹153	₹83	₹172	₹209	₹115
PALM OIL	₹87	₹120	₹65	₹133	₹172	₹80
MILK	₹45	₹65	₹30	₹49	₹70	₹38



\* PER KG

## Pandemic creates new poor; 70% of informal sec workers lose jobs

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has left millions of people poorer due to sharp decline in their incomes.

During the year-long Covid pandemic since March 2020, estimates suggest that up to 60-70 per cent of workers from the informal sector lost their jobs as the lockdown progressed. Among these, daily-wage workers, street vendors, small enterprises, and retailers were completely choked for various reasons. As most informal workers

in developing economies have low incomes, they also did not have the means to adopt alternative modes of work quickly.

According to the Economic Survey of Delhi 2020, the annual earnings of its residents dipped by over ₹20,000 a year owing to the "unparalleled effect" of the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to a report by the Pew Research Center a US-based think tank, indicated that the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic may have doubled poverty in India. **Continued on Page 4**

## Unemployment rate rises to 9.7%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The reduction in economic activities due to disruption of economic activities since March 2020 after the Covid-19 lockdown that forced thousands of businesses to scale down or entirely shut down their operations has triggered a massive rise in unemployment.

As per the Monitoring the Indian Economy (CMIE) data, with seven million job losses in April across India, the unemployment rate rose to 9.7 per cent on May 19, the highest since June 2020. The unemployment in urban areas rose to 11.8 per cent, highest since May 2020 when it was 23.14 per cent, while rural areas have recorded 8.8 per cent, which is the highest in the six months. **Continued on Page 4**

## CAPSULE

### EMERGENCY LANDING OF INDIAN BOXERS' FLIGHT

New Delhi: A SpiceJet plane ferrying ace pugilist MC Mary Kom and 30 other members of an Indian boxing contingent from Delhi was forced to circle over Dubai for around 45 minutes, and allowed to land after it declared a fuel emergency on Saturday, sources said.

### OVER 8L MIGRANTS LEFT DELHI IN LOCKDOWN

New Delhi: Over eight lakh migrant workers left the national capital in the first four weeks of the lockdown imposed to contain the spread of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, according to a report from the Delhi Transport Department.

### CYCLONE YAAS MAY TURN TO VERY SEVERE STORM

New Delhi: Cyclone Yaas is likely to intensify into a "very severe cyclonic storm" and cross the Odisha and the West Bengal coasts on May 26, the IMD said on Saturday. A low pressure area formed over the east-central Bay of Bengal and the adjoining north Andaman Sea on Saturday.

## Delhi's new cases down to 2,260, positivity 3.58%

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

At least 2,260 fresh Covid cases were reported in the national Capital on Saturday while at 3.58 per cent the positivity rate is also going down steadily in the past few days.

According to the health bulletin released by the Delhi Government, Delhi reported 182 fatalities on Saturday.

The daily positivity rate, crucial to assess the spread of coronavirus in the area, was on Friday reported below the 5 per cent mark (4.74%) and continued to slow down to 3.58 per cent, the lowest since March 31 when it was 2.71 per cent.

As per the report, 63,155 tests conducted, including 43,061 RTPCR/CBNAAT/True Nat tests on Saturday. Around 6,453 people recovered from Covid-19 disease.

## Cases abates but positivity rate over 10% in 382 dists



8 States have more than 1 lakh cases, 18 States have more than 15% positivity rate

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Saturday said even though the Covid-19 pandemic is stabilising in large parts of the country, there is still a long way to go as the positivity rate is still over 10 per cent in 382 districts.

Eight States have more than one lakh active cases and 18 States have more than 15 per cent positivity rate.

Also, an increase in deaths has been noted in six States — Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, UP, Punjab, Delhi.

Addressing a Press conference, NITI Aayog member (Health) VK Paul said India was able to come this far in controlling this pandemic through restrictions on social and economic activities and containment and care measures.

"In large parts of the country, the pandemic is stabilising,

the positivity rate and active cases are reducing and recovery rate is rising. It is also being seen that an increase is being seen in other States so this is a mixed picture but overall there has been a decrease in case burden but we have a long way to go to handle this wave and we also have to ensure that there should be no laxity in the steps we take," he said.

"As the situation improves we need to keep ensuring that the chain of transmission remains broken. In 382 districts, the positivity rate is over 10 per cent so there is still a long way to go to battle this particular wave," he said.

Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary in the Health Ministry, said that a continuous decline in the Covid-19 active cases has been noted in the last 20 days.

"From 17.13 per cent reported on May 3, the active cases now comprise 11.12 per cent of the country's total infections. A positive trend in the recovery has also been noted. The recovery rate which was 81.7 per cent on May 3 has increased to 87.76 per cent now," he said. **Continued on Page 4**

### Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES: 2,65,22,164 (+2,34,084)
DEATHS: 2,99,150 (+3,590)
RECOVERED: 2,34,04,320 (+3,40,622)
ACTIVE: 28,08,070
MAHA: 55,53,225 (+26,133)
K'TAKA: 23,98,925 (+31,183)
KERALA: 23,22,147 (+28,514)
TN: 18,06,861 (+35,873)
DELHI: 14,15,219 (+2,260)



## Now, black fungus invades small intestine in rare case

### 3 of a family die of Covid, 4th afflicted with mucormycosis

CHANDAN PRAKASH ■ NEW DELHI

Kumar, 56, a resident of Delhi who lost three of his family members, to Covid-19 complications, had barely completed the last rites of his wife when he experienced pain in his abdomen and visited a city hospital. To his shock, he was diagnosed with mucormycosis (black fungus) of small intestine, a rare form of such infection.

Till now it was understood that misuse of steroids in Covid patients leads to black fungus

## Explain delay in nominating 12 MLCs: HC to Maha Gov

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Governor BS Koshiyari has found himself in the dock over the inordinate delay in the nomination of 12 members to the State Legislative Council, with the Bombay High Court issuing him a notice, demanding to know as to when he would decide on the issue.

While hearing public interest litigation on the delay in the Governor nominating 12 members based on a recommendation made by the Maharashtra Government on November 6, 2020, the HC bench of Justices SJ Kathawalla and SP Tavade on Friday asked Koshiyari as to why he had not so far taken a decision on the recommendation.

The HC bench directed that the Secretary to the Governor be made a respondent in the case and asked the latter to file his say in the mat-

ter by June 9 when the case would be heard next.

"We direct respondents to file an affidavit in reply setting out reasons for not acting on the representation submitted to the Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra by the Council of Ministers... and by what time the submission of the council of ministers, November 6, 2020, will be considered and disposed of," said the HC.

"He (the Governor) must decide it either way. This is something he has to do. He can't keep it in his drawer, not to see the light of day," Justice Kathawalla said.

Meanwhile, an RTI filed by activist Anil Galgali seeking the list of members recommended by the Maharashtra Cabinet for nomination to the State Legislative Council, has elicited a shocking reply saying that the Governor's Secretariat does not have a copy of the list. **Continued on Page 4**

## Nepal Prez dissolves House, announces snap polls in Nov

### Opp alliance to move court

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal's President dissolved the House of Representatives on Saturday for the second time in five months and announced snap elections in November, rejecting both embattled Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and the Opposition alliance's claims to form a Government, a "regressive" move that will be legally challenged yet again.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari announced in an early morning statement that the House of Representatives has been dissolved in accordance with Article 76(7) of the

Constitution, ending a day of high-voltage political drama in the Himalayan nation. As per the Article, a date to conduct another election within six months must also be fixed. The President has called early elections pursuant to the Article, the dates being set for November 12 and November 19.

The announcement came after PM Oli in his last deal-sealing move on Friday mid-night recommended the Office of the President to dissolve the 275-member House and announce dates for early polls.

Earlier, Oli and Opposition leader Sher Bahadur Deuba had staked separate claims to premiership, both of which were rejected by the President, citing that none had adequate grounds to win a trust vote. **Detailed report on P7**

## Class XII exams only for major subjects mullied

New Delhi: Conducting exams for only major subjects, planning them in two phases keeping in mind the Covid-19 situation in respective States or devising an internal assessment scheme — these are among the suggestions likely to be discussed at a high-level meeting on Sunday to decide the fate of pending Class 12 board examination.

The Ministry of Education has invited suggestions from various stakeholders that will be taken up at the meeting scheduled to be chaired by Union Minister Rajnath Singh. A senior board official, however, said, "Nothing has been finalised yet. A final call will only be taken by the Education Ministry after considering suggestions from all stakeholders." **PNS**

**Detailed report on P5**



HOME THEATRE

# A nothing film



**GRANDSON OF SARDAR**  
Netflix  
\*ing: Arjun Kapoor  
Rated: 3/10

Except for the girth of Arjun Kapoor and his comfort level with it, there is nothing else that impacts you in this movie.

It's an injustice to arrived cast like Neena Gupta, Kawaljeet Singh, Soni Razdan and Kumud Mishra to be so sidelined by lack of flesh to characters which struggle to make some kind of mark in the absence of much movement.

The film, based on a loosely strung family story of Partition and a matriarch's quest for a return to Lahore in her final moments is just that — a loose and

directionless idea that fails to fructify even though a part of it pretends to be revolutionary.

As the matriarch Gupta and her rather obvious face prosthetics get deluged by unhappening events around them, the film ambles from folly to folly on the bulky shoulders of Arjun Kapoor who is actually the grandson of Sardar.

The director's obsession to go with quirks also falls apart after a here and there cameo of whiskey. Kapoor looks very much an out of job youth who returns from America to be with his *dadi* and give her some menus of fun as she passes with a tumour.

Despite the emotional angle to the story and all the nostalgia of Partition, the story seldom moves or justifies its length of time. All said, this one is best left aside.



# 'Neela was an emotionally challenging role'

SAYANTANI GHOSH, who plays Daljeet Bagga in Sony SAB's *Tera Yaar Hoon Main*, tells MUSBA HASHMI what made her come on board the project, being in the industry for 15 years and why she sees this role as a challenge

**■What made you come on board Tera Yaar Hoon Main?**

There are many factors for it. Of course I wanted to associate with Sony SAB to begin with. My association with the producers goes a long way and the show itself attracted me. I wanted to be a part of a light hearted comedy drama because that's not what people associate me with. They see me experimenting with family dramas, mythological and fantasy shows, but this was something new and challenging for me. Also, I was amazed when the makers of the show thought of me playing Daljeet, a Punjabi character. Like I said, at times you tend to get stereotyped, that is what happened and people started thinking of me as a Bengali character. But after 15 years of my career, to get a chance to play something different and to be able to challenge myself as an artist was a huge reason for me to come on board the show.

**■How has your journey been thus far?**

It has been an emotional one with a lot of hard work. I am overwhelmed that I have reached this stage in my life and career. It took years of heart break, sitting at home and thinking of myself as a failure to reach here. My journey has been my teacher.

**■I am not a trained actor, neither I come from a family where this profession comes easy. I come from a family where the emphasis is only on academics. But, I chose this field and, of course, my family has supported me throughout. I very humbly say that my journey is my guru, work is worship for me and my view is not myopic, I see my work as my personality. I can't segregate acting from my personality. It's been a journey of self-evolvement and commitment.**

I can't term it easy or hard, but yes it was challenging. As an artist, when you have worked over a period of time, everything that's hard becomes a challenge. But also because of your experience, everything becomes easy after a point of time. As I had said before, comedy or light hearted drama is something I haven't explored before. I always feel that it is one of the most difficult

**■In these 15 years of career, do you think you should have done something differently or shouldn't have done at all?**

There are times when you question yourself and think 'why have I chosen this field'. I could have got into a more secure field. Everything comes with its advantages and disadvantages, so is this profession. But, standing today, I wouldn't say I want to become anything but an actor. I love dance and acting. This is the best profession

for me where I can get to express myself, play so many different characters and get love from so many people. I have no regrets. There are doubts sometime, but I love being an actor.

**■What has been the toughest project till date?**

Every project has a challenging factor. I can't name one. Some are emotionally challenging, while others are physically challenging. I have done *Dare to Dance* and *Mahabharat*, they both were physically challenging. Then there are roles like Neela Parikh from *Naamkaran*, which challenged me emotionally. Hence, I can't pick and choose projects.

**■Is there a checklist you follow before taking up projects?**

I look at the basic things — the show, what is the story about, how important is my character and whether I want to do such a character at that time in my career. But, one thing that always tops my list is creatively how important my character is. Also, I want to do different things and roles, because otherwise you tend to get bored.

**■A lesson you have learnt during the pandemic.**

I am a Virgo and I plan things in advance. But the pandemic has reminded me the classic proverb: Man proposes, God disposes. We tend to get into a zone where we stop living in the moment and start planning our future. So, my focus right now is to enjoy the moment.

Also, 2020 has reminded me the importance of family, although I always crave for my family, but because of my work I couldn't spend much time with them. But in the last one year, I have spend about nine months with my family. Also, it is only the good health that matters.

## TELLY TALE

**JIYA'S FASHION STATEMENT**

Sony SAB's show *Kaatelal & Sons*, the story of two sisters on the journey of unending their dreams continues to



entertain the audiences with its motivating and engaging storyline. Jiya Shankar who essays the role of *dabang* Sushela is winning the hearts of the viewers with her powerful performance and unique style. In the upcoming episodes the viewers will watch the striking sisters Garima and Sushela as they lie to Dharampal about their shop's ownership so that they can get some extra time to come up with a plan.

Jiya Shankar in a candid conversation revealed that she is a fashion enthusiast and loves to keep herself updated about the latest fashion trends. Sushela aka Jiya Shankar shared her love for fashion, the trends she swears by and how she keeps herself on top of her fashion game.

Jiya Shankar talking about her love for fashion said: "I have been fashion enthusiast since I was in school. I believe Fashion is the armour to survive the reality of everyday life. Since I was young, I used to always prefer style over fashion as I believe feeling comfortable in your own skin is very important to carry anything well. I remember I used to own this dress which was given to me by my mother it holds a very exceptional place in my heart as she especially stitched it for me. In past, there have been many trends that I have followed. From hoops to chokers, skater skirts, and many more. Even my profession as an artist demands the know-how of the ongoing fashion trends because whenever we attend any events, it is imperative for an artist to know what

they would like to wear and what their fans would also like them to carry. If we are talking about fashion not talking about Sonam Kapoor it would be a crime she is the one who changed the meaning for fashion for all the girls out there."

She further adds: "I always keep a track on all the latest fashion trends in India and around the globe. It is like my daily ritual to read online fashion magazines. Keeping in touch with my love for fashion is a stress buster for me. I might not like all the trends which are making headlines but I still I read about them to keep myself informed. Fashion is a form of expression and I would always continue to express myself through my own fashion statement. In future I wish to start my own fashion label and pursue this passion of mine more diligently."

**DOSE OF MOTIVATION**

As the competition heats up in Colors' much-loved *Dance Deewane*, some lucky contestants are in for a little surprise. The contestants have been impressing the judges week after week with some breathtakingly spectacular performances. To reward their hard work, two lucky contestants will get to connect with their families over a video call.

Somansh from Generation 1 was the first lucky guy to get the surprise call from his father and the two had a great time catching up. To make the surprise even more sweeter, Somansh's father also made a special appearance on the show. The young dancer hugged his father and could not hold back his tears. Interestingly, Somansh believes that his father is his lucky charm so his meeting definitely bring him more luck.

The next contestant was Pallavi from Generation 3 who got into an emotional video call with her husband Vitthal right after her performance. Vitthal confessed on the call that he was not always around as he was busy working and apologised to her. Vitthal motivated Pallavi and told her: "I am really proud of you. I know I have been



self-centred and I could not give you enough time. But you are completely the opposite of that. You are someone who always takes people. I want to apologize to you for giving you so little time. You are now setting an example for other women who want to live their dreams."

Pallavi was in tears on hearing this and thanked the judges profusely for this much-needed boost of positivity.

**MALAIKA IN AWE OF SUPER DANCERS**

Week-on-week the contestants of *Super Dancer - Chapter 4* have been enthraling the audience with their dancing talent. Under the tutelage of



their *Super Gurus*, these contestants have been honing their skills and the result is for all to see. This weekend, the show pays a befitting tribute to the evergreen actresses of Indian Film Industry with the theme *Bollywood Queens Special*. Contestants will be seen performing on iconic songs of these *Bollywood Divas*.

Contestant Amit Kumar from Delhi along with super guru Amardeep gave an exceptional dance performance on one of the popular tracks of Jaya Prada *Daali Wale Daali Baja* and wowed the judges with their style. Geeta Kapur said: "Amardeep this was a very difficult song for your type of dance form which is robotics. But I am glad that you chose this song. Well done"

Malaika was super impressed by Amit's performance and started off by saying: "Amit, *aap itne effortless kaise ho yaa?*" Amardeep, I think you couldn't match up to Amit today... *aap guru ho, ye aapka shishya hai...* but I felt *aap thode peechhe reh gaye* because today he was on fire!"

Terence Lewis, also called as technical guru (Dr. T) said: "*Aaj Bollywood Queens Special hai* and you have given a tribute to Jaya Prada ji. I loved how you have interpreted this song. It was beautiful. (Amit) *aisa nahi lag raha tha ki aap beat pe naach rahe hain, beat aap ke saath naach rahi thi!* It was that good. Well done Amit, you were a star!"

While everyone was conversing about *Bollywood Queen Jaya Prada*, Ritvik revealed that Amit's father wishes to share the stage with entertainment diva Malaika Arora and requested her to dance with Amit's father. Malaika was happy to shake a leg with Amit's father and they both danced with all enthusiasm. Looking at all the fun on stage, the contestants also joined in and danced along.

**JUHI SHARES COVID DOS & DON'TS**

Zee TV's *Hamarwali Good News* is a primetime drama that has kept its audience at the edge of their seats since its inception. After Renuka's death and Meera's entry, the show has seen several twists and turns, keeping the viewers glued to their TV sets while they stay indoors during this pandemic. With such a gloomy atmosphere, the actors of the show have tried to keep their fans and followers positive through the show as well as their social media pages. In fact, Juhi Parmar who plays the role of Meera has now shared a very important message for people across India.

Like several people across India, Juhi was also shocked a month or so when she found out that her mother had tested positive for COVID-19. Though she has recovered, the journey wasn't easy and with people across the country stressed about their families or friends who are suffering from the illness, Juhi shared anecdotes from her own COVID scare at home. In order to help people in looking after their family members suffering from COVID-19, she shared a few do's and don'ts to keep in mind.

"I would advise everyone to keep an oximeter handy, so that you can keep a track of the patient's oxygen level and if it drops, then you should immediately consult your doctor. One more important thing to do is to keep the patient hydrated, you should see to it that they have at least 10 glasses of warm or normal water along with a glass or two of fresh fruit juice, either orange or lemon juice which are rich in Vitamin C. Coconut water and buttermilk can be given too. Don't give them oily food or canned items"

## WEEKLY NATTER

### EXPLORING ALL GENRES IS IMPORTANT: ARSLAN

Arslan Goni says as an actor one often comes across projects that may sound great on paper but could end up seeming not so great when seen on screen. It is the reason why working with the right director becomes important for an actor.

"There are quite a few things that sometimes have sounded great on paper and then not so great on celluloid. Hence, I believe the director is very important for whichever work he is taking you in," said Arslan.

He believes when it comes to an actor, exploring all genres is equally important. Arslan for one does not differentiate between fiction and

fantasy. "When it comes to fiction and fantasy, honestly I would love to explore both," he said.

"I want to do roles that give me a chance to showcase my skills as an actor. There is so much inside me that I haven't let out there yet. I promise to the people watching me that whenever I get a chance, I will shock them. Both the role and the story should be good," Arslan declared.

His latest offering is *Mai Hero Boli Raha Hun*, where he essays the role of Lala, a gangster. The show is based on the story of Nawab, played by Parth Samthaan, who becomes a powerful underworld don. IANS

### 'I LOVE THE SHORT FILM GENRE'

Actor Shagun Pandey, who is part of the short film *Blind Love*, says while it was tough to take time out of his busy schedule to shoot for the film, he is glad he did it.

"I love the short film genre. It allows you to explore so much as an actor in a short period of time. This was my first attempt to do a short film and my director Pradipt Khairwar convinced me to take this up. I first met him when I was shooting a music video for Guru Randhawa. Pradeep sir was there in the creative team. He asked me for my time and then I got busy with *Kyun Utthe Dil Chhod Aaye*, my TV show. Somehow, I managed the time and we shot in Shimla for two days and wrapped this up" he said.

The film also stars Aalisha Panwar. Talking about the equation he shares with her, Shagun says: "Aalisha is a very happy and energetic personality and so am I, and our director. I have always believed that genuine emotions always gets portrayed on screen. Aalisha and I are both from Chandigarh and I used to work as a coordinator so I have taken her auditions in the past. We knew each other since then." IANS



### HIMANI SHIVPURI MOURNS LAXMAN'S DEMISE

Actor Himani Shivpuri, who worked in films such as *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* and *Hum Saath-Saath Hain*, mourned the death of veteran music director Laxman of the Raam Laxman duo, who passed away on Saturday.

Himani said: "It is definitely a huge loss because they have given such iconic numbers. All the songs *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* and *Hum Saath-Saath Hain* are so beautiful. These movies keep on playing even today and their songs are fresh as ever."

"*Didi tera dewar* was a perennial favourite in all marriages. So many songs — it is really a huge loss. What iconic music he has given, and I just pray for the soul of the departed and offer my condolence to the family."

Laxman's real name was Vijay Patil. His partner Surendra passed away in 1976, soon after they signed the Mahendra Sandhu-starrer *Agent Vinod*. Vijay continued to use his partner's name and continued creating music as Raam Laxman in Surendra's memory. Their major hits came in collaboration with Rajshri Productions.

"What beautiful numbers in *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* That was my first commercial film. The song *Didi tera dewar deewana* is so catchy and beautiful. The sitar in the *Sandhan* song of the film was also so beautiful. I have such beautiful memories of that film," Himani said.

She also reminisced about the tracks *Sunoji dulhan* and *Maiya Yashodha* from *Hum Saath-Saath Hain* created by Raam Laxman. IANS

# Will shut centres for 18+ as we have no jabs: CM



A notice saying that no vaccines were available for people below 45 years was pasted outside a vaccination centre on Saturday PTI

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government will have to shut down the vaccination centres for people in the 18-44 years category from Sunday due to an acute shortage of vaccines. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting the Centre to increase the vaccine quota for the national Capital amid potential threats of a third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic that has been wreaking havoc across the country. "The Centre should buy and distribute international vaccines. States should not be asked to procure vaccines and fight with each other on the international stage," Kejriwal said. Given its population, Delhi needs 80 lakh doses per month. However, it received just 16 lakh doses in May and will

receive a grossly inadequate eight lakh doses in June. "If we continue to receive eight lakh doses, it will take 30 months to vaccinate all adults in Delhi," Kejriwal pointed out. Amid fears that the vaccine crisis plaguing the city may trigger a higher Covid death rate, especially in the wake of predictions of a third wave that is expected to sweep the country, Kejriwal urged the Centre to buy and distribute international vaccines. "The States should not be the ones to procure vaccines and fight each other on the international stage. The Central Government should order all companies to make vaccines as Bharat Biotech has agreed to share Covaxin's formula with other firms," Kejriwal said citing the examples of other Indian States demanding vaccines too. He said that the Central Government should procure

the jabs from nations that have more vaccines than they need and international vaccine manufacturers should be permitted to produce the shots in India. "It has been in the news that many countries have accumulated more than adequate vaccines with them. They have stored more than their fair share, as the numbers of vaccines with them is more than their populations. The Government of India should plead with them to give the surplus vaccines to our country and all foreign vaccine manufacturing companies should be immediately permitted to produce vaccines in India." "The maximum number of youth has died in the second wave of the Coronavirus. The youngsters have died and the quota of vaccines for the youth has gotten over," Kejriwal said further.

# CM honours young doctor who died fighting Covid

Provides financial assistance of ₹1 crore

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday provided financial assistance of ₹1 crore to the family of Corona Warrior Dr Anas Mujahid. Dr Mujahid, who was a junior resident doctor in the department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the GTB Hospital in the national Capital, succumbed to Covid on May 9 while on duty. Kejriwal said that Dr Mujahid served the people of Delhi during the Corona pandemic in a selfless manner. "I assured his father of any help that he might need in the future," he said. Dr Mujahid is survived by his father Dr Mujahidul Islam, mother Nasima Mujahid, brothers Imaduddin, Maaz, Hassan and sister Sidrah.



Dr Mujahid being honored by officials.

# Court declines to extend Kalra's police remand

POLICE ARE SAYING THAT THERE ARE 23 ACCOUNTS WHERE THE MONEY WAS RECEIVED BUT I ONLY HAVE ONE ACCOUNT WHERE MONEY WAS RECEIVED THROUGH REAL-TIME GROSS SETTLEMENT-KALRA

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A city court on Saturday declined to grant further police remand of restaurateur Navneet Kalra to the Delhi Police in the oxygen concentrators' (OC) black marketing case. The Crime Branch had asked the local court to grant five more days of custodial interrogation of the businessman; however, the court dismissed the plea for the second time. Public Prosecutor Atul Shrivastava told the court that police need to quiz Kalra about some WhatsApp messages where people, who purchased the OCs, said that the products were not working. Advocate Vineet Malhotra, appearing for Kalra, opposed the police plea and said that Kalra was cooperating with



the investigation. "In my considered opinion, police custody remand is not warranted. The application is dismissed," said Metropolitan Magistrate Vasundhara Azad. Earlier, a similar application was junked by a different judge on May 20 and Kalra was sent to 14-day judicial custody. Prior to this, the restaurateur was remanded to three days in police custody following his arrest. Kalra, who was produced before the court virtually through Mandoli jail, told the court that he was being implicated in the case because he was famous. He also claimed to have supplied the OCs to police officers. "Because I am famous, they are trying to put it on me. I am not the manufacturer. I

# 5 walk-in job centres for Delhi Police kin

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has made five walk-in Covid-19 vaccination centres for the family members of the police personnel who are aged 45 years and above. Delhi Police Commissioner, SN Shrivastava on Saturday also directed the force's officers to monitor their functioning and give vaccination the priority it deserves. "Police families need priority vaccination along with the personnel because they are also at high risk of infection as policemen and women have to work as frontline warriors in the Covid battle and go back to their families," said Shrivastava. Delhi Police has opened centres at the CGHS Wellness Centre at New Police Lines (NPL), Old Police Lines (OPL), Sector-23 in Dwarka, Jharoda Kalan and Delhi Police Wellness Centre at Hauz Khas. "The Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), First Battalion will be the coordinating official at the NPL Wellness Centre while DCP, North will be the coordinating official at the OPL centre. DCP, Dwarka will be the designated official at the Dwarka Wellness Centre while Principal, Police Training Academy will be the coordinating official at the CGHS Wellness Centre in Jharoda," said a senior police official.

# PICTALK



Family members perform the last rites of a Covid-19 victim at Nigambodh Ghat cremation ground in New Delhi on Saturday PTI

# Look after your own deceased staff's kin: CP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police Commissioner, SN Shrivastava, on Saturday directed his officers to remain in touch with the families of police personnel who have lost their family members to Covid and alleviate their pain through counseling and personal care. Shrivastava, during the weekly review meeting also

took stock of the crime and law and order situation across the city. During the meeting he also directed that action against financial frauds, cyber crimes should go on by means of prompt and proper investigation. Appreciating the action of the Crime Branch and Cyber Units in busting gangs of Covid cheats in the national Capital and from other States, and

arresting over 100 people involved in cheating Delhiites on the promise of providing medicines and machines need for the treatment of corona, Shrivastava said such coordinated action shall continue as fraudsters always find novel ways of duping people. He also took stock of cases of hoarding, black marketing, overcharging and directed the field officers to remain vigilant

against fresh instances of black marketing of essential medicines for black fungus and also online frauds on pretext of vaccination and vaccine tourism. On the issue of Covid orphans, Shrivastava said that the local police should be watchful of children whose parents succumbed to Covid, and immediately take the help of legal authorities such as the CWC to shelter and rehabilitate them.

# SDMC gets drains monsoon ready

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) claimed to have desilted 50 per cent of its drains under its jurisdiction ahead of monsoon. SDMC Mayor Anamika said that the civic body has started desilting drains and completed most of the work but the drains run by the Delhi Government's are still choked. "Several drains of corporation are merged with PWD drains and many have been found choked. Mosquitoes that cause chikungunya and dengue breed in the stagnant mush. The government must start the process of cleaning it as soon as possible," she said. The SDMC has removed nearly 14,000 metric tonnes of silt from drains and transport-

ed the same at landfill site, she added. Drains in the city are maintained by the Public Works Department (PWD), Irrigation and Flood departments of the Delhi Government and the municipal corporations. "Instead of desilting drains before the approaching monsoon, the AAP government keeps busy passing the buck to shrug off their responsibilities every year knowing well that vector-borne diseases proliferate during rainy season as water accumulates in part of the city owing to choked drains," the mayor said. Anamika on Saturday visited areas of Pul Prahladpur which had recently witnessed water logging due to massive rain. While inspecting the sites, she raised concern over choked drains run by the PWD. She added that the PWD has failed to clear silt from major drains which has resulted in water logging in various parts of the Capital.

# AMU student leader Usmani booked for objectionable tweets

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has registered a case against former Aligarh Muslim University student leader Sharjeel Usmani for allegedly posting "objectionable tweets". Police said they received a complaint from Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP's), Media Head, Naveen Kumar who alleged that Usmani's tweets against Lord Ram and late journalist Rohit Sardana were "defamatory", "mischievous" and were intended to hurt religious sentiments. "An First Information Report (FIR) has been regis-

tered under section 505 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at Laxmi Nagar police station. Further investigation is going on," said a senior police official. Earlier, on May 20, police in Maharashtra's Jalna district had registered an FIR against the former student leader for allegedly posting some objectionable content on social media. The complainant, Ambadas Ambhore, who hails from Ambad in Jalna and works with the Hindu Jagran Manch, had alleged that Usmani used disrespectful words for Lord Ram in some of his recent posts on Twitter and hurt religious sentiments. Earlier this year, the Pune police had also registered a case against Usmani under IPC section 153 (A) (promoting enmity between different groups on the ground of religion, etc) over his speech made during the Elgar Parishad conclave held there on January 30.

# 2 arrested for cheating women on matrimonial sites

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested two men for allegedly duping women after promising to marry them in the National Capital. The women were approached by the accused through a matrimonial website. The accused have been identified as Mohammad Shafiq (25) and Mohammad Saif (23), both residents of Tughlakabad in Delhi. According to Atul Kumar Thakur, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South district, a woman had lodged a complaint at the Hauz Khas police station, alleging that she had met a man through a matrimonial website and exchanged numbers. "The accused promised to marry her. After a while, the accused told the woman that he had come to India from London but had been stopped at the airport. The accused asked the woman to deposit ₹5,45,000 in two bank accounts. The victim deposited money. But when the accused asked her again to deposit Rs 9.5 lakh, she got suspicious and lodged a complaint," said the DCP. "During investigation, police analysed the bank account details in which the money was deposited. A total of ₹4,65,300 was found deposit-

ed in the account at the Okhla Industrial Area Branch in the name of Shafiq who was then arrested," said the DCP. "Based on his disclosure, Saif was also apprehended from the Tughlakabad area. During interrogation, Shafiq disclosed that he and Saif had opened seven accounts in different banks and sold them to a man named Rahul for ₹20,000 each account," said the DCP adding that investigation is underway to ascertain the role of the third person. "Shafiq also had changed the address on his Aadhaar cards to a false address with the help of Saif to evade arrest. Saif used to withdraw the money from different ATMs on the direction of Rahul on a 15 per cent commission basis," said the DCP. "Police have also recovered seven ATM cards, two mobile phones, ₹32,400 in cash and one scooter have been recovered from the possession of the accused," said the DCP adding that further investigation is underway.

## Suggestions to Follow During Home Quarantine

### Do's

- Stay at Home
- All Family Members to Wear Mask
- Sanitize hands
- Self isolate and Take Rest
- Stay in Well Ventilated Room
- Consume Nutritious Food
- Regularly Monitor Body Temperature and Oxygen Level
- Follow Respiratory Etiquettes
- Do Regular Exercise and Yoga
- Asymptomatic & Mild Covid-19 Patients: Anulom-Vilom (Pranayama), Steaming, Gargle
- Consume Turmeric Milk, Drink Warm Water and do Steam inhalation with Mint

### Don'ts

- Don't Come in Contact with Anyone
- Don't Throw Used Tissue Paper Anywhere
- Don't Share Food With Anyone
- Don't Touch Eyes, Nose and Mouth
- Caregiver Not to Share items Used by Patient
- Adopt Prone Process if Experiencing Difficulty in Breathing

Sh. Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana

Get Tested for COVID-19, if you experience following symptoms for more than 5 days

- Fever or Cold
- Dry Cough or Sore Throat
- Headache, congested or runny nose
- Fatigue or Body aches
- Difficulty in breathing
- Loss of taste, smell or Appetite

While taking care of yourself

- Get tested for COVID-19
- Consult your doctor, if oxygen level is less than 93 per cent
- Get a blood test done after consulting your doctor

### Covid-19 Helpline Number

**8558893911** (For Entire State) & **1075** (Except Gurugram & Faridabad)

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

# Black fungus declared notifiable disease in U'khand

**Dehradun:** With black fungus cases rising in Uttarakhand, it was declared a notifiable disease in the State under the Epidemic Act, 1897 on Saturday. So far, 64 people have been infected with black fungus in the State and of them, four have died. Black fungus or mucormycosis has been declared a notifiable disease for its co-ordinated treatment as a growing number of people are contracting the infection post Cov-19, Health Secretary Pankaj Kumar Pandey said. A notifiable disease is required by law to be reported to the government authorities. The collection of information allows the authorities to monitor the disease and provides early warning of possible outbreaks.

The State Government also issued an SOP on Saturday for the judicious distribution of Amphotericin B, a drug used in treating black fungus patients. Amphotericin B should be provided to only government medical colleges, institutions and Covid-dedicated hospitals on payment after they formally requisition for its supply on the prescribed format giving details of the patients and nature of infection. Rashmi Pant and Kailash Gunjyal have been appointed as the nodal officers for scrutinising the requisitions for Kumaon and Garhwal regions respectively, the SOP said. The current SOP supersedes an earlier order issued on May 18 for the judicious use of the drug, it said. **PTI**

# Bengal reports first black fungus death

**Kolkata:** A 32-year-old woman died of mucormycosis, commonly known as black fungus infection, becoming the first death due to the disease in West Bengal, a state health department official said on Saturday. Shampa Chakraborty, a resident of the southern part of the city's Haridevapur area, was admitted to the Sambhunath Pandit Hospital with Covid-19. She was later diagnosed with mucormycosis, he said. The patient, who was highly diabetic and was on insulin, died on Friday. At present, five patients are undergoing treatment for the disease in the state and all of them are from neighbouring Bihar and Jharkhand, the official said adding, "We are constantly monitoring their condition." **PTI**



Flyover wears a deserted look during Covid-induced lockdown in Nagpur on Saturday

# Telangana logs 3,308 Covid-19 cases, 21 deaths

**Hyderabad:** Telangana on Saturday reported 3,308 Covid-19 cases taking the tally to over 5.51 lakh cases while the death toll was 3,106 with 21 casualties, said a bulletin. Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) accounted for the most number of cases with 513 followed by Khammam (228) and Rangareddy (226), the bulletin said. The State has 42,959 active cases and over 63,000 samples were tested. The total number of cumulative cases stood at 5,51,035 while with 4,723 being cured, the total recoveries were 5,04,970. Cumulatively, over 1.44 crore samples have been tested. The samples tested per 10 lakh population was over 3.88 lakh, the bulletin said. The case fatality rate in the State was 0.56 per cent, while it was 1.1 per cent at the national-level. The recovery rate in the State was 91.64 per cent, while it was 87.7 per cent in the country. **PTI**

# 17-year-old raped in Kota

**Kota (Raj):** A 17-year-old girl here was allegedly raped by her neighbour, an incident which came to light after the victim was found four-month pregnant, police said on Saturday. However, the accused, also a minor, is yet to be detained. The girl was sent to a hospital for medical examination after her statement was recorded before the magistrate. Parents of the girl lodged an FIR and alleged that she was repeatedly raped by the boy, Talera police station SHO Mahesh Singh Sandhu said. Police have lodged a case under Section 376 of the IPC and provisions of the POCSO Act, he added. **PTI**

# 12-year-old raped in Agra

**Agra:** A 12-year-old girl was allegedly raped by three men at a village here, police said on Saturday. Police have arrested two of the accused while the third is on the run. The girl was taken to an abandoned "ashram" by one of the accused where she was raped by all three, police said. She was alone at home when one of the accused turned up there, police said, adding that her parents had gone to attend a marriage function. The girl told her parents about the incident when they returned home on Friday. The accused have been identified as Chota (25), Sanju (25) and Munna (30). SP (East) Ashok Venkat said Chota and Sanju have been arrested. **PTI**

# Ensure uninterrupted oxygen supply to States even during cyclone: Patnaik

**Bhubaneswar:** As Odisha continues to supply Medical oxygen to 15 States besides meeting its own need for treatment of the critically ill Covid-19 patients, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday told the authorities to ensure smooth transportation of tankers even during the cyclone likely to cross the east coast on May 26. Patnaik issued this direction to the task force constituted for the purpose and categorically said, "There should not be any disruption in oxygen supply within and outside the state. The task force should closely monitor the situation." Odisha has so far supplied oxygen to Uttar Pradesh, Madhya

Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Bihar, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Kerala Chandigarh among others to meet their requirements for the Covid-19 patients during the deadly second surge. Industries secretary Hemant Sharma, who joined the Chief Minister's review meeting on the preparedness for the ensuing cyclone, said, "Arrangements have been made to stock adequate quantity of oxygen for emergency situation. Additional generator sets have been sent to all the refilling centres." Sharma said the all the district health authorities

have also been told to keep the empty cylinders filled ahead of the possible calamity. "The state will ensure uninterrupted oxygen supply to different states," the industries secretary said. Meanwhile, Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) P K Jena said that in order to ensure seamless production and refilling of oxygen cylinders required for the Covid-19 patients, the Industries Department has prepared a special action plan in consultation with the oxygen manufacturers and refilling agencies. This apart, the SRC said steps are also being taken to ensure adequate stock of oxygen cylinders in each district Covid hospital and Covid care centres. **PTI**

# Lioness, 4 blackbucks found dead near dam in Gujarat

**Ahmedabad:** A lioness and four blackbucks were found dead near a dam at Visavadar in Gir forest division of Gujarat's Junagadh district, an official said on Saturday. These wild animals apparently died due to drowning, and there does not seem to be any connection with cyclone Tauktae, which ravaged the state earlier this week, he said. "The carcasses were found on the banks of a dam in Vekariya village of Visavadar range forest in Gir West forest division on Friday, and the cause of the death is being ascertained," chief conservator of forest (wildlife), Junagadh, Dushyant Vasavada said. Gir forest in Junagadh, one of the worst cyclone-affected districts in Gujarat, has a sizable population of

Asiatic lions. "The lioness, aged around five to nine years old, appears to have died due to drowning. However, the incident doesn't seem to have any connection with the cyclone. The lioness might have gotten trapped while chasing the blackbucks," the official said. In another development, a leopard died at an animal care centre at Vadal in Bhavnagar district on Saturday, a few days after being rescued and brought here, the forest department said. The animal, aged between five and nine years, was brought to the centre on May 16 after it attacked and injured a child, an official said, adding that the predator was sick and was found dead in the morning. **PTI**

# MP Govt launches scheme to award people for planting trees

**Bhopal:** The Madhya Pradesh Government on Saturday announced the launch of Ankur, a scheme under which citizens will be awarded for planting trees during monsoon, an official said. People who take the initiative to plant saplings will be given the Pranvayu Award for their participation, the official said. Speaking at the launch, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said, "We are setting up oxygen plants. But trees provide natural oxygen. No oxygen plant is bigger than trees. A sapling plantation campaign will be carried out under the

Ankur scheme during monsoon." The imbalance in nature has to be corrected, he said, urging citizens to pledge to plant more trees in monsoon. Additional chief secretary environment, Malay Shrivastav said the scheme will ensure public participation in the programme. People who wish to participate in the tree plantation drive can register themselves on Vayudoot app, the official said. Participants need to upload a picture while planting the sapling and upload another photograph after taking care of the sapling for 30 days, he said. **PTI**



A police person announces cyclone related warnings at a beach in Puri on Saturday

# 26 J'khand migrant workers stuck in Nepal reach Dumka

**Dumka/Ranchi:** Twenty-six migrant workers from Jharkhand, including five testing positive for coronavirus, who were stuck in Nepal due to Covid-triggered lockdown there, have reached their home town Dumka, an official said. Five infected travelled from Viratnagar on Bihar-Nepal border to Dumka in an ambulance, while the rest made journey back home on the bus sponsored by the state government. On arrival the five have been admitted to dedicated COVID Care Center of the Phulo Jhano Medical College and Hospital, Dumka, an official said. All the five migrant workers are "asymptomatic" and have no complications, Medical Officer, Dumka Sadar Hospital, Dr Javed told PTI. The remaining 21 workers who were found COVID negative have been lodged at Hijla Quarantine Centre and would undergo RT-PCR on Sunday, an official said. Meanwhile, one of the migrant workers, Dhananjay Thakur, said they had been in Nepal for the last two-and-a-half months working in a project and had been appealing through video messages for rescue for the past two-three days. The migrant workers engaged in a project in Nepal by Larsen & Tourbro, through a contractor, had been stranded in the Himalayan country due to lockdown to rein in the coronavirus surge and had been sending SOS messages including video messages to the Jharkhand government for rescue. **PTI**

# Pandemic creates new poor; 70% of informal sec workers...

**From Page 1**  
The report "State of Working India 2021: One Year of Covid-19", brought out annually by Azim Premji University's Centre for Sustainable Employment, which covers the period March 2020 to December 2020, that "for an average household of four members, the monthly per capita income in October 2020 (Rs 4,979) was still below its level in January 2020 (Rs 5,989)". The study found that post-lockdown, nearly half of salaried workers had moved into informal work, either as self-employed (30 per cent), casual wage (10 per cent) or informal salaried (9 per cent). With 230 million falling below the national minimum wage

threshold of Rs 375 per day during the pandemic, poverty rate has "increased by 15 percentage points in rural and nearly 20 percentage points in urban areas", the report said. The Pew Research categorised income levels in India - \$2 or less per day (poor), \$2.01 to \$10 per day (low income), \$10.01 to \$20 per day (middle income), \$20.01 to \$50 per day (upper middle income) and \$50 or higher (high income). It estimated that the number of poor people - with income less than \$2 (Rs 150) or less in a day - in the country increased from 6 crores to 13.4 crores. Therefore, the number of poor people increased in India by almost 7.5 crores last year.

# Cases abates...

**From Page 1**  
On Covid-19 prevalence among children, Paul said seropositivity rate between 10-17 years is roughly the same as between 30-40 and children can also spread the infection. "Whenever children contracted the infection then almost always symptoms are minimal, very mild disease or they are asymptomatic and because it is mild the mortality is very very less in them," he said. "We have a protocol of Covid disease among children. Protecting children from infection is equally important so that they do not become part of the transmission chain and the minimum risk which they face that risk they should bear brunt of so Covid appropriate behaviour is applicable in children too specially those who are mobile over 10 years of age," he said.

# Now, black fungus...

**From Page 1**  
"The patient had no associated fever and he experienced mild stomach pain. His clinical examination also did not show any signs of intestinal perforation. But the CT scan revealed small intestinal perforation similar to the first one. The biopsy confirmed mucormycosis of the small intestine," he said. "Mucormycosis most commonly involves the rhino-orbital-cerebral system or the lungs. Intestinal or GI mucormycosis is a very rare disease and most commonly involves stomach or large intestine. These patients in majority are immune-compromised. Majority of gastro-intestinal mucormycosis is seen in organ transplant recipients. GI mucormycosis is rare and the patient presents with vague abdominal symptoms. In recent times history of

Covid exposure along with treatment with steroids should warrant an early CT scan of the abdomen," he said. Talking about the case, Dr Dhir said both these patients had similar intra-operative findings where first part of small intestine (jejunum) had out-pouchings called diverticula and these diverticula had perforated along with surrounding ulceration. He said what makes it rare is that both the patients were diabetic and Covid positive and one of them did not take steroids that are said to be one of the reasons for the disease. Importantly, no record of fungus found in the eye, nose and brain but only the intestine. The patients had mild symptoms that could have been ignored. To detect fungus in the intestine, early city scans are very compulsory, he said.

# Between 2 waves and...

**From Page 1**  
Similarly, for arhar dal, the maximum price as per the Government record, is Rs 135 a kg, but it was selling at Rs 145-150 a kg. Price of arhar dal has increased from Rs 76 to Rs 130 a kg in some parts of the country in the last 14 months. In Chandigarh, arhar's rate has increased from Rs 76 to 110 a kg; from Rs 75 to 109 a kg in Gurgaon; from Rs 85 to 130 in Raipur; from Rs 77 to 112 in Vishakhapatnam and in Delhi price has increased from Rs 95 to Rs 117 a kg. The average price of gram dal has increased from an average Rs 50-55 to Rs 100 a kg in since lockdown in March 25, 2020. Gram price in Raipur has

increased from Rs 60 to Rs 100; Rs 57 to Rs 78 in Hisar, Rs 55 to Rs 72 in Punjab; Rs 60 to Rs 80 in Patna and Rs 57 to 81 in Gwalior. On the edible oil, the average retail price of packed mustard oil was Rs 110 a kg in March 2020 which went up to Rs 180 a kg in May 2021. The average retail price of groundnut oil has increased from Rs 139 a kg to Rs 177 a kg in the last 14 months. The retail prices of Vanaspati oil has increased from Rs 88 a kg last year to Rs 129 a kg this year. The price of Palm oil has increased from Rs 87 to Rs 133 and sunflower from Rs 106 to Rs 172 a kg in the last 14 months.

**Government of Jammu & Kashmir**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL**  
**HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR**  
Telefax :- 0194-2496089, Email Id:- xenmhchdk@yahoo.in  
**(Short Term)**  
**GIST of E-NIT NO: MHCHD/TS /2021-22/31/e-tendering Dated:-22-05-2021**  
For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited from registered/reputed/experienced firms with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work:-  
**Name of Work:- Complete Overhauling and servicing of Screw Air Compressor B (CPC75) of 500 LPM inmate make Oxygen Plant at Govt. GB Pant Hospital, Srinagar.**  
**Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs):- 1.64**  
**Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees):- 200**  
**Time of completion (in days):- 05**  
**AA Accorded Vide No :- Non-Plan Works**  
**TS. NO :- MHCHD/TS 25 of 05/2021**  
1. The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from **23-05-2021 (10.00 hrs).** to **31-05-2021 (14:00 hrs)** in two (02) cover.  
2. The bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on **31-05-2021 (16.00 hrs)** or any date convenient to the department in the **office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar.**  
**Sd/- Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar**  
No. DIPK-1967/21 Dated:- 22.05.2021

# Unemployment rate...

**From Page 1**  
The job losses are attributed to a series of curbs, including lockdowns, being announced by State Governments to contain the spread of the second wave of Covid-19 infections. As a result, a number of people working in different cities and towns have left for villages due to the closure of economic activity. Additionally, it has also dashed hopes of any recovery to the economic activity seen after a dip in infections towards the end of last year. According to the CMIE website, the national unemployment rate in April climbed to 7.97 per cent from 6.5 per cent in March; 6.89 per cent in February; 6.52 per cent in January; 9.02 per cent this year. Similarly, the unemployment rate fell 21.73 per cent in May last year, 10.18 per cent in June, 7.40 per cent in July, 8.35 per cent in August, 6.68 per cent in September, 7.02 per cent in October, 6.50 per cent in November and 9.60 per cent in December. The data of CMIE is official job data but it is widely accepted. The urban unemployment also fell 9.78 per cent in April, 7.27 per cent in March, 6.99 per cent in February, 8.09 per cent in January 2021. With 73.5 lakh job losses, the number of employees, both salaried and non-salaried, fell

from 39.81 crore in March to 39.08 crore in April, for the third straight month. The number of people employed in India stood at 40.07 crore in January. As per the CMIE data, in May 2020, the urban unemployment fell to 23.14 per cent in May 2020, 11.68 per cent in June, 9.37 per cent in July, 9.83 per cent in August, 8.45 per cent in September, 7.18 per cent in October, 7.07 per cent in November and 8.84 per cent in December. On the other hand, the employment rate fell from 37.56 per cent in March to 36.79 per cent in April, which is a four-month low. The monthly data also showed that the number of people who were unemployed yet not actively looking for jobs has increased from 1.60 crore in March to 1.94 crore in April. The highest unemployment rate in April was recorded at 35 per cent in Haryana, followed by 28 per cent in Rajasthan, 27 per cent in Delhi and 25 per cent in Goa. As per the State of Working India 2021: One Year of Covid-19, brought out annually by Azim Premji University's Centre for Sustainable Employment, Bengaluru, nearly 100 million jobs were lost nationwide during the April-May 2020 lockdown. Though most of these workers had found employment by June 2020, about 15 million remained out of work.

# Explain delay in nominating 12 MLCs: Maha HC to Guv

**From Page 1**  
Galgal had sought information from the Governor's Secretariat on April 22, 2021 that the list submitted by the Chief Minister's Office to the Governor recommending members to be nominated to the State Legislative Council, by the Governor. Replying to Anil Galgali's application on 19 May 2021, Jayaraj Chaudhary, Under Secretary, Governor's Secretariat, stated that the list of Governor-appointed Legislative Council members was not available in the office of the Public Information Officer (Administration). On his part, Galgali has filed the first appeal against the misleading information. "The chief minister and other ministers say the list has been sent. The Chief minister's secretariat had refused to give the list as no final decision has been taken yet and now the governor's secretariat is giving a different answer," the RTI activist said. "If the list is indeed sent, anyone of the Chief Minister's Secretariat or the Governor's Secretariat should make the information public. If the governor has a list, he should make a decision about what he wants to do about it," Galgali said. Interestingly, Bollywood actress Urmila Matondekar is one of the 12 persons in the State Legislative Council that have been recommended from the fields of Literature, Science, Arts, Cooperative sector and Social service, for nomination by the Governor as MLCs. The Governor, who has had a frosty relationship with the Shiv Sena-led MVA government in the state, has been sitting over the Uddhav Thackeray Cabinet's recommendation for the past more than six months now, for reasons best known to him.

# Unbridled export of oxygen, Remdesivir amid intel failure

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The intelligence agencies have failed in tracking the trend of import of large quantities of medical grade oxygen and critical anti-viral drugs Remdesivir and Tocilizumab from India by a number of foreign countries in the run up to the onset of the second wave of Covid-19 in the country and leaving the patients in the lurch amid shortage of these vital supplies.

Under the disaster management guidelines of National Disaster Management Authority, the intelligence agencies are clearly mandated to track such trends and issue advisory accordingly to the Government of the day and related agencies.

The agencies had also been unable to assess the situation last year when the novel coronavirus started to spread its tentacles far and wide from Wuhan in China.

Insiders in the intelligence agencies concede while getting caught off guard in the first wave of the Covid-19 was somewhat common across the globe as major democracies and their agencies failed in assessing the threat and its magnitude. But to fail in assessing the second wave amounts to repeating the mistakes in properly analysing the trends related to the same pandemic.

In the first wave of Covid-19, the Research and Analysis Wing and the other Intelligence agencies had not been able to assess the potential of the foreign members of Tableeghi Jamat who had visited India last year in large numbers after attending religious congregations in Indonesia and Pakistan.

Likewise, this year when the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic was unfolding, the



RAW could not assess why a number of countries were importing medical grade oxygen and anti-viral drugs in large quantities from India. The intelligence agencies also could not pick the trend of a major surge in the export of these vital items from the country.

In this backdrop, when the intelligence agencies did not have an inkling of impending threat from export of such essentials, the agencies did not issue any advisory on the need to check the rising trend of export of medical essentials to treat Covid patients in the country or the likelihood of the onset of the second wave of the pandemic.

The agencies also did not advise the Government on the need for a moderation in the export of the Covid vaccines.

The trends in the export of essential items in the fight against coronavirus like Remdesivir, medical grade oxygen or vaccines were not being monitored. Had these trends been monitored, the exports could have been moderated and spare the nation from the shortage of these items which had proved to be fatal for hundreds of Covid patients, a senior intelligence official admitted.

Conspicuously, the National Security Advisor Ajit Doval was consulted late on

managing the crisis.

Soon after Doval's conversation with his American counterpart Jake Sullivan on April 25, the US agreed to extend help in fighting the Covid surge in the country and take measures to do away with the embargo on export of raw materials used in manufacturing Covishield vaccines.

Doval was active during the first wave of the pandemic last year but he was not in the loop for handling the Covid crisis for a large part of the unfolding challenges posed by the novel coronavirus, sources said.

Doval's absence from the scene in the fight against coronavirus could be a pointer to the lack of coordination between the security establishment and the diplomatic corps, they said.

Thousands of tonnes of medical grade oxygen and Remdesivir have reportedly been exported to other countries leading to a major scarcity in the domestic market amid the sharp surge in Covid-19 cases and resultant fatalities. These are now being imported from other countries.

The RAW, the external Intelligence agency also failed in assessing the impending move of the European Union Parliament that recently passed a resolution on alleged



human rights violations by India. This has come despite The Pioneer flagging concerns in a report last year when the EU had moved six resolutions against India after the passage of Citizenship Amendment Act by Indian Parliament.

India needs to maintain the necessary level of epidemiological intelligence to pick up early warning signals of emerging and re-emerging diseases of epidemic/pandemic potential. This would also require advance knowledge of the activities of our adversaries in developing a potential BW (bio-warfare) ensemble and its potential use during war and by terrorist outfits using available inhouse facilities to develop such weapons.

A coordinated action plan of the intelligence agencies, MHA, MoH&FW and MoD (Ministry of Defence) will be developed and put in place to gather intelligence and

develop appropriate deterrence and defence strategies, the guidelines of NDMA have clearly spelt out the role of the intelligence agencies in gathering inputs on biological disasters, including pandemics.

In the foreword to the 156-page guidelines for management of biological disasters released in 2008, the then Vice Chairman of NDMA General NC Vij had noted, The spectre of pandemics engulfing our subcontinent and beyond poses new challenges to the skills and capacities of the Government and society. The intent of these guidelines is to develop a holistic, coordinated, proactive and technology driven strategy and management of biological disasters through a culture of prevention, mitigation and preparedness to generate a prompt and effective response in the event of an emergency.

# Pak groups using crypto currency to fund terror in J&K



RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Pakistan-based terror groups have now resorted to terror funding in Jammu and Kashmir through crypto-currency or virtual currency to evade the security agencies.

The move comes amid a crackdown by security agencies against trade-based terror financing and hawala funding.

The terror groups have further evolved from terror funding through drugs trade and shipping cash and arms through drones in Jammu and Kashmir as also Punjab.

Sources in the security agencies said the funds are sent by the Pakistani terror masterminds via Bitcoin to their cohorts in the Valley who use the money for procuring arms or providing relief to the families of killed terrorists.

The Pakistani terror groups even directly transfer the bitcoins to the arms suppliers without leaving any footprints that can be tracked by the agencies.

Following the inputs, the agencies are discreetly probing the extent of the latest modus operandi of terror funding and major action is likely to be in the offing.

For the latest terror funding mechanism, Pakistan's

Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has roped in a Bangladesh-based terror group for facilitating funding through virtual currencies.

Sources said a number of Bangladeshis and Kashmiris are based in the Arab countries who have links with the home countries and the ISI is seeking to exploit these networks for terror funding through virtual mode.

According to experts, terror funding through virtual mode has become a new challenge for the agencies from the perspective of containment of insidious financing of nefarious activities.

While virtual currency is not illegal, it is unregulated so far in India.

Earlier, the NIA had unearthed a trade-based terror funding network led by controversial businessman of Srinagar, Zahoor Watali. The Pak groups find it difficult to send cash through couriers from the border due to the tight security grid backed by technological surveillance systems.

The security forces have in the past also shot down a number of drones sent from Pakistan for shipping arms and ammunition in the Valley as well as Punjab.

# Centre-States meet to explore possibility of holding Class XII Board exams

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Assuming that the Covid-19 pandemic situation may considerably improve within a month, the Centre has convened a high-level meeting on Sunday with all the States and Union Territories Education Ministers, Education Secretaries and Chairpersons of State Examination Boards and stakeholders to discuss the proposals for the conduct of Class 12 board exams and entrance examinations for professional courses.

The meeting will be chaired by Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in the presence of Union Minister for Education Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', Union Minister for Women and Child Smriti Zubin Irani and Union Minister Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar.

Pokhriyal has also sought inputs from all the stakeholders - students, parents, teachers and others through Twitter.

A senior Education Ministry official said the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education and CBSE are exploring options regarding the conduct of examinations, keeping in mind the safety and security of the students and the teachers.

The Department of Higher Education is also deliberating upon the finalisation of the dates of examinations for institutions of higher learning, Pokhriyal said in a letter written to the states and UTs.

The letter has noted that the Covid-19 pandemic has affected various areas including the Education sector, particularly the board exams and entrance exams.

In view of the prevailing situation, almost all the State Education Boards, CBSE and CISCE have postponed their Class 12 board exam 2021. Similarly, the National Testing Agency (NTA) and other national exam conducting institutions have also postponed the entrance exams for admissions to professional courses.

A high-level virtual meeting will be convened tomorrow (Sunday) with all states and union territories' education ministers, education secretaries and chairpersons of state examination boards and stakeholders to discuss the proposals for the conduct of exams for Class 12 and entrance examinations for professional courses, Nishank said.

Recently held a meeting with the state education secretaries in this regard. The consultative process will be further strengthened through the high-level meeting. This virtual meeting will take place at 11.30 am, he added.

The CBSE had on April 14 announced the cancellation of Class 10 exams and postponed Class 12 exams in view of the surge in Covid-19 cases. The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Other board examinations like ICSE and IB too postponed the exams and announced to decide at an appropriate time.

On the other hand, early this week CBSE released its objective criterion on the basis of which students of Class 10 will be assessed, following the cancellation of board examinations.

The Centre has announced cancellation of the class 10 board examinations and asked CBSE to issue guidelines for objective marking.

# Sonia writes to Modi over shortage of injection to treat deadly black fungus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of mucormycosis also known as black fungus taking a serious turn prompting the Government to declare it as an epidemic, Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Saturday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the scarcity of Liposomal Amphotericin-B injection required for treatment of the fungal disease. She also suggested that the disease should be covered under Ayushman Bharat health scheme.

Former party chief Rahul Gandhi also hit out at the BJP government saying due to the mismanagement of Modi system there is now an epidemic of black fungus along with Covid infections in India.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, Sonia Gandhi said, The government has asked the states to declare Mucormycosis an Epidemic under the Epidemic Diseases Act. This means that there must be adequate production and assured supply of essential medicines to treat it and cost free patient care for those in need of treatment.

I understand that Liposomal Amphotericin-B is absolutely essential for the treatment of Mucormycosis. However, there are reports of its acute scarcity in the market. Further the illness is not covered in Ayushman Bharat and

most other health insurance products, she said.

She urged the Prime Minister to take immediate action to bring relief to the large number of patients being afflicted by Mucormycosis. Alongwith Sonia several other party leaders have been on a regular basis writing on covid pandemic issues to the PM demanding promptness for medical facilities, financial help to the needy, anti-covid vaccination process etc.

In a tweet in Hindi, Rahul Gandhi said, It is only in India that there is an epidemic of black fungus along with the Covid pandemic due to the inefficiency of Modi system. There is shortage of vaccines as well as of medicines. And to deal with this, the Prime Minister will be telling people to clang utensils and clap.

His remarks came a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi choked while interacting with the frontline workers of his parliamentary constituency of Varanasi. Rahul however taking a jab on the PM's sobbing, without mentioning about anything he tweeted in English Crocodiles are innocent and in Hindi Magarmach Nirdosh Hai.

Rahul Gandhi has been highlighting the shortage of vaccines and medicines for several days.

# NIA chargesheets 3 Hizbul terrorists in arms snatching case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday charge-sheeted three Hizbul-Mujahideen terrorists in HM Kishwar conspiracy case for snatching the service weapon of the escort in-charge of DC, Kishwar as part of a larger conspiracy to terrorise a particular community.

The three HM terrorists Jaffer Hussain and Taraq Hussain Giri of Kishwar besides Tanveer Ahmed Malik of Doda have been named in the chargesheet. Charges against three other terrorists involved in the crime Osama Bin Javed, Haroon Abbas Wani and Zahid Hussain who have been killed in encounters with security forces, will be abated.

The case was initially registered on March 8, 2019 at Police Station Kishwar, District Kishwar and the NIA re-registered the case on November 2 that year.

Investigation has revealed that this case was one of the several terrorist acts committed by Hizbul-Mujahideen during the years 2018 - 2019 in Kishwar. The objective of all these terror acts was to revive militancy in Kishwar by looting arms and targeting prominent persons of a particular community to create terror among the members of that community, the NIA said in a statement.

# 2 doses of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine effective up to 80% in curbing Indian Covid variant



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Two doses from either the Oxford/AstraZeneca or the Pfizer vaccine are over 80 per cent effective in preventing infection from the B.1.617.2 variant of Covid-19, first discovered in India, a new UK Government study has reportedly found.

The Oxford/AstraZeneca's two-dose vaccine is also being produced by the Serum Institute of India as Covishield and administered to the adult population in India.

The UK findings are said to be based on data from Public Health England (PHE) and have also revealed that the two doses provide 87 per cent protection from the B.1.17 variant, first discovered in Kent region of England and also considered highly transmissible.

According to 'The Telegraph' newspaper, the latest study's findings were presented to a meeting of the government's New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (Nervtag) this week.

The latest PHE statistics released earlier this week show

that case numbers of the B1.617.2 variant had risen by 2,111 over the past week to hit 3,424 cases across the country.

It comes as the National Health Service (NHS) further expanded its vaccination programme and announced that it will open bookings for people aged 32 and 33, adding to the over-34s cohort, from Saturday.

NHS England said that the third expansion of eligibility in just one week comes as over four in 10 adults have now had both jabs.

Only days after we extended the offer of a vaccine to 34 and 35-year-olds, we are now rolling out the invite to 32 and 33 year olds - an incredible step forward in the biggest and most successful vaccination programme in NHS history, said UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock.

This is truly a testament to the heroic work of our amazing NHS and care staff, volunteers and local authorities across the country who have helped deliver over 50 million jabs at lightning speed across England, keeping us on track to offer a vaccine to everyone by July, he said.

# Covid halted all industrial activities last yr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted almost all industrial activities last year, resulting in massive job losses across the formal and informal sectors of the economy. As the economy plunged into a recession in 2020, India's vast middle-class also shrank by 3.2 crores in numbers — to 6.6 crores from the pre-pandemic level of 9.9 crores.

If the trends in the income tax returns data are any indication of decline in earnings, returns filed by taxpayers declaring an income range of over Rs 5 lakh declined by more than 5 per cent as compared to the previous year.

The survey by Lotto247.com in November 2020, found that 77% of economically active adults in India had lost income due to the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the findings, the most affected age group were adults in their 40's.

Over 80% of adults in the 40's lost income as a result of the pandemic. Adults in their 50's, compared to those in their 40's, were less affected. However, 73% of them still lost income. Those aged 70 and older were the least affected age group. Only 30% of them lost income due to the pandemic.

# IMA seeks action against Ramdev for defaming allopathy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Saturday sought action against yoga guru Ramdev alleging that he has misled people by making unlearned statements against allopathy and defaming scientific medicine. It has written to the Union Health Ministry to take action in the matter.

The Resident Doctors' Associations of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and Safdarjung Hospital too flayed Ramdev's statement, demanding strictest steps against him.

Citing a video circulating on social media, the IMA said Ramdev has claimed that allopathy is a stupid science and medicines such as remdesivir, faviflu, and other drugs approved by the Drugs Controller General of India have failed to treat Covid-19 patients.

Lakhs of patients have died after taking allopathic medicines, the association said, quoting the yoga guru. Ramdev should be prosecuted under the Epidemic Diseases Act as untutored statements are a threat to the literate society of the country

as well as to the poor people falling prey to him, the apex doctors' body said in a statement.

The Union health minister (Harsh Vardhan) who himself is a practising modern medicine allopathic post-graduate and head of this (health) ministry, should either accept the challenge and accusation of this gentleman and dissolve the modern medical facility or boldly face and prosecute the person for his words of arson on the sovereignty of the country and book him under the Epidemic Act to save millions of people from such unscientific utterances, the IMA said.

It alleged that Ramdev is trying to take advantage of the situation and create a sense of fear and frustration among the people at large.

He is doing this so that he can sell his illegal and unapproved so-called medicines and make money at the cost of the public at large, the association said adding that Ramdev deserves to be prosecuted for disobeying and causing danger to the life of many by making them believe to not to take the advice of allopathy doctors.

# WHO yet to take final call on letting fully vaccinated to fly abroad: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With reports making rounds that Indians vaccinated with the Bharat Biotech developed Covaxin may not be allowed to undertake international travel, since the WHO hasn't included Covaxin in its list of vaccines for Emergency Use Listing (EUL), the Government on Friday tried to clarify that the global health agency was yet to take any decision on allowing such travels.

Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary in the Union Health Ministry, on Saturday, clarified that the WHO was yet to take a final call on allowing international travel for those fully

vaccinated against Covid-19.

So far there's no consensus at the level of WHO over this. Discussion still being done if vaccinated people will be allowed. As of now, as per WHO guidelines and guidelines by countries, people with negative Covid test report being allowed, Agarwal said at a press conference here.

As the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic weakens the world over, several European countries are lifting restrictions on international travel to boost their travel and tourism industries. They are likely to allow the entry of passengers who've received both shots of Covid-19 vaccines listed in WHO's EUL list.

India's other vaccine, Covishield, is on the WHO list. Globally, vaccines developed by Pfizer, AstraZeneca/Oxford, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson and China's Sinopharm are on the list.

The latest WHO guidance document shows that Bharat Biotech has submitted its Expression of Interest (EOI) for getting Covaxin on the EUL list, but more information is required.

Relevant action will be taken when we reach the level when a consensus at the world level is reached, Agarwal added.

Meanwhile, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar also reiterated that there is no global travel ban on India due to Covaxin.

# Nadda asks BJP-ruled States to take spl care of Covid-orphaned kids

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the Congress sharpened its attack on the Covid-19 management of the Modi Government, BJP president JP Nadda on Saturday asked party-ruled States to prepare a 'comprehensive programme' for the welfare of children orphaned by the Covid-19 pandemic.

BJP president said the detailed 'Yojna' should be launched on May 30 when the Modi government completes seven years in power.

In a letter to Chief Ministers of the party-ruled states, Nadda also said that no celebratory event will be held to mark the anniversary due to the circumstances caused by the pandemic and added that various wel-

fare programmes will be held instead.

BJP president who had this week launched countrywide helpline desk to reach-out to Covid 19 patients, said that the Covid pandemic had caused deep wounds on the nation and society with many children losing both parents to the disease.

Nadda told the Chief Ministers of BJP-held States including, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Assam, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and union territory of Puducherry that it is now our responsibility to care for their future and take solid steps in this regard.

He asked them to prepare a scheme keeping in mind the needs and situation of their states and added that they will



also be soon shared directives to help such children and their families.

BJP and the Modi Government have come under increasing attack from the Congress for allowing Corona pandemic to go out of hand and allegedly turning India a Covid country.

BJP has accused Congress of trying not only to bring down the Prime Minister's image and insulting the country but also weakening India's fight against the Coronavirus pandemic.

# Dining out reduced considerably during Covid-induced lockdown

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There has been a significant change in patterns of food consumption during post-lockdown periods. Dining out has been reduced considerably, and people started opting for home-cooked food by trying out new recipes. This led to a rise in demand for household edible oil packs such as soya oil, sunflower oil, and mustard oil.

On the contrary, the government claimed that the country's retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), eased to 4.29 per cent in the month of April. The retail

inflation during the month of March was at 5.52 per cent. The easing of the retail inflation last month can be attributed to the softening of food prices.

The Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI) or the inflation in the food basket eased to 2.02 per cent in the month of April, down from 4.87 per cent in March, the data revealed. The month-on-month fall in the food basket was led by the softening of vegetable prices which fell -14.18 per cent in April, while cereals and products slipped -2.96 per cent, the data showed. Sugar and confectionery items too fell -5.99 per cent.

# Total lockdown in TN till May 31

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Since the number of new persons joining the army of those afflicted with Covid-19 showing no sign of any abatement, Tamil Nadu Government extended the total lockdown in the State till May 31. This was announced by Chief Minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi Stalin on Saturday after a meeting with senior bureaucrats and medical professionals.

Tamil Nadu has been diagnosing more than 30,000 new Covid-19 patients daily since second week of May. J Radhakrishnan, secretary, health department, had said on Friday that the State was likely to see the number of patients

peaking by May 31. "Tamil Nadu has been diagnosing 35,000 new cases daily. Many States like Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala have peaked and Tamil Nadu will see the same by this month end. But the speed with which the number of patients was increasing has slowed down in Tamil Nadu," he said.

On Friday, 36, 184 new persons were diagnosed on Friday while the pandemic had claimed 467 lives on the day. Speaking to reporters at Tiruchirappalli on Friday, Stalin had said that the lockdown is likely to be extended in the backdrop of the increasing number of patients.

Stalin had said in a statement on April 24 that people in

Tamil Nadu were not in a position to afford any more lockdown and there would not be any lockdown in the State under the DMK regime.

But with the number of new cases and deaths showing steep hike after May 13, the State administration was left with no options other than declaring a total lockdown. While public transport would be allowed in Sunday, the State would come to a grinding halt from Monday morning.

Only essential services would function in Government offices while inter district movement will see stringent regulations and restrictions. Eateries and restaurants would be allowed to operate only for few hours daily.

## Covid situation remains grim in Kerala

KOCHI: While Covid-19 claimed 176 lives and 28, 514 new people were diagnosed with the infection on Saturday, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that the situation in Kerala continued to be grim.

There has been a decrease in the total number of Covid-19 patients undergoing treatment across Kerala as on Saturday evening, said Vijayan. "A total of 2,89, 283 patients are undergoing treatment in the State. The Test Positivity Ratio has come down to 22.63 per cent from 23.3 per cent of Friday," he said.

Though the numbers are coming down, Vijayan said that the State was facing the threat of the third wave of Covid-19 in addition to the black fungus attack.

"The Government has ordered medical auditing of black fungus in the State though we are yet to come across any casualties," he said. **PNS**



Beneficiaries wait to receive a Covid-19 vaccine at the Moti Lal Nehru Medical College, during the second wave of the coronavirus epidemic in India, in Prayagraj on Saturday

## J&K reports 3,408 new cases, 48 deaths

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The UT administration in Jammu & Kashmir is still struggling to contain the mortality rate especially across Jammu division. On Saturday, 48 more patients succumbed to the coronavirus while 3,408 patients tested positive and 4,117 recovered fully and went home from different hospitals. According to the media bulletin, "out of 48,604 samples tested, 3,408 patients tested positive recording a positivity rate of 7.01 percent".

Due to increasing load of severely ill patients the GMC on Saturday also added 14 more Covid ICU beds but the same were not sufficient to accommodate several others undergoing treatment in other Covid dedicated wards.

Since May 1, 750 patients have died due to Covid 19 across Jammu division while 433 patients died across Kashmir division during the same period.

On the other hand, to strictly impose containment measures the UT administration Saturday extended the corona curfew across all the 20 districts till May 31.

At the same time work is nearing completion on two 500 bedded makeshift Covid hospitals being established by the DRDO in Jammu and Budgam districts. In Jammu the facility is expected to be handed over to the health department on May 28.

According to the media bulletin, the total caseload of active positive cases Saturday stood at 49,136 while 3,513 patients have so far succumbed to the virus across J&K.

The two worst affected districts of Jammu & Srinagar on Saturday recorded less than 500 and 600 cases respectively.

## 'ISRO set to transfer technology for oxygen concentrator soon'

Chennai: The Indian space agency will soon transfer the technology for making the 'Shwaas', the oxygen concentrator developed by it at a cost of about ₹60,000 to industries, said a top official of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC).

On Friday officials of VSSC had a video meeting of interested companies and explained about 'Shwaas' and its systems.

"It was a first round meeting and about 50 industries participated. I had interacted with them. My team and I answered their queries," S. Somanath, Director, VSSC told IANS.

"We are entering into an agreement with each of them who are meeting the criteria on

technical capability. The technology sharing/transfer will take place in the next two days. The technology transfer will be free," Somanath added.

According to him, medical equipment, space equipment, electronics and product manufacturing companies are selected now and more could be based on their credentials.

Somanath said VSSC spent about ₹60,000 to build its prototype.

"The cost can go down by 30 per cent if production is done on a large basis. All the components are currently available in India. Some items are imported by Indian companies but they can also be made here," Somanath remarked. **IANS**

## 26,133 test Covid positive, 682 die in 24 hrs in Maha

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Covid-19 infections dropped further to 26,133 in Maharashtra on Saturday, even as the pandemic claimed 682 more lives in the State.

A day after the State logged 1,263 deaths (including 708 old unaccounted fatalities) and 29,644 infections, the daily infections dropped by 3511 cases, while there was a substantial decrease in the recorded deaths during the last 24 hours.

With 682 new deaths, the total number of deaths in the state climbed from 86,618 to 87,300. Similarly, with 26,133 new infections, the total number of cases climbed from 55,27,092 to 55,53,225. As 40,294 patients were

discharged from the hospitals across the State after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year increased from 50,70,801 to 51,11,095 on Saturday. The recovery rate in the state went up from 91.74 per cent to 92.04 per cent.

The total 'active cases' in the state dropped from 3,67,121 to 3,52,247. The fatality rate in the state stood static at 1.57 per cent.

With 52 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai increased from 14,410 to 14,464, while the infected cases went up by a relatively low 1283 to trigger a jump in the infections from 6,94,200 to 6,95,483. The situation in Pune improved vastly as the 'active

cases' dropped from 58,840 to 54,198.

Mumbai with 28,232 active cases stood second in the state, followed by Thane (25337), Nagpur (18,482), Solapur (18,095), Ahmednagar (17,755), Satara (17,696), Nashik (16,240), Beed (9530), Amravati (9296), Jalgaon (7866), Chandrapur (7133), Aurangabad (6697), Osmanabad (5589), Jalna (5176), Latur (4812) and Buldhana (4611).

Of the 3,27,23,361 samples sent to various laboratories across the state so far, 55,53,225 have tested positive (16.97 per cent) for COVID-19 until Saturday. Currently, 27,55,729 people are in home quarantine while 22,103 people are in institutional quarantine.

## Dr Krishnaswamy, TN's medical warrior, succumbs to coronavirus

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu lost its top medical warrior as Dr C V Krishnaswamy, the widely adored and loved physician cum diabetologist breathed his last late Friday night. He was 83 and fell victim to Covid-19 which he contracted while taking care of his patients.

He was one of the founders and former director of Voluntary Health Services, the poor man's super specialty hospital in Chennai that provides low cost medical treatment to the financially challenged patients.

The hospital is an initiative by a group of physicians and surgeons to make top class health care available for the poorer sections of the society. Dr Krishnaswamy, who had been flooded with offers

from hospitals in USA, Britain and other European countries chose Chennai, his hometown to set up practice. He and his wife late Dr Prema Krishnaswamy, set a new trend in medical care by doing away with prescribing costly medicines to their patients.

He was active till last week when he was felled by an attack of Covid-19. Dr Krishnaswamy, who was opposed to all kinds of vaccination had avoided getting vaccinated even as he was curing hundreds from the dreaded disease by administering them an integrated system of treatment involving Ayurveda, Sidha and Modern Medicine.

Even at an age when others call it quit, Dr Krishnaswamy was actively pursuing his medical research on diabetes and Covid-19.



Firefighters spray disinfectant on buildings as a prevention against Covid-19 at MG road in Chikmagalur on Saturday

## Negative Covid test report must to enter Karnataka, says Govt

Haveri (Karnataka): A negative Covid test Report is a must for inter-State travellers coming into Karnataka, said State Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Saturday.

"We have barricaded not only major roads but also the minor ones as was done last time," he told reporters here.

"We have imposed restrictions, especially in the border districts such as Belagavi, Bidar, Bidar, Kalaburagi, Anekal in Bengaluru (bordering Tamil Nadu) and near Mangaluru (bordering Kerala)," he said.

As directed by the Centre, a negative Covid report is a must for the inter-State travellers to enter Karnataka, the Minister said. The Minister said he has directed the district authorities, including the police, to strictly impose the lockdown in the districts to contain the spread of the infection.

He appealed to the people to abide by the lockdown.

Meanwhile, Bengaluru police commissioner Kamal Pant tweeted that the police personnel in the city have been instructed to take action legally, including booking cases and seizing vehicles of those who violate the lockdown guidelines and wilful defaulters. "Please cooperate with @BlrCityPolice in implementing the

**THE HOME MINISTER SAID HE HAS DIRECTED THE DISTRICT AUTHORITIES, INCLUDING THE POLICE, TO STRICTLY IMPOSE THE LOCKDOWN IN THE DISTRICTS TO CONTAIN THE SPREAD OF THE INFECTION. HE APPEALED TO THE PEOPLE TO ABIDE BY THE LOCKDOWN**

## Goa sees 1,647 fresh cases; 39 deaths

Panaji: Goa on Saturday recorded 1,647 fresh cases of Covid-19 and 39 casualties that took the tally of infections in the State to 1,44,839 and toll to 2,341, an official from the state health department said.

Apart from this, 2,693 patients were discharged from hospitals during the day, raising the count of recoveries to 1,24,255 and leaving the coastal state with 18,243 active cases, the official said.

With the addition of 4,581 swab samples tested during the day, the total number of tests conducted in the state has gone up to 7,83,409, he added.

Goa's Covid-19 figures are as follows: Positive cases 1,44,839, new cases 1,647, death toll 2,341, discharged 1,24,255, active cases 18,243, samples tested till date 7,83,409. **PTI**

## Flight carrying Indian boxing team makes emergency landing in Dubai for fuel

New Delhi: A SpiceJet flight carrying 31 members of Indian boxing team including Mary Kom and six crew members reported a fuel emergency landing at Dubai airport on Saturday morning, over landing confusion.

The SpiceJet plane had to hover over UAE airspace for 45 minutes and declared a fuel emergency before it was granted permission to land.

While the remnants of extremely severe Cyclone Tauktae are still causing rainfall over the north, north-west and central India, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday said that a low pressure area has been formed over east-central Bay of Bengal and Cyclone Yaas is likely to intensify into a "very severe cyclonic storm" and cross the Odisha and the West Bengal coasts on May 26.

The cyclone Yaas is likely to impact Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Bangladesh. Andhra Pradesh (2,09,156), Odisha (1,09,639), Tamil Nadu (2,74,629) and West Bengal (1,32,181) are among worst affected states in active cases in the country and shifting a large number of people from coastal and low lying areas to relief camp may aggravate the Covid-19 situation in the second wave of pandemic.

## Death toll 66, rescue operations continue for missing personnel

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

### BARGE P305 MISHAP

The Indian Navy on Saturday recovered the bodies of six more persons working on board the accommodation barge Papaa-305 that sank on Monday taking the total number of casualties in the mishap to 66, even as it deployed specialised diving teams to search for the remaining nine missing persons from the affected barge.

"Sixty six mortal remains have been recovered from under the sea. Search and Rescue (SAR) operations for remaining others are continuing. There are 188 survivors - 186 from Papaa-305 and two from tug Varapradha," Navy's chief spokesperson Commander Mehul Karnik said. With the recovery of 66 bodies, nine more oil workers from barge Papaa-305 are still missing.

Earlier in the day, the Navy rushed specialised diving teams in one of its ships to look for missing persons from barge Papaa-305. "To augment the ongoing SAR ops for the miss-

ing crew of Barge P305 and Tug Varapradha, specialised diving teams onboard INS Makar with side scan sonar and INS Tarasa sailed out early morning today from Mumbai," Karnik said. Indian Naval ships and aircraft are currently engaged in Search and Rescue (SAR) operations to locate the missing crew members of Accommodation Barge P-305, which sank on Monday, 35 nautical miles off Mumbai coast.

Ships INS Kochi, Kolkata, Beas, Betwa, Makar, Tarasa, Teg, P81 maritime surveillance aircraft, Chetak, ALH and Seaking helicopters are involved in the SAR operations, while INS Talwar has also been diverted to provide assistance in relief and rescue operations.

Acting on a complaint lodged by the Barge chief engineer among Rahman H. Shaikh who was among the survivors rescued by the Indian Navy earlier this week, the Yellowgate

Police Station had on Friday filed a First Information Report invoking charges of culpable homicide not amounting to murder against the Master of the Barge Papaa-305 and others. The police registered under Sections 304(II) (an act done with knowledge that it is likely to cause death), 338 (causing grievous hurt by an act endangering life or personal safety of others) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code.

"The captain of the barge acted negligently on the warnings issued related to Cyclone Tauktae and that allegedly led to the mishap due to which we have registered an offence. We have so far mentioned the barge's captain and others in the FIR.

"On the basis of the findings of the investigation, we will book more officials," Mumbai Police Spokesperson and Deputy Commissioner of Police S. Chaitanya said.

## BJP spent nearly ₹71.72 cr in Bihar Assembly polls in 2020

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP has spent over ₹71.72 crore; Congress ₹30 crore; Janata Dal (United) ₹22 crore and BSP over ₹4 crore in the last year Bihar Assembly polls. If the political parties total election expenditure is translated into their victory or seat, the saffron party has spent over ₹71.72 crore to get 74 seats; Janata Dal (United) spent ₹22 crore to win 43 seats; Congress spent ₹30 crore to win 19 seats and BSP spent ₹4 crore to win just one seat.

The election expenditure statement filed by the BJP to the Election Commission pertaining to the Bihar Assembly polls 2020, shows the total expenditure stood at nearly ₹71.72 crore. Of them, nearly ₹26.7 crore from its central headquarters accounts including Rs 24.07 crore towards chartered aircraft travel expenses of its star campaigners. In addition to it, the gross expenses made by the BJP's Bihar unit during the election period stood at nearly ₹28 crore, while a total of ₹16.5 crore was given to the party candidates as financial assistance with most of them getting ₹15 lakh each.

According to the expenditure statement, the gross receipts during this

period were to the tune of ₹35.83 crore. While the cumulative opening balance for the party's central headquarters and state unit stood at ₹ 2,367.90 crore before the announcement of polls, the post-poll closing balance fell to ₹2,279.96 crore. While the central headquarters recorded a gross receipt of ₹31.88 crore, the same for the State unit was ₹3.9 crore.

The State BJP unit incurred total expenses of ₹1.5 crore towards travel expenditure of star campaigners, including for helicopter and taxi used by leaders like Rajnath Singh, Sushil Modi, Devendra Fadnavis and Shah Nawaz Hussain. It spent nearly ₹45.6 lakh on travel expenditure of other leaders, including by taxi and train.

The Bihar unit of the party spent more than ₹16 crore on media advertisements, which included ₹ 1.59 crore to Google India. One candidate can spend a maximum of ₹ 30.8 lakh in Assembly elections to a State like Bihar, as per ceilings imposed by the poll panel. However, there is no such ceiling for campaigning expenditure by a political party.

The Janat Dal (United) has spent over ₹22 crore while the Congress spent around ₹30 crore while the BSP has spent only ₹4 crore during the Bihar Assembly polls.

## Kerala's Cong appoints VD Satheeshan as LoP

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Vilasiniamma Damodara Menon Satheeshan, popularly known as VD Satheeshan, is the Leader of the Opposition in Kerala Legislative Assembly. The appointment of Satheeshan (57) was announced by Mullappalli Ramachandran on Saturday at the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee head quarters at Thiruvananthapuram.

The selection of Satheeshan follows the report submitted by the team of leaders deputed by Congress High Command to Kerala to hold discussion with the newly elected party legislators.

The final choice was made by Rahul Gandhi, former AICC chief who represents Wayanadu constituency in Parliament.

"I know that the position of the Leader of Opposition is not a crown of flowers. My immediate mission is to rejuvenate and strengthen the Congress and the United Democratic Front in Kerala. It is true that the Congress-led UDF faced a severe drubbing in the recently held assem-

bly election. But the party had faced such defeat in 1967 when it was left with just nine MLAs. We will definitely make a turn around," Satheeshan told reporters at Ernakulam after the announcement was made by the KPCC chief.

He said the Congress and the UDF would extend all cooperation to the Government in its operations to fight the Covid-19 pandemic.

"But we will thoroughly screen the performance of the Government and point out all shortcomings," said Satheeshan who was re-elected to the House from Paravoor constituency in the district.

Satheeshan made it known that his top priority would be to lead the Congress and the UDF to bury once and for ever the Sangh Parivar and its agenda in Kerala.

"The 2021 Assembly election showed that the Sangh Parivar and the BJP do not have any acceptance in Kerala. We in Congress would not allow the Sangh Parivar and the BJP to take roots in the State as they represent communal and secessionist forces," said Satheeshan.

# Nepal Prez dissolves House

## ANNOUNCES SNAP POLLS IN NOV; OPP ALLIANCE TO LEGALLY CHALLENGE

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal's President dissolved the House of Representatives on Saturday for the second time in five months and announced snap elections in November, rejecting both embattled Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and the Opposition alliance's claims to form a government, a move that will be legally challenged yet again.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari announced in an early morning statement that the House of Representatives has been dissolved in accordance with Article 76(7) of the Constitution, ending a day of high-voltage political drama in the Himalayan nation, amidst the raging COVID-19 pandemic.

As per the Article, a date to conduct another election within six months must also be fixed. The President has called early elections pursuant to the Article, the dates being set for November 12 and November 19.

The announcement came after Prime Minister Oli in his last deal-sealing move on Friday midnight recommended the Office of the President to dissolve the 275-member House and announce dates for early elections.

Earlier, Oli and

Opposition leader Sher Bahadur Deuba had staked separate claims to premiership, both of which were rejected by the president, citing that none had adequate grounds for winning a vote of confidence.

"It has been noted that Prime Minister Oli counted those lawmakers as his supporters who extended support to the Opposition alliance, whereas the UML and JSP-N have forwarded letters stating action would be taken against those who had gone against the party to endorse the Opposition's claim," Bhandari said in a statement late on Friday.

The president's announcement plunged Nepal into further political crisis, a reminder of her December 2020 decision when she first dissolved the House at Oli's recommendation, a move that swayed the course of Nepali politics towards uncertainty.

The Supreme Court had annulled the duo's move in February.

Alarmed by the duo's move yet again, the leaders of Nepal's Opposition alliance on Saturday decided to take all legal and political means to counter Prime Minister Oli and President Bhandari's "unconstitutional and undemocratic" move of dissolving

the House.

In a joint statement issued at the end of a meeting called to discuss the matter, the Opposition leaders expressed their commitment to unitedly defend the constitutional rights of Nepali citizens achieved at the end of years of political struggle.

They appealed to all political and civil forces to condemn and stand against the Oli-Bhandari duo's regressive, autocratic intentions. They condemned their move as "unconstitutional, undemocratic and arbitrary."

The statement was signed by Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba, CPN-Maoist Centre Chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', CPN-UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal, Chairperson of Janata Samajbadi Party-Nepal Upendra Yadav and Vice-Chair of the Rastriya Janamorchha Durga Paudel.

The Opposition alliance is devising a strategy to approach the Supreme Court with all its lawmakers on Sunday demanding to scrap the president's decision.

The parties blamed the president for making an assault on the Constitution and democracy in partnership with the prime minister, who had lost a trust vote in the House.

"The President should have appointed NC President Sher Bahadur Deuba as per Article 76 (5) of the Constitution as he had the support of 149 lawmakers of the lower house of parliament," My Republica website quoted the alliance's statement.

The parties claimed that the government is hell-bent on its attempt to prolong the autocratic rule despite the COVID-19 pandemic in the country.

The Nepali Congress also accused President Bhandari and Prime Minister Oli of misusing the Constitution for their own benefit as their personal property.

"Prime Minister Oli recommending forming a new government, President Bhandari announcing to stake a claim to form new government giving less than 24 hours, not appointing prime minister as per the provision of the Constitution and dissolving HoR and holding a cabinet meeting in the middle of the night are unconstitutional and anti-democratic," the statement said.

"NC strongly objects to these kinds of activities," it said. Deuba, urging all the democratic forces to unite and act together for the protection of the Constitution and democracy, vowed to take political and legal action against the House dissolution.

# Myanmar election chief considers dissolving Suu Kyi's party

AP ■ NAYPYITAW

The head of Myanmar's military-appointed State election commission said Friday that his agency will consider dissolving Aung San Suu Kyi's former ruling party for alleged involvement in electoral fraud and having its leaders charged with treason.

Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy came to power after a landslide 2015 election victory, and won an even greater majority in last November's general election. It was set to start a second term in February when the military seized power in a coup, arresting her and dozens of top government officials and party members.

Junta leader Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing cited electoral fraud as the reason for the army's takeover, saying "there was terrible fraud in the voter lists." The army-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party, which suffered unexpectedly heavy losses in the election, made similar allegations.

Independent observers dispute the assertions of widespread irregularities.

Political parties were called to discuss planned changes in the electoral system at a meeting Friday. There, Union Election Commission chairman Thein Soe said an investigation of last year's election

that would soon be completed showed that Suu Kyi's party had illegally worked with the government to give itself an advantage at the polls.

"We will investigate and consider whether the party should be dissolved, and whether the perpetrators should be punished as traitors," he said.

Asked for U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' reaction, his spokesman Stephane Dujarric said: "Should that happen, that would be a clear step in the wrong direction."

"What we have all been working for, what the Security Council, the international community has been working for, is a restoration of democracy and a restoration of the voice of the people of Myanmar," Dujarric said.

Suu Kyi's party, which has thrown its weight behind the mass popular movement against the military takeover, has faced constant harassment since the coup, with its members arrested and offices raided and closed.

The junta initially announced that it would hold new elections a year after taking power, but it later hedged and said the delay could be up to two years. Before the start of democratic reforms a decade ago, Myanmar was ruled by the military for 50 years.

Suu Kyi's party also won a 1990 election, but the military stepped in to prevent it from taking power.

Suu Kyi and other members of her government already face various criminal charges that could keep them from running in the next election. Their supporters assert all the charges are politically motivated.

The announced purpose of Friday's commission meeting was to discuss the junta's plan to change the country's election system from "first past the post" to proportional representation.

In first-past-the-post systems, the candidate with the most votes in a given constituency is the winner, while in proportional representation, the share of winning parliamentary seats in an area with several seats is allocated according to the proportion of the vote won by each party or candidate.

Almost all the major parties — including Suu Kyi's NLD — refused to go to Friday's commission meeting, as they regard the body as illegitimate.

Local media reported that almost a third of the parties boycotted the gathering in the capital, Naypyitaw. Many of the 62 attending were pro-military organizations that polled badly in last November's election, failing to win a single seat.

# Pak allows overflight to US military to support presence in Afghan: Pentagon official

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Pakistan has allowed the US military to have overflight and access to be able to support its presence in Afghanistan, a top Pentagon official has told lawmakers.

Assistant Secretary of Defence for Indo-Pacific Affairs David F Hevelly also told members of the Senate Armed Services Committee on Friday that the US will continue its conversation with Pakistan due to the important role it has played to support the peace process in the neighbouring war-torn country.

Hevelly said that Pakistan has allowed the US to have overflight and access to be able to support its military presence in Afghanistan.

"Pakistan has played an important role in Afghanistan and they have supported the Afghan peace process," he said, responding to Senator Joe Manchin during a hearing by the Senate Armed Services Committee on Afghanistan.

"We will continue our conversations with Pakistan because their support and their contribution to the future of Afghanistan, the future of peace in Afghanistan is going to be critical," the Pentagon official said.

# No shift in commitment to security of Israel: Biden

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden has said that there is no shift in the commitment of his administration towards the security of Israel but insisted a two-state solution that includes a State for Palestinians remains the only answer to that conflict.

Biden's comment comes a day a ceasefire was announced between Israel and Hamas negotiated by Egypt following a 11-day war that caused a lot of casualties and infrastructure damage in Gaza.

"There is no shift in my commitment, the commitment to the security of Israel, period," Biden told reporters at a joint news conference along with the visiting South Korean President Moon-Jae-In.

"No shift, not at all, but I tell you what there is a shift in. The shift is that we still need a two-state solution. It is the only answer, the only answer. What I'm convinced of is that we can now move, as I did even before I was able to negotiate—well, I shouldn't—before the cease-fire was negotiated," he said.

Biden said his administration is going to make sure that the US is going to provide for security in the West Bank.

"We renewed the security commitment, as well as economic commitment to the

people on the West Bank," he said.

In his call with the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Biden said he indicated to the Israelis it was very important that they stop in Jerusalem this inter communal fighting that is by extremes on both sides.

"It has to end. I'm prepared to put together and attempt to put together a major package with other nations who share our view to rebuild the homes and without providing Hamas the opportunity to rebuild their weapons systems, rebuild the Gaza. They need to help, and I'm committed to get that done," he said.

Responding to a question on the shift on position of several of his Democratic party lawmakers, Biden asserted that his party still supports Israel.

"Let's get something straight here. Until the region says unequivocally, they acknowledge the right of Israel to exist as an independent Jewish state, there will be no peace," Biden said. He hoped that Netanyahu would abide by his commitment of ceasefire.

"I'm praying this cease-fire will hold. I take Bibi Netanyahu when he gives me his word; I take him at his word. He's never broken his word to me," he said.

# UN says war took toll on Gaza clean water access

AP ■ GAZA CITY

The United Nations says approximately 800,000 people in Gaza do not have regular access to clean piped water, as nearly 50 per cent of the water network was damaged in the recent fighting.

Quoting Gaza's public works and housing ministry, the UN's office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said nearly 17,000 residential and commercial units have been damaged or destroyed in the 11-day campaign.

These include 769 housing and commercial units that have

been rendered uninhabitable, at least 1,042 units in some 258 buildings which have been destroyed and another 14,538 units that have suffered minor damage.

A cease-fire took effect Friday after an 11-day campaign that left more than 250 dead — the vast majority Palestinians — and brought widespread devastation to the already impoverished Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip.

The UN said 53 education facilities, six hospitals and 11 primary health care centres have been damaged since May 10.

# Egypt, Israel FMs discuss solidifying ceasefire

AP ■ CAIRO

Egypt Foreign Minister Sameh Shukry has spoken with his Israeli counterpart, Gabi Ashkenazi, about stabilising the Cairo-brokered Gaza cease-fire deal.

A statement by Egypt's Foreign Ministry said the two diplomats on Friday discussed shoring up the deal, which has mostly brought a halt to fighting between Israel and the Palestinians. They hope that will facilitate the recon-

struction of Gaza.

The statement said the ministers also agreed on the importance of coordination between the two nations, the Palestinian Authority and international partners on securing communication channels to achieve peace. It did not provide further details.

The Egyptian government, meanwhile, said it would send a 130-truck convoy carrying humanitarian aid and medical supplies to Gaza, according to the presidency.

# Iran's Khamenei congratulates Gaza on 'victory'

AP ■ TEHRAN

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has congratulated Palestinians in the Gaza Strip after a cease-fire with Israel took effect in the territory, calling the truce a "victory over the criminal Zionist regime."

Iran's state TV website carried a letter by Khamenei addressed to the Palestinians on Friday, in which he also urged for prosecution of Israel's arch-enemy Israel and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in international courts over the Gaza campaign. Iran has been a close ally of Hamas and other militant groups in the Middle East.

In his letter, Khamenei also urged all Muslim countries to rally in support of Palestinian people, "whether by strengthening Palestinian forces, with financial support that is needed today more than before, or by rebuilding the infrastructure that was destroyed in Gaza."

Separately, Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard in a statement on its website, sepaheens.com, echoed Khamenei's congratulations to Gazans on their "victory." And the spokesman for Iran's foreign ministry, Saeed Khatibzadeh, tweeted a message to Palestinians: "Your resistance forced the aggressor to retreat."

# Biden won't allow Justice Dept to seize reporters' records

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden says he won't allow the Department of Justice to seize journalists' phone records and emails, calling the practice "wrong" in a significant departure from his predecessors.

"Absolutely, positively, it's wrong. It's simply, simply wrong," he told a reporter Friday at the White House.

His comments come as CNN reported Thursday that the Trump administration Justice Department secretly obtained the 2017 phone records of one of their correspondents, the latest revelation of an apparent leak investigation aimed at identifying a journalist's sources that was launched during the last administration.

The Washington Post also disclosed that the Justice Department had last year seized phone records belonging to three of its journalists who covered the Russia investigation.

When asked if Biden would prevent his Justice Department seeking reporters' phone records, Biden responded: "I won't let that happen."



His comments, however, seem to contradict those made earlier by White House press secretary Jen Psaki when asked how the administration viewed the practice of obtaining journalists' records. Psaki suggested that the Justice Department would use the "Holder model," a reference to Obama-era Attorney General Eric Holder.

Under Holder, the Justice Department announced revised guidelines for obtaining records from the news media during criminal leak investigations, removing language that news organisations said was ambiguous and requiring additional levels of review before a journalist could be subpoenaed, but it did not end the practice.

# Ex-BBC head quits gallery job amid Diana interview fallout

London: Tony Hall, who was director of BBC news and current affairs at the time of the public broadcaster's explosive 1995 interview with Princess Diana, resigned Saturday as board chairman of Britain's National Gallery.

Hall, who subsequently rose to the top job at the BBC, was heavily criticised in a report this week for a botched inquiry into how journalist Martin Bashir obtained the blockbuster interview.

In a statement, Hall said his continued presence at the gallery would be a "distraction to an institution I care deeply about."

"As I said two days ago, I am very sorry for the events of 25 years ago and I believe leadership means taking responsibility," Hall said.

The 126-page report by retired Judge John Dyson, published Thursday, found the internal BBC investigation had covered up "deceitful behavior" by Bashir, who was little-known as a journalist when he interviewed Diana.

The BBC also has faced questions about why Bashir was rehired in 2016 as the broadcaster's religious affairs correspondent. AP

# Biden, S-Korea's Moon 'deeply concerned' about N-Korea

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden on Friday said he and South Korean President Moon Jae-in remain "deeply concerned" about the situation with North Korea, and announced he will deploy a new special envoy to the region to help refocus efforts on pressing Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

Moon, meanwhile, welcomed "America's return" to the world stage and said both leaders pledged to work closely toward denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

Biden said he was dispatching career diplomat Sung Kim, who previously served as ambassador to South Korea, to serve as the special envoy to the region.

Moon said the move by Biden "reflects the firm commitment of the US for exploring diplomacy and its readiness for dialogue with North Korea."

Moon came to Washington seeking renewed diplomatic urgency by the US on curbing North Korea's nuclear program, even as the White House signaled that it is taking a longer view on the issue. High

on Biden's list for the meeting as well: coordination in vaccine distribution, climate change and regional security concerns spurred by China. Their meeting was only Biden's second in-person session with a foreign leader because of the coronavirus pandemic. Moon said after the meeting the two had "a very frank dialogue like old friends" and emphasized the need for cooperation on security issues in the region.

"The most urgent common task that our two countries must undertake is achieving complete denuclearization and permanent peace on the Korean peninsula," he said.

Moon said the two "reaffirmed the strength" of the nations' alliance and "affirmed the common vision for developing it into an even stronger one."

Their formal talks in the afternoon ran long, Biden said in earlier remarks, noting his staff interrupted repeatedly to warn they were over time. "But I enjoyed the meeting so much that it caused us to move everything back," Biden said, as he highlighted the two countries' "long history of shared sacrifice."

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
Tender Notice  
Dy. Chief Engineer/Const., Northern Railway Moradabad for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender under Single Packet System for the under noted work:

Name of work and its location	Const of precast boundary wall between IKK-HW section and in under Jurisdiction of Dy/CE/CMB in C/with Haridwar-Laksar doubling of Moradabad division.
Completion period:	02 Months
Approx. cost of the work	₹47,93,270.73
Date & Time for uploading of tender and Opening of Tender	Tenders may be uploaded upto 11:30 hrs. on 18.06.2021 date on IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in. The bidders can participate in the e-tender. Technical cum commercial bid and Financial bids will be opened immediately after close of uploading of tenders on 18.06.2021 at 11:30 hrs.
Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Documents	The detailed e-tender notice is available on Northern Railway website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in. Above tender document will be available for submission of offer on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 04.06.2021 upto 11:30 hrs. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender documents. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

Tender Notice No. 1-W/Tender-277/Dy. CE/CMB Dated: 22.05.2021 1100/21  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

**SEARCH OF MISSING/KIDNAPPED**  
General public is hereby informed that one female (depicted in the photo), Namely: Rekha Shukla, W/o: Pradeep Shukla, R/O: H.No. T-565, 3rd Floor, Baljeet Nagar, Prem Nagar Road, New Delhi-110008, has been missing (alongwith her daughter Vanya) from her house since 08.04.2021 at 08:00 PM from the area of PS Patel Nagar, Delhi. In this regard a case vide DD No. 94A, Dated 09.04.2021, has been registered at P.S. Patel Nagar, Delhi. Their physical description are as under:

**(1) Rekha Shukla: Aged: 23 years, Height: 5'2" Feet, Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Physique/Build: Thin, Clothing: Green Colour Top, Black Colour Legging and White Colour Flat Slippers in her feet.**  
**(2) Vanya: Aged: 2 years, Clothing: Printed T-Shirt.**  
Any person is having any information/clue about this missing female & her daughter, may inform SHO, Patel Nagar, Delhi at E-mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in or website : http://cbi.nic.in Fax No.: 011-23011334, Tele No. :011-24368638 or 24368641

**S.H.O**  
**P.S. Patel Nagar, Delhi**  
**Ph: 011-25872637, 8750870434**  
DP/803/CD/2021.

**CSB Bank**  
Formerly The Catholic Syrian Bank Ltd.  
CSB Bank, Janakpuri Branch, B1/34 Ground floor, Janakpuri-110058

**GOLD AUCTION NOTICE**  
CSB Bank Limited, Janakpuri branch has granted gold loan against pledge of gold ornaments to the below mentioned borrower/s. Notice has been issued to him/hem demanding repayment of the amount with interest and charges thereon. Since they have failed to pay the balance outstanding in the respective accounts, we are constrained to recover the amount by sale of gold ornaments in public auction and if the auction does not fetch required amount, bank will proceed with the sale by private treaties/contract. Bank reserves its right to change/extend the date and venue of auction without assigning any reason.

Sl No	Name of borrower	Weight of Pledge Items (in grams)	Overdue Gold Loan Account No.	Amount	Balance as on 21-05-2021
1	Yatish Sharma	86.5	0469-04229251-000001	2,69,000/-	254207.40/-
2	Alekta Kujur	242.09	0469-04188448-000004	9,00,000/-	910458.74/-

The auction will be conducted at the premises of CSB Bank Limited, Janakpuri branch premises situated at B1/34 Ground Floor, Janakpuri, Delhi-110058 on 31st May 2021 at 11:00 AM. Interested parties may contact the Branch Manager in the above address. Participants should attend the auction along with copy of Pan Card, passport size photo, valid identity proof and address proof on the date of auction.  
Place: Janakpuri  
Date : 21-05-2021 Branch Manager

**SEARCH FOR MISSING LADY**  
General Public is hereby informed that one lady (depicted in the photo) namely Nasreen W/o Umerddin R/O H.No. 236, Gali No. 07, Phase-07, Shiv Vihar, Karawal Nagar, Delhi, Aged- About 32 Years has been reported missing since 06.05.2021 from her house vide DD No. 51-A Dated 07.05.2021 lodged at Police Station Karawal Nagar, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:-  
**Complexion: Fair, Height: 5'0", Face: Round, Built: Thin, Wearing: Black suit-salwar and slipper in feet.**  
Any person having any information/Clue about this missing lady, may inform SHO, Karawal Nagar, Delhi at E-mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in or website : http://cbi.nic.in Sd/-  
Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641 SHO, Karawal Nagar, Delhi  
FAX No. : 011-24368639 Tel.: 011-9205832616  
DP/784/NE/2021 Mob.: 8750870728

**RAIL LAND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
(A Statutory Authority under Ministry of Railways, Government of India)  
Unit No. 702-B, 7th Floor, Connaught Tower-II DMRC Building, Ameri Gate, New Delhi-110002, Phone: +91-11-23228594, Fax: +91-11-23228335

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL THROUGH E-TENDER**  
(RFP Notice No. RLDA/RFP/CD-17 of 2021 Dated 13.05.2021)

**GRANT OF LEASE FOR RESIDENTIAL CUM COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT ON RAILWAY LAND OF 4,969 SQM AT MEDICAL COLONY AT BHAVNAGAR, WESTERN RAILWAY FOR 99 YEARS**

Land	Area	Built-Up Area	Bid Security	Reserve Price
Medical Colony at Bhavnagar	4969 Sqm.	8944 Sqm.	8000 Lakh	Rs. 9.70 Crore

**ONLINE PRE-BID MEETING ON WEBSITE: 2nd JUNE, 2021 AT 11:30 HRS**  
(Online Pre-bid meeting details to be obtained from Dy. General Manager/Mumbai)  
Last Date of Submission of E-bid: 14.07.2021 UPTO 15:00 HRS  
For Further details of the project, please visit our website www.rlda.indianrailways.gov.in or e-procurement Portal www.tenderwizard.com/RLDA Under the heading 'e-tender'  
For any clarifications, may please contact:-

Dy. General Manager/Mumbai M: 82753 40119 dgm@mba@rlda.railnet.gov.in	General Manager/Project-II M: 88265 77709 gmp2@rlda.railnet.gov.in	General Consultant/RLDA Mr. Sulabh Goyal M: 98999 11835	For E-bid Queries-Mr. Suraj M: 95996 53865 suraj@tenderwizard.com
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Note:- Any Corrigendum or Addendum shall be published only on RLDA's Website DGM/Tender, (M) 77039 18078

**SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
**E-AUCTION SALE PROGRAMME OF SCRAP IN SECRET**  
NO.: S/AP/2020-21/ Date : 19.05.2021  
The auction schedule Program for three months from June-2021 to Aug-2021 is as under:-

[A] June 2021				
GSD/Raipur	BSP/Division	Raipur/Division	Nagpur/Division	
03.06.2021	02.06.2021	07.06.2021	08.06.2021	
15.06.2021	18.06.2021	17.06.2021	16.06.2021	
30.06.2021	29.06.2021	28.06.2021	25.06.2021	

[B] July 2021				
GSD/Raipur	BSP/Division	Raipur/Division	Nagpur/Division	
08.07.2021	09.07.2021	12.07.2021	07.07.2021	
19.07.2021	20.07.2021	22.07.2021	16.07.2021	
28.07.2021	29.07.2021	30.07.2021	27.07.2021	

[C] Aug 2021				
GSD/Raipur	BSP/Division	Raipur/Division	Nagpur/Division	
06.08.2021	09.08.2021	10.08.2021	05.08.2021	
17.08.2021	18.08.2021	20.08.2021	16.08.2021	
26.08.2021	27.08.2021	31.08.2021	25.08.2021	

Please visit website: www.ireps.gov.in/e-auction for details of e-auction schedule and e-catalogue.  
Auction will start at 10:00 AM and may be continued next day, if considered necessary.  
• Material shall be disposed off on "as is where is basis"  
• Available at GSD/Raipur & Divisions at (Bilaspur, Nagpur and Raipur)  
• Type of material: Scrap Rail, Cast Iron, P. Way Scrap, Melting, MS, condemned rolling stock, Non-Ferrous such as copper, Aluminium, Batteries and abandoned structure etc.  
• For detailed Auction catalogue, please see the Website: www.ireps.gov.in/e-auction  
Assistant Materials Manager (IC), for PCMM S.E.C. Railway, Bilaspur  
CPR/10/32

# India's consumer confidence worsens in May

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

The consumer confidence in India has further weakened in May amid the severe Covid crisis and the resultant lockdowns across States.

The monthly Refinitiv-Ipsos Primary Consumer Sentiment Index (PCSI) for India, in May, has shown a sharp drop of 6.3 percentage points, over April 2021, amid Covid-19 fears.

The monthly PCSI, which is driven by the aggregation of the four weighted sub-indices, has plunged across all sub-indices. The PCSI Employment Confidence Sub-Index is down by 4.7 percentage points, the PCSI Current Personal Financial Conditions Sub-Index has steeply fallen by 9.0 percentage points.

Further, the PCSI Investment Climate Sub-Index has sharply declined by 8.4 percentage points and the PCSI Economic Expectations Sub-Index, has decreased by 4.4 percentage points.

Amit Adarkar, CEO, Ipsos India, said: "The second wave has been far greater in intensi-



ty as compared to the first wave and we are seeing its terrible impact not only on our healthcare infrastructure, which is stressed due to the steep surge in cases, but also on consumer sentiment, which has plummeted across the four sub-indices. Especially for personal finances, for day to day running of household expenses and savings and investments for the future."

Confidence around jobs and the economy too have taken a hit and right now, the government's focus is to contain the virus and save lives. And that is why we are seeing

lockdowns and restrictions being imposed. But then it is also impacting livelihoods and earnings, he said.

"It is a tough dilemma but saving lives will take precedence over everything else and then of course expediting the vaccination drive, with now Sputnik V too making the India debut. We will have to closely watch the Covid trajectory over the next 3-4 weeks and gauge if restrictions are being lifted from June onwards. If it does not happen and vaccination drive does not pick up pace, we are looking at a very slow rebound."

# Substantial stimulus needed for futuristic economic growth trajectory: PHD

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

A substantial stimulus would be required to create effective strides for futuristic economic growth trajectory amid the pandemic, said Sanjay Aggarwal, President, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Though economic activity recovered to pre-Covid levels in March 2021, the rapid re-spread of corona cases in second wave of Covid and resultant strict restrictions in many parts of the country have posed severe challenges to double digit economic growth in FY 2021-22, Aggarwal said.

"A substantial stimulus to create effective strides for futuristic economic growth trajectory would be crucial in this extremely difficult time," he said. There is a need to lower interest rates for consumers and businesses, lesser compliances for MSMEs vis-a-vis ease of doing business at the ground level and a lower tax regime to increase the personal disposable income of the people, Aggarwal added.

PHDCCI Economic & Business Momentum (EBM)

Index of 25 lead economic and business indicators has registered an increase in March 2021 to the level of 99.9 as compared to 99.5 in February 2021 and 99.7 in January 2020, said statement by the chamber.

Lead economic and business indicators such as cement, steel, consumer durables, GST collections, external commercial borrowings and FDI equity inflows have shown a marvelous improvement in March 2021, said Sanjay Aggarwal.

"However, the second wave of Coronavirus has swamped the country at a rapid rate with more severe impact than the previous wave in 2020," Aggarwal said.

The partial or complete lockdowns in many states and strict restrictions in various regions across the country have created an uncertain economic environment, with depressed demand and investment scenario, said Sanjay Aggarwal.

The supply chain disruptions are causing skyrocketing commodity prices, which have severely impacted the price cost margins of the businesses in the difficult pandemic time of coronavirus. The increase in

costs of raw materials is affecting the MSMEs which are already struggling because of pandemic impact and squeezed working capital, said Sanjay Aggarwal.

Households are shifting their savings towards fulfilling the medical needs of their family members along with deferment of their expenditure on non-essential items, he added.

According to him, at this juncture, the govt has to step up with proactive and calibrated measures to mitigate the daunting impact of Coronavirus 2.0 on people, industry, trade and economy, as it did during the last year in 2020.

On the basis of recent movement of PHDCCI EBM Index, PHD Chamber projects more than 1 per cent growth rate of GDP in Q4 FY 2020-21 and overall GDP growth of FY 2020-21 at (-) 7.9 per cent.

Going ahead, to attain a higher growth trajectory, effective policy measures are needed once again to support demand creation and to have a multiplier effect on enhanced production possibilities, said Aggarwal.

# Hero MotoCorp to resume production at all plants from May 24

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Two-wheeler market leader Hero MotoCorp on Saturday said it will resume production at all its manufacturing plants in India from Monday after temporarily shutting operations due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In the beginning of this week, the company had resumed partial operations at its three plants at Gurugram and Dharuhera in Haryana and Haridwar in Uttarakhand.

It had halted operations temporarily at all of its six plants in India in a staggered manner for four days from

April 22 to May 2, which was then extended till May 16.

Hero MotoCorp is "gearing up towards a gradual resumption of operations by starting production at all its manufacturing plants in India from Monday, May 24", the company said in a statement.

"The other plants of Hero MotoCorp in India - Neemrana in Rajasthan, Halol in Gujarat and Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh, will also start single shift operations from May 24," it added. Production in single shift had already commenced at three of its plants Gurugram and Dharuhera in Haryana and at Haridwar, Uttarakhand from May 17.



# No change in petrol and diesel prices on Saturday

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the hike, oil marketing companies (OMCs) on Saturday kept pump price of petrol and diesel unchanged across the country, taking a pause with global oil which is showing signs of softening amidst possibility of Iranian oil hitting the markets soon.

Accordingly, petrol continues to be priced at Friday's level of Rs 93.04 per litre and diesel Rs 83.80 per litre in Delhi.

Across the country as well the fuel prices remained static on Saturday but their retail prices varied depending on the level of local taxes.

The pause in prices has come after the repeated rise in fuel prices in May which has taken the retail price of petrol

closer to historic level of Rs 100 per litre in the city of Mumbai. The retail price of petrol has now reached Rs 99.32 per litre in the city.

Petrol prices are already over Rs 100 per litre in several cities in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. Premium petrol has been hovering above that level for some time now.

In the month of May, fuel prices have increased on 11 days so far. This has taken up the price of petrol by Rs 2.49 a litre in Delhi. Similarly, diesel prices have risen by Rs 3.07 per litre in the capital this month.

Before Friday, OMC were revising fuel prices on every alternate day for last one week rather than undertaking changes on a daily basis as has been the practice.

# Punjab & Sind Bank back in black after eight quarters; reports Q4 profit of ₹161 cr

PTI ■ MUMBAI

State-run Punjab & Sind Bank turned profitable in the fourth quarter of FY21 after eight consecutive quarters of losses, posting a profit after tax (PAT) of ₹161 crore on the back of improvement in recoveries and decline in bad loans.

The lender had registered a net loss of ₹236.3 crore in the year ago period.

However, for the full year, its loss widened to ₹2,732.9 crore as against ₹990.8 crore in FY20.

"The profitability is due to our focussed monitoring and also on account of recoveries. Though it has been challenging times, we were able to make a reasonable amount of recoveries.

"We were also able to arrest slippages to a great extent. This has helped in bringing down the credit costs,



which enabled us to register profit," the bank's Managing Director and CEO S Krishnan told reporters.

He further said the bank has taken a number of steps in order to sustain the profitability going ahead.

"We have created a dedicated department at head office which will be monitoring the accounts that are under stress very closely. "We have formed a task force at zonal offices which will be in touch with customers directly. That way, we will be able to ensure that we are able to arrest the slippages," he noted. The bank has also set up a separate recovery vertical and a stress asset management vertical.

Its net interest margin (NIM) declined to 1.70 per cent from 1.87 per cent. Net interest income (NII) was down 1.79 per cent to ₹495 crore as

against ₹504 crore in the year ago period.

The bank's asset quality showed improvement, with gross non-performing assets (GNPAs) declining to 13.76 per cent from 14.18 per cent.

Net NPA also halved to 4.04 per cent during the reporting quarter from 8.03 per cent in the corresponding period of the previous year.

As a result, the provisions and contingencies fell to ₹4.38 crore in the reported quarter from ₹817.83 crore in the year ago period.

Provisions for bad loans were down at ₹19.93 crore in Q4 FY21 as against ₹683.80 crore in the year ago period. Cash recoveries in the fourth quarter stood at ₹531.19 crore, while for the full year the figure was ₹926.57 crore, as per the bank's investor presentation.

# Start-up business to deliver necessities on the doorstep

IANS ■ KOLKATA

Covid-19 has brought several businesses to its knees. But it has also given small opportunities to hungry entrepreneurs, keen to display their social conscience. With companies declaring a work-from-home model and the novel coronavirus pandemic spreading its tentacles, BA graduate Hemlata Kushwaha from Kolkata has taken up the opportunity to provide 'pick up and drop service' to take the necessities at the doorstep of the people of the city.

'Pick up and drop facility' has become an essential service for consumers all across the country. The service allows one to deliver or receive anything, be it lunch boxes, documents, laundry, items for repair, shoes, stationery and other materials from one location to another from anywhere in their city. It also allows one to buy stuff from beetle shops, supermarkets, pharmacies and home-cooked means making the daily errands easier. Those running a business can also opt for deliveries of office documents as well.

Kolkata based start-up



'Delivery Pigeon' - a self-funded start-up - provides 'same day pick and drop services' to working professionals, small businesses and senior citizens at their doorsteps within city limits.

Functioning from March 2021, "the start-up currently gets 200 orders per day. The number is steadily increasing due to an increase in Covid cases. We currently operate with more than 180 provider partners all over the city," said 45-year-old Kushwaha.

"Keeping in mind our customers' concerns for safety, the parcels are verified twice by provider partners at the pick-up and drop points. We also offer easy payment options -

both online and offline mode as well as the flexibility of making payment at either point.

The app also allows users to schedule their orders 24 hours in advance," she added.

Initially started to help family members suffering from the deadly virus, the start-up is now a full-fledged automated, app-based service. Like its competitors in other cities, it aims to make local pick and drop services quick, easy and accessible for all through a user-friendly and hassle-free app.

Efforts are on to make Delivery Pigeon a key player in the hyperlocal delivery space in Kolkata.

### WESTERN RAILWAY

**E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE No. S/19/2021, Date 19.05.2021**

Sr.No	Short Description of Item	Quantity	T.O.D.
428	Locking Plate for Wheel and Axle	26522 Nos.	27.05.2021
429	Portable Operation Theatre Light	1 Set.	02.06.2021
430	D.Note No. T 7 B	4800 Nos.	04.06.2021
431	Cable Resistance Thermometer Sensor	7 Nos.	04.06.2021
432	Water Tank Complete Assy.	46 Nos.	04.06.2021
433	Equipped Hopper Assy.	167 Pairs	04.06.2021
434	Capacitor	21 Nos.	04.06.2021
435	Spring Plank for Casnub Bogie	118 Nos.	04.06.2021
436	Secondary Spring Outer	100 Nos.	04.06.2021
437	Brake Gear Shaft	320 Nos.	04.06.2021
438	Slack Adjuster	70 Nos.	04.06.2021
439	Anaesthesia Machine with Monitor	2 Nos.	04.06.2021
440	3 Phase Induction Blower Motor	229 Nos.	05.06.2021
441	ST Porcelain Insulator	1203 Nos.	05.06.2021
442	Grease shell GADUS	270 Kg	05.06.2021
443	High Capacity Thermoplastic Polyester Elastomeric	2150 Nos.	07.06.2021
444	Double Acting Hydraulic Shock Absorber	440 Nos.	07.06.2021
445	Silent Block	2056 Nos.	07.06.2021
446	Expansion Strap Complete	743 Nos.	07.06.2021
447	Brake Head Assy	384 Nos.	07.06.2021
448	U Clamp with Bracket	1120 Set	07.06.2021
449	Brake Gear Bushes	50292 Nos.	07.06.2021
450	Sub Kit POH-2B for Tap Changer No. 32	28 Set	07.06.2021
451	Pressure Switch -4 H3	21 Nos.	07.06.2021
452	Contact for Time Relay	13 Nos.	07.06.2021
453	Side Frame Friction Liner	13123 Nos.	07.06.2021
454	Bogie Centre Pivot Top	1066 Nos.	07.06.2021
455	Bogie Centre Pivot Bottom	710 Nos.	07.06.2021
456	SMPs based IPS System	32 Set	08.06.2021
457	CC PU Side Bearer Pad Assy. (22NLB Bogies)	1273 Nos.	08.06.2021
458	CC PU Side Bearer Pad Assy. (22HS Bogies)	565 Nos.	08.06.2021
459	Epoxy Gel Coat Red with Hardener	958 Set	09.06.2021
460	Railway Signalling Cable (2CX2.5 Sq.mm)	47.20 KM	09.06.2021
461	Thickener of Belt Tensioning Bracket	765 Nos.	09.06.2021
462	Brake Beam	26 Nos.	09.06.2021
463	Flap Door for BCNA Wagon	808 Nos.	09.06.2021
464	Flap Door Assy.	79 Nos.	09.06.2021
465	Oil Shell Corena	2642 Ltr.	09.06.2021
466	Set of Blower (Evaporator)	130 Set	10.06.2021
467	Hanger for Bogie Bolster Spring Supn.	7000 Nos.	10.06.2021
468	Foot Plate	200 Nos.	10.06.2021
469	Key Switch Simulation (Pos no 179)	4 No.	10.06.2021
470	Side Frame Key for CTRB	28359 Nos.	10.06.2021
471	Coupler Body with Shank Wears Plate	1500 Nos.	10.06.2021
472	Knuckle Pivot Pin	11920 Nos.	10.06.2021
473	Transition Screw Coupling	58 Nos.	10.06.2021
474	Lock Lift Rivet ( Flat CSK Head) for CBC	3094 Nos.	10.06.2021
475	Set of PU Lining	3107 Set	10.06.2021
476	Distributor Valve	20 Nos.	10.06.2021
477	Vinyl Coated Upholstery Fabric	25492 Mtr.	11.06.2021
478	D. Note No. EE 52 B	2000 Nos.	11.06.2021
479	Non-Ignitable Tape Plasticized PVC	80246 Mtr.	11.06.2021
480	Sealing Ring for Axle Box	103412 Nos.	11.06.2021
481	Packing Ring 254 OxDx120 IDx13mm thick	9700 Nos.	11.06.2021
482	Nitrile Rubber O Ring	4000 Nos.	11.06.2021
483	Pipe connection	123 Set	11.06.2021
484	Lock Lift Rivet (Flat CSK Head)	4832 Nos.	11.06.2021
485	Knuckle for Upgraded High Tensile CBC	5338 Nos.	11.06.2021
486	Key Bolt with Nut, Spring Washer & 4 Dia.Split Pin	84056 Nos.	11.06.2021
487	Centre Pivot Top	1333 Nos.	11.06.2021
488	Door Assy.	160 Nos.	11.06.2021
489	Flap Door Arrangement	320 Nos.	11.06.2021
490	Spare of APM	250 set	11.06.2021

**CORRIGENDUM:** Please visit [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in) for corrigendum issued to following tenders: Sr. No. 362 & 370 (Catenary Wire 105 & 05 Sq.mm) of Tender Notice No. S/17/2021 Dt. 05.05.2021 due on 25.05.2021 & 26.05.2021 respectively are dropped. Regarding detailed notice EMD, Purchase restrictions and detailed tender conditions, please visit website [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in), and [www.wr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.wr.indianrailways.gov.in).

**D-0121 For Principal Chief Materials Manager**  
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### WESTERN RAILWAY

**E-TENDER FOR RAIL RENEWAL WORK**

**(1) Executive: DEN (E) BCT, Tender Notice No. & Date: BCT/21-22/50, dt. 21/05/2021, Work and location: Udhna -Jalgao section: TRR, CRR, TBR P&C, shoulder & crib ballast, and TTR under ADEN-Amalner section in connection of sanctioned track works for the year 20-21. Approx. Cost of work: ₹ 3,99,32,777.46/- EMD: ₹0/- (2) Executive: DEN (E) BCT, Tender Notice No.: BCT/21-22/51, dt. 21/05/2021, Work and location: Udhna - Jalgao section: TRR, CRR, TBR P&C, and TTR under ADEN-Nandurbar section in connection of sanctioned track works for the year 20-21. Approx. Cost of work: ₹ 3,95,99,958.90/- EMD: ₹0/- For above both tenders Date & Time of submission & opening: Submission on 18/06/2021 till 15:00 hrs, Opening on 18/06/2021 at 15:30 hrs. Regarding detailed nature of work, containing cost of tender document (non refundable), EMD, eligibility criteria, similar nature of work, detailed tender conditions, please visit [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in) Manual offers will not be considered. D-0122**

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### UJVN Ltd.

(An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprises)  
H.O. "UJVN" Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006  
Telephone-0135-2763808 Fax: 0135-2763508  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866 Website: [www.ujvn.com](http://www.ujvn.com)

**RO No. 371 Date: 22.05.2021**

**e-Tender Notice**

For and on behalf of UJVN Limited, Office of the Executive Engineer, PCM(GV), Mayapur, Haridwar invites online bids from interested bidders. Brief summary of tender is given below:-

**Tender Notice Reference: NIT No.- 01/2021-22/EE/PCM(GV)/Mayapur- Supply & Laying New GI Pipe Line at Pathri Colony.**

**Estimated Value of Tender:- Rs. 35.51,120.31**

Date of availability of bid document on website:- **24.05.2021 from 17:00 Hrs.**  
Last Date for Submission of bids on website:- **14.06.2021 upto 17:00 Hrs.**  
For full & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal "<http://uktenders.gov.in>"

**Executive Engineer PCM (GV)**

**"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"**

### CSB Bank

Formerly The Catholic Syrian Bank Ltd.

Palam Branch located at RZ 11-D, Yadav Towers, Infront of Palam Metro Station Gate No.3, Puraan Nagar, Palam Colony, South West Delhi, New Delhi-110045

**GOLD AUCTION NOTICE**

CSB Bank Limited, Palam branch has granted gold loan against pledge of gold ornaments to the below mentioned borrowers. Notice has been issued to him/hem them demanding repayment of the amount with interest and charges thereon. Since they have failed to repay the balance outstanding in the respective accounts, we are constrained to recover the amount by sale of gold ornaments in public auction and if the auction does not fetch required amount, bank will proceed with the sale by private trustees/contract. Bank reserves its right to change/extend the date and venue of auction without assigning any reason.

Sl No	Name of borrower	Gross Weight of Pledge Items (in grams)	Overdue Gold Loan Account no.	Amount	Balance Outstanding (as on 18.05.2021)
1	Priya	67.22	0459-04185118-000001	262000	256751.15
2	Devender Rai	7.20	0459-04179135-000001	25000	25732.00
3	Devender Rai	14.25	0459-04179135-000002	36000	37200.00
4	Devender Rai	10.03	0459-04179135-000003	32500	33582.00
5	Devender Rai	5.50	0459-04179135-000004	17000	17883.00

The auction will be conducted at the premises of CSB Bank Limited, Palam branch situated at RZ 11-D, Yadav Towers, Infront of Palam Metro Station Gate No.3, Puraan Nagar, Palam Colony, South West Delhi, New Delhi-110045 on 31.05.2021 at 3 p.m. Interested parties may contact the Branch Manager in the above address. Participants should attend the auction along with copy of Pan Card, passport size photo, valid identity proof and address proof on the date of auction.

**Place: Palam**  
**Date: 21-05-2021**  
Branch Manager

# Rising prices likely to moderate white goods demand: MOFSL

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Rising prices due to high commodity costs is expected to moderate demand for white goods, said Motilal Oswal Financial Services (MOFSL).

At present, copper, plastics, steel, and aluminium form the key commodity inputs for the white goods sector.

In 2HFY21, almost all commodities were at multi-year high levels - copper, steel, aluminium, and polyprop were up 44 per cent, 38 per cent, 22

per cent and 29 per cent, respectively.

According to MOFSL, price increase of 5-10 per cent by companies across most categories have somewhat cushioned gross margins but will dampen the demand. "The primary reasons for this are the large ticket sizes of the product categories vis-a-vis other product categories and the availability of substitutes," the report said. "Price increases of 5-10 per cent taken by companies across most categories have somewhat cushioned gross margins."

# Amazon to retire Prime Now, allows 2-hour deliveries on main app

New Delhi: Amazon has announced to shut down its standalone Prime Now delivery app, and the two-hour delivery options will now be available on its main app and website.

The company said that in India, Japan and Singapore, it has already moved the Prime Now experience onto Amazon and retired the Prime Now app and website.

"In the US, we began making two-hour delivery from Amazon Fresh and Whole Foods Market available on Amazon in 2019. Globally, we'll move our third-party



partners and local stores to the Amazon shopping experience before the Prime Now app and website are retired later this year," informed Stephenie Landry, vice president of grocery at Amazon.

# India's oil imports remains flat in April amid Covid

IANS ■ NEW



# COVID AND AFTER

More than half a million people may have to go through the horrifying struggle to latch on to dear life after recovering from Corona, writes MUSBA HASHMI

A 69-year-old male Diabetic and hypertensive patient got down with fever earlier this month. At first, he thought of it as viral, but when the fever didn't go even after two days, he underwent an RT-PCR test. Positive, the report said. He had mild COVID and was treated in home isolation with oral anticoagulants and other supportive drugs. The symptoms went away soon and he recovered in 15 days. The man and his family took a sigh of relief. However, this is not the end of the story.

To everyone's surprise, one week later he complained of acute pain in the right leg. Something neither the patient nor his family members anticipated. Investigations revealed very high d dimer levels and deep venous thrombosis. It is a condition that occurs after a blood clot forms in a large vein, most often in the calf. Pain, swelling and sometimes pulmonary embolism (or a sudden blockage in the lung) can occur, making deep vein thrombosis a life-threatening condition. But, fortunately the doctors were able to save the patient because of early treatment.

However, not everyone might be as lucky as this man. Though the number of Corona cases is declining in India, the country is staring at the horrendous possibility of patients recovering from COVID, but succumbing to a heart attack or organ failure soon after.

## MILLIONS AT RISK

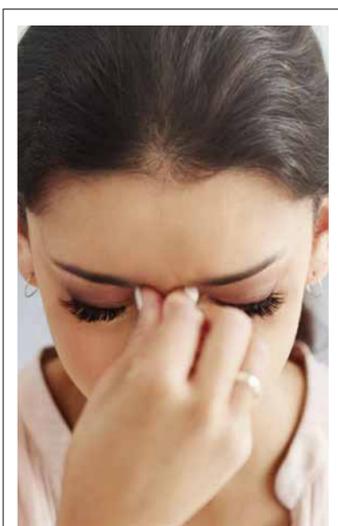
"It is estimated that 26 per cent of the COVID patients can exhibit post covid complications," says Dr Mubasheer Ali, Senior Internal Medicine Consultant, Apollo TeleHealth. The long-term effects may include fatigue, cardiac, respiratory symptoms, and neurological symptoms.

Looking at the current figures of recovered cases, more than half a million people may have to go through the horrifying struggle to latch on to dear life. Currently, India has seen 22,712,735 recovered cases, which is 99 per cent of the total cases with just one per cent deaths. The latest post-Covid complications story is giving a twist to the tale as the country might see more deaths in the months to come.

The post COVID complications are common in vulnerable patients such as patients above 60 years with or without comorbidities such as Diabetes, hypertension and cardiac disorders. The country has about 54.5 million cardiovascular diseases patients (according to a previous data), 77 million Diabetics, as of 2020, and similarly people struggling with serious ailments that are likely to get aggravated post COVID. Not only people with comorbidities, but the ones who have suffered severe COVID symptoms are equally at risk.

"It is found that individuals with a severe disease at the start of their illness have a greater risk of long-term cardiac complications secondary to COVID-19. But, recent scientific data suggests that even people with mild COVID-19 may develop long-term health complications that go well beyond the lungs," Ali adds.

Dr Shuchin Bajaj, Founder & Director, Ujala Cygnus Group of Hospitals, says that deaths in such cases is not new in the second wave. It happens due to heart attack or because of developing severe post Covid pneumonia leading to low oxygen levels in the patient, requiring ventilator support and then dying. The reason for cardiac arrests in such cases



## WARNING SIGNS

- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing
- Cough
- Joint pain
- Chest pain
- Swelling of limbs
- Memory, concentration or sleep problems
- Muscle pain or headache
- Fast or pounding heartbeat
- Loss of smell or taste
- Depression or anxiety
- Fever
- Dizziness when you stand
- Worsened symptoms after physical or mental activities

is the increased thrombogenicity in the blood.

"The Covid-19 infection increases the thrombogenicity in the blood. This leads to thickening of blood owing to prothrombotic conditions. This virus makes the blood thicker, which leads to formation of blood clots which can later result in cardiac arrest. Also, COVID-19 has endothelial disease qualities that damage the inner lining of blood vessels of the heart and arteries which makes it difficult for the heart to pump blood as it is supposed to do," Dr DK Jhamb, Director & HOD Cardiology, Paras Hospitals, Gurugram, tells you.

## STRUGGLE WITH LONG-HAUL COVID

"It is found that individuals with a severe disease at the start of their illness have a greater risk of long-term cardiac complications secondary to COVID-19. But, recent scientific data suggests that even people with mild COVID-19 may develop long-term health complications that go well beyond the lungs," Ali adds.

Although most people with COVID-19 get better within weeks of illness, some people experience post-Covid conditions. "Post-Covid conditions are a wide range of new, returning, or ongoing health problems people can experience more than four weeks after first being infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. These post-Covid health con-

THE INCREASED DEATHS CAN ALSO BE ATTRIBUTED TO HEART ATTACKS AND MULTIPLE ORGAN FAILURE AS A RESULT OF POST-COVID COMPLICATIONS. IT IS DISHEARTENING TO SAY THAT PEOPLE WITH CVDs ARE AT A HIGHER RISK OF LOSING THE BATTLE AGAINST COVID. IN SUCH A SCENARIO, PATIENTS WITH UNDERLYING DISEASES SHOULD BE MORE CAREFUL THAN EVER AND SHOULD TAKE PROPER CARE OF THEMSELVES EVEN AFTER THEY HAVE RECOVERED FROM THE INFECTION. THIS IS THE ONLY WAY DEATHS RELATED TO POST-COVID COMPLICATIONS CAN BE REDUCED IN THE COMING MONTHS

— DR DK JHAMB, DIRECTOR & HOD CARDIOLOGY, PARAS HOSPITALS, GURUGRAM

ditions are known as "long Covid" or "long-haul Covid". In such cases, a patient continues to experience symptoms of the disease four weeks after initial recovery," Dr Deepak Verma, Internal Medicine, Columbia Asia Hospital, Ghaziabad, tells you.

He agrees with Ali and tells you that Covid-19 is also affecting multiple organs and body systems, including heart and blood vessels, lungs, kidneys, skin, brain and nerves. This virus has the potential to directly involve lung cells, leading to lung fibrosis. They stimulate the fibroblasts, causing fibrosis of the lungs and that is a tripling problem. "That is, you land with a 'triple lung', leading to fatigue and you always pant for breath," Verma says.

Available data indicates that about a quarter of those with COVID-19 suffer from symptoms four-five weeks after testing positive, and about one in 10 experience symptoms after 12 weeks.

"While there is no conclusive evidence, people may experience post-Covid conditions due to persistence of the virus in some parts of the body that are sheltered from the immune system," Verma adds.

Certain post Covid complications can be quite severe ranging right from death to continued breathlessness, post Covid pneumonia, inappropriate sinus and anxiety. These can last anywhere between two weeks and five months.

"We have seen hundreds of cases till now. And, one of them was a famous paediatrician, who was admitted in our hospital. He suffered from inappropriate sinus tachycardia for about four months after recovering from COVID. Every time he stood up and walk, his heart rate would shoot up to 150 per minute. He would develop severe palpitations and would have to sit down immediately. A visit to the toilet was like preparing for a marathon for him. He would think 10 times before standing up. It was a severe case and quite unfortunate too because it was a helpless situation. Thankfully, he has recovered now and is doing perfectly great," adds Bajaj.

## BE ALERT, BE SAFE

The only way, Jhamb says, to avoid these deaths is to take proper care even after recovering from the virus.

"The increased deaths can also be attributed to heart attacks and multiple organ failure as a result of post-Covid complications. It is disheartening to say that people with CVDs are at a higher risk of losing the battle against COVID. In such a scenario, patients with underlying diseases should be more careful than ever and should take proper care of themselves even after they have recovered from the infection. This is the only way deaths related to post-Covid complications can be reduced in the coming months," Jhamb opines.

While, Ali suggests it is important to diagnose and treat the post-Covid complications early, in order to reduce mortality. "Early signs of post-Covid complications depend on the organ or the system involved post recovery. Complications range widely involving cardiac, neurological and respiratory systems. Take for example, if there is an impending cardiac complication then the patient can experience typical cardiac symptoms such as chest pain, palpitations, heaviness in the chest and others. This can further lead to increased chances of heart attacks. So, one has to be alert and should keep a watchful eye on the symptoms," he says.

## Mystery of Black Fungus

While we are still fighting the deadly second wave of COVID-19, many States are reporting a rash of mucormycosis aka black fungus cases.

While some doctors believe it is a post-Covid complication, there are no reports to back the fact. Also, several doctors disagree with the notion and say that it is simply an opportunistic infection and attacks people with a compromised immune system. It is also said to be a hospital acquired infection.

"Black fungus is an opportunistic infection and attacks people with a compromised immune system. Certain people like transplant patients, cancer patients and people on immunosuppression are at high risk. The fungal spores are present in our environment but can infect only when the immune system is down. Hence, we generally see these infections limited to a particular patient group," Dr Sumana Arora, Vice President, Clinical Services, DayToDay Health, tells you.

However, we are seeing an explosion of black fungus infections lately in our country, especially with the COVID pandemic. Why, you ask?

"The novel Coronavirus infection by itself is diabetogenic. Further, the covid infection has two phases — the viral phase and the inflammatory phase. And not necessarily the infected patient goes through both phases. Most of the patients go through only a mild illness in the form of the viral phase and do not enter the inflammatory phase at all. However, for the patients who do enter the inflammatory phase of the illness, steroids are the standard of treatment. Unfortunately, we are seeing indiscriminate use of steroids even in the viral phase, which is doing more harm than good. This is leading to more patients entering the inflammatory phase," she adds.

Additionally, poor sugar monitoring control and improper tapering of steroids add to the problem. The fact that India is the Diabetic Capital of the world doesn't help either. "It is also suspected that the use of industrial oxygen, dirty masks and unclean tubes when using oxygen therapy is also leading to this infection, not to mention the unclean water for humidification for oxygen therapy," she says.

Dr Archana Dhawan Bajaj, Gynaecologist Obstetrician and IVF expert, Nurture IVF, agrees with Arora and says that this is not per se a complication of COVID-19 alone, it can happen to anybody whose immunity is compromised.

"Patients with malignancies or HIV also have compromised immune system and are at a higher risk of getting fungal infection," Bajaj says.

This fungus can enter through the sinuses into the brain and the lungs and from the brain. It could damage the eyes also. A very high mortality rate as high as 50 per cent found to be associated with mucormycosis. The disease can be easily cured if it is picked up at the early stages with drugs.

"If the disease gets at advanced stage which often happens in people with COVID-19, it becomes difficult to treat it. People with COVID and mucormycosis may have headache, breathlessness, difficulty in timing well or difficulty in vision along with other symptoms. Mucormycosis is potentially life-threatening condition and should be treated timely with adequate emphasis on all possible curative drugs and procedures," Bajaj says.

# Don't need to change anything with my batting: Saha

PTI ■ KOLKATA

It's a circle of life that has put Wriddhiman Saha in the same position that he was a decade back when he came to England in 2011 as skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni's understudy.

The script was repeated in 2014 with Saha seen dutifully carrying the bats, towels and drinks for his teammates and in 2021, he is again expected to watch Rishabh Pant's pyrotechnics from the dressing room, something that has solely missed from his style of batsmanship despite being decent at his craft.

"Obviously, there would be criticism when you don't do well. I always try to deliver the way I've learnt over the years," Saha said ahead of joining the team's bio-bubble in Mumbai on Monday.

Despite being steady with the bat, somehow Saha's willow wielding hasn't exactly inspired the highest confidence and the question raised doesn't amuse him one bit.

"If people are saying my batting is not up there, maybe that's the case... But, I don't think I need to change anything — mental approach or technique. I just try to keep my focus and work hard," the reticent Bengal stumper said.

He accepts that post Dhoni's retirement and his spate of injuries during the whole 2018 season, it was Pant, who had best utilised the chances that came along.

"Parthiv (Patel), DK (Dinesh Karthik) and Rishabh got chances after I got sidelined due to injury. But it was Rishabh, who made full use of the opportunity and cemented his place in the side. Maybe I played some matches here and there..."

India will be playing six Test matches in England over the next three months and while Pant starting during the World Test Championship is a no-brainer, Saha might fancy



that some chance will come along his way with five games against England starting August.

"I think representing India itself is a big motivation, and it

will be much bigger if an opportunity comes my way," Saha, who has played 38 Tests, scor-

ing 1,251 runs and accounting for 103 dismissals, said. "Ultimately, everyone faces

## Wriddhiman questions IPL bubble tightness

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Seasoned wicketkeeper-batsman Wriddhiman Saha has indicated that the bio-bubble for IPL-14 was not as foolproof as the one in UAE last year, becoming the first India player to publicly question, even if subtly, the tightness of the controlled environment.

The 36-year-old Saha was among the players who contracted the dreaded virus before the IPL stumbled to an abrupt halt midway into its 14th season after multiple

Covid-19 cases were reported in its bio-bubble.

During an interview with PTI, Saha spoke about the bio-bubble breach in India and said it would have been better if the IPL was held in UAE, like last year.

"It's the job of the stakeholders to assess it, but the only thing I would say is that there was not a single individual during our training in UAE (last year), not even a ground staff.

"Here there would be people, kids peeping from nearby walls. I don't want to

comment much but we saw how the IPL went off smoothly in UAE in 2020 and then it started in India this year with cases on the rise," Saha said.

The Bengal veteran reached his home in Kolkata after completing over a fortnight-long quarantine at a Delhi hotel to make himself available for selection for the upcoming England tour.

On the bio-bubble he added, "I don't know what would have happened, but definitely I feel it would have been better off in UAE this time as

well. It's for the stakeholders to look into it."

Saha had tested positive for Covid-19 on May 4, the day the 2021 edition of the tournament was suspended indefinitely.

He said he has fully recovered now and he is not feeling any weakness.

"I'm doing all normal activities, there's no fatigue, body ache or any weakness. But I will actually get to know how my body is coping when I get into actual match training mode."

Recalling his battle with the

this kind of a challenge in a small or bigger way. But being with the team and representing your nation from 1.4 billion is far bigger."

A teammate to the core, Saha believes that despite his 11 years of stop-start Test career, he has never had any bitter feelings of being left out in the cold at times.

"I always approach my game with this mindset. For me, the team always comes first and I will always want my team to win. It has never affected my personal relations with anyone," he said.

Looking ahead to the WTC final, Saha said the onus would be on the batsmen.

"Looking into the English conditions, batsmen will face the maximum challenge. Pace bowlers always get the advantage there. So the batsmen will hold the key. The team who bats better will be ahead," he said.

Asked to compare Virat Kohli and Kane Williamson, his Sunrisers Hyderabad captain in the IPL, Saha said: "Kane is always cool-headed and goes about his job in a calm and composed manner. But it's about the challenges on-the-field rather than the off-the-field talks."

# Still feel weak & dizzy: Varun on Covid recovery



PTI ■ CHENNAI

Kolkata Knight Riders spinner Varun Chakaravathy is still not fit for intense training after his recovery from Covid-19 as he is still feeling "weakness and dizziness".

Chakaravathy was the first player in IPL to test Covid-19 positive and within a couple of days, the tournament was suspended because of multiple cases inside the bio-bubble across franchises.

The 29-year-old Chakaravathy recovered on May 11 and is currently recuperating at his Chennai residence.

"I'm now doing well and recovering at home. I still haven't been able to resume training full tilt because of post-Covid-19 symptoms. Although I don't have cough or fever, there is weakness and dizziness," Chakaravathy told ESPNcricinfo.

"The loss of smell and taste is still intermittent, but I'm confident of being able to resume training soon."

Having experienced the effect of the dreaded virus first hand, Chakaravathy's advice to all athletes is to give their bodies at least two weeks of complete rest after recovery before resuming any training.

"The thing I've learnt and would like to tell other athletes

and individuals recovering from Covid-19 is to give your body at least two weeks to fully recover after you test negative.

Chakaravathy first felt the symptoms on May 1 when he got tired quite quickly at the training session.

"As to how it all started, I felt something was slightly off on May 1. I felt tired. There was no cough whatsoever, but I had little fever, so I didn't attend our training session."

"I immediately informed the team management and they arranged for an RT-PCR test quickly. I was immediately quarantined and isolated, away from the rest of my KKR teammates, in a separate wing of the hotel. Soon, I found out that I'd tested positive," he recalled.

"My first reaction was feeling worried, not only for myself, but also for what was happening around us in the country. Even a few of my family members were affected by Covid-19. It wasn't easy, but as professionals we had to find ways to go about our work in the best possible way."

"The KKR franchise was very supportive. They went to the extent of even having someone from the team management stay back with me, even after the IPL was postponed and left only after I returned two negative tests and got back home."

# Pay dispute hits SL team morale for B'desh games: Captain Kusal

AFP ■ COLOMBO

A pay battle between Sri Lankan players and the national board has hurt team morale ahead of a One-Day series in Bangladesh starting Sunday, skipper Kusal Perera said.

Sri Lanka Cricket have cut fees for 24 national players by up to 40 percent in new contracts which have been rejected by the players.

Perera said no agreement had been reached before leaving for Bangladesh where they are to play three 50 over games.

"It will be a lie to say that the pay cut issue won't mentally affect our players," Perera told an online press conference on Saturday.

"I hope we will be able to negotiate with the board upon our return."

He said the pay structure devised by the board's new cricket director Tom Moody and former Sri Lanka skipper Aravinda de Silva was causing mental stress for the team.

"This is an additional challenge for me as I try to create an environment where players go to the middle and perform fearlessly," he said.

A lawyer for the players has accused Sri



Sri Lankan players train ahead of ODI series @OfficialSLC

Lanka Cricket of holding the team "at gunpoint" in a bid to force the new contracts through.

Former captain Angelo Mathews and Test captain Dimuth Karunaratne — who suffered the biggest cuts — were dropped from the tour of Bangladesh.

# PCB plans June 5 start of PSL in Abu Dhabi

Karachi: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is planning to start the PSL-6 in Abu Dhabi from June 5 and all the participating players will undergo a 10-day quarantine period before they start training.

The owner of Karachi Kings Salman Iqbal said the terms and conditions agreed between the PCB and the UAE authorities entail a mandatory 10-day quarantine period for players, officials and broadcasting crew members.

"In between there will be regular Covid-19 tests during the quarantine period as well," Iqbal said.

A source in the PCB said plans were being made to fly the foreign and local players to Abu Dhabi by May 25 so that they can start their quarantine period and the tournament can begin from June 5.

The foreign and local players and officials will also have to undergo a three-day quarantine in Pakistan before boarding their chartered flights to Abu Dhabi.

The Board has also hired the services of an international company, Restrata, to manage the Covid-19 bio-bubble in Abu Dhabi where the six teams will be put up at three different hotels.

The PCB has managed to get clearance from the authorities in the UAE to hold the remaining 20 matches of the PSL 6 in Abu Dhabi.

The confirmation to hold the matches came after days of suspense over whether the PCB would get clearance from the UAE Government which has suspended all flights from Pakistan due to the current COVID-19 situation. PTI

# Leclerc secures Monaco pole

AFP ■ MONACO

Charles Leclerc won the first pole for Ferrari since 2019 despite crashing with 18 seconds remaining to end Saturday qualifying at the Monaco Grand Prix.

Leclerc held the top spot at his home track until his Ferrari grazed a barrier to break a suspension piece. He then hopped a curb and finally came to a stop crashed into another barrier to bring the qualifying session to an abrupt end.

The 23-year-old Leclerc grew up in a flat overlooking the circuit that surrounds a lake in the picturesque principality. He lives a few kilometers away

in Cap d'Ail, one of many small and scenic spots dotted along the French Riviera's spectacular coastline.

He was visibly emotional after becoming the first Monaco driver to take pole here. But he could forfeit it if the damage to his Ferrari is too great that he receives a grid penalty. If the gear box must be changed — which Leclerc feared — he'd lose five positions on the starting grid.

"I am worried about a penalty. I've always been very unlucky here, so let's just wait and see," said Leclerc. "It's a shame to finish in the wall. It doesn't feel the same but I'm incredibly happy about my lap."

The red flag prevented world champion Lewis Hamilton and his title contender Max Verstappen from completing their final qualifying lap. Verstappen will start second for Red Bull; Hamilton seventh for Mercedes.

"That crash ruined the chance for pole," Verstappen said. "Just a shame about the red flag."

Valtteri Bottas qualified third for Mercedes behind Verstappen.

Leclerc waved to his fans as a crane lifted his car off the track. His lap at 1 minute, 10.35 seconds on the 3.4-kilometer (2.1-mile) course gave him his eighth career pole. But it was his first since the Mexican Grand Prix in October 2019 and a boost for Ferrari after the team struggled all last year.

Leclerc will try to become Monaco's first local winner since Louis Chiron in 1931.



# Gauff wins 2nd WTA title in Parma

AFP ■ PARMA

American teenager Coco Gauff swept aside China's Wang Qiang to win her second WTA career title on clay in Parma on Saturday.

Third seed Gauff won through 6-1, 6-3 against Wang, the sixth seed, in 74 minutes to add to her hardcourt title in Linz in 2019.

After reaching the semi-finals on clay in the Italian Open in Rome last week, 17-year-old Gauff dropped only one set en route to the title in Parma, just one week before Roland Garros.

Gauff, who is ranked 30 in the world and has won 20 of her last 26 matches, saved each of four break points in her first meeting with the 29-year-old Wang.

The Chinese player was looking for her third title and first outside China.

# Tokyo Olympics on schedule: Bach

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

International Olympic Committee chief Thomas Bach on Saturday asserted that the Tokyo Olympics will go on as scheduled despite opposition from the majority of Japanese population amid the raging Covid-19 pandemic.

The IOC president said hosting the Olympics, already postponed by a year in 2020 due to the unprecedented health crisis, will send a strong message that there is still "light at the end of the tunnel."

Bach made the statement during his address at the 47th International Hockey Federation (FIH) Congress held virtually.

"With Tokyo (Olympics) finally on the horizon, the final countdown has begun. During this difficult time, we need to send a strong message of resilience, unity and our diversity. Tokyo will show light at the end of the tunnel," he said.

Bach's remarks came close on the heels of IOC vice president John Coates' views that the Tokyo Games will go ahead even if the city is under a state of emergency due to the pandemic.

The IOC's stance underscores the challenges to host the Games in a Covid-hit world.



try's medical infrastructure in the wake of the pandemic, the IOC remained adamant.

Bach exuded confidence that together with the local organisers, the IOC would be able to deliver a safe Games, which was postponed last year because of the pandemic.

"The safety and security of our everyone is utmost priority. But together with our Japanese colleagues we will have to ensure that our athletes come together and compete in a safe environment."

"Over 70 per cent athletes and officials have already been vaccinated and this number will grow with time. We have also received offers from three vaccine producers for vaccination," he said.

# 148 athletes get vax 1st dose

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 148 athletes across all sports, including those who have qualified for the upcoming Tokyo Games, have already received their first dose of Covid-19 vaccination, according to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

Out of these 148 athletes, 17 have got both the doses and 131 have received their first shot, IOA president Narinder Batra said.

These 148 include potential athletes who can make it to the Tokyo Olympics which is opening on July 23. Besides this, 13 Tokyo Paralympic-bound athletes have got their first vaccine shot while two have received both doses. The Tokyo Paralympics opens on August 24.

The total number of athletes (including para-athletes), who have got at least their first dose till May 20, is 163.

The IOC chief said everyone has to make some sacrifices to fulfil their Olympic dreams.

"We have to make some sacrifices to make this possible. The athletes definitely can make their Olympic dreams come true," Bach said.

# BWF to continue with three-game format

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Badminton's scoring system remains unchanged as an attempt to replace the existing three-game format of 21 points each with a best-of-five of 11 points on Saturday failed to get the required two-thirds majority during the Annual General Meeting of the sport's global body.

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) member nations voted on the proposal to amend the laws of the sport relating to the scoring system during the body's 82nd AGM that was held virtually.

The proposal put forward by the Indonesian Badminton Association and the Badminton Association of Maldives, and seconded by Badminton Asia, Badminton Korea Association and Chinese Taipei Badminton Association, received 66.31 per cent for and 33.69 per cent against, falling just short of the two-thirds majority required.

A total of 282 votes were cast.

BWF President Poul-Erik Hoyer thanked the members for their participation in this important decision.



"Our Membership has spoken, and despite the very small margin in which the two-thirds majority was not reached, the BWF respects the outcome to retain the three games to 21 points scoring system," Hoyer said in a release issued by the game's apex body.

"It is now the second time such a proposal has not been approved, but I see the fantastic participation of the Membership and the decision reached today as an indication that the badminton community is very much engaged in the best interests of the sport during these difficult and challenging times."

The game's governing body, under president Hoyer, had floated the idea in 2014 for the first time but it didn't receive the support.

The 11x5 system, which was criticised by players and coaches alike, couldn't gather enough votes in last year's AGM too.

# Indian boxing team reaches Dubai

New Delhi: The Indian boxing team, featuring the likes of M C Mary Kom (51kg) and Amit Panghal (52kg), reached Dubai to compete in the Asian Boxing Championships aboard an "air-bubble" flight, which had to stay mid-air longer than scheduled as administrative paperwork delayed its landing.

The tournament starts on Monday with the draws lined up for Sunday. It is the only major competition that the boxers will get before the July-August Olympics given the Covid-19 restrictions in place around the globe.

The team reached Dubai on Saturday after being held up for over two hours in the flight, of which close to one hour was mid air, because of a delay in the clearance of paperwork which approved the team's arrival in Dubai.

The approval was required as the UAE has imposed a ban on flights from India in view of the heavy Covid-19 caseload here.

"Indian contingent has landed in Dubai and reached the hotel. Two rounds of RT-PCR test have been conducted — one at the airport and the other at the hotel," the statement read. PNS

# ATLETICO MADRID LIFT LA LIGA TITLE

## Suarez scores winner in Simeone's men 2-1 comeback win over Valladolid

AFP ■ MADRID

Atletico Madrid won La Liga and Luis Suarez found vindication, his goal securing the 2-1 victory over Real Valladolid on Saturday that clinched his team another remarkable Spanish title.

Suarez began the season crying after being forced out of Barcelona but ended it with his 21st goal of the season earning Atletico a first league triumph since 2014, this one at the expense of Real Madrid.

Atletico knew victory would guarantee them the title regardless of what Real Madrid did at home to Villarreal but it was never comfortable, with Valladolid taking a shock early lead.

Real Madrid were behind too for most of the afternoon but Karim Benzema equalised in the 87th minute and Luka Modric even scored a late winner for 2-1 at Vallebebas, leaving Atletico hanging on at the end, as they were suddenly one goal away from squandering it all.

When the final whistle blew, the players ran onto the pitch, Suarez underneath a pile of red and white shirts, with Europe's most nerve-racking and unpredictable title race finally complete.

Just over a week ago, coach Diego Simeone said this was the "Suarez Zone" and so it proved, the Uruguayan scoring the winner against Osasuna last week to keep the title in Atletico's hands and then again on the last day to put their name on the trophy.

This is only the second time in 17 years that a team other than Barcelona or Real Madrid have won the title, with Atleti claiming the other one under Simeone in 2014.

Atletico went into the game hav-



ing been top since December and on the back of beating Osasuna with two goals in the last eight minutes, a victory that was so dramatic it felt like it would prove decisive.

But Atletico have done nothing the easy way this season, with their 10-point lead in February cut to two in May and their position at the top of the table relying on numerous slip-ups from both Real Madrid and Barcelona.

So it was apt that faced with beating Real Valladolid, who were 19th in the table, they still had to scrape over the line.

Several hundred Atletico fans gathered in Valladolid's Plaza Mayor in the hours before kick-off to sing songs and a similar number made it

outside the stadium, where they were cordoned off in a cess-pit of nerves and anticipation.

### PLAYERS SCREAMED

Suarez had a couple of early openings but any hopes for a comfortable afternoon were dashed in the 18th minute when Valladolid took the lead.

It came from an Atletico corner as Yannick Carrasco lost the ball and Valladolid broke at speed, pinging passes through midfield and finally through to Oscar Plano, the former Real Madrid youngster who pulled away and fired past Jan Oblak.

There was plenty of time left and the other consolation for Atletico was Real Madrid fell behind too, Gerard

Moreno's poked pass causing confusion as Yannick Carrasco lost the ball and Yereimi Pino prodding Villarreal into the lead.

Atletico pushed as Suarez's effort curled wide and Felipe headed straight at Jordi Masip but they also looked for calm. Players screamed at Oblak to give the team a moment to regroup. Simeone told the substitutes to quieten down.

Both title contenders were trailing at half-time but Atletico came out with renewed vigour and a crucial few minutes fell their way.

Real Madrid struck first, Benzema heading in Casemiro's cross before Angel Correa levelled for Atletico as well, collecting on the edge of the area and firing through the legs of Jawad El Yamiq.

Atletico's equaliser, though, was made all the more precious after Real Madrid's was ruled out, Benzema's left arm shown to be offside by VAR.

Valladolid might have scored again but Shon Weissman headed over with the goal gaping and then Atletico took the lead, a gift of a pass-back by Sergi Guardiola allowing Suarez to skip clear.

Suarez slid the ball past Masip before ending up under a pile of Atletico teammates.

Real Madrid equalised in the 87th minute, Benzema curving a delightful finish into the top corner and it was still not over, Modric scoring again to leave Atletico with some nail-biting final moments.

They got over the line.

### 5 MATCHES THAT WON LIGA

Atletico 1-0 Barca, Nov 21

Yannick Carrasco scored the winner as Atletico registered their first La Liga win over Barcelona in more than a decade and stretched their unbeaten run to 24 matches.

It would be this result that eventually gave Atletico a better head-to-head record over Barca, who were left 10th in the table and without the injured Gerard Pique for three months.

### Elche 0-1 Atletico, May 1

Atletico were inches away from surrendering victory and their lead at the top of the table to Real Madrid as Elche's Fidel Chaves missed a dramatic 91st-minute penalty.

Fidel's shot struck the post as Atletico held on for a 1-0 win that kept them two points ahead of Real Madrid and also in front of Barcelona going into a crunch meeting at Camp Nou.

### Barca 0-0 Atletico, May 8

Barcelona had the chance to shift the dynamic of the title race on their home turf but Atletico dominated the first half and Barca never did quite enough in the second.

The stalemate ended up being an even better result for Atletico after Real Madrid were held by Sevilla a day later, Atleti's two-point lead pre-

served at the end of what many had circled as a pivotal weekend.

### Atletico 2-1 Osasuna, May 16

With nine minutes left, Atletico trailed Osasuna 1-0 at the Wanda Metropolitano and Real Madrid were going top of La Liga, the title in their hands, with a win against Athletic Bilbao.

But Atletico pulled off an incredible turnaround, Renan Lodi equalising in the 82nd minute and Suarez scoring the winner in the 88th, with hundreds of fans celebrating outside in the stadium car park.

Victory kept Atleti top and left them one more win away.

### Valladolid 1-2 Atletico, May 22

Atletico knew victory would win them the title regardless of how Real Madrid fared against Villarreal but they did it the hard way, coming from behind after Valladolid took a shock lead through Oscar Plano.

But Angel Correa equalised and then Suarez scored the winner, a nervy title race decided by a nail-biting victory.



Atletico Madrid supporters celebrate their team's La Liga title in Madrid on Saturday AP



Luis Suarez reacts after Atleti's match

## Ronaldo 'still a Juve player,' insists Pirlo

AFP ■ TURIN

Cristiano Ronaldo remains every much a Juventus player, coach Andrea Pirlo insisted on Saturday with the Portuguese star's future in doubt going into the final game of the season.

Juve's Champions League hopes are no longer in their hands as they head for 11th-placed Bologna needing a win and hoping rivals Napoli and AC Milan slip up.

However, Pirlo does not believe that the game will be Ronaldo's final one with the club if they fail to qualify for elite European football.

"No, I see him still in the 'Bianconero' jersey and focused," Pirlo told a pre-match press conference. "He proved it the other night, sacrificing himself because he wanted to win the Coppa Italia."

"I see him focused on tomorrow, then there's time to discuss the rest."

Juve's nine-year title run was ended by Inter Milan and failure to qualify for the Champions League would be a financial blow.

The competition is worth on average 80 million euros a season to teams. Failure to qualify would make Ronaldo's

annual salary of 31 million euros a year difficult to sustain.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner was recruited in 2018 from Real Madrid to help Juventus win the title after two lost finals in 2015 and 2017. The 36-year-old is the top scorer in the competition with 134 goals.

In the meantime, Ronaldo is set to become the first player to finish the season top scorer in three major leagues — England, Spain, and Italy.

He has scored 28 goals so far, six more than Inter's Romelu Lukaku and Atalanta's Luis Muriel.

Meanwhile Pirlo also insisted the match would not decide his own future after an erratic first season, during which he won two trophies.

"I don't think the club will decide my future based on what happens tomorrow," said the 42-year-old.

"They have an idea of what has worked and what has not worked this season. You don't make decisions just by looking at one last game."

But he warned: "We really believe in it, we were dead after Milan (defeat) but the results, ours and those of others, allowed us to get back on their feet."

## Lewa breaks Müller's scoring record

AFP ■ MUNICH

Robert Lewandowski on Saturday broke Gerd Müller's 49-year-old record when he bagged a 41st Bundesliga goal of the campaign seconds before the final whistle on the last weekend of the season.

Müller, 75, is suffering from severe dementia, but *The Bomber* remains an iconic figure in German football as the Bundesliga's all-time top scorer with 365 goals, well ahead of Lewandowski's tally of 277.

Many thought Müller's record of 40 goals for Bayern Munich in 1971/72 would never be matched until Lewandowski rounded the goalkeeper to score in the same club's

5-2 rout of Augsburg on Saturday after equalling the record last weekend.

"It was tense until the last second, I would have liked to have scored earlier," a relieved Lewandowski told Sky. "Sometimes you also have to stay patient, which was difficult."

"I always believed that a chance would come. That was a special and historic moment."

While Müller scored his 40 goals over 34 league games in 1971/72, injury and squad rotation meant Lewandowski broke the record in just 29 matches.

Bayern scored 101 goals in the league in 1971/72 and 99 this season. Physically, the 32-year-old

Lewandowski is very different to Müller, who was 26 in the 1971/72 season.

"Robert is an athlete, Gerd was an artist," Müller's wife — Uschi Mueller — told magazine *Sport Bild*.

At 1.84m and 79kgs, Lewandowski is a model athlete, renowned for his strict diet and training programme.

Müller, at 1.76m and 80kgs in his prime, was nicknamed "short fat Müller" by former Bayern coach Zlatko Cajkovski.

The pair share an insatiable appetite for goals.

Lewandowski has hit the net on average every 60 minutes this season, while *The Bomber* scored every 77 minutes in 1971/72.

Lightning reaction speed is another similarity.

Müller was a copybook penalty box striker, who could transfer the ball from his right to left foot with bewildering speed.

His low centre of gravity helped Müller steal an edge over defenders in the first few metres. Given a sniff of goal, he was an ice-cool finisher.

Lewandowski is just as dynamic, but in contrast to Müller, he is happy to shoot from outside the box or use the space to outsprint defenders.

They share the killer instinct when the ball is near goal, often being alert to a rebound and waiting until the last second to pounce, as Lewandowski demonstrated on Saturday.

While Lewandowski has scored consistently, Müller had sporadic purple patches, netting just three goals in the first nine games of the 1971/72 season.

"Gerd spread fear and terror in defenders," said Bayern assistant coach Hermann Gerland, who faced Müller as a Bochum defender in the 1970s.

And almost half a century later, Müller was in Lewandowski's thoughts when he scored at Freiburg last weekend.

To celebrate a record-equalling 40th goal, Lewandowski lifted his playing shirt to reveal a T-shirt with Müller's face over the text 'EVER GERD'.



## Brentford 1 win away from PL

AFP ■ LONDON

Brentford are just one win away from the English Premier League after a thrilling fightback enabled them to reach the Championship play-off final with a 3-1 win against 10-man Bournemouth on Saturday.

Thomas Frank's side were in danger of defeat in the semi-final second leg after Arnaut Danjuma put Bournemouth 2-0 up on aggregate early in the first half.

But Brentford, who lost the first leg 1-0 on Monday, were given a controversial lifeline when Ivan Toney scored a penalty awarded for handball by Liam Kelly.

Bournemouth defender Chris Mepham was sent off soon after that incident.

To the delight of 4,500 fans at the Brentford Community Stadium, the Bees took full advantage as second half goals from Vitaly Janelt and Marcus Forsss sealed a 3-2 aggregate success.

Brentford, who haven't played in the top-flight for 74 years, will face Swansea or Barnsley in the final at Wembley on May 29.

Swansea hold a 1-0 first leg lead heading into the second leg in south Wales later on Saturday.

It will be Brentford's second successive Championship play-off final appearance after they lost to Fulham last season.

## Werder Bremen relegated



Berlin: Werder Bremen were relegated from the Bundesliga for the first time in 41 years on Saturday after a 4-2 thrashing at home by Borussia Moenchengladbach.

"At the moment it's hard to say anything," caretaker coach Thomas Schaaf, who stepped in after Florian Kohfeldt was sacked last weekend, told Sky.

"We didn't manage to do what

we wanted to do.

"We missed the huge opportunity to equalise, which we needed. We fought back too late."

FC Köln's 1-0 win over bottom side Schalke, who were already relegated, confirmed Bremen's worst fears, sending them down for the first time since 1979-80, when they came back up a season later.

Bremen paid the price for taking one point from their last ten league games in Germany's top flight, finishing 17th in the table, two points behind Köln who have a two-legged relegation play-off next week.

A loosening of the hygiene rules in Bremen meant there were a 100 spectators in the stadium, mostly club employees, but there was near silence at the final whistle among the stunned hosts. AFP



## Princepal yet to decide on NBA draft Lille look to dethrone PSG

HARSHIT BISHT ■ NEW DELHI

Tipped to be the next big thing in Indian basketball, Princepal Singh, who played in the G League last season as part of Ignite, which was a first-of-its-kind team, is yet to decide whether he will enlist for the upcoming 2021 NBA Draft, which will be held on July 29.

"I'm not sure whether I will enter the Draft. I would like to play in the NBA and would like to be drafted as soon as possible, if not this year, then at least next year," Princepal said.

Ignite was set up by the league for Draft-eligible prospects. Initially, Ignite were expected to play just a few exhibition games, but when many G League teams opted out of playing in the bio-secure bubble, Ignite were given a spot along with 17 other teams,



which ensured at least 15 games for the youngsters.

During an online media interaction from Ohio, where he is currently training, Princepal said, "My contract is over with G League. So I am just focusing on getting as

much practice as I can. It is off season and I hope to play in the Summer League and join another G League team."

By playing another season in the G League, Princepal could make a more pressing case for himself to the 30 NBA teams than he did in his first season.

In his debut G League season, he got just 25 minutes (in four appearances) on the court under coach Brian Shaw, who is a five-time NBA champion. In those minutes, he totalled nine points and grabbed four rebounds.

Speaking about the experience and learning of G League, the 6'9" tall player said, "In one season in the G League, I started to play a more power-based game. I have improved my shooting and physically I have become a bet-

ter player."

"Building strength is very important in basketball. You need to do regular gym training to build it. In India, the focus is more on the skills, with little time spent on building strength. I also followed the same routine however, I went to Australia (NBA Global Academy). I realized how important strength is for the game of basketball, especially if I wanted to play in the NBA."

"When I joined Ignite, the team worked a lot on my dribbling skills and shooting from 3-point range. The drills were different from what I used to do in India. It was all new and exciting for me," he added.

Before Princepal, two other Indians — Satnam Singh and Amijot Singh Gill — have played in the NBA G League.

AFP ■ PARIS

A tight French title race culminates on Sunday with table toppers Lille a win away from dethroning Neymar and Mbappe's Paris Saint-Germain as champions.

Christophe Galtier's outfit have no major stars but are unbeaten away since November and travel to mid-table Angers, a team who have lost five of their last six league games.

On 80 points, Lille hold a slender one-point lead over PSG who won the French Cup in midweek.

Galtier has been a tower of strength at the head of three-time former champions Lille, and is confident his charges will complete the job.

"Our campaign has been built on away performances, we just have to stick to our guns," he said.

Turkish veteran striker Burak Yilmaz, 35, is Lille's top scorer with 15 goals, compared to the league-leading 26 of Mbappe, but there is a palpable sense of unity at the club.



Lille, bidding to win the title for the first time in a decade, have a budget which is smaller than that of Lyon, Marseille and Monaco as well as PSG.

PSG coach Mauricio Pochettino insisted his side will hold their nerve at Brest who are desperate to avoid being dragged into the

relegation play-off spot.

"We have to believe it's possible, do our job by winning our match at Brest and see if Lille run into trouble," said Pochettino, whose charges will take the title with a win if Lille draw or lose.

If they are successful, PSG will be crowned French champions for a record-equalling 10th time.

On what could be an enthralling last day, Niko Kovac's Monaco, on 77 points, will hope to qualify for the Champions League for the first time since 2018.

Monaco were beaten 2-0 midweek by PSG in the French Cup final but former Bayern coach Kovac said his side had already moved on.

"If we win at Lens on Sunday we will have transformed our season into something wonderful," said Kovac.

The south coast side will however be looking anxiously over their shoulders at Lyon who can still snatch third place.

At the bottom, Nimes and Dijon are already relegated, but there are six sides fighting to avoid a relegation play-off.



Parents with their pets enjoying their day out at Happy Petting in New Delhi

## Boarding pets for parents who have tested positive

SHALINI SAKSENA ■ New Delhi

The present pandemic that has claimed over 33 lakh people globally has not just affected people. It has affected stray animals and even pets whose parents have tested positive. A video where a stray dog was eating cow dung had gone viral last year. Animal lovers were shocked as they watched it. So much so that hundreds of people in Delhi-NCR took to the streets despite the lockdown and faced police brunt to feed these animals including cats and even cows.

Cut to April 2021. The second wave hit the country and entire families started testing positive leaving their pets with nowhere to go. In stepped good samaritans who besides helping the people with oxygen cylinders and getting beds in hospitals started fostering pets while the parents were in hospital or quarantined at home.

For Nikhil Chawla and his wife, Neha Grover, boarding pets began last year when they started feeding strays because they had no food to eat. "Last year, things were better and people were particular and careful; they stayed indoors but this year, in April, things came to a head. I have a friend in West Delhi who also likes to lend a helping hand. We decided to foster pets and it all started with four dogs," Chawla says who fosters pets at his home.

He has hired a few people including a driver whose task is to pick up the pet from wherever the need arises. "Also, it is not possible for me to walk 20-30 dogs. I have people who help me out. The demand has been such that I am now looking for a farm house and convert it into a resort where I can house these animals. People call me to foster their pet since they can't take care of it. Then there are pets whose owners have passed



Dogs in their room in Happy Petting



Fostering a pet in Happy Petting



Neha Grover Chawla feeding strays



Strays enjoy a meal put out by Neha



Dhanvi with Ego, the Rottweiler

away and their family is not willing to keep the pet. We bring such pets home and try to find new homes for them. It is extremely painful to watch these pets since they keep expecting their parent to show up. At present, I have a couple of pets that are up for adoption," Chawla tells you.

To begin with, he was charging ₹400 per day to foster pets but then things changed in April this year and at present, he is fostering these pets for free. This is because he is already feeding the strays and opines feeding a few more mouths is not going to hurt him. However, his friend charges ₹ 200 day because she is renting a place to house the pets such has been the demand.

"As it is I spend around ₹2,000 per day to feed the strays, why not pets as well. I have been feeding animals out of my pocket since last year and will continue to do so as long as it is possible. When it gets out of my hand, maybe I will think of reaching out to people. Things are however, improving and from 25-30 dogs, the number has fallen to six to seven. People are getting better and they take their pet. I am happy; the whole purpose of this initiative is to help people and their pets," Chawla says.

When he gets a call, either he goes or sends his driver to pick up the pet. A bath is given to pet to ensure that he is not carrying any infection before he is allowed to mix with other pets. Once the owner gets better, the pet is given a bath again and sent back.

Achal Gupta of Jeffurys: The Pet Resort who runs a luxury pet care resort — from pet boarding to pet park to a pet pool to a pet spa and store — tells you that at present only pet boarding is operating due to the lockdown protocol.

"We started this resort, spread over an acres with 50 individual rooms with an AC for the pet, four years back in Mundka, West Delhi. Fostering pets of COVID-19 patients was not a service that we started specifically. Our motto is to help people. When the first call to help foster a pet for a family came last year and it has continued. While the influx of dogs coming in from COVID positive families in the last six months was nil, in the last six weeks, we have been flooded with COVID positive family dogs," Gupta says.

There have been instances in the last few weeks where people were roaming with their pet in the car looking for a bed for themselves since they couldn't

leave the pet alone at home and weren't sure when they would be back home. We have actually picked up pets from outside hospitals while the owners waited for a bed. These last few weeks has been life-changing experience. There have been cases where the dog is locked at home and we have had to request the local SHO to break into the house to get the pet because he has been inside for more than two days," Gupta recalls. He gets calls from Delhi-NCR that includes Noida, Rohtak, Bahadurgarh and even Sonapat.

There have been cases where Gupta has had to leave from the resort immediately to pick up the pet and coordinating with the owner over the mobile because the parent has taken a turn for the worse and had to leave to the hospital. This is unlike the normal boarding where the pet parents come in, look at the premises and book for 10-15 days because they are going for a vacation. Now, they get a call at 6 am or 11 pm to pick up the pet while he is on his way to the house to pick up the pet. One is told that few people realise pet needs. "The care that it needs hits you once you are unable to take care of it and this includes walking the pet three-four times a day; giving

him food, grooming it and ensuring his vaccines are taken care of. COVID-19 is a disease that things change within a few hours and we get frantic call to up the pet. Things were dark. We have had four pets where some one in his family has died. There is this family; a young man and his mother. She tested positive so the dog came to us. His mother passed away; the grandparents tested positive and they too passed away. The young man is now left alone with just his pet," Gupta recounts. He tells you that they charge a regular tariff but at present, they are giving a discount since each dog that is coming to them is there for at least two weeks. The discount varies from 15 per cent to 30 per cent.

Just like Chawla has a protocol. Gupta too follows the guidelines. The first is that they send a form that has to be filled up and sent to us. We need to know something about the dog. But this is not always possible. The team gets in touch with the pet's vet to get an update. This is ensure the inoculation status. Second, they don't enter any premises. Somebody has to drop the pet at the gate or outside the apartment. Third, they only take the collar and leash. Fourth, once the pet reaches the resort, he is given a bath; the

leash and collar washed as well. Fifth, a WhatsApp group is created where the parent can see videos of their pet and even talk to them via video calling.

Happy Petting's owner Vipul Agrahari, a business entrepreneur who owns an IT solution firm, tells you that he started this venture more than 10 years back because of his love for dogs. "It all started with three dogs and there was talk to keep the fourth. My dogs' vet told me why don't I start a resort for the pets and Happy Petting was born," Agrahari recalls.

"This year, we started boarding for pets and are getting bombed for the same. The situation has been terrible. Almost everyone in our contact list has been a COVID suspect. It started with a Labrador, Sweetu; his entire family tested positive — grandparents, husband, wife and their three-old baby. This boarding continued for a month. This led to him boarding 30-35 COVID family pets. But this number stood at 50 since many pet parents didn't want to outright say that they had tested positive for fear that their pet may not be boarded," Agrahari says.

As is with Gupta, Agrahari also sends his car to pick up with the pet. The car is then sanitised. The leash, collar and the dog is given a bath. It remains out of the house.

"We provide everything that the pet needs, bowl, leash and collar. It then comes inside my home. My house can accommodate up to 30 pets. But there have been instances where it has been more because one pet has come in and the other is to leave in a couple of days. It also helps me to keep track on whether I can take on more pet boarders. We charge ₹500 to ₹1,200 depending on the breed, its needs, medical history, age and physical fitness," Agrahari says.

## Enjoy IFFLA movies at home

This year, The Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles went virtual. SHALINI SAKSENA brings you a report.



This last one year has been a learning curve for everybody across the globe. The present pandemic that has killed over 33 lakh people globally has people indoors and restricted travel for most. Hence, from holding classes virtually, to stand-up going online to even festivals being organised virtually, the world has definitely changed.

The latest to join the virtual world is The Indian Festival of Los Angeles (IFFLA) that went live from May 20, 2021. The festival includes a vast array of highlights from an extraordinary 13 regions in India, representing over seven languages. Christina Marouda, founder, IFFLA tells you that it was a straightforward decision to go virtual given the pandemic situation both in the US and in India.

"At the time of our decision — end of 2020 beginning of 2021 — the pandemic situation in Los Angeles (LA) was alarming. Traveling to and from India was not possible or even safe. There was no concrete information from LA County about the reopening, including large gatherings and movie theaters. Therefore, it was the safest decision for our staff, filmmakers and audiences to hold the festival virtually," Marouda says.

There were challenges involved; the biggest was to discover and learn the new skills required to hold a film festival virtually, and that, too, within a very short period of time.

"Nuances included selecting the right screening platform that would be 100 per cent secure, user-friendly and esthetically attractive; creating the India pass which gives access to everyone in India; figuring out which films can be made available in India, how much to charge for this pass (₹150), how to cover financial loss for making this pass available," Marouda tells you. People in California and India can buy a pass and watch films from home, on Eventive, she says.

The IFFLA opened with *Fire in the Mountains* a 2021 Sundance-selected debut feature by Ajitpal Singh. Ankush Jindal, director programming, IFFLA tells you that they opened with this film because it represents the overall mission of IFFLA, which is to showcase strong work by emerging talent to audiences that are eager to see the best of Indian cinema.

"It's a remarkable film that immerses us in the foothills of the Himalayas as we follow Chandra, the protagonist whose strength carries us through the film," Jindal says. As part of their process, they tracked other festivals, reach out to their industry partners, and looked at the submissions, which in total ended up being over 250 films. They looked at a variety of factors to select the films.

"These included storytelling, the use of the cinematic form, amplifying debut talent, and better representation of emerging and underrepresented voices. We have tried to maintain a healthy balance between considering specific criteria and paying attention to those films that allow us to turn off our conscious minds for a while and escape into the stories," Jindal says. He finds it difficult to choose a favourite.

"It's impossible to choose a film as a favourite. Our programming team is made up from a unique array of backgrounds and tastes, and our job is to represent our audiences. We want them to walk away from our festival excited about the stories that our filmmakers are telling, and by the immense talent that exists within their community. The whole slate of films is incredibly diverse, with 17 languages represented, notably with four Assamese films and five Tamil-language films, and an impressive shorts program with shorts that have already garnered high acclaim at places like Sundance, Berlin, Rotterdam, Venice Biennale, and the Academy Awards.

Every film we choose and the dozens of films we are always sadly unable to include, helps serve this purpose in its own way," Jindal tells you. The festival concludes on May 27, 2021, with Akshay Indikar's *Sthalpuran* (Chronicle of Space). "The film premiered at Berlinale, and it is exactly the type of exciting and original film making from a young filmmaker. It makes for a great closing night film because I'm confident it will leave audiences with a sense of excitement about the future of the Indian film industry," Jindal says.

## 'Indie space is homecoming for me'

■ **What is Shaan Music Label about?**

I had to create this label. When you create songs you have to have a publishing company. One would think that it is a new venture, no such thing, nothing commercial. As a senior composer's son, I had this *keeda* to compose. There was this instinct in me that I wanted to explore composer. When you compose for films, it is difficult to have it your way. I knew that if I wanted to enjoy the creative process, I needed a little more control over what I am doing. So I decided to compose my own songs and put them out under the label.

■ **The song — Ye Faasle — is about keeping distance. Do you think words are powerful to have an impact?**

When the first wave happened, it was new to many of us. Making songs about keeping safe, maintaining social distance, encouraging them and telling to keep hope were working. It was giving people a feeling that there were others; that one is not alone. But with the second wave, there is nothing new to say. This song is about love. It doesn't talk about Coronavirus; it doesn't talk about the pandemic. It is about two people in love who can't wait to meet again.

■ **You have collaborated with international singers. Is there a project you had fun doing?**

It is very important for me — to enjoy the project that I take up. One has to enjoy it. Interestingly, there was one project that I felt I wouldn't have fun with and was reluctant to take it up but I did since I wanted to learn a new skill.

It was *Jhalak Dikha Jaa* in 2013-14. I couldn't dance to save my life, I still can't. I had to wear a watch on my left hand to know which is which. But I have very fond memories of that process; it was life changing. After that, whenever, I felt that there was a project, that I didn't want to do, I psych myself to take it up.

■ **You have judged so many talent shows. What made you say yes to them?**

I started as a host for these shows and I could relate to the role being played by the judge very closely and sensitively. As a judge, you don't realise the repercussions of your feedback to the contestants. As a host I could see what they were feeling. Hosting back then was reactive. I learnt so much from the judges, many veterans and go to know interesting things. I wanted to share this knowledge. When I took it up, I ensured I didn't give false promises to the participants but not being rude to them either. I enjoyed judging. There is something about watching young talent with fire under their belly.

■ **A Bollywood song that you struggled with?**

By the time, I got to playback on a regular basis the rehearsals stopped happening. One ended up in a recording studio, given the lyrics and then there singing it, it would happen with a few hours. There are a few songs that I felt I could have probably justified if I had more time but that as the process then. At that time, it was quite a feather in your hat that you went, heard the song, sang it was there out in two hours. There were songs there a bit difficult but there has never been a song that I couldn't sing.

■ **How did you end up singing Telugu, Assamese, Odia, Kannada and even Sindhi songs?**

By the time I started I had two songs

live but it was on its way out. When it comes to languages, when you get to sing them line by line and with cuts and retakes, then it is not a big deal. But for singers who sang them live, in the 90s, it would take a lot of effort. One had to have lots of patience with languages in the South. The longest time I have taken to sing are the Tamil songs; it took me five-six hours to get them on track.

■ **How did indie songs happen?**

I started with creating my own songs in the 90s. Even then, I used to write my songs like *Tanha Dil*. It was not as if I was something that I decided to do. I have been doing. But meanwhile, when you do shows, live recording and Bollywood commitments I couldn't commit and concentrate on creating my own music in the last few years. With time and as I wasn't getting as many offers, I tried to utilise the time to compose again. I would love to do an album, but today, it is a single's market. So I have been doing that; it's homecoming.

■ **What next?**

I have a lot of songs that I have done and created; a lot of social songs. People today, want love or party songs. But I want to put out songs on mental health; songs about how we should be more sensitive to the elderly. These are all beautiful songs. But to put them out as singles will not work. There is a need to connect with the right people. I am trying to tie up with NGOs so there is a platform. Then there are regular songs as well.

**I WANT TO PUT OUT SONGS ON MENTAL HEALTH; SONGS ABOUT HOW WE SHOULD BE MORE SENSITIVE TOWARDS THE ELDERLY. THESE ARE ALL BEAUTIFUL SONGS. BUT TO PUT THEM OUT AS SINGLES WILL NOT WORK. THERE IS NEED TO CONNECT WITH RIGHT PEOPLE. I AM TRYING TO TIE UP WITH NGOS SO THERE IS A PLATFORM**

**Talktime**  
SHAAN  
The playback singer-television presenter and judge has recently released *Ye Faasla*. He speaks with Shalini Saxena about why and how he ended up judging reality shows, and upcoming projects



There is absolutely, 100 percent, a light at the end of the tunnel for anyone who stutters  
— Emily Blunt



FROM THE INSIDE

**A tall order**  
*Himalayan Challenge* is a book as scholarly & interesting as Dr Subramanian Swamy. A must read



**The master of prudence**  
If we imbibe the spirit as embodied in Lord Ganapati, and follow its script, we could use *Shakti* towards the right end

Pandemic is a complex problem with simple solutions — wearing a mask, maintaining social distance and getting vaccinated. The reality, however, is that people are not following norms, writes GAURI CHAUDHARI



# WHY AREN'T THEY LISTENING?

“Why are these Covidiot not listening? When will these educated illiterates start wearing masks?” My doctor friend was angry. Whenever she saw people crowding, she shouted at them, warned them, requested them, but all fell on deaf ears. To her surprise, many in the crowds are often educated individuals who chose either not to wear a mask or wear it around their chin.

Most complex problems have simple solutions. Pandemic is a complex problem, yet it has simple solutions — wearing a mask, maintaining social distance and getting vaccinated. While the world is worrying about the mutants, the reality is masks and distancing work against all the mutants. Yet, the fact is people are not listening.

The question is: why? Why do they choose not to wear a mask? Why do they gather for weddings? Why do they celebrate festivals with families and friends?

When asked this question to individuals, one gets a variety of answers. Some of the common responses are: 'Covid is media made', 'I have strong Immunity', 'We can't be scared; whatever has to happen will happen'. Some reasons for not wearing masks are bizarre. "My nose is such that no mask can fit my face." or "I look ugly in masks."

Some people have genuine problems with masks, particularly those with certain health conditions. They feel breathless with masks. Medical science provides the solution to this issue. It emphasises practicing wearing a mask at home, avoiding certain time of the day to go out and several other tips and tricks.

Digging deeper into people's psyche, one may unearth several psychological reasons for not following Covid compliant behaviour. Unless these reasons are addressed, there is no chance of carrying out behavioural modification in people.

Having worked on Anti-AIDS, anti-smoking, and a wide variety of health campaigns for chronic diseases, I can say for sure people don't change behaviours just because they are told to do so.

Health-related behaviour modification is an 'Art' based on science. If the authorities want to modify people's health-related behaviour, they need to understand the science and take the help of experts who know this art.

So, what are these psychological reasons, and how can we address them?

**MASK AND MASCULINITY**  
Masks are victims of cultural dogmas. Men are expected to be tough, particularly under the conditions of threat.  
Cambridge University Press has published an article clearly showing the inverse relationship between mask and sense of masculinity. The authors highlight that masculinity and toughness are connected to the negative reaction to wearing masks.  
This explains why many leaders, irrespective of their political parties, avoid masks.

What is true for political leaders is true for neighborhood uncles who want to be seen tough. Even women who have to portray tough images avoid wearing masks.

Another segment of influencers that have fallen into the trap of toughness is the spiritual and lifestyle gurus. These gurus suggest exercises and diets to build tough immunity. They are often seen without masks. Some have gone on record to say vaccines are for vulnerable people having weak immunity. No wonder masks are linked to weakness of every sort. If this is the case, what is the way out?

**NEED FOR INFLUENCING THE INFLUENCERS**

Leaders, too, are victims of cultural biases. There is a strong need to educate, convince and persuade them to play a bigger role. They need to be educated and told that even if they are tough and can fight infection (though this might not be the truth), they do a disservice to humanity by providing their bodies for the virus to mutate and become more dangerous.

If the influencers stop negatively correlating masks and masculinity, half the battle is won. When we see 'tough' political leaders, spiritual gurus, journalists, Bollywood heroes appear in media with their masks, we will believe that wearing a mask is not a sign of cowardice. There is no harm in wearing masks even if they are alone in TV studios; they will send a strong message; after all, no one is lip-reading them.

The social media micro-influencers too have huge impact on the younger population. Studies after studies have proven that youngsters are health indifferent and are reluctant to follow healthy behavior. Unfortunately, today, they are responsible for the super-spread of the virus. The micro-influencers can make Covid compliance look cool. For that, they must be seen wearing masks in every video they make or every picture they post.

Is it enough? Will the masses start becoming Covid compliant looking at the leaders?

There are a few more factors that need to be considered while we try to impact social behaviors.

**FEAR OF FEAR**

No one likes to be in a state of fear. When we are approached by danger, the body develops a fight or flight response. But what happens when we can neither fight with this unseen enemy nor run away from it? We freeze. And no one likes that state.

Kim Wittle, a communication scholar, put forward an extended parallel process model (EPPM) that predicts how individuals react to danger. The human mind likes to be in a state of equilibrium. When confronted with a significant perceived threat, the human mind loses its inherent state of equilibrium. At this time, there is an intense urge to go back to equilibrium, which can be achieved by controlling the threat or controlling the fearful mind.

For example, if a farmer knows that the field is infested with snakes, he adequately covers his feet and ankles where the maximum bites hap-

pen. This is his way of controlling threats. But what would he do if he does not have shoes or enough coverage to protect his feet? He decides to control the fearful mind. He convinces himself by denying the existence of the snakes in the field or makes himself believe that his good karmas will protect his naked feet.

In this pandemic, we see people around us using either the fear control approach or danger control. Those who are controlling fear are quick to deny the severity of the virus. Some deny the existence of the virus. This is their way of gaining the state of equilibrium. They insist that media created Covid for the TRPs and benefits of political parties.

Others gained equilibrium by danger control. They acknowledged the existence and severity of the problem. Unfortunately, in the cacophony, unscientific messages on social media, misleading ads on TV and press and overclaims of various brands gave them a false sense of security.

From foods to air conditioners, everyone is promising protection from Corona. "I follow immunity-enhancing diets; I am protected," "I take XYZ health supplement; Nothing can happen to me even in a crowd" or "Why wear masks? My family and friends meet only where ABC air conditioner is installed. This AC filters out Corona."

**NEED FOR CONTROL ON CLAIMS**  
Having spent close to three decades in the healthcare industry, I feel unsubstantiated claims do a huge disservice to society. Unless companies do scientific studies and publish them in peer-reviewed journals, they should refrain from making such claims.

There has to be a body that scrutinises health-related claims. There is a lot at stake, and a casual approach should not be allowed.

**AUTHENTIC ADVICE**

People need authentic advice. Authorities and governments must create a forum that regularly provides such advice. Besides this, mass campaigns to educate people regularly are necessary.

Health campaigns having authentic health messages need to run frequently across media. These messages need to follow the fundamental principles of health communications.

Creating health messages for behavioural modification is not an easy task. The messages that disregard the basic framework of health messages have an adverse reaction. A wrongly crafted health message has the potential to backfire and make people take actions that are contrary to the message.

**REASON OF REACTANCE**  
While there are several dynamics in play while people respond to a health message, reactance is an important factor to consider. Psychological reactance is often a reason for resistance to health messages.  
Reactance is a state where people become upset if a message poses a risk to their freedom. Brehm, a renowned psychologist, discov-



ered that people show extreme reactions to a health message if they feel there is a threat to freedom.

People believe that following traditions is their right. Festivals and weddings are a big part of these traditions. When someone says, 'You must not celebrate festivals in such and such way', they feel their freedom is threatened. Often this happens due to the tone and manner of the message.

To restore the sense of freedom, people indulge in certain behaviors. Depending on the situation, direct or indirect ways of restoration are adopted. Direct ways are often called the boomerang effects, where an individual engages in the admonished behaviour.

So a board outside a shop or a dispensary says, "Hey Covidiot, wear your mask!" People feel offended and try to act contrary to the message. But what if the administration punishes or forces them? They rebel indirectly. The indirect ways involve connecting with people who do not believe in compliant behavior. They try to grow their tribe by convincing more and more people against the health message.

Here it is essential to understand these people do not have a problem with the message. Their issue is with its delivery.

The healthcare communication must be crafted keeping some of the cardinal rules.

● **No place for Freedom-Threatening Language:** Messages with 'controlling' or 'Forceful' language are instantly rejected. Orders like 'you must', 'Stop denial' must be avoided.

● **Provide choices:** Messages that provide choices are accepted without resistance. When people are told to choose the list of options that best fit their lifestyle, they are more inclined to follow the instructions.

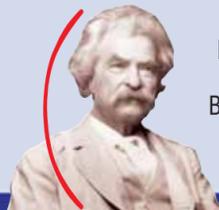
● **Other-Referring messages:** When messages talk about the impact of risky health behaviour on the loved ones, they are better accepted. Other referring messages do better than self-referring messages.

Last but not least is the need to be empathetic in communication. Even at the individual level, when we try to correct our fellow citizens' behaviour, one must stop taking the moral high ground and use commanding language simply because it won't work!

The experts are anticipating the third wave. The healthcare system is reeling under unprecedented pressure. There is an urgent need to minimise the impact and extent of the third wave. By now, we know masking, maintaining social distance, avoiding large gatherings, and vaccination are the ways to control the spread. But for this to happen, governments have to take people along. Understand both rational and emotional reasons behind non-compliance and lead by example.

Stopping third wave is possible and together we can do it.

The writer is a Pharma Marketing, Advertising, Branding professional, and author of The Perfect Pill: 10 Steps to Build a Strong Healthcare Brand, with SAGE India



BE CAREFUL ABOUT READING HEALTH BOOKS. YOU MAY DIE OF A MISPRINT — MARK TWAIN

**Himalayan Challenge: India, China and the Quest for Peace** is a book as scholarly and interesting as Dr Subramanian Swamy. A must read for those interested in India-China ties, says KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

A number of former diplomats and foreign policy experts based in India have published books and research papers on India-China and India-Pakistan ties, but nobody has been able to, so far, furnish a solution to the underlying issues of discontent. Daily we see news channels and magazines accord the status of international foreign policy specialists to many “experts”, and yet these “experts” fail to come out with a China or Pak policy that can help put the apprehensions behind us.

Instead of former diplomats who take pleasure in patting their own backs for their prowess in golf courses and international connections, what our country needs is real experts who could resolve its age-old issues with the neighbouring countries. In my view, what we need is a person with the brain of Harish Salve, the patience of Nani Palkhivala and the executive skill of KPS Gill to manage China and Pakistan.

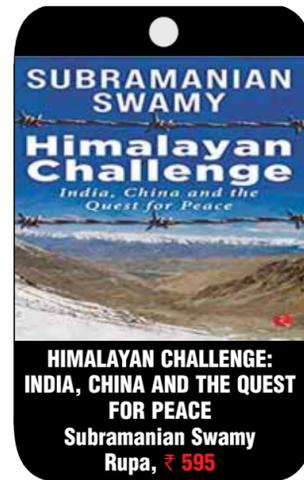
It is at this juncture that Dr Subramanian Swamy, MP and former cabinet minister, has come out with the book *Himalayan Challenge: India, China and the Quest for Peace*, published by Rupa Books. The book carries forward several issues that Dr Swamy had addressed in his earlier book, *India's China Perspective* (2001, Konark Publishers).

Dr Swamy is an experienced Chinese hand and in my view, if there is anyone in India who is capable of highlighting the real issues haunting India and China, it is him. Dr Swamy teaches economics to policy makers in China, speaks fluent Mandarin and enjoys a powerful rapport with people who matter in that country.

Even today, the trade between the two nations continues to be in favour of China. The firecracker industry in Tamil Nadu's Sivakasi has gone bust because of smuggled firecrackers from China.

All eyes turn to the two neighbours whenever a meeting between the premiers takes place. A lot of hype was generated when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi entertained Chinese President Xi Jinping in Ahmedabad immediately after the former's swearing in as Prime Minister in 2014. Ironically, while Modi and Xi were having “*Chai Pe Charcha*” in Sabarmati Ashram in the backdrop of various dance items, the Chinese Army were infiltrating into Indian borders and having a stand off with Indian soldiers. The matter did not end there. During Modi's return visit to

# A TALL ORDER



China, the stand off was repeated at a different place.

When Xi came to India after the 2019 Lok Sabha elections for the Mahabalipuram summit, Modi charmed his Chinese guest wearing a typical Tamil Nadu *veshti*, *angavastram* and cotton shirt, much to the surprise of Tamil Nadu politicians.

If the words of K R Nagarajan, founder of Ramraj & Company (the pioneers in manufacturing branded *Veshti*) are to be believed, sales of *veshti* and *angavastram* shot up after the Mahabalipuram summit! That was the only positive outcome of the high profile meeting. Within months, whatever positive vibes were generated at the sea side resort gave way to animosity and India lost the lives of her gallant army officers. However hard Indian leaders try to charm the Chinese leadership, the latter continue with their treacherous

approach, says Dr Swamy in his book. Even if India bends backwards to please the Chinese by recognising that country's hegemony over Tibet, they view India with suspicion.

According to Dr Swamy, India and China constitute 36 per cent of the world population and the two countries would be able to control global affairs if they work in tandem. “Issues like visa, line of control and Tibet are mere pinpricks which could be addressed if India speaks to China from a position of strength,” he had said.

He is of the view that the issues between India and China could be resolved if our government had structured its policy based on intentions and capacity. “You should understand your as well as the Chinese' intention and capacity,” said Dr Swamy.

He also wanted Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibet, to be told in no

uncertain terms that Tibet was an integral part of China. “Dalai Lama is welcome to stay in India to propagate spirituality but not politics. Two Prime Ministers of India, Jawaharlal Nehru and Atal Behari Vajpayee had declared Tibet an integral part of China and the subject ends there. The Chinese are afraid whether India would join USA in the eventuality of an uprising in Tibet. It is our responsibility to clear that apprehension from the mind of the Chinese leadership,” says Dr Swamy.

He is hopeful of solving the border conflict through diplomacy. “The Chinese argue that they would not accept the McMahon Line, the border between the two countries, because it was drawn by the British. But the same Chinese consider as sacrosanct the McMahon Line between it and Myanmar which too was drawn by the British,” Dr Swamy points out.

Though the Chinese has built a series of ports at strategic points in the Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal, India can counter it in association with Indonesia, feels Dr Swamy. “Build a major port in the 90 km stretch between Andaman Nicobar islands and Sumatra. China's international trade passes through this region and we can call the shots. Moreover, Indonesia is not at all disposed favourably towards China,” he writes.

Dr Swamy pointed out that the ties between the two Asian giants dated back to 3000 years. “Before 1962, there never was any military conflict between India and China. The 1962 war was a fall out of the short sighted policies followed by former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru,” he said.

According to Dr Swamy, Tibet was handed over to China by Nehru though he was advised by Sardar Patel not to do

so. “The 1959 disturbances in Tibet which saw the Dalai Lama seeking asylum in India proved Nehru wrong.” Dr Swamy pointed out. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in a letter dated 7 November 1950 had cautioned and warned Nehru about the perfidy the Chinese has reserved for India. Nehru chose to ignore words of wisdom from the Sardar and the country continues to pay for his foolishness.

He also said the Chinese economy could be ruined if India starts importing electronic and other manufactured goods from east Asian countries like Taiwan and opt for value addition. “Nearly 80 per cent of the goods dumped on India by China are goods purchased by the Chinese from East Asian nations in semi processed stage. They complete the processing and re-export the same to India,” he said.

Most of the East Asian nations were willing to set up their manufacturing plants in India. “But our infrastructure facilities are in a state of mess. Unless it is rectified and revived, no one would come to India,” said Dr Swamy.

The book has reproduced the interview/discussion Dr Swamy had with Deng Xiaoping in 1981. That explains everything. Has any CPI(M) leader met Deng and held discussions with him? For the Marxists, Deng was their Tirupathi Balaji or Lord Ayyappa (to get a *darshan* for 30 seconds and that too from a distance of 50 meters!).

*Himalayan Challenge* is a book as scholarly and interesting as Dr Swamy. A must read for those interested in India-China ties.

## NEW ARRIVALS

**MURDER AT DAISY APARTMENTS**  
Shabnam Minwalla  
Speaking Tiger/YA, ₹399

Colaba, May 2020; Lockdown, Day 46: Baman Marker, the Chairperson of Daisy and Lily Apartments, is found poisoned in his home. He dies soon after. The twin apartments are sealed, so the murderer could have only been one of the residents. The news shakes fifteen-year-old Nandini Venkat, a devourer of murder mysteries, out of her stupor. After all, didn't she spot a pair of legs climbing up and down the stairs that deadly night... With her not-so-alert twin, Ved, and BFF Shanaya, she begins an investigation. But the Chairperson knew every little dirty detail about every single resident, so the list of suspects is long. Was it Mr Carvalho — Nandini's crush Daniel's father — with his shady past? Or Shanaya's mother, Amrita Aunty, who had a running feud with Baman? Or mean old retired principal Lina Almeida who now makes lethal detox smoothies? Or the old and immobile Mr Alimchandani with a long-buried secret? The seemingly listless days of the lockdown, when secrets and tensions bubbled below the surface, come back to life in this gripping and entertaining whodunit. With *Murder at Daisy Apartments*, bestselling author Shabnam Minwalla brings her phenomenal gift for dramatic storytelling to a new genre.

**IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE: ROADS TO HAPPINESS**  
Ruskin Bond  
Aleph/Rupa, ₹399

In a grey and frightened world driven to despair by the pandemic, Ruskin Bond's luminous new book, *It's a Wonderful Life*, cuts through the gloom like a blade of bright steel. His unerring eye seeks out the joys and positive truths to be found in the smallest of incidents that occur in our lives, the good news and sources of happiness that we often miss out on as a result of the anxiety and bad news that has pervaded our daily existence over the past year. Perceptive, uplifting, and deeply moving, *It's a Wonderful Life* is another triumph from one of our most beloved writers.

# To Eat Like a Dawoodi Bohra

*How I Quit Google to Sell Samosas* is the story of how an adventurous entrepreneur grew a weekend Bohri food pop-up from his home into an F&B start-up with a ₹4 cr turnover. An edited excerpt:

When I eventually quit Google to sell samosas, I set time-lines for myself, an exit strategy of sorts, that allowed me to pivot back to the employee life if I didn't achieve certain objectives within a one-year time frame. I also started working on a plan on how to take TBK to the next level.

My part-time foray into the home dining experience had been a rousing success and even Dad, who thought it unthinkable that we would charge people to eat food under our roof, started coming around.

He had laid down multiple conditions before allowing us to make the TBK Home Dining Experience official. One of them entailed memorizing fifty pages of text — basically anything and everything that he had found about the Dawoodi Bohra community — online. He made me promise that I would represent the community properly and answer questions accurately. Telling guests that the Bohra thaal was three feet in diameter because Bohras were at one point in time giants was unacceptable!

Though, if I'd been asked this question pre-TBK, that may have been my answer.

Here's a glimpse of a little that I learnt.

Dawoodi Bohras are a sub-sect of the Ismaili branch of Shia Islam. That sounds like a mouthful, and I could delve into the finer points of the origins and religious evolution of the Bohra community, but for the time being I'll spare us all the history lesson and distil the story of our multilayered heritage to a few fun facts.

The Bohra community was formed by splitting several



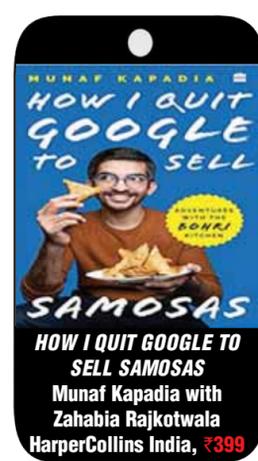
times over from its Ismaili branch due to succession wars. Our religious leadership (Dai al-Mutlaq), that had built its power centre in Yemen since 1151, transferred the seat of administration of the dawlat or religious mission to Sidhpur in Gujarat in 1567.

There had been a wholesome and peaceful acceptance of our unique practice of the

Islamic faith across the western coast of India. Today, members of our small community are settled in large numbers across many Indian cities: Gujarat, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

A consequence of migration, certain social, cultural, linguistic and economic values of the Bohra community were per-

manently enriched by the Gujarati communities that we came to coexist with. Bohras adopted a dialect of Gujarati as their mother tongue (what we now call 'dawat ni zubaan'); to this day, we are often mistaken for Parsis or even Gujaratis when we speak. This confusion can also be attributed to our last names. Take my own, for example — Kapadia. You'll find



Gujaratis, Parsis and Bohras with the same last name because, like the practice was at the time, we derived our last names from what we did professionally (Lokhandwala, Chitalwala, Baldiwala, Kapadia, Merchant, etc.) or where the family resided or used to reside (Pardiwala, Udaipurwala, Rajkotwala, etc.).

Our food was fantastically improved. From the meat-heavy diet that the dry landscape of the Middle East afforded us, we now had access to abundant green vegetables, grain, fresh fruit, dairy and whole spices that form such an important part of Indian cooking.

When I was growing up, if anyone asked me, “Munaf, what religion do you belong to?” I would have said gaming is my religion. But otherwise, any real awareness of religious identity came from Mom's food and memories of eating around a Bohra thaal — either at home on Eid, at Bohra weddings, or at

the occasional religious gathering that we attended.

I do believe food gives you the easiest access into the culture of a community or family. When I first came up with the idea of calling people over and have them eat Mom's food in an attempt to keep her occupied, I was also simultaneously thinking how exciting would it be for a non Bohra to eat around a thaal?

For those of you who have never had the chance to eat from a thaal, let me paint a picture of what a typical meal around a thaal looks like.

According to tradition, us Bohras sit on the floor on a square cloth mat called a safra and eat from a thaal, which is a large steel platter. The average thaal is three feet in diameter and placed on top of a kundli (anything that gives the thaal a slight elevation). Seven or eight hungry guests can be seated around it, cross-legged (or somewhere between cross-legged and a padmasana) so that everyone can reach the centre of the thaal. At any Bohra function, you are likely to find yourself randomly sitting around a thaal, shoulder-to-shoulder with complete strangers.

At the end of the meal, you will either hate your fellow diners because somebody grabbed your samosa before you could get to it. Or, in all likelihood, you will make friends, get the latest on the chawl gossip and maybe even crack a potential business partnership!

Excerpted with permission from *How I Quit Google to Sell Samosas* by Munaf Kapadia with Zahabia Rajkotwala, published by HarperCollins India

# Constitution, CAG and monolithism – I

*Dedication — I dedicate this article to thousands of employees of all cadres in Indian Audit & Accounts Department across the country, but for whose ceaseless hard work, efforts and devotion, Audit reports are never possible.*

Historically and contemporarily, world over, both societies and institutions, with their immutable linkages, have been needing a historian's perspective, insight and language to be of candid expression to a layman. When it comes to think of subtlety and truthfulness of such narratives, a name crops up inescapably: John Kenneth Galbraith, one of the most exciting writers of last century. Galbraith, not a storyteller (his being a historian not in dispute), never lets his readers suffer the absence of a storyteller and a literary artist. His readers feel as if they are sailing through a long tale spanning over decades, sometimes even centuries reflecting on numerous presences and occasional absences. In him, we meet a classy world of anecdotes, historical incidents, great inequalities, personal ambitions, idiosyncrasies, cliques, social ideas and recollections of his rendezvous with some of the world leaders. His "The Age of Uncertainty" is such a book where a few themes, inter alia, are used to explain societies and institutions.

To begin with, Galbraith clarified the title: *The Age of Uncertainty*. It is about great uncertainties of twentieth century as contrasted with great certainties of nineteenth century with little of those certainties surviving. With this basic theme, Galbraith moved to other theme: Ideas. He admitted, "...ideas are important not only for themselves but also for explaining or interpreting social behaviour." Ideas at any time in history guide people and government and shape history of that time. He treated ideas in two parts: first, the men and the ideas and, second, their consequences or impact on society. This is the sequence as a whole for the book. But Galbraith, as unsated as ever, hungered for more. He shifted, in due course, his analysis from "men" to "consequences" and "ideas" to "institutions". While talking of all these, that great voyager for truth and trust, never forgot to talk of "vested interests" the role of which in any institution, he was gravely aware of.

Let us see what he said about

vested interest: "And we had best not close our eyes too completely to the idea of vested interest. People have an enduring tendency to protect what they have, justify what they want to have. And their tendency is to see as right the ideas that serve such purpose. Ideas may be superior to vested interest. They are also very often the children of vested interest." Amid the generally gloomy picture painted, much later in the book we come across Galbraithian optimism, "...problems can be solved by the collective responsibility and intelligence of the people themselves. It is that responsibility and intelligence that count."

There is no gainsaying that men, ideas, vested interests and consequences, inter alia, do form the warp and woof of many institutions throughout the world. The history of any institution can be penned in terms of interplay of these concepts which can also account for aberrations, if any, in the behaviour of institutions. While the reference to Galbraith's book being an aside, the book, in general, spells out a format for analysis useful in approaching questions and seeking answers.

Moving to the principal subject of this article, it is known that the institution of Comptroller and Auditor General (Indian Audit & Accounts Department, IA&AD) comes under overall control of CAG of India appointed under the Constitution. All powers concerning audit, administrative, financial, etc, are vested in the CAG. Let us look at some important provisions.

Article 151 of the Constitution reads as follows:  
"The reports of the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India relating to the accounts of the Union shall be submitted to the President, who shall cause them to be laid before each House of Parliament."

The reports of the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India relating to the accounts of a State shall be submitted to the Governor of the State, who shall cause them to be laid before the Legislature of the State."

Section 21 of Duties, Powers, and Conditions of Service Act (DPC Act) 1971 reads as below:

"Any power exercisable by the Comptroller and Auditor General under the provisions of this Act, or any other law may be exercised by such officer of his department as may be authorised by him in this behalf by general or special order.



Provided that, except during the absence of the Comptroller and Auditor-General on leave or otherwise, no officer shall be authorised to submit on behalf of Comptroller and Auditor General any report which the Comptroller and Auditor General is required by the Constitution or the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963 to submit to the President or the Governor of a State or the Administrator of Union Territory having a Legislative Assembly as the case may be."

Chapter 11 (140) of Regulations on Audit and Accounts 2020 reads as below:

"The form, content and time of submission of audit reports shall be decided by the Comptroller and Auditor General."

Thus, all officers and staff below him work under delegated powers of CAG and are rudderless without him. These provisions, read together, and many more give the organisation a monolithic structure.

Over decades, the organisation has flourished and enjoyed considerable name and fame under the able guidance of widely experienced different CAGs. Personnel working under the CAG right up to senior most Deputy CAG have enjoyed the guidance, insight and foresight bestowed by the respective CAG and in turn they have given their best to any CAG in the performance of the responsibility assigned to him under the Constitution. In their respective roles, they help the CAG in dis-

charging his accountability ultimately to the nation: to the aam admi the utilisation of whose taxed money he is constitutionally required to audit and offer comments. It hardly requires any reiteration that the organisation has very robust system of processing of material, evolved over decades, both at the level of field offices and headquarters before audit findings are put up to CAG for his approval. Approval of audit reports by any CAG brings laurels to the field offices as the hard and sustained work of thousands of unknown/unseen staff at different levels in these offices get ultimate recognition at the highest level within the organisation.

The CAG is appointed for a period of six years or up to the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier. Needless to mention for the period a CAG holds the post, s/he is duty bound to address the requirements stipulated in the Constitution. He takes oath. None of his subordinates, though all working under delegated powers, can substitute for him as far as his constitutional duties are concerned. Only the CAG can take a final view on audit and decide about the material going into Audit Reports before he countersigns the Reports which are signed by respective heads of field offices like Principal Accountant General/Director General. Thus no audit finding is final unless it has the approval of CAG and it features in Audit Reports. Only the CAG can finally decide what and how much

to place before the Parliament, Committees and ultimately the common citizens. This distinguishes the CAG from his subordinates making him the most important person in the institution. Constitution confers on the CAG that privileged position: a duty, a responsibility and ultimately a faith which founding fathers of the Constitution reposed in him/her. Over the last more than forty years, successive governments, in turn, have reposed faith in Indian Administrative Service officers who they have thought would duly meet the requirements of the Constitution and fulfil the expectations flowing from the Constitution.

Recently some self-explanatory articles appeared in print/online media (for example-The Caravan (March 2021), Wire (July 2020 and March 2021), The New Indian Express (March 2021) about systemic slowing of the process during the last few years, which led to significant delay and decline, vis-à-vis preceding many years, in number of audit reports. After reading these articles, a natural question arises in anyone's mind. What about the responsibility of the institution particularly the officers who are in charge of ultimately processing audit material and putting these to the CAG for approval??

While I leave answer to this question to the citizenry of the country who can draw their own conclusions given the aforemen-

tioned provisions, an episode my memory retains edges out to be in place.

A few years back, I got an opportunity to call on one stalwart from IA&AS who superannuated long back as Additional Deputy CAG, (a post, for the sake of brevity referred to as ADAI. This, of course, is my supposition.). He was full of fond memories of his days in the department. Recalling his period in CAG office, he told me when he was ADAI in charge of some audit reports, one of the reports got stuck with late TN Chaturvedi, the then CAG. Chaturvedi had a scholarly temperament and was known to be fiercely independent. That ADAI went to Chaturvedi's chamber and requested him to clear the report at his earliest. Chaturvedi called for the report and told him, "You have read it. It's as good as I have read it." And then he signed the report. "Trust". Yes, it was the bond that was there. If there was one Chaturvedi, then there was an ADAI of that stature with his vast accumulated experience in different field offices in the country. He had a formidable reputation which in turn gave him the confidence of meeting any one of Chaturvedi's observations himself on the spot, if required. More importantly, Chaturvedi knew it too. That facilitated his prompt decision.

Do these articles not elevate discussion to a higher level by throwing a few significant questions meriting serious consideration? These do. Let me proceed with a hypothetical example.

(To be concluded: Watch this space)

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**There is no gainsaying that men, ideas, vested interests and consequences, inter alia, do form the warp and woof of many institutions throughout the world. The history of any institution can be penned in terms of interplay of these concepts which can also account for aberrations, if any, in the behaviour of institutions**



KK SRIVASTAVA

## PERSPECTIVE

**As German Chancellor Angela Merkel plans to step down after serving the country for over 15 long years, the departure of the de-facto leader of Europe might trigger uncertainty as Germany hasn't been immune to the rise of the right**

# End of an era in Germany

Born as Angela Dorothea Kasner to Horst Kasner and Herlind Kasner in Hamburg, Angela Merkel became the first woman Chancellor of Germany in 2005. Her father was a Lutheran Minister, and her mother an English teacher. Merkel is now 66 years. She has made an indelible impression on the public life in Germany, Europe and around the globe. She is the first woman and the first East German to hold the highest elected office of the country. Merkel has won four consecutive elections for the office of the Chancellor since 2005. She is set to retire from active politics in September 2021. When she leaves her office this year, she will be Germany's second longest serving leader in the modern era only after her mentor and former Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Merkel is branded as a figure of "Hope". The best part of her career is that she knows who she is, and she does not try being someone else. She does complete justice to herself and her abilities. Friends, critics, diplomats, and historians say she knows German history exceedingly well. Though she does not like the term, some American and British commentators started calling her "the leader of the free world". In fact, this has happened because most of the locals in these two countries were for some time fully frustrated with

their democratically elected leaders and set to spot the future of the western world in Merkel's leadership.

In 2009, after four years of her chancellorship, Mattel Inc, an American toy manufacturing multinational giant, made an Angela Merkel Barbie Doll. *The Forbes* magazine has ranked Merkel the world's most powerful woman for ten years consecutively. In 2015, she was declared as the *Time* magazine's "Person of the Year".

*Time* in its profile rightly noted, "Her political style was not to have one; no flair, no flourishes, no charisma, just a survivor's strong sense of power, and a scientist's strong devotion to data". And finally, in 2020, a remarkable Pew Poll survey found that Merkel is the world's most trusted leader. What more you need to claim her to be the most successful politician of our troubled times.

Today, the most dangerous crisis in the western world is that democracy is under siege. It's constantly challenged by anti-democratic populist politics, Russia's cyber-attacks, rise of the right, and varied shades of Trumpism prevalent almost everywhere. When we think a West minus democracy is nothing but an omen for humanity, then many of us can find our answer in Merkel only. She is the one who is capable of turning the tide and making democracy viable and sustainable in the western

world.

When she made public that she will step down as the leader of her party, Christian Democratic Union (CDU), on October 29, 2018, many political observers said the most powerful woman of the world is looking for an elegant and dignified exit. She is also termed as the de facto leader of the European Union (EU).

At present, the coalition government of Merkel consists of three political parties, namely her own CDU, the Christian Social Union of Bavaria (CSU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD). It is uncertain today whether Merkel would be able to continue as Chancellor till September. It may so happen that the SPD may force her to resign by withdrawing support and push the country for a fresh election. However, the optimists opine that she is in full command of her government. And coalition partners hopefully will not dislodge her and will allow her to go for a graceful exit.

In fact, Merkel has had a firm grip on the country, except in one instance in 2015 when it was felt that Merkel is not in control of the country's borders. That year seemed to be a catastrophe as nearly a million refugees mainly from West Asia streamed into Germany.

Referred to as "das Madchen" "That Girl" by the former Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Merkel is also known as Germany's beloved mom.

Initially trained as a quantum chemist, she spent the first 35 years of her life in the Soviet-controlled East Germany, until the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989. It was a historic moment for both Europe and for the entire world. And also for this quiet scientist. She has done whatever it takes to prevent the EU from falling in her entire four terms of chancellorship.

Currently, she inspires and influences people, especially women around the world. The world of politics is seriously under-represented by woman. She has carved a niche for herself as grand unifier of Europe at a time when forces of disintegration have been looming large across the continent. One can clearly say that when crisis comes, Merkel responds to them with unabated success. She has figured out a well-managed team to answer crisis zones all throughout her career of more than one and a half decade in office. Merkel has even quietly digested all the taunts, fabrications, unilateral actions and slights by Donald Trump in his four years in office against Germany and many other allies of the US in Europe.

However, her critics think otherwise. To them, she is a cynical operator. She is one big ruthless leader who sidelines her opponents in a Machiavellian style. While acting in this manner, what reigns on her mind is the interest of

the voters. The critics think as a de facto leader of Europe, she has failed to craft a real architecture for the future integration of Europe.

Merkel welcomed more than a million refugees from West Asia in 2015 and 2016. When refugees crossed over to Germany, she simply said, "We will manage this". Her critics said it was her great mistake, but she proved them wrong finally. This created a furore across Europe and particularly in Germany. Anyone critical of Merkel's open-door policy towards the migrants were branded as racist. Nearly a million refugees and asylum seekers reached the country before the Chancellor ordered to close the border entries in March 2016 when Balkan states cut off the migrant route. Many later said some of the media reports were biased and they failed to cover the influx of refugees responsibly. And despite having a strong intervention from Merkel, the German society is split over the migrant issue.

Some international experts criticise her for purported lack of vision and of course stagnation during her four terms as Chancellor. What Germany eventually has done mattered a lot than what it said in the past sixteen years. Europe has experienced massive waves of change, especially the departure of Britain from the privileged EU.

Against the backdrop of

the crisis, the far-right groups and political parties across Europe voiced their strong concerns over the migrants. The Alternative for Germany (AfD), the most influential party of the rightists in Germany, vehemently criticised the open-door policy of Merkel towards the migrants. This backlash led to the worst performance of her party in the last 70 years in 2017. Her grand coalition is seemed to be fraught with major difficulties in her last term in office.

She clearly says she has no plan to hold any public office beyond 2021. But the fact is that since the unification of Germany, she has been either holding one or the other important office, including the Chancellor's. So practically speaking, it is time for her to go.

Now the question is: Does Merkel has a trans-Atlantic legacy or impact? Merkel's departure from public life would be profound both in Germany and in entire Europe. She has experimented a lot: She was one who stopped military conscription, allowed the ECB to pump money into the economy to save the Euro, initiated a radical energy policy, and top of that, despite all odds, invited nearly a million refugees to the country.

However, she proved her detractors wrong who predicted the total collapse of the German system. Though she has introduced volunuous

changes, she has projected to the world that things have remained stable. It must be said that German politicians are adept in making new ideas look old, sturdy and durable.

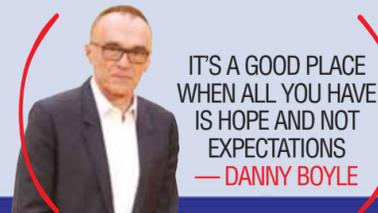
Merkel has read Germans exceptionally well, and knows they were looking for an emotional insurance policy before stepping into a new narrative of change. So she religiously followed the prophetic words of Konrad Adenauer, the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany from 1949-63, who said: "No Experiments".

Thus, she has cleverly weathered a series of countless domestic and global upheavals. Also, she has placed absolute confidence on a group of loyalists who has served for decades in the Chancellor's office. Her appetite for complete information and constant arguments puts her above from her contemporaries in Germany. She prefers that success be rewarded with approval and credit. She is capable of working against all odds!

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



MAKHAN SAIKIA



**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

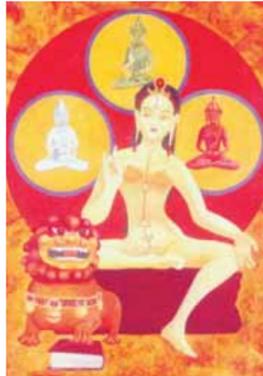
MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week you feel spiritual, religious and would get immense benefits from working in a group. Need be, seek health advice from your spiritual leader. If you have health challenges, discipline, order, and commitment are the ways to handle it. You feel more comfortable with traditional therapy for healing yourself than consulting a doctor. On the work front, direct your energy into a job where planning has gone into. Focus on your strengths. New opportunities will come your way, bringing hope and renewed energy. Luck is on your side. On the relationship front, if you are currently committed, you will move to the next level. For some time, you are likely to have a peaceful, happy period in your love life.

**Lucky number 13**  
**Lucky colour Navy Blue**  
**Lucky day Tuesday**



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

This week follow your intuition on health issues. If a diagnosis (positive or negative) doesn't feel right, or you don't feel comfortable with your health care provider, get a second opinion or a new provider. Those who consume alcohol are likely to overdo it. Indulge if you must, but in moderation. This is also a great time to access the great spiritual books of the world. On the work front, you are at your creative best and your popularity will soar. A promotion or an additional charge at the workplace is likely. Businessmen will do well. On the personal front, those looking for love may have to wait or may come across a wrong choice. Existing relationships are likely to feel stagnated. Mental tension will remain.

**Lucky number 18**  
**Lucky colour Indigo**  
**Lucky day Friday**



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This week you might find that your health changes drastically and can let go of old negativity. Sudden insights and a feeling of great optimism make it possible to let go of old grudges and to feel fabulous about the future again. Trying new stuff/ food/ and enjoying them is also indicated. On the work front, this is a time when you can expect new opportunities to come on your way. Be ready for them. A good week for media people and politicians. On the personal front, lovers will have a good time. Those in a committed relationship will turn it in a strong relationship that is mutually supportive and beneficial. If you're looking for someone, this might be the time. You might be very pleasantly surprised by how things work out.

**Lucky number 12**  
**Lucky colour Black**  
**Lucky day Tuesday**



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week even if you feel lethargic, try to follow through your health regime on your own. Days ahead are great for you health-wise. Health will improve and those waiting for the test reports will have reasons to celebrate. You can have a peaceful and positive time now. Your positive and fresh outlook towards life will help you lead a better life. On the career front, you will feel new energy which pushes you to go ahead without much effort and pay rich dividends. Those in arts, music, and literary fields will have good times. Even those with the psychic and healing profession will be doing well. On the personal front, you need some time and space to understand the intensity in relationships, especially in love relations.

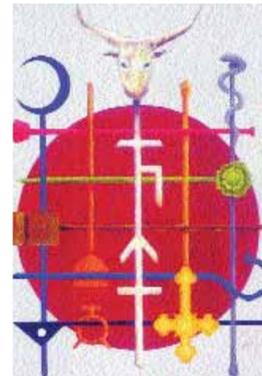
**Lucky number 31**  
**Lucky colour Turquoise**  
**Lucky day Thursday**



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This week you need to take care of your health. Prevention is better than cure. Things are under control. Yoga, Pranayam, and meditation will be rejuvenating. Don't be your own doctor. If you are suffering some health ailment, it's better to go to a medical consultant and start the medicine. On the work front, a promotion is on the cards for some. Good relationship with seniors will pay rich dividends. Those fond of reading and lecturing will find ample time for both. On the personal front, this is the time to be happy. You will enjoy a good rapport with your relatives too. Love will be at the centre stage of your life. This is either a new relationship or a powerful re-bonding of an old one.

**Lucky number 17**  
**Lucky colour Gold**  
**Lucky day Sunday**



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

Stress and anxiety are likely to affect your health this week. Balance in exercise, food and water intake, and getting adequate rest is required. Breathing exercises and meditation are particularly useful for you. Those waiting on test results, try not to worry much. Focus on the positive vibes. Surround yourself with positive people. Work-wise, the week will be either burdensome or non-existent and you may be feeling stuck. Know that you do not have to stay in a situation that is not healthy or workable for you. You may find a lot of mess created around you. Have faith in yourself and the Almighty that changes are possible. On the relationship front, this can be a make-or-break period. This is a time to be clear about what you want out of your relationships.

**Lucky number 21**  
**Lucky colour Grey**  
**Lucky day Saturday**



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

This week you will be active and energetic. You will come across as action-oriented and rejuvenating to others. You want to pass your time in creative pursuits. You are filled with new ideas. Your curious mind will keep you occupied in something or the other. Exercise regularly, as your muscles are likely to act up. On the work front, you need to take firm decisions. Be prompt and aggressive when it comes to business ventures, otherwise, you may miss a good opportunity. Time is apt for journalists who are focused and clear about their goals. On the relationship front, offer what you have to your partner. The picture is not very good on the emotional front. A difference of opinions with the elders is likely.

**Lucky number 39**  
**Lucky colour Red**  
**Lucky day Wednesday**



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

This week a healthy and positive environment will add to your charm and attraction. You will grow both physically and mentally. This is a good week to enjoy, pamper yourself with beauty-enhancing tips. Going to the spa, massage, and beauty salon is on the cards. You won't mind spending a good amount on your personality grooming. On the work front, a change of job is likely for some. This is not a good week for those in partnership business. You tend to overreact, keep your finance and wavering mind under control. Money transaction business should be done with great care. On the personal front, you are likely to get an ambitious partnership with a beneficial influence. You are kind, generous and make all efforts to win the heart of partner.

**Lucky number 29**  
**Lucky colour Sky Blue**  
**Lucky day Tuesday**



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

Your health would be on the upswing this week. A healer might suggest a therapy. Follow your instincts about what is best for your health. You will feed yourself with the latest information about health issues. On the work front, you are a quick learner and will realise your mistakes fast. Mysteries excite you and you will even try solving them in this week. Check your aggression and hasty decisions which not only harm your personality but may cause injuries too. Be careful when talking to your seniors. On the personal front, do not overreact to situations that can change the equation of a relationship you value. Keep all the women in your life happy as they bring good luck. You may find yourself attracted to someone older than you now.

**Lucky number 14**  
**Lucky colour Pastel Green**  
**Lucky day Friday**



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

Your ability to bounce back from the toughest of situations will win you many admirers. Take care of your health, especially the eyes which need your attention. This is the time to exercise regularly and take a break from the hectic schedule. Meditation and walking in morning hours will do wonders. On the work front, some unexpected situations may force you to have a serious thought and bring some changes in working style. Be careful in your interactions with the opposite sex at the work area. You will be adaptable and versatile that will help you to overcome the challenges. On the personal front, you are a happy and contented person. You will enjoy the warmth and affection from your elders and love from the spouse.

**Lucky number 19**  
**Lucky colour White**  
**Lucky day Friday**



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

Health shouldn't be a cause for worry for you this week. This is a great time to give thought to what you are doing to increase your health and vitality. If you need rest or exercise, consider it and add in your schedule. On the career front, a position of power is predicted for you. Your hard efforts done in the past will reap rich dividends. You will find a harmonious balance between meeting your professional commitments and spending quality time with friends and family. Those who are working selling/buying property will earn a huge profit this week. On the personal front, romance is in the air. For the moment, even though life's problems go on, you can take time out to forget about the hassles of the everyday world and enjoy the company of your partner.

**Lucky number 28**  
**Lucky colour Peach**  
**Lucky day Saturday**



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

This week you need care and healing energy and you look forward to your mother/sister or some feminine support. There is a need to be loving and supportive of yourself, particularly if you are facing health challenges. Think positively and trust in the universe's healing energy. On the career front, use your creative ideas to turn the tide at your workplace in your favour. Rethink your strategies. If you're looking for a position now is a positive time. Your efforts are valued. This is a largely laid-back week with plenty of time to recharge your energy. On the relationship front, love knocks at your heart. You will enjoy a good relationship with your colleagues. You will find time to nurture your love. Those in a long-term relationship are likely to find love growing.

**Lucky number 11**  
**Lucky colour Orange**  
**Lucky day Tuesday**

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# The master of prudence

A tusker is supposed to have the most stable mind. It is not that it is not subject to provocation. With its large ears, it can access sounds from far and wide. Yet, with its small eyes, it remains focused on its target. It ordinarily ignores all provocations coming its way and keeps marching ahead. It has a flexible trunk which can hold both small and big things with ease. It is indicative of its sense of adaptability. It does not carry any sense of ego. It is exemplified by the fact that it is not bothered by the loss of one tusk, which serves as its fighting weapon. For, the sense of killing is almost foreign to a tusker. It becomes aggressive only when there is threat to life, or if provoked when its privacy is encroached.

Ganapati is perceived as the one who feeds his large belly with a bowl full of *laddoos* (a sweetmeat, round and firm). Why after all, of all the sweets, *laddoos* only? For, it is round and solid, signifying completeness and solidity. Again, each *ladoo* is made out by binding together numerous sweetened globules made out of gram-flour. This, in the first place symbolises that in

togetherness you gain strength. Second, you need to put in all acts together to come out with your best.

Third, the need of life are multifaceted. And we need to attend to all of them holistically in the right proportion due. If ever, for the sake of one aspect, we lose sight of any other, we create an imbalance in life, which in turn, may invite mental, physical or emotional discomfort.

In this context, a real-life story of a child prodigy becomes imperative. Later in life, this child got engaged in higher research. He was so focused to his research activity that he remained oblivious to his family obligations. He could not spare any time even for his newly married wife. In desperation, his wife abandoned him. He then tried his best to reconnect with his wife. But he failed to persuade her come back to his life. But when she refused to live with a man not bothered about her sensibilities and concerns, he was due for a shock. He lost his mental balance thereafter. He could not come out of his lunacy for almost 4 decades thereafter till he met the end of his life.

For, such a hefty bodied Ganapati,



a little fragile mouse serves as His mount. See the contrast: a level-headed elephant and a fragile mouse. At the sight of the faintest of sound, a mouse runs away to safety. Also, it has access to even small holes around. The entailed message is that we need to keep looking around with an open mind and remain well informed.

Bear in mind: a well-informed person won't miss out even on a smaller aspect of an issue in hand, vital to making appropriate choices. Also, be on full alert against all impending challenges. But for which, it will be difficult to pursue one's usual course of life with ease and comfort, not to say anything about hurdles standing in way of fulfilment of one's ambitions and desires. It thus comes out that if it is desirable to have a stable mind, it is equally important to be on full mental alert against impending challenges as well.

Here, it becomes relevant to note that we all owe our dynamic existence to nature driven energies (*Shakti* in Indian terminology). The word *Shakti* reflects altogether a different connota-

tion as compared to "Energy" as is understood in modern sense. For, inherent in *Shakti* is a creative aspiration, which spontaneously following intelligent design inherent with nature, blossoms out into the world of phenomenon.

On the contrary, energy as we usually understand, doesn't have a drive of its own. It will act, the way it is applied. The same *Shakti*, drives each living being as well. It, however, acquires a different dimension altogether when it comes to human application. For, a human being, armed with the power of freewill, could guide one's actions by choice and discrimination. So, they could use it either way — destructive or creative, depending on how each unique mind is oriented. *Shakti*, thus, at human level, proves to be a double-edged weapon.

If we imbibe the spirit as embodied in Lord Ganapati, and follow its script, we could use *Shakti* towards the right end.

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