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IT'S OK TO NOT FEEL OK: SAMEERA 10 VIVACITY

Amnesty scheme for small taxpayers

GST Council also exempts IGST on black fungus drug, Covid materials meant for donation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The 43rd GST Council on Friday took several important decisions, including an amnesty scheme for small and medium taxpayers to reduce late fee burden on them.

The GST Council, which is headed by the Union Finance Minister and comprises representatives of all States and Union Territories, exempted levy of IGST on import of Amphotericin-B, which is used for the treatment of black fungus. However, the GST Council left taxes on Covid-19 vaccines and medical supplies unchanged.

Currently, Covid vaccines attract 5 per cent GST.

A group of Ministers will deliberate on tax structure on the vaccine and Covid-related medical supplies, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told reporters after the meeting of the GST Council.

Sitharaman said the Council decided to continue



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman chairs the 43rd GST Council meeting in New Delhi

with the waiver of IGST on free Covid-19 related supplies imported from abroad.

"The Council has decided to exempt the import of relief items even if they are purchased if they are meant for donations to State Governments. This exemption has been extended till August 31. So far, the IGST exemption was available only when you were importing free of cost," said FM.

"The ad hoc exemption has been extended till August 31. While that applied to imports received for free for donation, the decision is that if somebody wants to purchase these things from abroad and donate them in the country, they can also

avail the exemption," said Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj. The Centre will borrow ₹1.58 trillion in FY22 to compensate states for loss of revenue from GST, added the Minister.

A special session of the Council will be held soon to consider extending the five-year GST shortfall compensation period to states beyond 2022, she said. "We are on the last of the five years of GST compensation to states. I have assured the members that there will be a special session only to discuss that agenda on how long the compensation cess will be collected beyond July 2022," said the FM.

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Dominican court stops Choksi's repatriation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A top Dominican court has restrained repatriation of fugitive businessman Mehul Choksi from the Caribbean island nation to India to face legal proceedings in the over ₹13,500 crore PNB credit fraud scam.

According to media reports in the island country, the order came on a petition filed by the lawyers of Choksi, who was detained in Dominica for "illegal entry". Choksi had fled from the neighbouring Antigua and Barbuda where he was reported missing since Sunday.

Meanwhile, reports here said India's High Commissioner to Port of Spain, Arun Kumar Sahu, is likely to travel to Dominica next week to initiate a dialogue with the island country and explore Choksi's repatriation here.

Choksi is wanted here for trial before respective courts in a criminal as well as a money laundering case by the CBI and ED respectively.

Earlier on Thursday, Dominica Government had officially contacted High Commissioner Sahu to inform him about the arrest of Choksi by the CID.

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Most States OK Class XII board exams after shots

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A majority of the States and AUTs — barring Delhi, Maharashtra, Goa, and Andaman & Nicobar — have supported the CBSE's proposal to go ahead with the Class 12 Board examinations. They have reportedly opposed the offline mode examinations but suggested that the students and teachers should be vaccinated before the conduct of the examinations.

Education Ministry sources said of the total 36 States and UTs, 32 have agreed to hold the board examinations either as per the Centre-issued guidelines or the common understanding between the Centre, State and CBSE.

The same is likely to be adopted with regard to another national board, ICSE.

Several States like Kerala, Assam, Delhi, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Meghalaya have urged the Centre to vaccinate teachers and students on priority to ensure their safety during their time at the test centres.

The Education Ministry after a meeting on Sunday chaired by Union Minister Rajnath Singh had asked all the States and Union Territories to send their suggestions on Class 12 Board examinations by May 25. The meeting was also attended by Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal



Nishank, along with two of his predecessor Smriti Irani and Prakash Javadekar besides the Chief Ministers and State Education Ministers and Education Secretaries.

The CBSE has proposed two options to the Education Ministry for evaluation of Class 12 students — first, conducting exams in the existing format only for around 20 major subjects, and second conducting a one-and-half-hour objective type exam of major subjects for students in their own schools.

Sources in the Education Ministry said Rajasthan, Tripura and Telangana have backed the first option of the existing format. Under option A, exams for the 19 major subjects will be held in the "existing format" at designated examination centres, while marks for minor subjects are to be calculated based on performance in major subjects.

The three States that opted for this format are expected to have justified their choice on the ground that students may not be comfortable with last-minute changes in the examination format.

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SC to hear on May 31 plea to cancel exams

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday said it would hear on Monday a plea seeking directions to cancel Class 12 examinations in the wake of the surge in Covid-19 cases across the country.

Around 300 Class 12 students have also petitioned the Chief Justice of India urging him to quash the CBSE decision to conduct physical examination amid the pandemic.

CAPSULE

MSY ASKS AKHILESH FOR PATCH UP WITH SHIVPAL

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav has again initiated unity efforts among the family by asking his son Akhilesh Yadav to bury the hatchet with his uncle Shivpal Yadav. "Sort out the ruinous family feud or be ready to perish," Mulayam Singh is believed to have told party president Akhilesh Yadav, who was present at a meeting also attended by Shivpal Yadav earlier this week. The meeting assumes significance in view of the 2022 UP Assembly elections.

KERALA HC QUASHES GOVT ORDER ON SCHOLARSHIP

Kochi: The Kerala High Court on Friday quashed State Government Orders, subclassifying the minorities by providing merit-cum-means scholarship at 80 per cent to Muslim community and 20 per cent to Latin Catholic Christians and Converted Christians, saying it cannot be legally sustained.

NCB ARRESTS SUSHANT'S FLATMATE FROM HY'BAD

Mumbai: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has arrested Siddhartha Pithani, a flatmate of Sushant Singh Rajput, in a drug case linked to the Bollywood actor's death last year, an official said on Friday. Pithani was arrested from Hyderabad and produced in a special court in Mumbai which sent him in the NCB custody till June 1. Pithani was Rajput's friend and was staying with him at the actor's apartment in suburban Bandra.

Narada decision reduced judiciary to a mockery, rues Calcutta HC judge

PNS ■ KOLKATA/NEW DELHI

Calcutta High Court judge has stung the judiciary by slamming the handling of the Narada bribery case by the court saying CBI's e-mail asking for the Narada case to be transferred out of Bengal was wrongly listed before a division bench of two instead of a single judge.

"We have been reduced to a mockery," Justice Arindam Sinha wrote in an explosive letter dated May 24 to acting High Court Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal and other judges.

"The High Court must get its act together. Our conduct is unbecoming of the majesty of the High Court commands," Justice Sinha wrote in his letter.

The CBI sent an e-mail to the High Court on May 17 after arresting four political leaders, including two West Bengal Ministers. A division bench headed by Chief Justice Bindal heard the CBI's request the same day and put on hold bail granted to the Trinamool lead-

ers. The CBI sought transfer of the case out of State citing Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's sit-in protest at the agency's office and the ruckus created by Trinamool supporters outside the building.

In his letter, Justice Sinha has contended that the CBI's transfer plea should have been heard by a single judge and it should not have been treated as a "writ petition" in the absence of any substantial question of law related to the constitution.

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HC grants bail to 2 Bengal Ministers, TMC MLA, ex-mayor

Kolkata: The Calcutta High Court on Friday granted interim bail to two West Bengal Ministers, a Trinamool Congress MLA and a former mayor of the city, arrested by the CBI in the Narada sting tapes case.

Snubbed by Mamata, Centre recalls Bengal Chief Secy

BJP blasts Didi for not taking part in cyclone meet with PM

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Even as Bengal Chief Minister made a hurricane visit to Kalaikunda airbase where she met Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a few minutes to place a claim of ₹20,000 crore for reconstruction of cyclone-hit areas of coastal Bengal, Central Government sources termed the her absence from the main review meeting with the Prime Minister as "calious", arrogant and "unmindful" of the welfare of the people of Bengal.

Expressing shock at the conduct of the State Government, the Centre on Friday recalled West Bengal Chief Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay and asked the West Bengal Government to relieve him with immediate effect and direct him to "report



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee takes stock of damage due to Cyclone Yaas in Digsha on Friday

to the DoPT by 10am on May 31, 2021."

Central officials alleged the Chief Minister's "arrogance" prevented her from allowing senior officials like Chief Secretary or Home Secretary to make a presentation.

"The entire presentation was loaded on the screen. However, her pettiness prevented officers from presenting it to the PM," it was said. The day for Bengal was, however, saved by Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and Opposition Leader Suwendu

Govt: India will be fully vaccinated by year end

Health Ministry has prepared a blueprint with 216 crore doses

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Even as various States are reporting acute shortage of Covid-19 vaccines, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar on Friday declared that India will be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 by the end of 2021.

The Minister's statement came hours after Congress MP Rahul Gandhi took a swipe at the Modi Government pointing out that less than three per cent of the country's 130 crore people had received both doses of a vaccine.

Javadekar drew Rahul Gandhi's attention to a Union Health Ministry "blueprint" that, he said, would ensure the vaccination of 108 crore people by December, and reminded him "India is the second-fastest in vaccinating its people" and over 20 crore doses have



been administered so far.

"India's vaccination will be completed before 2021. The Health Ministry has given a blueprint. 108 crore people — with 216 crore doses — will be vaccinated by December. Rahulji... if you're concerned about vaccination then pay attention to Congress-ruled States... there is a mess. They are not taking the quota given to them for 18-44 year old beneficiaries from May 1," Javadekar said.

He also accused State Governments, many of which have frantically red-flagged low vaccine stocks over the past weeks, of "not taking the quota

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES:	2,77,18,744 (+1,64,499)
DEATHS:	3,22,364 (+3,440)
RECOVERED:	2,51,68,916 (+2,71,770)
ACTIVE:	22,16,350
MAHA:	56,92,920 (+20,740)
K'TAKA:	25,46,821 (+22,823)
KERALA:	24,70,873 (+22,318)
UP:	16,86,138 (+2,276)
DELHI:	14,23,690 (+1,141)

for 18-44 age group given to them from May 1."

The Union Minister also criticised Rahul Gandhi and his party colleagues for questioning Covaxin — the vaccine developed and manufactured by Bharat Biotech — efficacy against Covid-19.

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Hooch claims 13 lives in Aligarh

3 Excise officials suspended; 4 held

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/ALIGARH

Thirteen people died after consuming spurious liquor in Aligarh on Thursday night prompting Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to suspend three officials of the Excise Department, including the Aligarh district excise officer, and ordered stern action against all those involved in the crime. However, villagers put the toll at 24.

This tragedy comes at the heels of a similar incident in Ayodhya and Azamgarh around a fortnight back when over two dozen persons had died in the hooch tragedy.

According to police, four people have been arrested so far



in connection with the hooch tragedy. Among those arrested included a salesman of the outlet from where the spurious liquor was sold.

As per the reports, victims had consumed illicit liquor from Government-run country-made liquor shops in the district on Thursday.

Six people are also in a critical condition and were admitted to the state-run hospital.

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International flights to remain suspended till June 30: DGCA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Friday said suspension of international passenger flights will continue till June 30. This restriction will not apply to international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by DGCA.

Given the rise in Covid-19 cases during the second wave of the pandemic, several countries have banned flights from India under the air bubble pact till the situation improves.

"In a partial modification of circular dated 26-06-2020, the competent authority has further extended the validity of circular issued on the subject

cited above regarding scheduled international commercial passenger services to/from India till 2359 IST of 30th June 2021," the DGCA order reads.

The suspension of scheduled international passenger flights was last extended till May 31 amid the coronavirus pandemic. However, special international flights have been operating under the Centre's Vande Bharat Mission since May 2020 and under bilateral "air bubble" arrangements with selected countries since July last year.

All scheduled international flights were restricted on March 23 last year in wake of the coronavirus pandemic and continue to be banned.

Gradual unlocking in Capital to begin from May 31 as cases ebb

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi will see gradual unlocking beginning May 31 as the Covid-19 situation has come under control. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said Delhi will take one step at a time and will not unlock all activities to maintain a balance between containment and reopening of economic activities.

"Only construction activities and factories will be reopened from Monday, the decision was taken keeping the interest of daily wagers in mind. Everything else will remain shut," Kejriwal said after a meeting of the Delhi

Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) chaired by Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal on Friday.

"Week after week, based on public suggestions and expert's opinion, we will continue the unlock procedure given that the coronavirus does not increase any further," Kejriwal said.

He said the infection rate has come down to 1.5 per cent. "Infection rate and corona cases are decreasing. I appeal to the people to not step out of their homes unless absolutely necessary, this will help in preventing another surge," he said.

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SC directs State Govts to adopt children orphaned by Covid-19 pandemic

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday directed all State Governments to take charge of children who have been orphaned in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Bench of Justices



L Nageswara Rao and Aniruddha Bose, while hearing a suo motu case regarding protection of children from Covid-19 in child care institutions, also directed the States to provide data of orphaned kids and relief measures taken.

Amicus Curiae Gaurav Agarwal submitted that two

categories of children were in need of immediate protection. "The first category is of children who have lost their parents and guardians. The next is children who have lost parents or guardians who were earning members," Agarwal said.

The Bench in its order noted that the pandemic has created an unprecedented situation and has a cascading effect on vulnerable children.

The apex court further ordered that States should take charge of children and address their basic needs without waiting for its official order.

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Interference in admin politically motivated allegation: BSY's son

Bengaluru: Under repeated attacks from some party leaders for allegedly interfering in administration, Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa's son and State BJP vice-president B Y Vijayendra on Friday termed such allegations against him as politically motivated.

He claimed no ministers had accused him of interference. "Yediyurappa because of his 30-40 years political struggle and due to the efforts of lakhs of party workers has become Chief Minister. He has become the state and its people as MLA, Leader of Opposition, Deputy Chief Minister and Chief Minister. He knows how to run the administration," Vijayendra said.

Speaking to reporters here, he termed such statements as politically motivated, and said,

"no Ministers have accused me of interference. As the party state vice president I'm aware of my responsibilities and doing my service to the State in my own way...I'm functioning as the BJP vice president within my work limits," he said.

Asked as to why he is repeatedly being accused of interference, Vijayendra sarcastically said, "...Many people have a lot of love towards me and when that love grows, they make such statements."

The Chief Minister's younger son was responding to a question on a veiled attack against him by Tourism Minister C P Yogeeshwara.

In what is widely seen as a reference to Vijayendra, Yogeeshwara on Thursday had said, "I am a Minister. I won't accept my son exercising my

powers. In the same way, someone else exerting power in my jurisdiction or running the show in my name is not sitting well with me personally."

Earlier too, several BJP leaders, especially senior MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, have openly accused Vijayendra of interfering in the administration.

It is also seen as one of the main reasons for growing disgruntlement against Yediyurappa's leadership within the party. Yogeeshwara, whose visit to New Delhi triggered the latest round of speculations about attempts to replace the Chief Minister, while clarifying that his visit had nothing to do with leadership change in the State, had dropped broad hints on his disgruntlement. **PTI**



A shepherd with his flock of sheep and goats after crossing over the snow-covered Rohtang Pass, near the Atal Tunnel Rohtang North Portal on Friday. **PTI**

Delhi HC grants more time to Robert Vadra for reply to I-T notices under Black Money Act

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday said that Income Tax authorities can proceed against Robert Vadra in the Black Money Act-related case involving purchase of London property but said final orders can be passed after the case in High Court.

The Division Bench of Justices Rajiv Shakti and Talwant Singh also granted three weeks' time to Robert Vadra, husband of Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, to file his reply to the notices issued to him by the authorities under the Black Money Act (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) Act, 2015. The matter would be heard next on August 10.

In December 2018, Robert Vadra had received a communication under Section 10(1) of the Black Money Act from the

Office of the Additional Commissioner of Income Tax, Central Range-VII, asking him to furnish certain information in connection with the assessment for year 2019-2020. As per Income Tax department in 010 Vadra had acquired the beneficial ownership of a property located at 12 Ellerton House, Bryanston Square, London for 1.9 million GBP in violation of the Black Money Act.

According to Income Tax department, the purchase was created through the sale of the property by Sanjay Bhandari to one Skylite Investment FZE (UAE) whose shareholding had moved from CC Thampi to GV Cheru to Yayha Abraham over 2009 to 2016. Relying on 18 emails exchanged between Manoj Arora (Vadra's PA), one Sumit Chadha and Vadra, the authorities alleged that Vadra carried out extensive renovation work in the property.

Maha logs 20,740 new cases, 973 more deaths

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Covid-19 infections in Maharashtra dropped further to 20,740 on Friday, while the State logged 973 deaths in various parts of the State.

A day after the State recorded 21,273 infections and 884 deaths, the infections went down further by 533, while it added 973 deaths - comprising 424 current ones and 549 previous unrecorded one - to its fatality tally.

With 973 deaths reported on Friday the total number of deaths in the State climbed

from 92225 to 93,198. Similarly, with 20,740 new infections, the total number of cases climbed from 56,72,180 to 56,92,920.

As 31,671 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 52,76,203 to 53,07,874 on Thursday. The recovery rate in the state rose from 93.02 per cent to 93.24 per cent.

The total "active cases" in the state increased marginally

from 3,01,041 to 2,89,088. The fatality rate in the state increased from 1.63 per cent to 1.64 per cent.

With 30 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai increased from 14,720 to 14,750, while the infected cases went below 1000 mark to touch 924 and trigger a jump in the infections from 7,01,598 to 7,02,522. The situation in Pune improved further, as the "active cases" dropped from 43869 to 42,550.

Mumbai with 28,793 active cases stood second in the state, followed by Thane

(20,008), Satara (21591), Nagpur (14,593), Ahmednagar (11,578), Solapur (11,099), Nashik (10,767), Beed (8252), Jalgaon (6591), Amaravati (5972), Aurangabad (4939), Osmanabad (4371) and Jalna (4030)..

Of the 3,43,50,186 samples sent to various laboratories across the state so far, 56,72,180 have tested positive (16.57 per cent) for Covid-19 until Friday.

Currently, 21,54,976 people are in home quarantine while 16,078 people are in institutional quarantine.

Telangana logs 3,527 fresh corona cases

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana on Friday logged 3,527 Covid-19 cases, taking the tally to over 5.71 lakh while the toll stood at 3,226 with 19 deaths, a Government bulletin said.

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) accounted for the most number of cases with 519, followed by Nalgonda (218) and Khammam (215), the bulletin said.

AP reports 229 black fungus cases in a single day

Amaravati: The gross number of Mucormycosis (black fungus) cases went up to 808 in Andhra Pradesh on Friday as 229 were reported afresh in a day.

But lack of sufficient stock of medicine to treat the affected patients has become a cause for concern, officials of the Health Department told Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy during a review meeting on Covid-19 on Friday evening. So far, the Centre sent 5,200

liposomal Amphotericin-B injections to the state, but that was not even 10 per cent of the requirement, a release from the CMO quoted the officials as telling the Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister said at least 40,000 injections would be required in a week, based on the caseload. Since the injections were not available in the required quantity, he asked the health officials to look into alternatives. He asked them to coordinate with pharma com-

panies and procure medicines for Black Fungus, the release said.

Meanwhile, the government has so far identified 78 children orphaned by coronavirus in different districts. Of the 78, 10 children were given ₹10 lakh each, as announced by the government. The ₹10 lakh would be deposited in a bank till the child attains the age of 25 years and the monthly interest could be used to meet the regular needs. **PTI**



A dust storm engulfs the skyline of the walled city in Jaipur on Friday. **PTI**

Most States...

From Page 1

On the other hand, of the 32 that has agreed to the exams, 29 States and UTs have either indicated a preference for CBSE's option B or agreed to support the Centre's decision on the matter.

Under option B, exams for major subjects will be conducted in the students' own schools, instead of at designated centers and each exam will be for a shorter duration of 90 minutes.

States such as Punjab, Delhi, Jharkhand, Sikkim, Daman and Diu have suggested that the examination should be held only after all students and teachers are vaccinated. While Kerala and Assam have also mentioned vaccination in their feedback, their support for holding Board examination doesn't hinge on it.

Snubbed by...

From Page 1

The Chief Minister, however, later said at Digha that she had no other way but to rush in and out of Kalaikunda venue along with her Chief Secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay as she was herself in the midst of making an aerial survey of the cyclone-hit regions.

"I have been touring all the areas of North and South 24 Parganas and from there I rushed to see the Prime Minister as I came to know that he wanted me to meet him... I went quickly, submitted my report before leaving in a hurry as I had the other programmes here to attend," she said.

The Bengal Government has claimed Rs 20,000 crore from the Centre for reconstruction of the cyclone-hit areas of Digha in East Midnapore and Sunderbans in North and South 24 Parganas, the Chief Minister on Friday said airing doubts whether New Delhi would genuinely come out with any visible help for the State.

The Prime Minister, who earlier made an aerial survey of devastated coastal districts of Odisha and Digha region in Bengal and met the Chief Minister at Kalaikunda, also held discussions with Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and Opposition Leader Subhendu Adhikari.

"I had very little time because I too was making an aerial survey... still I rushed to see the Prime Minister who wanted to see me at Kalaikunda where I met him along with my Chief Secretary and submitted to him a preliminary report," said Mamata who met Modi for a few minutes.

"The preliminary reports suggest that the State has suffered a damage of Rs 20,000 crore due to the cyclone," said the Chief Minister, adding,

"We have sought a package of Rs 10,000 crore each for the redevelopment of Digha and the Sunderbans..." and airing doubts whether the fund would be all reach Bengal.

"I have submitted my report though I do not have any clue about whether we will get anything or not," she said after an

administrative meeting in the tourist town of Digha.

The Chief Minister was currently in a two-day trip of the devastated areas and was currently camping at Digha. She would make an aerial survey of the East Midnapore zone following which she would fly back to Kolkata.

Mamata's statement came in the backdrop of a release issued by the Prime Minister's Office saying Modi had announced a financial assistance of Rs 1,000 crore for immediate relief activities.

"Rupees 500 crore would be immediately given to Odisha. Another Rs 500 crore has been announced for West Bengal and Jharkhand, which will be released on the basis of the damage... The Union Government will deploy an inter-ministerial team to visit the states to assess the extent of damage, based on which further assistance will be given," it was said.

The Prime Minister said, "We have to continue the focus towards more scientific management of disasters. As the frequency and impact of cyclonic systems are increasing in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, communication systems, mitigation efforts and preparedness have to undergo a major change," the statement from the PMO said.

The Prime Minister also declared an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh to the next of kin who died in the cyclone and Rs 50,000 for those seriously injured.

Barely a year after super cyclone Amphan --- the strongest to be seen in about 200 years --- hit Bengal last May a second cyclone "Yaas" wrecked havoc in parts of Odisha and Bengal needing about 15 lakh people to be evacuated government shelters in two 24 Parganas and East Midnapore.

Meanwhile, Adhikari who too met the Prime Minister at Kalaikunda later said he too had made a case for Bengal seeking a full-fledged support to rebuild the coastal areas of Sunderbans with special emphasis on rebuilding dams.

He had told the Prime Minister that the large number river islands in Sunderbans delta needed to be fenced with concrete dam so that large-scale damage from repeated cyclonic onslaughts could be prevented, the TMC-turned-BJP leader said.

SC directs State Govts to adopt children...

From Page 1

"It has been brought to our notice that there are a large number of children who have become orphans due to the demise of the breadwinner or both parents. We are informed by ASG Aishwarya Bhati and counselor NalPCR that a portal named BalSwaraj is being operated by all concerned district authorities and have been given password to access and upload information pertaining to identification of children who became orphans. District authorities are directed to upload information about children who have become orphans after March 2020 by Saturday (tomorrow) evening, 8 pm," the Order said, asking the States to act through the District administrations immediately.

State Governments have been asked to file their replies to the application, latest by Sunday evening, so that the Amicus can prepare a note by collating and submitting it to Court by Monday evening.

India will...

From Page 1

Covaxin was approved in January but medical experts, civil society groups and Opposition leaders, including those from the Congress, questioned its safety and efficacy after it was passed without key trial data. Those results were eventually released in March and Covaxin showed 81 per cent efficacy.

Earlier in the day, Gandhi said that PM Modi "did not understand Covid at all". Meanwhile, the Union Health Ministry said that the Government has so far provided, both through the free of cost category and through direct state procurement category, more than 22.46 crore vaccine doses (22,46,08,010) to States/UTs. "Of this, the total consumption, including wastages, is 20,48,04,853 doses (as per data available at 8 AM on Friday).

More than 1.84 crore COVID Vaccine doses (1,84,92,677) are still available with the States/UTs to be administered while 3 lakh (3,20,380) vaccine doses are in the pipeline and will be received by the States/UTs within the next three days, said the Ministry.

Dominican...

From Page 1

"The legal team has filed a habeas corpus petition in Dominica for Mehul Choksi and have also highlighted deprivation of access to Mehul Choksi and deprivation of constitutional rights to legal assistance," Choksi's lawyer in Mumbai Vijay Aggarwal reportedly said.

According to a report in Antigua News Room, the High Court of Justice in Dominica "restrained" the authorities from "removing" Choksi till further orders. Choksi's attorney in Dominica, Wayne Marsh, had told a radio show that in a brief interaction with his client, allowed by authorities after a lot of efforts, Choksi had told him that he was picked up at Jolly Harbour in Antigua and Barbuda by men looking like Indian and Antiguan policemen and was put in a vessel.

Marsh also claimed that he saw injury marks on the body of Choksi who had swollen eyes and feared for his life. He said Choksi is a citizen of Antigua and Barbuda and not India, hence he should be sent back.

Aggarwal called the entire episode of Choksi's mysterious disappearance and detention

in Dominica "fishy".

"Lawyers for Choksi in Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica have been trying to have a legal interview with him as per his constitutional rights but they were denied access to him," Aggarwal claimed, adding, after great effort they were able to speak to Choksi for two minutes. During this, Choksi narrated a "horrible" experience which is an eye-opener and vindicates my stand that he would not have gone from Antigua voluntarily, Aggarwal further said.

After being taken from Antigua, Choksi was kept somewhere and then on Monday he was taken to a police station. Since then, he has been there and this news to the world was broken only on Wednesday, and there were marks on his body, Aggarwal asserted.

"There is something fishy and I guess it was a strategy to take him to another country so that there are chances of sending him back to India. So I don't know what forces are operating. Only the time will tell," he said.

Choksi was reportedly last seen going for dinner in his car in Antigua and Barbuda on Sunday. The police there had launched a manhunt after his family and staff there claimed he went missing.

Hooch claims...

From Page 1

Among the deceased are two truck drivers who consumed the hooch which they had brought from the Dhaba.

District Magistrate Chandrabhushan Singh said that all the dead are from different villages and police are trying to gather information about the victims. "All the deceased had purchased liquor on Thursday and consumed it in the late evening. After this, their condition started deteriorating," he said.

The authorities have sealed five shops of the country-made liquor in the affected villages while all the country-made shops of the district have been closed. Local people claimed that those who lost their lives after consuming liquor had purchased the illicit liquor from the village itself.

He directed the District Magistrate to impose National Security Act (NSA) against the culprits and to auction their properties to compensate the family members of the victims.

Gradual...

From Page 1

"Firstly, slowly and steadily we are going to begin the process of opening up the lockdown. We should not lose all the gains of the previous lockdown by suddenly opening up the lockdown. Thus, it is a unanimous belief amongst the experts that the lockdown be opened up slowly and steadily," Kejriwal said.

Talking about the hardship faced by migrant workers, Kejriwal said, "Labourers from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and the neighbouring States come to Delhi to earn their livelihoods. They live on daily wages and in dire conditions. Such workers are found mostly in construction activities and factories. So today it was decided in the meeting that both these activities will be opened up from Monday when this lockdown gets over at 5 am, and for the next one week, construction activities and factories will remain open. The details can be understood from the order that will come as to what precautions are to be followed."

Amnesty...

From Page 1

"On compensation, we have told the Council if we adopt the same formula as last year, the gap is about Rs 1.58 trillion at a macro level. Unlike last year, when there was a complete lockdown, this time, the economy is not suffering as much. Even if we manage to collect Rs 1.1 trillion per month, we will have a deficit of about Rs 1.5 trillion. This deficit may go down to Rs 1.25 trillion if collections improve to Rs 1.15 trillion a month," said Bajaj.

The borrowing amount would be retained at Rs 1.58 trillion to ensure that the States get the residual dues from last year to that extent, added Bajaj.

She also announced an amnesty scheme for those who missed out on GST payment. Late fee has been reduced for past period and also rationalised for future for small taxpayers, said FM.

"One of the biggest decisions today is reduction of compliance burden of small taxpayers and medium-sized taxpayers. Late fee, amnesty-related matters have also been decided upon. To provide relief to small taxpayers, an amnesty scheme has been recommended for reducing late fee payable in these cases. Taxpayers can now file their pending returns and avail the benefits of this amnesty scheme with reduced late fees. Late fees have also been rationalised. The rationalised late fee and the decision

to reduce the maximum amount of late fee for small taxpayers will come into effect for future tax periods. This will provide a long term relief to small taxpayers," said Sitharaman.

"Annual return filing has also been simplified. The Council has recommended amending the CGST Act to allow for self-certification of reconciliation statements, instead of getting it certified by chartered accountants. The annual return filing will continue to be optional for FY21 for small taxpayers, having a turnover less than Rs 2 crore while reconciliation statements for 2020-21 will be furnished only by those taxpayers whose turnover is Rs 5 crore or more," added Sitharaman.

Narada decision ...

From Page 1

"The mob factor may be a ground on merits for adjudication of the motion but could the first division bench have taken it up and continued to hear it as a writ petition is the first question," he wrote.

The judge also objected to the division bench passing on the case to a larger bench when the judges disagreed on whether to grant bail to the accused Trinamool leaders, and said the opinion of a third judge should have been taken instead.

He criticised the way the division bench was not available the next day and did not entrust another bench to hear

the matter. "The public were presented with the situation of the High Court having interfered with the liberty of their elected representatives and then it would not be available for that day to adjudicate on their liberty," the letter said.

"The two-judge division bench had a difference of opinion, with one favouring the granting of interim bail and the other not, but the procedures for such situations were not followed," he wrote.

Justice Sinha wrote in case of difference within a bench, a third judge's opinion is usually taken, which was done in this case.

Centre perpetrating vax scam: AAP



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Accusing the Centre of favouring Bharat Biotech and the Serum Institute of India, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Friday said that the scarcity of vaccines was purely fabricated to favour these manufacturers. Vaccines are available and being administered by private

hospitals at high rates but the same are not available to the State Governments which are doing it free of cost, AAP senior leader Atishi said. "Lakhs of lives have been lost in the face of the second wave of Covid-19. Even religious and social organisations came forward to aid people but the Centre continues to play dirty politics at the cost of peo-

ples' lives. "The lives of so many young people would have been saved if the Centre would not have indulged in the downright vaccine scam. Shortage of vaccines is only in Government schools. Had the Centre cleared the WHO-approved vaccines that are available in the international market and allowed their import, lives

would have been saved," she added. Atishi said, "This is the fifth day that the entire vaccination programme for the youth has remained halted in Government schools. Today, not a single school is able to administer vaccines because of the shortage of jabs. On the contrary, private hospitals have been vaccinating people at such a fast speed because the Centre continues to supply and facilitate enough stock of vaccines to them." "Many vaccines are being approved across the world. The Pfizer vaccine has been approved in 85 countries, the Moderna vaccine has been approved in 46 countries and J&J is approved in 41 countries. "Then why have these three vaccines not been given emergency authorization? If the WHO can approve them,

why can't India? This clearly shows that the Centre has created this artificial scarcity to favour the Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech," she alleged. AAP national spokesperson Raghav Chadha also said that while citizens and State Governments are working hand-in-hand to combat the second wave of Covid-19, it appears that a scam is being perpetrated under the garb of the vaccination programme by the BJP-ruled Central Government. "The BJP-ruled Central Government is trying to loot the citizens of India by forcing them to take vaccines from private centres at much higher prices. He said that if a family has five members, the family will have to shell out a minimum of ₹10,000 should they take both doses at private centres," he added.

Delhi records 1,141 fresh Covid cases, positivity rate 1.59%

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

At least 1,141 fresh cases of Covid-19 were reported in the national Capital while the positivity rate stood at 1.59 per cent. According to the health bulletin released by the Government, 71,853 tests were conducted, including 47,917 RTPCR/CBNAAT/True Nat tests. There are 14,581 active cases and 7,111 of them are in home isolation. The number of cumulative cases stands at 14 lakh and the death toll is at 23,951. Over 13 lakh people have either recovered or have been discharged. Of the 25,032 hospital beds for coronavirus patients in the city, 18,995 are vacant, it stated. The lowest positivity rate has provided much needed



relief to the people who have been fighting the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. This is the third consecutive day when the daily cases count has stood below the 1,500-mark. On Thursday, 1,072 cases and 117 deaths were recorded, while the positivity rate had dipped to 1.53 per cent, the health bulletin stated.

Give monthly dole of ₹10K to every family: Cong to AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress has demanded that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government give a monthly dole of ₹10,000 to every family in the national Capital besides a special package to small shopkeepers, as the deadly sweep of the mutated strain of the Coronavirus has not spared anyone. Former Union Minister and ex-MP Krishna Tirath said that the prolonged lockdown has caused irreparable damage to the economy and lives of the people of Delhi as the national Capital has virtually hit the bottom in every index with small businesses, traders and shopkeepers, and those who depend on them for their livelihood, suffering a terrible bat-



tering. Addressing the media, Tirath said that when the present lockdown was announced on May 19 after the situation in the city turned worse with the latest wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had announced that it would be a short lockdown. But the Government kept on revising its plans in the wake of the second wave of the pandemic.

However, now the AAP Government has decided to start the unlocking process in a gradual manner from May 31. She said that it was surprising that the Delhi Government plans to allow the resumption of construction and industrial activity without specifying what steps are being taken to ensure that the workers engaged in the construction and industrial activities are safe.

Delhi Govt to start free food distribution in 280 wards soon

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government will start a food distribution programme for non-PDS beneficiaries in 280 wards. All underprivileged people who do not possess ration cards, including unorganised sector workers, migrant labourers, building and construction workers and domestic help are eligible to receive food grain under the Delhi Government's scheme.

Food and Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister, Imran Hussain will visit fair price shops (FPSs) regularly to take stock of the grain distribution. "In case FPSs are found closed during the prescribed working hours, strict action will be taken against not only the erring dealers but



also against the FSI, FSO and AC concerned," the Minister said after chairing a meeting with the officials. Additional Commissioner (F&S), Joint Commissioner (F&S), CMD (DSCSC) and GM (DSCSC) have been asked to review distribution of ration free of cost to the beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act and PMGKAY for the months of May and June, a Delhi Government official said. Hussain also reviewed the progress of distribution of free food grain to Non-PDS beneficiaries in all the 280 wards through select schools of the Directorate of Education and Municipal Authorities. It may be noted that the Delhi Cabinet has already taken a decision to provide free ration to non-PDS beneficiaries in view of the lockdown imposed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

G'gram recovery touches 98.14%, jab prices fixed

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

The recovery rate of Covid-19 in Gurugram is constantly improving and has touched 98.14 per cent as compared to 91.89 per cent last week. The health officials said that to curb Covid infections, an action plan has been prepared by the district administration which focuses on testing, tracing and treatment. Plus the administration is also encouraging people to get vaccinated and as per the Haryana Government's instruction, the Gurugram district administration has ordered all private hospitals to fix the rate of the

Deputy Civil Surgeon, Dr MP Singh, has ordered that all the private hospitals charge a fixed rate of ₹900 for the Covishield vaccine and ₹1,200 for Covaxin. "All private hospitals have been asked to fix the Covid vaccine rates. If private hospitals set up a vaccination camp out of their premises, then they can charge an additional ₹250 for administering the dose," Singh said. This means that if the hospital sets up camp anywhere outside its premises, then it can charge ₹1,150 for the Covishield jab and ₹1,450 for Covaxin.

PICTALK



Beneficiaries rest after receiving a dose of the Covid-19 vaccine at a vaccination centre in New Delhi on Friday

Two more associates of Sushil Kumar arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Two more associates of international wrestler Sushil Kumar were arrested by Delhi Police in connection with the Sagar Dhankar murder case. This is the ninth arrest so far in the sensational case involving the Olympian. One of the arrested persons, has been identified as Rohit Karor, who has been a sparring partner of Sushil for the last 14 years and was also present at Chhatrasal stadium on the day of the incident. Meanwhile, the Crime Branch team also took Sushil and his aide Ajay to Punjab's Bathinda in connection with

the ongoing investigation. In a related development, the Delhi High Court on Friday declined to entertain a plea to restrain the media from 'sensationalising' the trial of wrestler and Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar in connection with the death of a 23-year old wrestler, and seeking rules for reporting criminal cases, saying a PIL cannot be filed for an individual who is a "vigilant person". According to a senior police official, Rohit and another accused Binder were nabbed on Thursday night from Delhi's Tikri border after specific inputs were received regarding them by the police team of

Crime Branch. "Initially they told the investigators that they were present at Chhatrasal stadium with Sushil at the time of incident. They are being interrogated for their role in the murder", a senior police official said. Earlier, a video had surfaced on social media, purportedly showing two-time Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar and his associates allegedly hitting another man with sticks. In the video, Kumar and his associates are clearly seen carrying sticks in their hands while the man can be seen lying on the ground in an injured condition. A man can be seen carrying a pistol in the video.

Man held in Delhi for smuggling illicit liquor



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested a 30-year-old man on the charges of supplying illicit liquor in the national Capital. The accused has been identified as Naresh Kumar, a resident of Rajasthan. According to a senior police official, police team found that the illicit liquor, which was meant to be sold in Haryana only, was being transported from Bahadurgarh, Haryana to different parts of Delhi. "On Thursday, specific inputs were received that a man, who was involved in supplying liquor, would come from Moti Nagar side and would go to Trans Yamuna area for supplying liquor," said the police official. "Thereafter, a trap was laid near Shadipur Depot metro station and around 6.30 pm, a tempo was seen. When police tried to stop the tempo, its driver tried to escape, but was nabbed. Police checked the tempo and found 67 cartons were kept inside," he added.

Psychology student arrested for duping people on pretext of giving Remdesivir

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has nabbed an 18-year-old psychology student from Madhya Pradesh for allegedly duping people on the pretext of providing them Remdesivir injections prescribed for treatment of Coronavirus patients in the national Capital. Police said that the woman had cheated over 11 people from the national Capital region of over ₹2 lakh on the pretext of delivering them injections. She is a resident of Seoni in Madhya Pradesh. Pursuing her first year in Psychology from an open university here in Delhi. According to Atul Kumar Thakur, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South district, on May 1, a case was registered at Defence Colony police station in south Delhi on the complaint of Ankit Kumar who was also

duped by the woman. "In his complaint, Kumar alleged he was in urgent need of Remdesivir injection for his relative and got in touch with a person after getting the contact number online. When contacted, he was promised delivery of five injections for ₹32,400. After transferring the demanded amount via online transaction facility, the alleged person stopped responding and the injections were never delivered," said the DCP. "During investigation, the alleged bank account details were collected, technical details were obtained and on Monday, a team was sent to Seoni district in MP for tracing the accused person. With the help of technical surveillance, the team managed to trace the location and arrested the accused from her house in Seoni area," said the DCP.

दिल्ली सरकार
आप की सरकार

For help during the Corona pandemic, call these numbers

Helpline Numbers

1031

Covid Helpline Number

- Oxygen Concentrator
- Pulse Oximeter
- Vaccination Information
- Drug Control Room
- Death Certificate
- Rain Basera
- Hospital Beds
- Tele-consultation
- Any other Covid related information

Other Helpline Numbers

 1075	 1800-111-747	 1076
 1098	 08046110007	 14567
 102	 41400400	 1967

For hospital bed availability or any information related to Corona please log on to delhifightscorona.in or download the app

Directorate of Information and Publicity, Government Of NCT Of Delhi

DIP/Shabdarth/D/0019/21-22

PM's nautanki is behind Covid 2nd wave: Rahul



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In one of his sharpest direct attacks on Narendra Modi, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday said the Prime Minister's "nautanki" (drama) is the reason behind the second wave of Covid-19 in India. "He did not understand Covid-19," Rahul charged.

Rahul warned that given the way the Modi Government handled the second wave of pandemic crisis, India will witness a third, fourth and fifth wave of the disease if the Government did not change its vaccine strategy.

He said he had "directly" told the PM that India will witness multiple waves as the virus will mutate and adapt. "I, along with several other people warned the Centre over the Covid-19 pandemic multiple times. The Centre made fun of us. The Prime Minister declared victory against Covid-19. The problem here is neither the Prime Minister nor the Centre has understood the viral disease till now," Rahul said addressing a virtual press conference.

"You're creating a liability for the whole planet. Why?" Rahul questioned the Centre and Modi.

"There are three to four ways to stop Covid-19. Of these, the permanent solution is vaccination. Lockdown is a weapon but people suffer and hence it is a temporary solution. Social distancing and wearing of masks are also temporary solutions against Covid-19," he added.

He targeted the Centre over its vaccine strategy and the decision to export doses to other countries by saying that only 3 per cent of India's population is vaccinated and the remaining 97 per cent is

Mins term Rahul's remark against Modi 'mindless blabbering'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The vaccination slowdown jibe by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday invited a determined counter from the Centre with two Union Ministers describing his "mindless blabbering" as waste of bandwidth and a confirmation that the tool-kit was a brainchild of the Congress.

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said, "The Prime Minister is fighting Covid with the people of the country. And he uses words like nautanki, which is an insult to the nation and the people. The people have long put an end to their nautanki," he asserted.

"It has been confirmed, and there is no need for any evidence. It is clear that the toolkit was produced by you. The kind of language you used and the way you tried to stoke confusion and fear among people is part of that politics," Javadekar said.

If Rahul was worried about vaccines he should focus on the Congress-ruled States which are "not using 25 per cent of free vaccines given

still prone to Covid-19. He said if the vaccination rate continues at the present pace, the entire population will be only inoculated by 2024.

"The Centre is lying about the death rate due to the virus. This is not the time to lie," he said even as the Government has strongly refuted a report by *New York Times* about the death figures in India. On a question about a tweet he had posted earlier

free by the Centre for people in 18 to 45 age group", he charged.

Javadekar said the Indian vaccination programme will be completed by December end with the health ministry giving detailed programme of 216 crore doses.

Another Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan remarked that Congress leaders' "mindless blabbering" was a waste of internet bandwidth.

"While the responsible citizens of India are using the precious internet bandwidth to keep the wheels of economy churning by working from their homes, the only tangible outcome of senseless, mindless and meaningless blabbering by Rahul Gandhi is the wastage of this precious resource," Pradhan tweeted.

Pradhan slammed Rahul saying at a time when all the countries in the world are fighting the menace of Covid-19 in unison, there has been no visible signs of sense of responsibility from Opposition parties, majority of which are nothing but family enterprises indulged in securing the future of their princes.

In first, black fungus invades skin of Covid recovered 3-yr-old kid



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Covid-19 may be causing immunosuppression resulting in black fungus even in kids, as small as three-year-old. Probably, in a first of such case, a mucormycosis or black fungus associated with skin was detected by a team of doctors from Fortis Memorial Research Hospital in Gurugram in a three-year-old Covid recovered girl child.

Hailing from Iraq, the kid was admitted a few weeks ago at the hospital at Gurugram for Bone Marrow Transplant for treatment of her thalassaemic condition, a blood disorder. "As per our protocol, we conducted RT-PCR tests on the child after her parents were found to be Covid-19 positive.

The baby was found to be an asymptomatic carrier, i.e. suffering with Coronavirus but showing no sign of infection. She was quarantined as per the medical guidelines and then BMT was successfully conducted on her ten days back," shared Dr Vikas Dua, Director, Hematology, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurugram.

However, as she was stabilizing, five days back we detected

huge black patch on the skin of her back near abdomen. After investigation it was found to be cutaneous mucormycosis, called as black fungus of skin. "We had been detecting black fungus in many paediatric cancer and blood disorder cases. But this is for the first time that a case of Covid with skin fungus (cutaneous mucormycosis) has been found," he added.

The doctors are now investigating the cause for the trigger of such fungus. Dr Dua added that it is yet to be known from where the girl acquired the fungus.

At present we are not sure whether it is Covid-induced fungus infection or she got it during transplantation, though massive immunosuppression is usually seen in high-end transplantation. "This is something new which we have seen for the first time as skin fungus is very rare. Skin mucor is not common even among the full match transplant.

No steroid was given as the kid is very small. After the transplant the patient got mucor. She was not given any major drugs during quarantine," Dr Dua pointed out.

IT Minister accuses Twitter of adopting double standards



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reiterating that microblogging site Twitter cannot "dictate laws" in India, Union IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Friday accused it of adopting "double standards" and claimed that the new IT rules were to protect people.

The Union Minister also accused Twitter of differential rules.

Prasad said people would continue to use Whatsapp and government is only concerned about messages relating to national security, terrorism and those concerning well-being of children and women.

He said twitter cannot dictate laws to India and accused it of adopting double standards- blocking accounts during Capitol Hill protests in the USA but bracketing farmers' agitation protest as "freedom of expression."

Speaking to a news channel, Prasad said that "these foreign companies cannot come to our country and dictate their terms".

He said while the Government was committed to "individual freedom", the social media intermediaries "will have to follow the new norms".

Alluding to freedom available in India, he said "during the Coronavirus period six crore messages" were sent on social media.

The Union Minister informed that the data protection law, which is currently with the select committee, would be brought in the next session of the Parliament.

CRPF stops summer chain transfers of staff



RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has stopped the summer chain transfers of all its personnel owing to the disruptions caused by the ravaging impact of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"As desired by competent authority, transfer list of summer chain transfer of all personnel (ministerial/hospital staff/Signal personnel) may be released after August 2021 due to present situation of 2nd wave of Covid-19 in the country, direction in this regard will follow," reads an order sent to all the formations across the country.

The order will apply to operational as well as medical and signal or communications personnel, officials said.

The move follows continuing lockdowns in different States to check the spread of the coronavirus that has significantly impacted the CRPF.

As on Friday, 23,588 CRPF personnel have so far contracted the viral disease. Of them, 21,649 patients recovered while 121 personnel lost their lives. A total of 1,818 patients continue to suffer from the coronavirus infection.

From May 17 till now, the CRPF has recorded a surge in the tally of infected personnel from 22,216 to 23,588 and the spike in the death toll from 114 to 121 during the period in which the number of active cases has recorded a downward spiral from 2,867 to just 1,818, a decline of over 1,000 cases in the 12-day period.

The combined tally of infected personnel in the Central paramilitary forces-- CRPF, BSF, CISF, SSB, ITBP, NDRF and NSG as on Friday is 79,861 out of which 73,928 personnel have recovered from the disease and 5,973 personnel continue to be actively infected.

The combined toll of the paramilitary forces is 314 of which the CRPF has recorded the most number of deaths at 121. The forces recorded 283 new cases of infection during the last 24 hours.

While the number of infected personnel across the paramilitary forces has surged from 75,918 cases on May 17 to 79,861 as on Friday, the number of cured patients also jumped from 66,239 to 73,928 in the 12-day period. The number of active cases also dropped from 9,381 on May 17 to 5,973 as on date.

EC defers RS bypoll in Kerala



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Citing the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Election Commission on Friday decided to defer a proposed Rajya Sabha bypoll for a seat from Kerala. The Commission said that Kerala Congress (M) leader Jose K Mani had resigned as a Rajya Sabha member from Kerala on January 11 this year. His term in the upper house was till July, 2024. The biennial elections to legislative councils of three seats in Andhra Pradesh and six in Telangana were also deferred by the Commission in a separate order.

"As per the provisions of Section 151A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the vacancy is required to be filled, through bye election within six months from date of occurrence of vacancy, provided that remainder of the term in relation to the vacancy is one year or more," it observed in the order related to Rajya Sabha seat from Kerala. The EC had not yet announced any date for the proposed bypoll.

The Commission said it reviewed the matter on Friday and decided that due to the outbreak of the second wave of COVID-19 in the country, "it would not be appropriate to hold the said by election till the pandemic situation significantly improves" and conditions become conducive to hold the byelection.

The poll panel said it will take any further decision in the matter at an "appropriate time in the future" after taking inputs from the state concerned and assessing the pandemic situation from mandated authorities like the national and state disaster management authorities.

NCDC video guidance to help youth become cooperative biz leaders

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With its career guidance videos gaining popularity among the youth and farmers, encouraging them to venture into the profitable business of cooperatives, the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) has now launched another initiative to reach out to the youth of Andhra Pradesh, in Telugu language.

All the guidance videos in nineteen regional and Hindi languages are now uploaded on NCDC's YouTube channel, 'Sahakar Cooptube NCDC India' available in public domain for those having interest in cooperative sector.

Dr K Rajeswara Rao, Special Secretary, NITI Aayog, launched the guidance video at an online event here and said that such initiatives will go a long way in strengthening the cooperatives as well as helping the youth and potential cooperators to boost their income, thus contributing to the country's economy.

He also emphasised on making the videos popular among the potential cooperators in the rural and tribal areas.

These videos also aim to strengthen and deepen the major measures taken by the Government to promote and form 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in the country.

Last year, Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar, had launched the 'Sahakar Cooptube NCDC India', to encourage farmers and the youth to take the benefit of cooperatives. He had also rolled out guidance videos made by NCDC on 'Formation and Registration of a Cooperative' in 18 different States in regional languages including Odia, Bengali, Gujarati, Tamil, Punjabi and Mizo to name a few, besides Hindi.

Col (Dr.) Baljit Singh, Chief Director, LINAC-NCDC, hoped that the guidance video would go a long way in promotion and development of cooperatives while SK Tucker, teaching faculty at LINAC-NCDC, who guides the initiatives, said that the guidance videos aim to reach out to youth, women and all those who could be potential cooperative business entrepreneurs.

Programme held to mark Menstrual Hygiene Day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To mark the 'Menstrual Hygiene Day', an outreach activity for adolescent girls was organised by Sulabh Sanitation Club at the resettlement locality in Delhi with an aim to create awareness among students about menstrual hygiene during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The basic idea was to underscore the importance of having open conversations about periods and offer educational guidance to facilitate discussions that help eradicate period stigma, said Rupak Roychoudhary of Sulabh WASH.

Further, there is a rumour circulating on social media that is triggering a lot many women into believing that the Covid-19 vaccine taken during their menstrual periods isn't fully safe for them. The Sulabh Sanitation Club team said that women do not need to schedule their Covid-19 vaccine around their menstrual cycle.

Jack Sim, Founder, World Toilet Organisation, Singapore, Indian Ambassador to Cambodia, Dr. Devyani Khobragade, Additional Chief Secretary of Sikkim GP Upadhaya and other experts also addressed a webinar.

CPM asks Govt to refrain from implementing new Information Tech rules

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CPI(M) polit bureau on Friday asked the Central Government to refrain from implementing the new IT Rules and condemned the BJP Government for using Delhi Police to trample the social media companies by raiding offices.

"Facebook/WhatsApp has pointed out that this means breaking the security of the existing messaging protocol, and therefore of all those who use WhatsApp. This has been

endorsed by technical experts. Weakening security protocols violate user privacy and increase vulnerability to hacking for criminal purposes as well.

"The Government of India is using the Delhi Police to intimidate Twitter for flagging various BJP leaders' Tweets as manipulated media. The CPI(M) condemns the BJP government's partisan use of the IT Ministry and the police raids on Twitter's offices as acts of blatant intimidation," the CPI(M) said in a statement.

Dowry deaths case: SC concerned with 'casual approach' of trial courts

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday expressed concern on the "casual" and "cursory" attitude adopted by trial courts while recording the statements of accused under Section 313 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) in dowry death cases.

A bench of Chief Justice NV Ramana and Justice Aniruddha Bose said, "It is a matter of grave concern that, often, trial courts

record the statement under Section 313, CrPC in a very casual and cursory manner, without specifically questioning the accused as to his defence."

Undoubtedly, the menace of dowry death is increasing day by day, it said, but also observed that sometimes, family members of the husband were roped in, even though they have no active role in commission of the offence and are residing at distant places.

Air Chief reviews operation readiness of forces in Leh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IAF chief R K S Bhaduria on Friday reviewed the operational readiness of his force during a daylong visit to Leh. He was briefed about the present situation on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh where situation is yet to return to normal after nearly a year-long stand-off between the Indian and Chinese armies.

Incidentally, his visit also took place a time when the Chinese are holding their annual military exercise in the Tibetan plateau on their side of the LAC facing Eastern Ladakh. The exercises are on at least 100 km from the border.

However, the Indian forces are keeping a close watch on the Chinese activities and Army Chief General M M Naravane recently said India will not be taken by surprise this time. He made this assertion as the Chinese last year diverted some of their troops from the annual exercise to Eastern Ladakh in a bid to intrude at several points.

It led to stand-offs and a bloody brawl leaving 20 Indian army personnel including the commanding dead last June.

More than 40 Chinese soldiers also died in the fracas but Beijing has so far not made any official statement in this regard.

Naravane also said the Indian forces are deployed in adequate numbers with proper back up to meet any challenge. Moreover, more than 90 per cent of the Indian troops have got their two doses of corona vaccine he said adding the troops deployed at the LAC and the Line of Control (LOC) were cleared only after all tests.

As regards the IAF chief's visit, sources said here he was also apprised about air maintenance operations in support of the Indian Army and the paramilitary troops there, they said.

At present, more than one lakh troops are facing each other on the friction points at the LAC.

The Corps Commanders of the two armies have held 11 rounds of talks since May last year to defuse tension at the border by quick disengagement.

Following the deadly brawl last year in June, the IAF moved most of its front-line fighter aircraft to airbases close to the LAC and remains on heightened alert since then.

UGC issues list of 83 UG, 40 PG courses via SWAYAM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The University Grants Commission (UGC) on Friday issued a list of 83 undergraduate (UG) and 40 post-graduate (PG) courses that can be offered through the SWAYAM platform for the July 2021 semester. The courses offered on the education ministry's e-learning platform are all non-engineering ones.

The UGC (Credit Framework for Online Learning Courses through

Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) Regulations, 2021 allowed institutions to offer up to 40 per cent of the total courses in a particular programme in a semester through the SWAYAM platform.

In the current scenario of the second wave of the Covid-19, the UGC has urged universities and colleges to make optimum use of the SWAYAM online platform and popularise SWAYAM courses amongst students and faculty through

websites and various social media handles.

"The list of 83 UG & 40 PG MOOCs courses are ready to be offered on the SWAYAM platform in July-October Semester 2021," reads the UGC letter.

"SWAYAM Courses may be approved and adopted on the recommendation of Dean Academics/Heads of Department for credit transfer and ratified by the Academic Council," said the UGC to Universities.

Area under cultivation of summer crops goes up

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The area under cultivation of summer crops like pulses, paddy, oil seeds, coarse cereals have gone up to 80.46 lakh hectare till May 28, an increase of 21.10 per cent over the last year's 66.44 lakh hectare. The rise is primarily due to sharp increase in pulses area, which has gone up by almost 67.48 per cent to 17.82 lakh hectares over previous year's 10.64 lakh hectare, raising hopes of a good harvest and extra income for farmers.

The higher acreage at the initial stage growth during summer crops sowing, seems to

have been unscathed during the second national wave of Covid-19 infections just as it was during the first outbreak in 2020.

The planting areas have gone up despite hundreds of farmers of Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh protesting against the farm laws from the last six months. The Met Department has also forecast that monsoon will hit Kerala on its scheduled date of May 31, a day before the official arrival of the onset date.

Although the main kharif or summer-sown season will start in June, with the arrival of the monsoon, the data of the Ministry of Agriculture showed that summer crops sown up to 80.46 lakh hectare till May 28,

an increase of 21.10 percent over the last year's 66.44 lakh hectare.

Throughout the peak pandemic months, the farm sector was the only bright spot in the Indian economy.

The farm and allied sector is expected to grow at 3.4% in real term in 2021, remaining the brightest spot in an otherwise gloomy year, as overall gross value added in the economy is projected to shrink by 7.2%.

The country's real GDP is estimated to contract by as much as 7.7% in 2021, thanks to the Covid-19 outbreak.

The share of agriculture and allied sectors in GVA of the country plays a key role and at current prices was 17.8%

during 2019-20, according to May 2020 estimates of national income released by Central Statistical Office.

With the procurement of 400.45 lakh metric tons, all time high as against previous high of 389.92 lakh metric tons, in the ongoing rabi crop season is continuing smoothly in the procuring States of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir at MSP.

About 42.36 Lakh farmers have already been benefitted from the ongoing RMS procurement operations with MSP value of Rs. 79,088.77 Crore.

MSY asks Akhilesh to patch up with Shivpal

VIRENDRA NATH BHATT ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav has again initiated unity efforts among the family by asking his son Akhilesh Yadav to bury the hatchet with his uncle Shivpal Yadav.

"Sort out the ruinous family feud or be ready to perish," Mulayam Singh is believed to have told party president Akhilesh Yadav, who was present at a meeting also attended by Shivpal Yadav earlier this

week. The meeting assumes significance in view of the 2022 UP Assembly elections. The SP has suffered three back-to-back defeats at the hands of the BJP in 2014 Lok Sabha polls, 2017 UP Assembly elections and 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

SP sources said that while nothing tangible was achieved in the meeting, both sides agreed to meet again soon. Earlier this year, Akhilesh Yadav had given hints to accommodate his estranged uncle by not fielding party



candidates against him from Jaswant Nagar Assembly seat in Etawah. He had also announced to give him a berth in the Cabinet if the SP Government came to power in 2022.

Mulayam Singh Yadav is

also said to have advised his son to work for enlarging the electoral base of the party beyond the traditional Muslim-Yadav constituency. A senior SP leader, close to the Yadav family, said: "Mulayam Singh Yadav had realised the limita-

tions of the M-Y combine during his active days in politics and had groomed leaders from non-Yadav communities in the OBCs to enlarge the base of the party."

Akhilesh's estranged uncle Shivpal Singh Yadav proved his damage potential in 2017 Assembly elections and 2019 Lok Sabha polls that cost the SP seats in the home turf of the Yadav belt Agra-Etawah region. Soon after the 2017 UP Assembly polls, Shivpal Yadav floated his own party - Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party

(Lohia), after his fallout with Akhilesh and fought the SP to a bitter finish.

"If Akhilesh doesn't make up with Shivpal, it can adversely impact the SP's prospects again on home ground. Unlike Akhilesh's other uncle and Rajya Sabha MP, Ramgopal Yadav, who spent the better part of his political career in Delhi, Shivpal rose through the ranks and created a niche for himself. To that extent, he's more of an asset for the SP than Ramgopal," the SP leader said.



A woman carries buckets filled with marigold flowers in a field, near the international border at Suchatgarh on the outskirts of Jammu on Friday

PM visits Odisha, Bengal, announces Cyclone Yaas financial aid

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday visited Odisha and West Bengal to review the situation arising out of Cyclone 'Yaas' and announced a financial assistance of ₹1,000 crore for immediate relief activities.

He undertook an aerial survey of the cyclone affected areas in Bhadrak and Baleswar districts of Odisha, and Purba Medinipur in West Bengal.

In Bhubaneswar, the Prime Minister chaired a meeting to review the relief and rehabilitation measures being undertaken, said a statement from the Prime Minister's Office. Modi announced a financial

assistance of ₹1,000 crore for immediate relief activities. ₹500 crore would be immediately given to Odisha. Another ₹500 crore has been announced for West Bengal and Jharkhand, which will be released on the basis of the damage.

The Union Government will deploy an Inter-Ministerial Team to visit the States to assess the extent of damage, based on which further assistance will be given.

The Prime Minister was briefed that maximum damage due to Cyclone 'Yaas' happened in Odisha, and some parts of West Bengal and Jharkhand have also been affected.

Prime Minister assured the people of Odisha, West Bengal and

Jharkhand that the Union Government would closely work with the State Governments at this difficult time, extend all possible assistance for restoration and rebuilding of the infrastructure in the affected areas.

Prime Minister expressed his complete solidarity with all those who suffered due to the cyclone and expressed deep sorrow to the families who have lost their kin during the calamity. He also announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased and ₹50,000 to the seriously injured in the cyclone.

Prime Minister said that all have to continue the focus towards more scientific management of disasters.

As the frequency and impact of cyclonic systems are increasing in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, communication systems, mitigation efforts and preparedness have to undergo a major change.

Modi appreciated the preparedness and disaster management activities by the Government of Odisha which has resulted in minimal loss of lives. He also noted that the state has embarked on long term mitigation efforts for dealing with such natural disasters.

He informed that Disaster Mitigation has been given emphasis by the Finance Commission to buy provisioning for mitigation funds to the tune of ₹30,000 crore.

Bombay HC directs Maha to shift Stan Swamy to private hospital for 15 days

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Friday directed the Maharashtra Government to shift ailing octogenarian priest and accused in the Elgar Parishad-Koregaon-Bhima case moved from JJ Hospital to a private hospital for 15 days in view of his deteriorating health.

Hearing an application for temporary bail on medical grounds, a HC division bench comprising Justice S. S. Shinde and Justice N. R. Borkar ordered that Fr. Swamy was transferred from the State Government-run JJ Hospital to

Holy Family Hospital at Andheri in north-west Mumbai, as it was not feasible for the current hospital to give him proper attention owing to the influx of the Covid-19 patients.

The HC bench directed the State Government to shift Fr Swamy to Holy Family Hospital to itself for a 15-day stay there. Fr. Swamy - as per the undertaking given to the court by his senior counsel Mihir Desai, would bear all his medical treatment expenses. The court directed the hospital to provide an attendant to Fr Swamy in view of his advanced age, besides a policeman for his security.

The HC bench passed the orders to transfer Fr Swamy while hearing a temporary medical bail plea filed by Fr. Swamy challenging two earlier orders rejecting his bail application by a Special NIA Court.

When the high court heard the matter last week, Dr Swamy had steadfastly refused to get admitted to any hospital and requested for release on interim bail.

Mihir Desai, representing Swamy, had asked the Court to grant him some time to confer with Swamy before taking a decision on proceeding with the hearing on interim bail.



Agricultural labourers work at the Boro paddy field, damaged by heavy rain and strong wind triggered by the Cyclone 'Yaas', in Birbhum district, on Friday

UP Govt aims to vaccinate 1 crore people next month

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In what could be touted as the biggest vaccination drive in the world, the Uttar Pradesh Government will initiate an extensive vaccination campaign to cover around one crore people of the state in a month beginning June 1. The ambitious programme will be conducted in all 75 districts of the State to prepare them to combat the raging wave of coronavirus and focus on beneficiaries of both 18+ and 45+ age groups.

At a high-level meeting in Lucknow on Friday, the Chief Minister stressed, "Our goal is to administer one crore doses in the month of June for which a detailed plan has been chalked out. We have an adequate amount of vaccines available relative to the target in the state. Health officials must keep in constant touch with the Union Government and vaccine manufacturing companies."

Currently running a vaccination drive for 18 plus category in 23 districts, the government aims to spread the drive to all 75 districts of the State in three days.

2,803 new cases in J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir on Friday reported 56 deaths due to Covid-19, 30 from Jammu and 26 from Kashmir division, while 3,637 patients were discharged and 2,803 were tested positive recording an overall positivity rate of 6.25 per cent in the region.

Meanwhile, three districts of Jammu, Shopian and Ganderbal have so far achieved the target of vaccinating 100 percent of the population over 45 years of age with a single dose of vaccine.

In Jammu district, 4,98,185 persons above 45 years of age have been vaccinated till May 28.

On May 19, when 4,53,856 persons were vaccinated the district administration claimed to have achieved 100 percent vaccination above 45 years of age. In the last 10 days more than 44,000 people have received the first jab while the drive for the age group of 18-44 has been intensified by first covering the targeted groups.

In Jammu region eight districts Friday reported less than 100 fresh cases while Jammu district reported 320 fresh cases and Rajouri recorded 107 new cases. In Kashmir division, Srinagar district on Friday reported 382 new cases while four districts of Baramulla, Budgam, Kupwara and Anantnag reported more than 200 fresh cases.

According to the media bulletin, "2,803 new positive cases of novel Coronavirus (Covid-19), 1,009 from Jammu division and 1,794 from Kashmir division were reported. The Active positive cases across J&K stood at little over 41,000 while 3,795 patients have died; 1,838 in Jammu division and 1,957 in Kashmir division.

More over, 3637 more Covid-19 patients were discharged from various hospitals including 1,741 from Jammu Division and 1,896 from Kashmir Division.



A medic gives a dose of a Covid-19 vaccine at a camp for differently-abled, at the SMRV School vaccination centre, in Kanyakumari on Friday

SSR DEATH-RELATED DRUG CASE

Court remands SSR's friend Pithani in custody till June 1

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Two days after he was arrested in Hyderabad, a Mumbai court on Friday remanded late Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput's friend and accused Siddharth Pithani in the custody of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) till June 1 in connection with a drug case linked to the actor's death.

After obtaining a transit remand from a Hyderabad Court, the NCB brought Pithani to Mumbai and produced before the Chief

Metropolitan Magistrate at Esplanade Court which sent him to NCB custody for five days. The court sent Pithani to NCB custody till June 1, after its lawyer told the court that the investigating agency wanted to probe his role and nexus with others accused in illicit drug trafficking case linked to the Sushant Singh Rajput's death and his alleged links with contraband dealers to bring out the full truth in the case.

Official sources said that the investigators had found documents and electronic evi-

dence at his Hyderabad home.

Pithani's arrest came more than two and a half months after the NCB filed a 11,700-page charge sheet against Rhea Chakraborty, her brother Showik Chakraborty and 31 others by a Special NPDS court here on March 5, 2021.

During the interrogation, other accused in the case Samuel Miranda and Dipesh Sawant had spoken Pithani in their statements, alleging that the latter was in direct touch with Suishant, Rhea Chakraborty and her brother Showik Chakraborty.

Swamy urges TN Govt to take action against attacks on Brahmin priests by DMK, DK, LTTE activists

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The increasing number of physical and verbal attacks on 'poor and hapless Brahmin priests' by activists of the ruling DMK and its ally DK has forced Subramanian Swamy MP to write to Governor Banwarilal Purohit asking him to put the M K Stalin-led Government on notice.

Dr Swamy's letter to the Governor comes within days of the Dravidian political parties launching a diatribe against two popular educational institutions in the State for alleged misconduct by some teachers towards girl students. A teacher by name Rajagopal from one of the school network has been arrested by State Police over complaints by students who alleged that he was behaving in an improper manner with them.

Interestingly, the arrested teacher is a close relative of a senior parliament member of the DMK. Neither the MP nor the DMK have responded to the reports. The Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Sekhar Babu

warned the members of the Rajasthan community in Tamil Nadu for not voting for the DMK in successive elections. He reportedly told the community members that the DMK knows well for whom they are voting because of the EVM has the facility to find out who voted for whom.

"The targeting of Brahmins in the State and verbal terrorizing of this hapless disorganized community is today much like as happened during the early period of the Nazi Government led by Adolf Hitler in Germany. I am getting reports from persons living in the State of Tamil Nadu, that Pujaris and Teachers are specially targeted because they are Brahmins," Dr Swamy said in his letter. He further stated in the letter that a pall of fear of terror has descended in Tamil Nadu let loose by the DK, rogue elements of the DMK and rump elements of the LTTE.

The MP said that it was too early for him to suggest the application of Article 356 since these were the early days of the Stalin Government that was sworn in the first week of May.

Kerala HC declines to stay Lakshadweep Regulation 2021, issues notice to Administrator

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Friday declined to stay the Draft Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation 2021 (LDAR) as desired in a public interest litigation filed by a local Congress activist.

The draft regulation issued by the Lakshadweep Development Authority proposes to modernise the islands and transform it into a global tourism hub. But all political parties in Kerala, barring the BJP, has come out against the LDAR 2021 alleging that the draft proposals would destroy the culture, tradition and lifestyle of the island's predominantly Muslim population. The last few days have been witnessing unprecedented protests and rallies in mainland Kerala against the move by Praful Patel, the administrator of the Union Territory, to bring in reforms and modernisation in the atolls.

A Division Bench of Justices K Vinod Chandran and MR Anita issued notice to the Lakshadweep Administration and asked it to respond to the PIL in two weeks. "Nothing doing...it's a

Local Body authorities resort to fudging to cover up Covid cases

KOCHI: Health professionals, police and bureaucracy were bowled over by a strategy formulated by Malappuram politicians in the district to "beat" the Covid-19 pandemic. The district has been put under Triple Lockdown since the last fortnight because of high Test Positivity Rate that crossed the 45 per cent mark. Despite strict orders from revenue and police officials asking the population to stay indoors, residents violate the laws, come out and crowd around vantage points all over the district.

The department of health has succeeded in bringing down the TPR to 30 per cent but that is not sufficient to lift the Triple

Lock down enforced in this district. A telephonic talk between a local body member and volunteers of the task force in the ward to artificially bring down the TPR to normal level has gone viral, shocking everyone. Ayisha, ward member of Vazhakkadu Panchayath, was heard asking the task force members to bring down the TPR. "If the Triple Lock Down has to be lifted here, we should bring down the TPR to 20 per cent. Hence please send only those without any symptoms to the camps to make sure that the number of people with COVID-19 symptoms are kept at minimum level," Ayisha is heard saying in the message. PNS

1 terrorist killed in Shopian

Jammu: Two back to back encounters erupted in the South and North Kashmir districts of Shopian and Baramulla on Friday in which one unidentified terrorist was neutralized by the joint team of security forces in Ganapora area while gunfight was going on till the time of filing the report in the Sopore town.

According to a spokesman of Jammu and Kashmir police, "The first firefight broke out this afternoon after police and security forces cordoned the area following specific inputs about the presence of terrorists in the Ganapora area of Shopian". In the ensuing gunfight, "an unidentified terrorist had been killed while searches were going on in the area".

Treat all minorities equally, Kerala High Court tells State Govt

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Friday quashed a Kerala Government order issued in 2015 announcing scholarships to Muslim students and Latin Catholic/Converted Christians in the ratio 80:20 and asked the Government to treat the minorities equally.

This order has been the reason for heart-burning among the Christian community in the State which said that the scholarships should be apportioned as per the population of the communities.

"The order by the Government of Kerala in this regard is not legally sustainable.

The State should provide merit-cum-means scholarships to members of notified minority communities equally," said a Division Bench consisting of Chief Justice S Manikumar and Justice Shaji P Chali while disposing a petition filed by Justine Pallivathukkal, a lawyer who complained that the Kerala Government was giving undue preference to the Muslim community over members of other minority communities in the State.

'Govt is sensitive to the needs of weaker sections of society'

New Delhi: Union Minister of State of Social Justice and Empowerment, Rattan Lal Kataria welcomes the latest directions issued by Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for provisioning "near to home" vaccination centers for Senior citizens and Divyangians

The move is expected to benefit around 10.40 Crore Senior citizens and around 2.2 Crore Divyangians across the Nation.



Clouds hover over Kanpur Central Railway Station due to the weather changes induced by the Cyclone 'Yaas', in Kanpur on Friday

GUJARAT WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD.
SECTOR-10/A, GANDHINAGAR

BRIEF SHORT NOTICE INVITING ON LINE TENDER FOR FIXING RATE CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF C.I.I., JOINTS WITH EPDM RUBBER RING FOR THE YEAR 2021-22

GWSSB invites online tender through e-tendering for Manufacture, Supply & Delivery of C.I.D. Joints with EPDM Rubber ring (80 to 700mm Dia.) with IS1 Mark/Confirming to Relevant IS from Indian Manufacturer only. Interested bidder who wish to participate in above tender may view the detailed tender notice & download the Tender documents at free of cost from website. <https://www.nprocure.com>
The last date of submission of online tender is 1-7-2021.
INF/270/21-22

JAIPUR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Indira Circle, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, Jaipur-302004

No.: JDA/EE & TA to Dir. Engg.-II/2021-22/D-55 Dated: 28.05.2021

NOTICE INVITING BID
NIB No.: EE & TA to Dir. Engg.-II/06/2021-22

Bids are invited for works given below in various zones as per details given :-

Sr. No.	Zone	UBN No.	Cost of Work (Lacs)	A&F	Nature of Work	Last Date
1.	EE-08	UBN : JDA2122WLOB00074	944.32	04/2021-22	Remaining Development Work	18.06.2021

Details are available at Procurement Portal website www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in and www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in and www.jda.urban.rajasthan.gov.in
Raj. Sarmsd/2/2021-22/1668
Executive Engineer & TA to Dir.Engg-II



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PAPER WITH PASSION

No child's play

India, like the world, is gearing up to protect its children from the next wave of COVID-19

Children are the last human frontier COVID-19 threatens to engulf. The second surge has seen quite a number of children infected. Even deaths have been reported, including one of a day-old infant in eastern Uttar Pradesh. Most of these patients were asymptomatic or with mild symptoms; they recovered within a week. A small percentage of cases needed hospitalisation and intensive medical care. India, like the rest of the world, is now gearing up to prepare to save children in the next surge, whenever that is. Lessons from the first two surges have chastened the Government and steps are already afoot to provide separate neonatal and paediatric wards in hospitals. Contingency measures are on for oxygen, monitoring equipment, ventilators and medicine. Medical and paramedical staff are undergoing re-orientation to handle young patients. Bharat Biotech of Covaxin fame is also ahead of the curve in coming up with a vaccine for the two to 18 age group. In fact, it has got approval for stage 2 and 3 human trials already. With 40 per cent of the population in this age group, vaccination becomes imperative. But tackling child COVID-19 is a matter not merely of logistics. It will be fought largely in the arena of the mind; a seesaw between the panic of parents and patience of doctors.

For instance, the question is: Are the hospital wards children-friendly? If a discernible part of the scarcity of beds and oxygen in the second surge was owing to panic among adults, imagine what parents can go through if their children become infected. Rationality will become scarce. The social media will press a panic button of its own, mostly of the illegal variety. Should the location and names of the infected children be revealed on social media posts for help? Should pictures be circulated? How will these violations of privacy be checked? There are many NGOs handling awareness campaigns to keep children safe. Apart from safety measures, there is the need for a healthy diet, mental agility and physical exercise, particularly when schools are closed and they are stuck at home. But what about the rural areas? Nearly half of the population below 18 lives in the countryside. There are issues with hygiene, availability of potable water and nutritious diet. Malaria, dengue and pneumonia are rampant. A large section of the rural parents is aware of their responsibilities, but hands of most would be tied by their economic situation. As yet, no data shows that the third surge will affect children, but it is equally important they be immunised. It is more important to inoculate their parents first. Both medical workers and parents need to realise that most children may not be able to recognise COVID-19 symptoms; how then to diagnose at the earliest? A beginning has been made, but it has to be seen to be real. The UNICEF web advisory on child protection, for example, is begging updation since September 2020.



PICTALK



Cyclists during the 19th stage of the Giro d'Italia race, from Abbiadegrasso to Alpe di Mera, Italy

Restoring sanity in national narrative

Despite the Corona setback, the motivation to overcome hardships shall emerge simply from the spirit of serving fellow human beings



JS RAJPUT

The true character of a people and nation reveals itself only in the toughest of times. India is going through such a phase and, sadly enough, instead of presenting a picture of national unity and socio-religious cohesion, the political class that had tasted power in the past and has been unseated by the electorate, is using the Corona crisis as an opportunity to reverse its fortunes. Those in power are, obviously, busy managing this crisis of unprecedented measure and magnitude; all they are getting from their political opponents is ridicule, allegations and accusations. The political scenario is indeed depressing for the common people who are suffering on so many counts due to the epidemic and its impact on practically every sector of human activity.

This has attracted international attention and painted Indian democracy in poor light. The Corona crisis, particularly in April-May 2021, weighed very heavily on India and its people. The inadequacies of the health infrastructure, as also the systems of public service and governance, have revealed distressing deficiencies. There were heart-wrenching reports of people dying in ambulances and even outside hospital gates. In the 21st century, should even a single life be lost simply because of non-availability of medical oxygen? It certainly was serious mismanagement, lethargy and lack of commitment.

But the extra efforts put in at every level to tide over the crisis also deserve to be noticed. We have the ingenuity to produce medicines and vaccines, distribute better and ensure adequate availability. If the mishap was an outcome of systemic complacency and unconcern, these shall have to be wiped out completely from the work culture in future. The Corona crisis shall certainly transform human approach to life, the nature of human interactions and re-establish the criticality of man-nature relationship. The economic, social and cultural implications of the pandemic are being assessed all around.

The motivation and the will to overcome the impediments shall emerge from numerous instances, initiatives, acts and actions that



were ignited simply by the spirit of serving fellow human beings, in the realisation of the "essential unity of all human beings." As one looks around, one finds great examples of courage, dedication and commitment to the cause of helping the needy. Working in conditions of severe deficiencies, they are great examples of human empathy and compassion. Think doctors, paramedics, police personnel, railways, teachers and other public servants, they all rose to the occasion, at the cost of grave personal risk, and hundreds of them sacrificed their lives.

Democracy depends on the dexterity-imbuéd dialogue. Unfortunately, all this unequivocally emphasises the need for continuous, productive dialogue among the political parties, among those in powers, and out of it. There ought to be no hesitation in mid-course correction. The absence leads to instances of political immaturity, which are injurious to the polity. One of the former Chief Ministers, a fairly well-educated young person, thundered he would not get vaccinated since it was a party vaccine! Now, he is among those demanding free vaccine to all. Apparently having realised his folly, he could



THERE WERE HEART-WRENCHING REPORTS OF PEOPLE DYING IN AMBULANCES AND EVEN OUTSIDE HOSPITAL GATES. IN THE 21ST CENTURY, SHOULD EVEN A SINGLE LIFE BE LOST SIMPLY BECAUSE OF NON-AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL OXYGEN? IT CERTAINLY WAS SERIOUS MISMANAGEMENT, LETHARGY AND LACK OF COMMITMENT

have been advised by someone that consistency is not a value that must be adhered to, even if the fallacy becomes obvious.

On April 29, 1933, MK Gandhi in an article in the *Harijan* stated: "I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent. In my search for truth, I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things...when anybody finds any inconsistency between any two writings of mine, if he has still faith in my sanity, he would do well to choose the later of the two on the same subject." He said so as he had "not ceased to grow inwardly". This instance has great relevance not only for the particular person indicated, but also to all other ambitious young persons in politics.

Indian politicians must realise that elections are important, but this alone is not democracy. Most important is the public acceptance of its credibility. This they could comprehend if they practice *aparigraha* and, for that, the guiding light could come from Gandhi: "All humanity is one undivided and indivisible family, and each one of us is responsible for the misdeeds of all of the others." A person becomes a

personality only when he moves out of his own self and starts internalising his obligations to others. It was beautifully articulated by Einstein: "A person starts to live when he can live outside himself".

Corona has clearly established before every human being and every nation that, for it, every human being is just one more target. And therefore, it could be confronted only through coordinated global efforts; no nation, no race, no religion can do it in isolation. It is so succinctly articulated in the words of HH Dalai Lama: "In human societies, there will always be differences of views and interests. But the reality today is that we are all interdependent and have to coexist on this small planet. Therefore, the only sensible and intelligent way of resolving differences and clashes of interest, whether between individuals or nations, is through dialogue. The promotion of a culture of dialogue and non-violence for the future of mankind is thus an important task for the international community." Hope our politicians are listening!

(The author works in education and social cohesion. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TWITTER MUST ABIDE BY RULES

Sir — The freedom of expression has its own limitations. It can neither be overstepped nor does it act as a threat to the security of any nation. The standoff between the Twitter management and the Government is unwanted. As Twitter is a foreign entity, it has the obligation to abide by the rules and regulations of India if it wants to play here.

A part of Ladakh was shown as part of China by Twitter not too long ago. This is absolute mockery of the laws of the land and it is a shame on the nation, which needs to be condemned. It acted similarly in the aftermath of the Delhi violence though a social platform should not be instrumental in creating hatred, chaos or violence. Vaccine hesitancy too was professed, which was totally uncalled for. So the Government's move in this direction is absolutely right and necessary. Even in many European nations, there are watertight rules for social media.

The freedom of speech and working against national interests are two different issues. Twitter must obey the laws of the land, not join hands with the Opposition and the so-called liberalists whose only aim is to dislodge the democratically elected Modi Government.

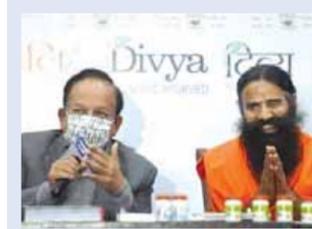
Sravana Ramachandran | Secunderabad

RAMDEV IS FEELING THE PINCH

Sir — The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has served a defamation notice on Baba Ramdev for making disparaging remarks against allopathy and allopathic doctors, and demanded an apology from him within 15 days failing which, it said, it will demand a compensation of ₹1,000 crore from the yoga guru. Around 2,000 allopathic practitioners are part of the association.

As Ramdev's comment is a criminal act under Section 499 of the IPC, the notice demanded a written apology from him. The notice has also asked Ramdev to make a video clip contradicting all his "false and defamatory" allegations and circulate it on all social media platforms where he had uploaded his earlier video clip levelling the allegations. It has also asked the yoga guru to withdraw all misleading "advertisements" from

Unbecoming of a doctor



Instead of being India's Health Minister, Harsh Vardhan should have been the brand ambassador for Patanjali. Otherwise, as the son of a doctor, let me tell Harsh Vardhan that giving the "vultures" metaphor to foreign media is highly unprofessional and unbecoming of a doctor. It smacks of fascist and totalitarian tendencies.

We know that it is problematic for Harsh Vardhan and the BJP's top brass to read Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's tweets or speeches, but that does not also mean that the *aam aadmi* would start believing his facts and figures over the COVID-19 death count. Because hardly any statistics put out in the public domain by the Modi Government in the

last seven years is authentic. Harsh Vardhan must admit that he has never been open, transparent, sensitive or honest.

The way he attacked Rahul in his tweet, it wasn't the language of a cultured person: "Politics on corpses, INIndia Style! Although vultures are disappearing from trees, it seems their spirit has been absorbed by vultures of the earth.@RahulGandhi ji trusts #NewYork more than #Delhi. One should learn to play politics on corpses from the vultures of the earth." No doubt Harsh Vardhan attacked Rahul on behalf of the Modi Government but people eagerly want to know from the Government that how would they silence people's belief, as Gujarat poetess Parul Kakkar said in her *shav vahan* poem: "Ek saath sab murde bole, 'sab kuch changa-changa', saheb tumahre Ramraj me shav vahini Ganga (Don't worry, be happy, in one voice speak the corpses; O King, in your Ram-Rajya, we see bodies flow in the Ganges)."

Had Harsh Vardhan worked harder for India, he would not have been in this pitiable condition.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

all platforms endorsing the Coronil kit, a product of his firm, as an effective medicine against COVID-19, failing which an FIR and a criminal case would be lodged against him by the IMA. Ramdev, therefore, is in a soup and feeling the pinch.

CK Subramaniam | Navi Mumbai

LOCKDOWN IMPACTED MENSTRUAL HYGIENE

Sir — Periods don't stop just because there are lockdowns, cyclones or any other form of a calamity or the pandemic. However, the manufacturing units that are in the business of making affordable sanitary pads are facing disruption as the successive lockdowns have slowed down, almost halted in fact, the process of importing raw materials.

The sorry development has led to the shortage of availability of affordable sanitary

napkins across the country. This has caused millions of menstruating women to suffer, especially those belonging to the rural areas of India, as they could not access sanitary pads during the lockdowns.

It is forcing many women to adopt unhygienic methods of managing their monthly periods, which may give rise to other diseases. Therefore, both the Centre and the State Governments should act swiftly to restore normalcy in the production of affordable sanitary pads. Otherwise, the gains made over the last decade in improving menstrual hygiene and empowering women in this field may be reversed.

PS Swagatika Sahoo | Jagatsinghpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Regional cooperation

The pandemic is an opportunity for the member nations to revive the SAARC spirit

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), after 35 years of its existence, has almost become a relic of the past. An organisation that was launched for regional cooperation has been dying a slow death ever since its inception on December 8, 1985. It was to bring together the 21 per cent of the world's population living in South Asia. The idea was to help the region by economic cooperation. It, however, did not go beyond declarations that were never implemented by the member nations. South Asia remains one of the most impoverished regions in the world. The interaction among SAARC nations, which share a common heritage and history, is dismally low. The grouping was mooted on the lines of ASEAN, which would provide a common economic zone that would help trade and make people prosperous. It was supposed to increase people-to-people contact. To build a framework for economic cooperation, it contemplated the South Asian Economic Union (SAEU) to promote Free Trade Area, Customs Union, a Common Market and a Common Economic and Monetary Union.

The idea was indeed very promising, yet it never took off as it was defeated by regional politics. Pakistan's obsession with Kashmir made it impossible to make it a workable entity. The result was that no SAARC leaders' meeting took place after Kathmandu in 2014 till 2020. The 2016 meeting was, though, boycotted by India due to the Uri attack. A ray of hope for regional cooperation came in the form of the Corona pandemic. Just like elsewhere, the pandemic affected the people of this region as well. This was the time when regional cooperation could have helped the member countries in terms of medicine, medical facilities and other necessary equipment. Though some positive trends emerged but they had limited scope. Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the initiative on March 15, 2020, as India led from the front. It hosted a virtual meeting of the SAARC leaders; India pledged \$10 million to a fund to fight Corona and other nations followed suit. India also donated vaccines to the member nations. This meeting was indeed path-breaking. At the ground level, the SAARC Disaster Management Centre has set up a website (<http://www.covid19-sdmc.org/>) for SAARC countries. A special cell in the Ministry of External Affairs is coordinating and monitoring with SAARC countries. Hope this revives SAARC and regional cooperation gets a new lease of life.

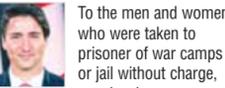
SOUND BITE

From Monday, two activities will be open — construction and factories. We will take further decisions considering the COVID situation in Delhi.



Chief Minister

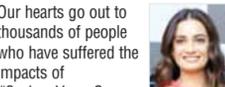
— Arvind Kejriwal



To the men and women who were taken to prisoner of war camps or jail without charge, people who are no longer with us to hear this apology...we are sorry.

Canadian Prime Minister

— Justin Trudeau



Our hearts go out to thousands of people who have suffered the impacts of #CycloneYaas. So many lives and homes affected.

Actor

— Dia Mirza



India look a superior batting side. How they tackle the conditions is important. To me, India's batting will hold the key.

Former India captain

— Kapil Dev



Such five-star politicians (Akhilesh Yadav) are responsible for the fall in level of politics because of their senseless comments. They should have actually been serving people of the State in such troubled times

Uttar Pradesh Minister

— Sidharth Nath Singh



FIRST COLUMN

POWERING THE GROWTH IMPETUS

How India should ensure sustained economic recovery post-pandemic



HIMANSHU RAI

The global economic slowdown caused due to the pandemic has been an eye-opener for various economies chasing growth. They have realized the importance of sustainable growth and contingency planning to cushion deep shocks. Although the scale of the spread of the pandemic was not foreseeable, a resilient and robust underlying policy framework has enabled many nations to get on their feet again. Notwithstanding the unique challenges that countries faced, let us attempt a comparative analysis of economic metrics to understand the hits and misses in terms of economic policies and practices and eventually help policymakers to replicate the successful ones. Australia and New Zealand got the basics right



early and concentrated efforts on health infrastructure to minimize the impact of supply shock and subsequent demand shock due to lockdowns. Spending on goods and services grew by 7.9 per cent in Australia for Q3 2020. In New Zealand, industrial production decreased by two per cent in Q4 2020 while the unemployment rate was 4.9 per cent. The GDP growth rate has been projected within the range of 4 - 5 per cent for 2021, while the IMF projects a GDP growth of three per cent % for 2021 for Australia.

Industrial production decreased by 1.9 per cent in January, 2021 in Europe. New job postings reduced by around 40 per cent in food and beverages sector, indicating challenges of employment. A report by McKinsey estimated that around 59 million jobs may be at risk. The GDP growth rate of the US economy for 2021 was projected earlier to be around 3.08 per cent. The recovery is slow but steady. The industrial production index decreased by 4.2 per cent in the last year, but the increasing market confidence due to ongoing vaccination drives is raising hopes for normalcy. Joblessness is still a major concern with a February, 2021 McKinsey report saying only 60 per cent of job losses have been recovered.

India has been on the path of recovery since Q4 2020, when the GDP increased by 0.4 per cent and GVA by one per cent. The GST collection and eWay bills generation have reached a high, signifying a boost in domestic spending. The share market also recorded significant growth. Indian Forex reserves have become the fourth largest in the world, surpassing Russia.

Though the economy is projected to contract in 2021, there is a 12.6 per cent projected economic growth by OECD for 2022. The Index of Industrial Production shrank by 12 per cent in the period April, 2020-January, 2021. The contraction in January, 2021 has been around 1.6 per cent, indicating slow-paced recovery. The unemployment rate increased from 6.53 per cent in January, 2021 to 6.9 per cent the next month and the major contribution to unemployment has been from the rural areas.

Thus, India needs to focus on the rural sector and boost employment opportunities and stimulate rural markets to develop a solid base for recovery. An important element in this would be the communication to remove skepticism and fear over vaccines, and chart out a robust vaccine-coverage strategy. Sustenance and empowerment of rural and local economies and strengthening the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative will go a long way in helping us recover and reinvigorate.

The author is Director, IIM-Indore. The views expressed are personal.

The dragon's footprint in selective spread of Covid?

Surprisingly, the virus affects only the countries that may have a capacity to control China's hegemonist ambitions and not those securing aid and assistance from it



VINAI KUMAR SAXENA

It is widely suspected that the COVID-19 virus was manufactured in a laboratory in China and was let loose on the world. It is China which is thus claimed to be largely responsible for the loss of more than 3.3 million lives and causing untold suffering to a far greater number of people.

If we look at the list of death by countries, we will see that over half a million died in USA, the biggest trade and military rival of China. Brazil and India, which are the two major members of the BRIC countries that together could make a formidable power of challenge to China have collectively recorded over another half a million deaths. Western European countries, which are allies of US and are power partners in the UN and NATO and dominate the world of commerce and military under the patronage and partnership of US, have collectively seen another half a million deaths.

Actually, a laboratory manufactured agent of death has allegedly been unleashed into countries that are the major threat and hurdle in China's marathon 100-year run to finish as the world's largest super power. In about a year, not just death, the health and hygiene framework and the economic fabric of these countries have been damaged to such an extent that the recovery could take years. On top of that, these nations, mostly democratic, are now facing people's ire due to unquantifiable suffering, and very stable political governance systems have been shaken to the core. This kind of warfare has never been witnessed before in human history.

From the same list of countries, one may observe that countries in the neighbourhood of these strategic nations have not been so much affected by the Chinese virus at all.

Is it a coincidence or a conspiracy that nations like Pakistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan, most of which have societies that are closely linked to India's in trade, cultural exchange, familial relations and interactive through our perforated borders do not have the viral infection anywhere near to the proportion in India? Is it a coincidence or conspiracy that a similar disparity in the viral spread happens across Europe and only NATO countries get severely affected and not the eastern nations on that continent? Why and how is that the Chinese virus affects only countries that may have a capacity to successfully control the hegemonist ambitions and not the countries that secure aid and assistance from China and remain subservient to the growing power of the dragon?

This is only possible with the help of a laboratory generated virus and not through an organism spun out of organic evolution. For this very reason, India should never accept the vaccine, medicines or any material of mass consumption originating from China, because we could just become sitting ducks for a conspiracy that is deep and wide and is brought out through a careful fusion of science, technology and hegemonist strategy.

We are living in times when completely unthinkable and what we thought as impossible have begun to happen. This month, a rocket launched by China fell back into sea and space agencies have wondered what might have fallen from it into the Indian Ocean. We all remember not many years ago, across the world, unsolicited packets of seeds arrived at people's doors from China and agriculture experts warned people not to sow them, for they might be seeds that will destroy the native species and obliterate our food



IS IT A COINCIDENCE OR A CONSPIRACY THAT NATIONS LIKE PAKISTAN, MYANMAR, BANGLADESH, SRI LANKA AND BHUTAN, MOST OF WHICH HAVE SOCIETIES THAT ARE CLOSELY LINKED TO INDIA'S IN TRADE, CULTURAL EXCHANGE, FAMILIAL RELATIONS AND INTERACTIVE THROUGH OUR PERFORATED BORDERS DO NOT HAVE THE VIRAL INFECTION ANYWHERE NEAR TO THE PROPORTION IN INDIA?

The author is Chairman, Khadi and Village Industries Commission, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.



security. Australia is in the eye of the storm of the dragon because of its developmental position in south east and scientists wonder if there is any Chinese connection to the devastating wildfire of last year that burned for weeks on end. For scientists, the devastating glacier burst in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, which lies in proximity to China, is also an unusual and rare occurrence in the peak winter months when the Himalayan glaciers remain in deep frozen state.

Technology companies in the Silicon Valley are increasingly being established and led by people of Chinese origin, which might help in China in global surveillance and information collection. Zoom, the leading Video Conferencing facility has been blamed on that count and nations have suspected that information from secretive and strategic video conferences may have already reached Chinese information archives.

A recent publication of NITI Aayog has elaborately traced the character of India's rural economy and put into perspective the importance of rural sustainability of the nation. Although India is in a transitional state of economic resurgence, 68.8 per cent of the nation's population and 72.4 per cent of nation's workforce are from rural areas. Nearly half of India's National Domestic Product (NDP) is still rural. While 96 per cent of agricultural employment is rural, 48.6 per cent of non-agricultural employment too is rural. Because of this, sustain-

able development of India depends predominantly on rural industriousness, productivity, dynamics and livelihood quality. The efforts of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) are intricately linked to this horizon of rural sustainable development of India through nearly 100 different kinds of rural industrial entrepreneurship and handholding activities. KVIC has been sustaining a major part of village industries in India through over 40 offices spread across the nation, around 5,000 aligned institutions, 23 departmental sales outlets and around 8035 Khadi sales outlets /Khadi Bhavans run by Khadi Institutions. The direct beneficiaries organized through this mechanism exceed 15 million people, while indirect beneficiaries run into several additional millions. If you put together the direct, indirect associated and familial beneficiaries of this carefully hand raised and sustained sector, it could well over be a billion people in the lifeline of village industries sustainable development programmes. China understands the socio-economic and socio-political power of this community and its influence on the mainstream life of our nation. And it engages itself in a calculated and consistent manner in which this delicate balance could be obliterated, so that the nation can be hollowed from within.

In taking some examples of this phenomenon, the 'agarbatti' (Incense stick) industry stands out. Out of the half-a-million-metric-ton 'agarbatti' requirement and production in

India annually, over 80 per cent raw material come from China and Vietnam.

Even the national flag of India that is only made with Khadi cotton or silk fabric was not spared by Chinese invasion. Counterfeit national flags made of plastic and other artificial material from China flooded Indian markets forcing the current government to place the National Flag under prohibited category of import in October, 2019.

Similarly, the traditional Indian Silk Industry, the heritage art of clay pottery, handmade paper and leather industry were driven to the verge of extinction. Imagine, the idols of Indian deities were made in China and worshipped in Indian households. Toys, honey, minerals, and dozens of other natural-resources-based village industries have been rendered unproductive due to Chinese economic aggression of pushing through our market a subsidized and quality-compromised product till recently, until the present government made corrections by imposing higher import duty and import restrictions on such Chinese products. It will, however, take years for the Indian village industries to recuperate from the Chinese intrusion and be self-reliant in all respects.

One can imagine the invasion of the dragon. The fire is not in the borders that guard the nation. The fire is burning the nation to its core and is devouring the integrity, national character and our very ways of existence. And we have unconsciously allowed that.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THIS IS THE FOURTH DAY; NO VACCINATION FOR YOUTH BETWEEN 18 AND 44 IN ANY OF THE GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS OF DELHI IS DONE. — AAP LEADER ATISHI



THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO PLAY POLITICS. BUYING VACCINES INTERNATIONALLY IS NOT SIMILAR TO BUYING OFF-THE-SHELF ITEMS. — NITI AAYOG MEMBER VK PAUL

Super inflation and income loss thaw India

The crisis is national and the country has to take prudent steps, prune expenses and not do politicking on issues of benevolence

Multiple Taxes, unemployment, high 10.49 percent wholesale price index (WPI) rise and severe income losses are thawing the nation amid high Covid-19 deaths.

The six-month high WPI figures in April would be straining the economy. Actual price rise at the retail level would be a minimum of 10.49 per cent plus 4.29 per cent CPI inflation, not less than 14.78 per cent. The super inflation in 1974 was at 28.66 per cent, and 16.94 per cent in 1973. Those days purchasing power of the people had collapsed and protests marked the national scenario. It may not look serious but if income losses of 84 per cent of the people are added it appears grim. As per a study of the Azim Premji University study, the pandemic has led to worsening in quality of employment, with a



SHIVAJI SARKAR

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

number of salaried employees joining the ranks of precariously self-employed.

"The annual rate of inflation in April 2021, is high primarily because of rise in prices of crude petroleum, petrol, diesel and manufactured products as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year," the Commerce and Industry Ministry (CIM) said.

As most rise in prices, fares, freight are due to the CIM stated factors, the economy is slowing down, indicating a lower GDP as well. It is being further complicated by rising joblessness at 8 per cent in April amid the second covid19 wave from 7.4 per cent in March 2021. A CMIE study - Consumer Pyramids Household Survey (CPHS) - observes weekly unemployment rate touched 14.5 per cent on May 15. The CMIE says



that 84 per cent households have suffered a decrease in monthly income and that more than one-fourth of the country's working-age population is unemployed.

World Bank warns 70 per cent of employment and about a third of GDP comes from the 'informal' workers. They are likely to lose their jobs or suffer severe income losses during Covid-19 lockdowns and

they tend to be largely excluded from social safety nets. Informality has made eight lakh migrant workers move out of Delhi, according to the state government. No nation, World Bank says, could have actual recovery unless these 'informal' people, particularly women, are taken care of.

RBI governor Shaktikanta Das says that manufacturing and services PMI along with

inflation would continue the price pressure. It may aggravate because global prices continue to rise.

Amid such scenario it looks strange that RBI, itself in crisis, approves a dividend payout bonanza of Rs 99,122 crore for July, 2020-March, 2021. It is 73 per cent higher than the entire previous year's Rs 57,126 crore. It is time for austerity not only in the debilitated public sector units but also in its expenses on many real estate and cosmetic projects.

The country is avoiding discussing such criticality that leads to impasses. The recent farmers' stir against the three draconian laws is the result of the 'partyocracy'. The nation does not want to discuss the irrationality of multiple taxes and the woes of the people. They are paying taxes on taxes - on old cars, multiple taxes on

petrol, bank deposits, vaccine, coffin, Rs 25 per km road toll and also a GST on that, junking their own cars and even on oxygen -that thankfully was undone by Delhi high court, and irrational atrocities and penalties on masks and Covid-19-related issues. A senior political observer and journalist, Ajai Setia, comments that even in government "ministers don't know what is going on in their ministries".

The discriminations are not being discussed. The Serum Institute of India is stated to have made profits of Rs 59,000 crore (\$8.2 billion) in 2020 and Rs 85,000 crore (\$12.7 billion) in 2021. Similarly, some select corporates are making tons as edible oil, fruit and gas prices are soaring apart from their international and national business. The concern of rising monopolies that are checked in

the US through anti-trust laws remains missing. The PSUs that are sustaining the nation are designed to become junk.

The second wave or spurt in cases of Covid-19 since April has not only caused loss of lives but has cast its shadows on growth prospects. A third wave has been warned. Downward revision of tax revenue and GDP projections are realities. The central government's gross tax revenue in Budget 2020-21 estimates was reduced by more than 20 per cent in 2021-22 Budget.

The governance method has to change with the participation even the opposition. The crisis is national and to surpass Bangladesh, the country has to take prudent drastic steps, prune expenses and not do politicking on issues of benevolence. One step would go through long chain of changes.

Oli calls upon parties to form all-party Govt and hold elections

Kathmandu: Embattled Nepal Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli on Friday urged all political parties to form an all-party government and hold elections, My Republica.com portal quoted him as saying. Addressing the nation as the chief executive of the country, Oli took most of his time to criticise the moves taken by the Opposition parties and his fellow party leaders. He blamed the Opposition parties and dissident faction of the ruling CPN-UML for the dissolution of Parliament. He blamed his party's rival group for blocking his attempts to consolidate democracy and to take the nation to the path of socio-economic transformation. Oli said Parliament could not ensure stability in the country even after it was restored on February 23 through judicial intervention. "Though it was reinstated through the Supreme Court's verdict, it turned out to be func-

tionless and the main source of instability in the country," said Oli. He claimed that he tried to prevent the lower house of Parliament from being dissolved. "I made my last ditch effort to form an alternative government as per Article 76 (5) after being assured of support from the Janata Samajbadi Party (JSP). However, Opposition parties, who played a dirty game of politics, forced the president to dismiss their claim for a new government," he said. "Due to their erroneous claim, I was the victim and Parliament was dissolved as per the constitutional provisions," he said. Hinting at the support extended to Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba by more than two dozen lawmakers of UML and a dozen others belonging to the JSP, he warned of not accepting party-

less character in the multiparty system adopted by Nepal. President Bhandari dissolved the House and rejected the bids of both Prime Minister Oli and the Opposition alliance's claims to form a government, saying the "claims were insufficient." Nepal's Opposition alliance on Monday filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court demanding restoration of the House of Representatives and appointment of Deuba as the Prime Minister. Others had also filed petitions against the dissolution of the House of Representatives. The next hearing in the case will be held on Sunday, the government-run Rising Nepal newspaper reported. Earlier on December 20, the President had dissolved the Parliament and called snap polls on April 30 and May 10. However, two months later, the Rana-led Constitutional Bench on February 23 over-

turned the decision and reinstated the House. Constitutional experts have criticised Oli and Bhandari for their complicity in trampling upon the Constitution. In his address Oli also discussed the government's efforts to combat the coronavirus pandemic and claimed that his government made big achievements, including controlling the pandemic, during his three years tenure. Oli expressed gratitude to China, India and other friendly countries for helping the government in its attempt to control the spread of the coronavirus by providing necessary medical supplies. He informed that the Nepal government has received 3.2 million doses of vaccines against coronavirus in grants from friendly countries and purchased one million additional vaccines to start the drive against spread of the coronavirus. **PTI**

Nepal's Supreme Court starts hearing 30 writ petitions against House dissolution

Kathmandu: A Constitutional Bench of Nepal's Supreme Court on Friday heard 30 writ petitions against the dissolution of the lower house of Parliament and fixed Sunday as the next date of hearing, according to media reports. Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher Rana formed the bench earlier in the day with justices Deepak Kumar Karki, Dr Ananda Mohan Bhattarai, Tej Bahadur KC and Bam Kumar Shrestha alongside him, the Kathmandu Post newspaper reported. There is a provision of a five-member Bench to settle disputes over constitutional matters. Currently, there are 13 senior justices, besides chief justice, in the Supreme Court.

"The hearing took place till 3:00 pm on Friday afternoon and it will continue on coming Sunday (May 30)," Devendra Dhakal, Information Officer at the Supreme Court, was quoted as saying by the official The Rising Nepal newspaper. As many as 30 writ petitions have been registered at the apex court against President Bidya Devi Bhandari's May 22 move to dissolve the lower house of Parliament on the advice of Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli, who is heading a minority Government. The initial hearing on 19 of such petitions was conducted by the CJ Rana-led bench on Thursday. The single bench, however, forwarded the writ petitions to the Constitutional Bench for further hearing. Some of the petitioners had demanded an interim against the dissolution and calling of the House meeting to present the national budget. Rana, however, refused. According to the provision, the government must present the federal budget at the federal Parliament by May 29. Since there is no Parliament, the Government is planning to bring the budget through an ordinance. President Bhandari dissolved the 275-member House of Representatives on Saturday for the second time in five months and announced snap elections on November 12 and November 19 on the advice of Prime Minister Oli, who is heading a minority government.

Man killed after stabbing, shooting 3 French cops

Paris: An unidentified assailant stabbed a police officer at her station on Friday in western France then shot two other officers before being killed in a shootout with police, authorities said. The motive for the violence is unclear. The slain suspect's identity is being verified, France's national gendarme service told The Associated Press. The three officers were wounded but none is in life-threatening condition, the gendarmes said. After stabbing the first police officer in her station in the Nantes suburb of La Chapelle-sur-Erdre, the assailant took her gun and fled, according to the gendarme service. French police deployed helicopters, search dogs and more than 200 officers to find the suspect, and closed nearby schools and stores. When he was located, he fired on officers trying to arrest him, the gendarme service said. He was gravely wounded in an ensuing shootout, and died Friday afternoon of his injuries, according to a police official. The official was not authorised to be publicly named. Police and ambulances blocked roads in the normally quiet, residential area after the stabbing. **AP**

Iraq looks to new pier to boost oil product imports, exports

Basra (Iraq): Iraq is building a new oil pier off its southern coast, financed by Japan, that's expected to boost exports and imports of crude-derived products and increase revenue, officials said Friday. The construction within the port of Khor al-Zubair — Iraq's main fuel export and import facility — is over 70 per cent complete and should be finished this year, said Farhan Fartousi, the director-general of the General Company for Ports in Iraq, a state company responsible for Iraq's southern ports. It marks the latest project undertaken by port officials and investors to modernize the port and boost revenue in the wake of government plans announced last year to clamp down on border corruption that significantly skims off state revenue. Iraq's two largest and key commercial ports — Umm Qasr and Khor al-Zubair — have come under scrutiny amid anti-corruption measures to tackle widespread graft. Fartousi said Khor al-Zubair is now bringing in 10 billion Iraqi dinars a month (about USD 6.8 million), a significant jump from 8 billion Iraqi dinars a month earlier this year (approximately USD 5.4 million). **AP**

Man killed after stabbing, shooting 3 French cops

Pak Hindu lawmaker submits bill seeking religious minorities be referred to as 'non-Muslims'

Islamabad: Hindu lawmaker in Pakistan has submitted a bill in the lower house of Parliament seeking that religious minorities in the country be constitutionally referred to as "non-Muslims" to end the discrimination and establish equality and justice for every citizen. Keeso Mal Kheal Das, a member of the National Assembly from the Opposition Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party, approached the National Assembly with a private member bill under rule 118 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, 2007. Called as the Constitution Amendment Act, 2021, the bill aims to end discrimination against Pakistani non-Muslims who have been also referred in the constitution as minorities. He suggested that the bill should be adopted and brought into effect immediately. The government has not opposed the bill so far and the matter has been referred to the relevant standing committee. **PTI**

Belarusian leader heads to Russia amid showdown with EU

Moscow: Belarus' authoritarian leader heads to Russia on Friday to seek assistance amid a bruising showdown with the European Union over the diversion of a flight to arrest a dissident journalist. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko is set to meet with Russia's Vladimir Putin at his Black Sea residence in Sochi for talks on closer economic ties, according to the Kremlin. Belarus provoked the EU's outrage when Belarusian flight controllers on Sunday told the crew of a Ryanair jet flying from Greece to Lithuania there was a bomb threat and instructed it to land in the Belarusian capital, Minsk, where 26-year-old journalist Raman Pratasevich was arrested along with his Russian girlfriend. The EU responded by barring Belarusian carriers from its airspace and airports and advising European airlines to skirt Belarus. The bloc's foreign ministers agreed Thursday to ramp up sanctions to target the country's lucrative potash industry and other sectors of the Belarusian economy that are the main cash-earners for Lukashenko's Government. **AP**

Erdogan opens landmark mosque at Istanbul main square

Istanbul: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was set on Friday to inaugurate a landmark mosque in Istanbul's Taksim Square, fulfilling a long-time ambition to build a Muslim house of worship at the city's main public space that has become an emblem of the modern Turkish Republic. Erdogan was scheduled to join a group of worshippers for the first prayers at the towering 3,000-capacity mosque on Taksim which was also the site of the mass anti-government protests in 2013 sparked by the government's construction plans at the adjacent Gezi Park. The Turkish leader, who has steadily consolidated power in his 18 years in office, had long promised supporters of his Islam-oriented ruling party a mosque on Taksim, saying it is inconceivable for Istanbul's main square not to have a Muslim house of worship. Critics, however, see the mosque's construction as being part of Erdogan's plans to transform Taksim and undermine the legacy of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk who established the secular-oriented republic after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. **AP**

UN envoy says he held talks with Yemen's rebel negotiator

Cairo: The UN special envoy for Yemen said on Friday that he met with a top rebel negotiator to discuss the roadmap for the resolution of the impoverished Arab country's six-year conflict. Yemen has been embroiled in a civil war since 2014, when rebels known as Houthis swept across much of the north and seized the capital, Sanaa, forcing the government into exile. A Saudi-led coalition entered the war the following year on the side of the government and has been fighting the Iran-backed Houthis since. The war has spawned the world's worst humanitarian crisis. According to the U.N. envoy, Martin Griffiths, his meeting with the chief Houthi negotiator, Mohammed Abdul-Salam, took place in Oman's capital of Muscat on Thursday. Last week, U.S. Envoy to Yemen Tim Lenderking had criticized the Houthis for refusing to meet with Griffiths during a previous visit. Griffiths' statement says the two discussed U.N. plans to reopen Sanaa's international airport, the lifting of restrictions on Yemen's port of Hodeida, and a cease-fire to relaunch negotiations. Griffiths urged the warring sides to "seize this opportunity and make a breakthrough towards resolving the conflict." **AP**

Hong Kong tycoon gets 14-month jail term over 2019 protest

Hong Kong: Hong Kong media tycoon and outspoken pro-democracy activist Jimmy Lai was sentenced to more jail time on Friday over his role in an anti-government protest in 2019, as authorities step up a crackdown on dissent in city. Lai and nine others were charged with incitement to take part in an unauthorised assembly when they walked down a road with thousands of residents on Oct. 1, 2019, to protest against dwindling political freedoms in Hong Kong. All 10 pleaded guilty to organising an unauthorised assembly. Lai, 73, was sentenced to 14 months in prison. He is currently serving a separate 14-month jail term for other convictions earlier this year also related to unauthorised rallies in 2019, when hundreds of thousands repeatedly took to the streets in the biggest challenge to Beijing since the city was handed from British to Chinese control in 1997. Beijing promised that the territory could retain its freedoms not found on the mainland for 50 years. With the two sentences combined, Lai will serve a total of 20 months behind bars. The founder of The Apple Daily, a feisty pro-democracy tabloid, Lai is also being investigated under the city's sweeping national security law, imposed last year, on suspicion of colluding with foreign powers to intervene in the Hong Kong affairs. Also receiving jail terms of 18 months each were former lawmakers Albert Ho and Leung Kwok-hung, as well as Lee Cheuk-yan, a pro-democracy activist. **AP**

US taking 'very close look' at vaccine passports

Washington: Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas says the Government is taking a very close look at the possibility of vaccine passports for travel into and out of the United States. As head of the Department of Homeland Security, Mayorkas oversees the Transportation Security Administration, which safeguards the nation's transportation systems. Mayorkas told ABC on Friday that one of his guiding principles throughout the coronavirus pandemic has been the value of diversity, equity and inclusion and making sure that any passport that we provide for vaccinations is accessible to all and that no one is disenfranchised. The European Union, some Asian governments and the airline industry are scrambling to develop COVID-19 vaccine passports to help kickstart international travel. They're working on systems that would allow travellers to use mobile phone apps to prove they've been vaccinated, helping them avoid quarantine requirements at their destinations. Mayorkas says the underlying point is: Everyone should get vaccinated. **AP**

US taking 'very close look' at vaccine passports

'China has no allies, US has many around world'

Washington: China, which is currently and will remain America's pacing challenge going forward, has no allies, while the United States has many allies around the world, which gives it greater capacity and greater capability, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told lawmakers on Thursday. "China is currently and will remain our pacing challenge going forward," Austin told the members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense during a hearing on the fiscal 2022 Budget Request for the Defense Department. The Biden administration, he said, has established the China task force that is about to complete its work and will inform about its efforts going forward and help them create synergies, eliminate duplication and more efficiently focus on the China challenge, he said. "China has no allies. We have many allies around the world. And we certainly have some strong allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region. And that gives us greater capacity and greater capability," Austin said responding to questions from the lawmakers. **PTI**

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General Public is hereby informed that an one male person was found dead by train accident at Platform No. 3, Pillar No. 26, Anand Vihar Railway Track, Delhi dated 26.05.2021. In this regard a DD No. 25A, dated 26.05.2021 has been registered at P.S. Anand Vihar Railway Station, Delhi. The description of the person is given as under Name: Unknown, S/O: Unknown, R/O: Unknown, Age: About 27 years, Height: 5'6", Complexion: Wheatish, Build: Thin, Face: Long, Wearing : Upper body naked and Grey Colour Pant and bare footed. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the dead person but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this dead person please inform undersigned. SHO P.S. Anand Vihar Railway Station, Delhi Ph.: 011-22145601, 22145602, 8750871314, 9311350017 DP/147/RLY/2021

INFORMATION

We (Vinayak Hospital, Noida) are going to discard our in-patient file record from VH-00113327 to VH-0032105 as per the protocols.

If anyone required their related records then you can collect records from the medical record department with 15 days i.e., till 13 June, 2021.

GUJARAT WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD.
SECTOR-10/A, GANDHINAGAR

BRIEF SHORT NOTICE INVITING ON LINE TENDER FOR FIXING RATE CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF C.I. SLUICE VALVES FOR THE YEAR 2021-22

GWSSB invites online tender through e-tendering for Manufacture, Supply & Delivery of C.I. Sluice Valves (50 to 1200mm Dia.) only from Approved vendors of GWSSB as per new vendor Selection policy as on last date of online Bid submission. Interested bidder who wish to participate in above tender may view the detailed tender notice & down load the Tender documents at free of cost from website. <https://www.nprocure.com>

The last date of submission of online tender is 1-7-2021. INF/271/21-22

KAMA HOLDINGS LIMITED
CIN : L92199DL2000PLC104779
Registered Office: The Galleria, DLF Mayur Vihar, Unit No. 236 & 237, 2nd Floor, Mayur Place, Noida Link Road, Mayur Vihar Phase I Extn, Delhi - 110091
Corporate Office: Block C, Sector 45, Gurgaon-122003, Tel. No (Regd office) : (+91-11) 49482870 • Fax : (+91-11) 49482900
Email : info@kamaholdings.com; website : www.kamaholdings.com

AUDITED STANDALONE AND CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED 31TH MARCH 2021 (Rs. in Lakhs)

Sl. No.	Particulars	STANDALONE				CONSOLIDATED			
		Quarter ended		Year ended		Quarter ended		Year ended	
		31-Mar-21	31-Mar-20	31-Mar-21	31-Mar-20	31-Mar-21	31-Mar-20	31-Mar-21	31-Mar-20
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1	Total Income from Operations	5709.40	2103.43	7212.09	4206.86	262310.10	186935.14	846755.24	726947.44
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (including discontinued operations)	5643.64	2048.87	6994.87	4031.79	50997.90	20615.99	161153.79	107381.31
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (including discontinued operations)	5807.15	2055.03	6986.38	4037.65	38025.08	18282.25	119631.27	101657.93
4	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	5807.35	2054.98	6986.05	4037.33	40185.89	3971.21	138274.91	88026.74
5	Paid up Equity Share Capital	645.26	645.26	645.26	645.26	645.26	645.26	645.26	645.26
6	Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) -								
	(a) Basic :	90.00	31.85	108.27	62.57	298.38	145.95	939.10	821.74
	(b) Diluted:	90.00	31.85	108.27	62.57	298.38	145.95	939.10	821.74

Section 115BAA of the Income Tax Act, 1961 was introduced by the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019. The group had re-measured its deferred tax balances. Consequently, tax credit of Rs. 13,610.53 Lakhs (net of MAT adjustment) was recorded in the Statement of Profit and Loss during the year ended March 31, 2020.

Note: The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly/Annual Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly/Annual Financials Results are available on the Stock Exchange websites (www.bseindia.com) and the Company's website (www.kamaholdings.com).

For and on behalf of the Board
Ekta Maheshwari
Whole Time Director, CFO & Company Secretary
(DIN: 02071432)

BSES BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi

Sealed tenders under Two Bid System (Unpriced & Priced) are invited for following job from all bidders. Date: 29.05.2021

NIT No.	Brief Item Description	Estimated Cost (₹)	Cost of EMD (₹)	Due Date & Time of Submission	Date & Time of Opening
CMC/BR/21-22/RS/MS/928	SURVEY, DESIGN, SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING, COMMISSIONING & INTEGRATION WITH SCADA OF FAULT PASSAGE INDICATORS AT SUBSTATIONS IN BRPL, NEW DELHI (INDIA)	4.20 Crores	8.40 Lacs	21/06/2021 15:30 HRS	21/06/2021 16:00 HRS

Cost of each Tender Document: ₹ 1180/-
For any query call on 011-4920 7235 or e-mail on brpl.eauction@relianceada.com
For details in respect of Equipment/BOM/Services, Qualifying requirements, Terms & conditions, purchase/submission of tender documents etc. please visit our website www.bsesdelhi.com **Head (Contracts & Materials)**
Regd. Off.: BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019 | Corporate Identification No.: U40109DL2001PLC11627
Telephone No. : +91 11 4920 7235 | E-mail : brpl.eauction@relianceada.com | Website : www.bsesdelhi.com

Govt borrows 55% more so far this fiscal

AS LOCKDOWNS HIT REVENUE COLLECTIONS

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Indicating a massive revenue crunch due to the second wave of the pandemic that has forced many states to declare full lockdowns for almost two months now, the Centre has borrowed ₹2.1 lakh crore so far this fiscal - a whopping 55 per cent more than what it was a year ago.



₹2.1 lakh crore is 17.5 per cent of the budgeted debt creation of ₹12.05 lakh crore for the full year and 30 per cent of the first half borrowings calendar of ₹7.24 lakh crore, he said.

But thanks to the debt yield management by the central bank, the only saving grace has been the low cost of the money raised so far despite the steeply higher drawdowns, the average cost of the money for the government has been under check and at the Friday's auction, it is paying only 6.08 per cent, much lower than last year and the same as last week, chief economist of Care Ratings Madan Sabnavis said on Friday. The market borrowing of

to the primary dealers. However, the total borrowing for the week is ₹550 crore more than the notified amount but is 30 per cent lower than the previous week. Total market borrowings are in May climbed to ₹1.1 lakh crore, ₹6,545 crore more than in April. The amount exercised under the green shoe option so far this year rose to ₹23,398 crore while total amount devolved to the primary dealer is ₹18,363 crore.

The weighted average yields in this auction remained unchanged at 6.08 per cent, same as last week. Of the total borrowing this fiscal, 24 per cent is via 14-year GSecs, 17 per cent via five-year bonds and around 15 per cent via the 10-year bonds. For the 2-year bonds maturing in 2023, there was an over-subscription of ₹550 crore.

Forex reserves hit lifetime high, rise \$ 2.8 bn to \$ 592.894 bn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The country's foreign exchange reserves rose by USD 2.865 billion to a record high of USD 592.894 billion for the week ended May 21, boosted by gold and currency assets, RBI data showed on Friday.

The previous all-time high for the forex kitty was USD 590.185 billion for the week ended January 29, 2021.

For the previous week ended May 14, the reserves had increased by USD 563 million to reach USD 590.028 billion.

Foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves, swelled by USD 1.649 billion to USD 548.519 billion for the reporting week, the RBI said.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. After remaining

For the previous week ended May 14, the reserves had increased by USD 563 million to reach USD 590.028 billion

unchanged in the previous week, gold reserves rose by USD 1.187 billion to USD 36.841 billion, the apex bank said.

The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) increased by USD 7 million to USD 1.513 billion.

The country's reserve position with the IMF too increased by USD 22 million to USD 5.021 billion in the reporting week, as per the data.

Bank credit growth decelerates to 5.6 pc in March

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Bank credit growth decelerated to 5.6 per cent in March 2021 from 6.4 per cent a year ago, the Reserve Bank said on Friday.

On the other hand, aggregate deposits growth accelerated to 12.3 per cent in March 2021 from 9.5 per cent in the same month of the previous year.

Lower growth in credit vis-a-vis deposits led to decline in the all-India credit-deposit (C-D) ratio to 71.5 per cent in March 2021 from 76 per cent a year ago.

Combined credit by bank branches in top six centres (Greater Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kolkata) declined marginally during 2020-21. These six centres together accounted for over 46 per cent of total bank credit.

"Bank branches in urban, semi-urban and rural areas, on the other hand, recorded 9.4 per cent, 14.3 per cent and 14.5

per cent credit growth, respectively, during the year," the RBI said while releasing the 'Quarterly Statistics on Deposits and Credit of SCBs: March 2021'. Public sector and private sector banks recorded 3.6 per cent and 9.1 per cent credit growth, respectively, whereas lending by foreign banks declined during 2020-21.

The central bank further said aggregate deposits growth accelerated to 12.3 per cent in March 2021 from 9.5 per cent a year ago. Metropolitan branches, which account for over half of total deposits, recorded nearly 15 per cent growth during 2020-21.

The share of current account and savings account (CASA) deposits in total deposits increased to 44.1 per cent in March 2021 from 42.1 per cent a year ago.

"The share of private sector banks in total deposits and credit by SCBs (Scheduled Commercial Banks) increased during 2020-21 at the cost of public sector banks," it said.

'Govt should focus on converting 30 cr on-road vehicles to clean fuels'

New Delhi: The Government

should focus on converting around 30 crore vehicles currently running on petrol and diesel to clean fuels in a bid to improve the air quality, said Indian Auto LPG Coalition, apex body of Auto LPG stakeholders. In a statement, the industry body said that with mass adoption of electric vehicles still a distant future, an absence of a near term strategy to convert existing vehicles to cleaner alternatives is a crucial policy oversight. Indian Auto LPG Coalition has said that Govt's indifference towards immediately available clean alternative fuels is proving to be a major health bane for the country. "Electric Vehicles are still in very early stages of adoption and even the most optimistic projections suggest that a mass adoption is not likely to begin at least till another decade. Meanwhile, around 300 million vehicles including two wheelers continue to produce toxic emissions," said Suayash Gupta, Director General, Indian Auto LPG Coalition.

IANIS

DoT allocates spectrum for 5G trials to telecom operators

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Department of Telecom (DoT) has allocated spectrum to telecom operators to start 5G trials in the country, sources said.

The trials will be conducted at various locations including Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Gujarat, Hyderabad, among others, according to industry sources.

"Telecom operators have been allocated spectrum in 700 Mhz band, 3.3-3.6 gigahertz (Ghz) band and 24.25-28.5 Ghz band across various locations," a telecom company official said.

On May 4, DoT had approved applications from Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and MTNL for conducting 5G trials without using technologies from Chinese companies.

DoT had approved trials of 5G with Ericsson, Nokia, Samsung and C-DOT. In addition, Reliance Jio Infocomm will be conducting trials using its own indigenous technology.

According to DoT, 5G technology is expected to deliver ten times better download speed than that of 4G and up to three times greater spectrum efficiency.

During the trials, application of 5G in Indian settings will get tested.

This includes tele-medicine, tele-education and drone-based agriculture monitoring etc. Telecom operators will be able to test various 5G devices on their network.

The duration of the trials, at present, is for a period of 6 months. This includes a time period of 2 months for procurement and setting up of the equipment.

Markets maintain momentum; Nifty hits fresh record as RIL zooms

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rising for the sixth session on the trot, the NSE Nifty closed at a fresh lifetime high on Friday, powered by a robust rally in index heavyweight Reliance Industries.

The rupee's rising streak and daily Covid-19 cases falling below the 2-lakh mark also spurred bullish sentiment, traders said.

The Nifty surged 97.80 points or 0.64 per cent to finish at 15,435.65, closing at a record high for the second straight day.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 307.66 points or 0.60 per cent higher at 51,422.88.

Reliance Industries hogged the limelight in Friday's session, topping the Sensex gainers' chart with a jump of 5.90 per cent.

M&M spurred 2.13 per cent after the homegrown auto major swung into black in the March quarter with a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 163 crore.

HDFC twins, Kotak Bank, IndusInd Bank, ITC and Bharti Airtel were among the other gainers, climbing as much as 1.47 per cent.

On the other hand, Sun Pharma, Bajaj Finserv, Nestle India, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank and Dr Reddy's were among the laggards, tumbling up to 4.30 per cent.

During the week, the Sensex rallied 882.40 points or 1.74 per cent, while the broader Nifty surged 260.35 points or 1.71 per cent.

Tata Group acquires majority stake in BigBasket

PTI ■ CHENNAI

New Delhi: Tata Group has acquired a majority stake in online grocery seller BigBasket for an undisclosed sum of money, pitting it against the likes of billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance and Amazon. The stake was bought by Tata Digital Ltd, a unit of Tata Sons, a joint statement by the two firms said on Friday. It neither disclosed the quantum of stake bought nor the deal size. In March, Competition Commission of India (CCI) had approved the acquisition of up to a 54.3 per cent stake in BigBasket by Tata Digital. It was previously reported that Tatas was in talks to buy close to an 80 per cent stake in the online grocery seller, that is backed by Alibab Group, for USD 1.3-1.6 billion.

Indian Bank posts ₹3,005 crore net profit for FY21

PTI ■ CHENNAI

State-owned Indian Bank on Friday said it closed last fiscal with a net profit of ₹3,004.67 crore on a total income of ₹45,185.04 crore, said a top official. The bank had earned a total income of about ₹44,099 crore and a net loss of ₹4,643 crore for 2019-20. Last fiscal was the first full year of operations after the Allahabad Bank was merged with the Indian Bank. According to the Indian Bank, the figures for 2019-20 were arrived at by totaling the numbers of the two banks. Addressing reporters, Managing Director and CEO Padmaja Chundru said the bank's Board of Directors have recommended a dividend of 20 per cent for FY21.

Reliance Infra net loss narrows to ₹47 cr in Jan-Mar quarter

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi: Reliance Infrastructure Ltd on Friday reported narrowing of consolidated net loss at Rs 46.53 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2021. The company had reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 153.84 crore in the year-ago period, it said in a filing to the BSE. The company's consolidated income during the January-March quarter increased to Rs 4,610.72 crore over Rs 4,012.87 crore in the year-ago period, the filing said.

₹ rises for 3rd day in a row, up 15 paise at 72.45 against \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai: The Indian rupee clocked its third straight session of gains on Friday, firming up by another 15 paise to end the session at 72.45 against the US dollar amidst improved risk-on sentiments. At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 72.46 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 72.31 and a low of 72.49 during the session. It finally ended at 72.45 against the American currency, registering a rise of 15 paise over its previous close.

BRIEFS

VIRTUAL VENDORS MEET ORGANISED BY CLW

Chittaranjan: A virtual Vendors Meet was organized online by Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW) in association with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on 28th May 2021 with participation of over 200 vendors. The objective of the meet is for development of new vendors especially for imported items as well as enhancing the existing vendor base. The meet was started with introductory welcome remarks by the CII team. The meet had a full fledged discussion touching various points such as eligibility criteria & conditions; supplier on boarding process overview; product & service requirements; procurement policies & procedures; delivery/ payment terms; documentation required etc.



67 TH MEETING OF STF HELD

The 67 th meeting of STF was held on 28.05.2021 wherein officers from all the local bodies and other concerned agencies were present. The progress of the complaints received up to 15 th May was reviewed. In total 83566 complaints have been received in STF till 15th May 2021 and action on 79821 complaints has been initiated. 3258 ATR were received during the period from 01.04.2021 to 15.05.2021. Since the constitution of STF in 2018, 3621 unauthorised constructions have been demolished and more than 2423 properties have been sealed. Chairman, STF directed the ULBs to take the matter seriously and expedite the action on the pending cases.

DEFENCE SECY AJAY KUMAR LAUNCHES NCC TRAINING APP VERSION 2.0

Defence Secretary Dr. Ajay Kumar launched the Directorate General National Cadet Corps Mobile Training App Version 2.0 here today. The App will assist in conducting countrywide online training of NCC cadets during the pandemic conditions. In view of the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 in March 2020, a need was felt that training to NCC cadets should be imparted utilising the digital medium. In order to assist online cadet training, a DGNCC Mobile App Version 1.0 for training was developed and launched by the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri on 27 Aug 2020.



IAMAI announces setting up of Digital Publisher Content Grievances Council

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) on Friday announced the formation of the Digital Publishers Content Grievances Council (DPCGC).

Over the past two years, the IAMAI has worked collectively with its members towards establishing a self-regulatory and grievance redressal framework for Online Curated Content (OCC) Publishers, it said.

In light of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, the IAMAI is establishing the DPCGC as the level-II self-regulatory body for publishers of OCC as required under Rule 12, with the intent to empower consumers to make informed viewing choices.

The DPCGC will have an OCCP Council composed of publishers of OCC as members and an independent Grievance Redressal Board (GRB) -- consisting of a chairperson and six members.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male, Age: 45-50 years, Complexion: Wheatish, Height: 5'6", was wearing Yellow colour T-Shirt, White & Blue colour Half NIKKAR and Blue colour Chappal in feet, was found dead between KM Pole No. 2/12 to 2/13, near Nathu Colony Railway Line, between Shahdara Railway Station to Loni Railway Station. In this regard a DD No. 5A, dated 28.05.2021, has been lodged at P.S. Old Delhi Railway Station, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.

SHO P.S. ODRS, Delhi Ph.: 011-23961522, 8750871302 9868377475

IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is notified for the information of rail passengers that the East Coast Railway has decided to cancel/reduce the frequency of the following Rajdhani Special Trains due to low occupancy as per the following details:-

CANCELLATION/REDUCTION IN FREQUENCY OF SPECIAL TRAINS				
Train No. & Name	Existing Frequency	Revised Frequency	Dates of Cancellation	Days of Cancellation
02823 Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Special	Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri	Tuesday	03, 04, 07, & 10.06.2021	Mon, Thu, Fri
02824 New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Special	Tue, Wed, Thu & Sat	Wednesday	03, 05, 08, & 10.06.2021	Tue, Thu, Sat
02825 Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Special	Wednesday & Sunday	Sunday	02.06.2021 & 09.06.2021	Wednesday
02826 New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Special	Monday & Friday	Monday	04.06.2021 & 11.06.2021	Friday
02855 Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Special	Saturday	---	05.06.2021	Saturday
02856 New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Special	Sunday	---	06.06.2021	Sunday

These Special Trains will be having Fully Reserved Service.

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

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

Visit RailMadad website:- www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in
 Download RailMadad app.
 RailMadad Helpline No.: 139
 Please join us on
NORTHERN RAILWAY
 Your Convenience - Our Concern
 Visit us at: www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in
 "SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE!"

NEW OKHLA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida G.B. Nagar, (U.P) Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com

E-TENDER NOTICE
 E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors/firms for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these website for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

S.No.	Job No.	Name of Work	Amount (Rs.)
(1)	06/SPE/PE (PH-01)/2021-22	Supply of Labour and Machinery for Cleaning & Desilting of drain of Various Location in PH-1 Area, Zone-III, Noida.	6579368.64

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 07.06.2021 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-Qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 08.06.2021 at 11.00 AM. Sr. Project Engineer (Public Health) Noida

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

Notice Inviting Tender

Office of District Magistrate / District Disaster Management Authority Haridwar

Email: ddmoharidwar@gmail.com / ivrsnodalharidwar@gmail.com
 Office of District Magistrate / District Disaster Management Authority, Haridwar invites following short term tender from eligible bidders for the following work :-

01-Implementation of IVRS & Analytics System to Monitor and check Spread of Covid-19 in Haridwar District.

Tender documents can be purchased from office of "ADM(F&R)/DDMA Haridwar" between 29/05/2021 to 03/06/2021 (12:00 pm). Information in this regard with all details-detailed eligibility criteria and other terms & conditions of the tender document can be downloaded from www.haridwar.nic.in. It is also to be informed that any amendment in future against the tender shall be uploaded on www.haridwar.nic.in.

Document Purchase Start Date	29.05.2021 at 10:00 AM
Proposal Due Date	03.06.2021 at 12:00 PM
Opening of Technical Bids	03.06.2021 at 01:00 PM
Tender Document Price	Rs 2000 (GST Extra)
No.10765/DDM/IVRS/2021-22 Dt.28.05.21	ADM (F/R), Haridwar

GUJARAT WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD.

SECTOR-10/A, GANDHINAGAR

BRIEF SHORT NOTICE INVITING ON LINE TENDER FOR FIXING RATE CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF C.I. AIR VALVES FOR THE YEAR 2021-22

GWSSB invites online tender through e-tendering for Manufacture, Supply & Delivery of C.I. Air Valves (15 to 200mm Dia.) only from Approved vendors of GWSSB as per new vendor Selection policy as on last date of online Bid submission. Interested bidder who wish to participate in above tender may view the detailed tender notice & download the Tender documents at free of cost from website. <https://www.nprocure.com>
 The last date of submission of online tender is 1-7-2021.
 INF/272/21-22



SHORTCIRCUITS



SONAKSHI SINHA
 We end up in the environment we create for ourselves, and we must make sure that it's beautiful. The current situation around us is making us think hard about climate change, and the kind of effect it has on our planet. As responsible individuals, if we make small sustainable changes, we can create a healthier environment.



SAMEERA REDDY
 We've all been shamed at some point in our lives. Sometimes by society and at other times we do it to our own self. Loving your flaws and imperfections is your ticket to move towards a happy you. It's ok not to feel ok all the time. We are all imperfectly perfect.



ILEANA D'CRUZ
 It (the film industry) is brutal, of course, but it comes down to the audience. If people like you, that is all you need. You just want them to like watching you. The minute you are not liked, you sort of lose the mark.



SUNNY HINDUJA
 We should never let success and fame overwhelm us so much that we lose touch with our roots. When I say roots, I mean staying connected with people you have grown up with, who stood by you when you were starting out because they do not judge you.

SIMON COWELL
 After I lost my parents, I genuinely felt I would never feel that kind of love for anyone ever again. I thought that was it, until I saw the scan of my son for the first time. Now I just cannot imagine my life without him. He's the most amazing thing that ever happened to me. I adore him.



IMMERSIVE 15 MINUTES

SEARCHING FOR THE ELUSIVE

Love can be many things — sometimes intimidating, frustrating, and often exhilarating. From ghosting, polyamory, love in the times of social media to dealing with heartbreak, infidelity and getting out of a toxic relationship, author AASTHA ATRAY BANAN's latest book, *The L Word: Love, Lust and Everything in Between*, is a guide. By AYUSHI SHARMA

♦**Love. What exactly is it?**
*Love is a many splendored thing
 It's the April rose that only grows in the early spring
 Love is nature's way of giving a reason to be living
 The golden crown that makes a man a king
 Once on a high and windy hill, in the morning mist
 Two lovers kissed and the world stood still
 Then your fingers touched my silent heart and taught it how to sing
 Yes, true love's a many splendored thing...
 Isn't it? Well, every single person in the world understands love and expresses it differently. When author Aastha Atray Banan found herself getting questions asked about the daily struggles of love, she decided to start a podcast, *Love Aaj Kal*, which facilitates non-judgmental and candid conversation on topics like love, sex and relationship. From ghosting, polyamory, love in the times of social media to dealing with heartbreak, infidelity and getting out of a toxic relationship, she knew what were the problems people were facing these days. So she worked up from dating to marriage, which led her to write — *The L Word: Love, Lust and Everything in Between*. The book is a guide to love, dating and relationships in the modern world.
 It wouldn't be wrong to say that technology has superseded human interaction today, and has elevated the desire for quick hookups. However, ask Aastha, 'what does she think about modern relationships?' 'Are they fundamentally the same as they were in prior generations?' She tells us that modern relationships are 'transient.' 'They are not about commitment but the illusion of choice. People think the next best thing is always waiting somewhere around the corner and don't want to put in any work. People move on too quickly and everything is based on shallow interactions. It's all about how you look and come across. Nobody wants to actually commit or even adjust. They just feel like moving on, instead of meeting the other person halfway,' she says.
 Everybody seems to be obsessed with the notion of love these days. It might be because we are conditioned to believe that we*



need to find another person to complete us. That's what Aastha has tried to convey in the book: Love is great but it's not 'be all and end all'. 'Build your relationship with yourself first. I think we need to start finding love in different ways and not just romance,' says the author, who has previously written *His Monsoon Bride* and *Games Girls Play*.
 It's true that in a never-ending quest for 'the one', people risk losing the one they should care about the most: Themselves. Aastha completely agrees and says, 'Yes, we do! We don't prioritise ourselves, and we spend years in toxic relationships just because we want someone. The book talks about 'self-love' as the most needed criteria. We need to never underestimate who we are, and what we stand for.'
 After comprehending and exploring the idea so much, what can love stand for Aastha? Well, she tells us that she believes love is being consistent, being present, and being completely involved in another's life. She says, 'It's all about choosing to settle for someone while being aware of their pros and cons. Nobody is perfect. We have to eventually settle for someone who has flaws. And we should understand this soon. We need to only enter relationships that provide comfort and peace. But be ready to accommodate and adjust. We need to meet people halfway.'
 The book has some hard truths about love. 'Some will help you become aware, some will show you the truth, some will say it's okay if you are alone, and it's okay if it didn't work out, life moves on. Love makes you grow in many ways,' she says.
 Certainly, love is a many splendored thing.

CONVERSATION 30 MINUTES

Behind the scenes

Sharing memories of the shoot from the film *Wrath of Man*, actor JASON STATHAM says that it is always a challenge to bring a sense of spontaneous realism to the sets but Guy Ritchie, the director, is an ace at it



♦**How does it feel to be working with Guy Ritchie again?**
 It's the greatest thing in the world. We have both come a long way since we started working together over 20 years ago. And what you really want to do in a situation like this is see whether anything has changed, but the truth is that nothing has. I fell in love with this profession, thanks to a lottery ticket that Guy handed me called *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*.



♦**What are your memories of that shoot, which marked your debut in Hollywood and Guy's first film behind the camera?**
 It was a bunch of lads running around spitting out this incredible dialogue in a crime caper that turned out to be a big smash hit in the UK. I think they were the best six weeks I have ever had.
 ♦**And here you are, more than 20 years later, working on another Guy Ritchie film, *Wrath of Man*. How do you see H, the character you play?**
 I see him as a complicated guy who above everything is a father. And even though I became one quite late in the game, I feel everything rotates around that in my life. So, to have it removed is an unimaginable sort of horror to deal with, which can spiral into an obsession with finding the culprit.
 ♦**Is H a mysterious man?**
 Yes, and I think that is necessary for the interest of the story. So, it's better not to know too much about him (and wait) for the plot to unfold. That aspect about him makes the role very internal, and especially when he goes for a job in the cash truck business. My character has to keep his cards very close to not let anyone know who he really is or what he is capable of doing. And I do quite like playing such mysterious characters.
 ♦**So, *Wrath of Man* is much more than just an action film, as the dramatic component to it is quite significant.**
 It gets very dramatic because of the stakes at hand. H is forced to play people a certain way to figure out who they really are, but in the end someone is going to pay a hefty price.
 ♦**And would you say that being a father has helped you understand this man?**
 Oh yes! And then you wonder how you would have to come back from losing a son or a daughter, as it seems unimaginable. These are conversations I have shared with Guy, for my character.
 ♦**What else did you do to prepare for the role?**
 When I work with Guy I try not to get too ahead of him, which would be impossible anyway, because he has the whole film in his mind. So I didn't meet people who worked at cash truck companies or anything like that precisely because my character is not too proficient at his job.
 ♦**And when it comes to the action, the film also feels very real and gritty.**
 Yes, Guy wanted to keep this very real and not have me do cool, slick movements. And his way of achieving that is with an on-the-day type of organic approach, where you kind of get into the space and figure out what the character is going to do in the specific situation he is in...as the tension builds.
 ♦**What does it feel like to shoot a film this way?**
 Like a breath of fresh air! And in

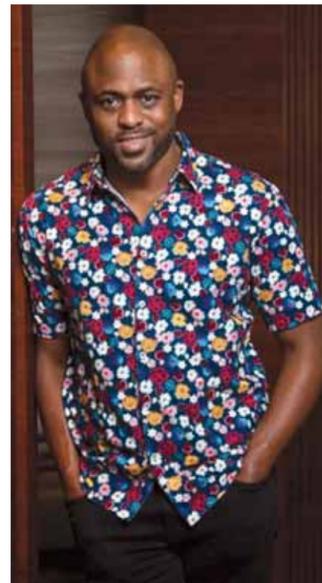
hindsight, I believe it helps create the sense of realism we are after. I think it's very hard for a director to provide that nowadays unless you are so confident that you know exactly what you want to capture through the camera lens; but Guy does.
 ♦**And is there any room for humour?**
 Well, we are trying to avoid it because it's quite a dark story. But Guy is so good at humour that it is almost impossible for him to not write interesting and funny dialogue. He will probably be incapable of not letting some humour into the film.
 ♦**Your character reminds us of those down-to-earth antiheroes from the '70s.**
 I think Guy likes to write characters like that. I remember when we were shooting our first film together and he pulled me into his room and told me to stop acting and just focus on saying my lines. He just has this real way of dealing with any bad habits that an actor could have. So, sometimes you feel you are not doing much, but it's what he wants. And it's a great thing to do when you have just come out of doing a 250 million dollar film like the one I just shot with Dwayne Johnson, where everything is so big.
 ♦**Do you like mixing it up then in your career?**
 Yes, because *Wrath of Man* is the complete polar opposite of that film, and I am portraying a very real, intense guy.
 ♦**And what can you say of Holt McCallany, who stars opposite you as Bullet.**
 I think Holt has pulled this film together better than any of us, and especially considering that sometimes he gets dialogue only a few minutes before we say it. But he is certainly more verbal than anybody else, and he never drops a line. Holt is a tremendous actor, and he is so good in this likeable character he plays. Actually, to be honest, I think Bullet is my favorite character in the story.
 ♦**What should we expect from *Wrath of Man* then?**
 I think you are going to get a very stylish yet tense type of film that will keep you guessing. And, whether you like it or not, I am sure it will be memorable, because Guy isn't capable of making one that isn't.
 ♦**So, your mind is already made up if Guy Ritchie knocks on your door again to offer you another role, right?**
 If all I did for the rest of my career was work for Guy Ritchie, I would be a very happy man.

EXPRESS 45 MINUTES

Speaking up for the cause

Actor WAYNE BRADY collaborates with GLENN CLOSE for her spoken word jazz album to release a life's worth of thoughts and feelings in *A Piece by the Angriest Black Man in America (or, How I Learned to Forgive Myself for Being a Black Man in America)*

In the background of his career as an actor, singer, comedian, game show host and television personality, Wayne Brady had been working on a one-man show about being a young Black man growing up in Orlando for a long time, but he could never finish the project.
 That's until acclaimed actor Glenn Close asked him to participate in her spoken word jazz album.
 "To be honest with you, the reason it took me a couple of years was that it was so painful. Every time I'd go to it, I would start a draft and it got a little too real. I felt myself wanting to do the thing that you can do — whether you're talking to a group of friends or whether you're on a stage — I'm going to now make this funny and I'm going to deflect. Or I'll sidetrack or I'll do something that takes away the weight because I don't want to remember this," Brady recalled. But some things are meant to be. "Glenn coming to me, that was the impetus of me saying, 'You're going to finish this and you're going to finish this now. You've got to talk about this. You've got to share this,'" he expressed.
 That's when the actor-comedian-singer crafted *A Piece by the Angriest Black Man in America (or, How I Learned to Forgive Myself for Being a Black Man in America)*. It appears on *Transformation: Personal Stories of Change, Acceptance, and Evolution*. Close's new album which was released this month.
 "My heart was going a mile a minute... It's the first time that people will be hearing this piece of Wayne, this struggle of Wayne, that some people know and some people don't," said Brady, who recorded the track in front of a live audience at New York City's Jazz at Lincoln Center.
 "What I'm trying to do is move the needle a little bit because there is someone who may sit down and know Wayne Brady from *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* or looked at *Let's Make a Deal* or 'I loved him on that sitcom' — they don't know this story of pain is lurking there because I, don't share it. Well, I have decided to share it to let you know maybe you're skewed



to what Black is or what Black isn't," he went on to say.
 In *Angriest Black Man in America*, Brady begins telling his Black experience by what a lighter-skinned Black person, Tessa Grady, had told him when he was younger, "You're a Black, ugly mother(expletive)."
 "It was just a fact. There was Black and then there was Blaaaataaaack... I fit into the latter, dark as Black matter and hearing you pair Black and ugly together in that manner, made me feel like my type of Black life didn't matter," says Brady, as heard on the spoken word track.
 On the poignant, eight-minute song, the performer continues to break down his life's experiences, touching on topics like his hair and not wanting to play outside in the sun because he didn't want to get darker to being called 'one of the good ones' by white people.
 Close shared that she was moved by what Brady wrote. She invited him to work on two more songs on her album, a collaborative project with Grammy-winning jazz musician and Jazz at Lincoln Center orchestra player Ted Nash.
 "I had tears in my eyes," Nash said, after reading Brady's original piece. "I had tears in my eyes for several reasons — first of all, that he was willing to share this with us and allow us to have him participate. One of my band members, who is Black, came up to Wayne after we did one of the performances and he expressed that Wayne had spoken about things that he had been feeling for a long time," he shared.
 "Sometimes you don't realise how people interpret what's put to them, and that was a very profound moment for us," Nash added.
 Brady said he forgives Tessa Grady for the ill words she spoke as a child and he

plans to reach out to her since his song is out and widely available. He adds that he didn't write the poem to vilify her, he just wanted to use Tessa as an example of one of those self-codifying moments that play a role in who you turn out to be as a person later on in life.
 "I had to deal with what that person said all my life, till I realised I needed to forgive myself — for how Black I felt I was, or how not Black that I felt I was. Those things were holding me back. Especially at a point in our country's development where race has always been on the table and it's always been a fight, but now voices are demanding to be heard. I realised I needed to add my voice to that," he thought out loud.
 Brady, 48, has won five Emmys for his roles across various TV shows, appeared on Broadway stages and even earned a Grammy nomination for his cover of Sam Cooke's *A Change Is Gonna Come*. He said he's been working on new music and wants to continue being a voice for people who look like him, making use of the platform he has.
 "By the time I started getting on, around the time of *Who's Line*, I kind of fell into this narrative that was being written for me by some network people who didn't want to see race either. They wanted an amiable, shiny, Black face that could connect with their viewers, without necessarily having to talk about the Black experience. Sure, and I was complicit because in my mind I was thinking, 'I'm not going to talk about Blackness either, I'm going to kick ass and show everybody how amazing I am. And if I do that because of the talent that I have, then that will change the conversation of race,'" he shared. He admits that thinking along such lines was very idealistic and somewhat naive of him because the world doesn't work like that.
 "If I would have used my platform to say, 'I sit in my Blackness, that's who I am and let's get on with it,' life as I knew it could have been different," Brady signed off on a thoughtful note.

DEEP DIVE 45 MINUTES

UNSEEN PLACES, UNSCRIPTED STORIES AND UNFILTERED ADVENTURES

Travel enthusiasts, dog parents and hosts, **TANVEER TAJ** and **PRIYANKA JENA** set out on an epic escapade of a lifetime in the show — *Life Off The Leash*. By **AYUSHI SHARMA**

Travelling to 20 states across the periphery of India in 120 days, adventure junkies and dog parents, Tanveer Taj and Priyanka Jena set out on an epic escapade of a lifetime — with Frodo, a Golden Retriever and Cruise, a Labrador — in the forthcoming show *Life Off The Leash*. They cover the epic four month-long trip in a self-shot travel journal. Excerpts:

How did the idea of travelling with pets come about?

Tanveer: I'm from Muscat. I came to India in 2009. After which I started working here in an advertising agency. I've always wanted a dog as a kid, so I finally got one after coming to India. Also around the same time, my interest in travelling and motorcycling was gradually increasing. So after becoming a parent of a dog, I realised that I have a huge responsibility towards him. I started taking Frodo (my dog) along with me to nearby places and realised it's not as difficult as it may seem.

Later, I moved to Mumbai and met Priyanka, she was into travelling and adventure space as well. Both of us have been travelling for quite some time now, and apart from that, both of us are animal lovers. A few months after we met, she also got a dog (Cruise), after which there was no looking back. We started taking trips together. Both Cruise and Frodo were keeping up and started having great fun outdoors. We started documenting and posting our adventures on our personal social media handles. After which both Frodo and Cruise became quite popular in our circle. A lot of questions started flooding about how we were travelling with dogs.



This gave us an idea that we should give ourselves an identity online. Everything just kept happening organically from there. We realised that we were breaking our own limits in terms of how far we can go with them. We started with a trip around Maharashtra, it became a trip to Goa and then we headed to Karnataka. We kept expanding our reach. I can still recall it was in 2018 when both of us made a bucket list of travelling to all the places in the country with our dogs. It has been an amazing journey since then.

What kind of planning and research went behind planning 120 days of adventure?

Priyanka: If we talk about our personalities, I am more of an organised traveller, whereas Tanveer is very spontaneous. Well, I can expect him to be that because he's a rider. He approaches every day with a fearless attitude. He is super quick with his decision of where and how he wants to travel. However, I am just the opposite of that. I really love planning everything from the start.

But we both knew that this trip was going to require a lot of preparations, especially because it was not just us, human beings, travelling. We knew that not all places on such a long trip would be pet-friendly and it might be difficult for us in some States. As we started

planning this journey, it took us about a year and a half, as there were a lot of different factors we had to look into. In terms of our work, we had to adjust our business, such as finish the projects that we were working on and be free for four months straight. We also had to arrange the finances and do budgeting, so we worked backward in terms of how much dog food we will need, cost of petrol, equipment, stay and much more. Also, there were not many references for such travels in India because we were basically the first. If we talk about the locations, we had a wish list in place but we had to map our route according to the pet-friendly areas.

Finding places to stay along our route took us a lot of time. So when we left for the trip, we had planned until Odisha, which was about two and a half months of planning. We had booked with tentative dates till then. Thankfully, all the places that we had booked knew that we were on this crazy escapade and were very excited to host us. Another major thing was packing because we basically had to have a mini house in the car, including medical kits for everyone, all kinds of clothes for different terrains and equipment. So it took a long time, but finally, I am proud that we did it. I would say 90 per cent of the trip was planned.

I remember just the

day before we left, I said, "This preparation part seems to be never-ending. When are we going to get into the car and leave?" And it happened. Planning really helped. I would say that being prepared is better than running into something that you don't know how to deal with.

If you had to narrow it down to the top five places to visit with pets, which would those be?

Priyanka: Top five places would be — Cherrapunji in Meghalaya, Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu, Palakkad in Kerala, Manali in Himachal Pradesh and Goa. They all are pretty pet-friendly.

How would you describe the experience for the dogs? Has any adventure gone bad?

Tanveer: It was one hell of a holiday for them. They just had to get into the car, enjoy the ride. They were getting fed, were experiencing new terrains, meeting new people, seeing new places every day.

As the journey went ahead, they became quite strong in terms of travelling. Whenever you put a bag down for more than 10-15 minutes, they knew that this was home for the night. They were adjusting to the lifestyle really well. However, Cruise got really unwell in Cherrapunji. He hurt himself while getting down the stairs in the mountains. That was a bit of a scare; we had to rush him to a vet. So that almost put us 10 days behind our schedule. Also, in the mountains, we had to make sure that we get the dogs on the leash to keep them safe from the mountain dogs, which are extremely territorial and huge in size. In Mussoorie, Dehradun, we faced some trouble with one of the mountain dogs. He attacked Frodo and it was quite a messy scene. Other than that, it was smooth sailing.

What were some of the major obstacles while travelling with dogs?

Tanveer: Yes, as Priyanka mentioned, it was a bit difficult to find pet-friendly places in cities such as Lucknow and Chennai.

So while crossing these locations, it was a nightmare to figure out a place, which is perfect for all four of us. At times, we almost thought that we would have to sleep in the car overnight... But thanks to social media, we asked online what to do and quite a few times people opened their doors, allowing us to stay with them. That was quite heart-warming to see. Apart from that, we had an amazing time.

Can you share basic tips that one should follow, but tend to forget while travelling with pets?

Priyanka: It's really important to have a good medical kit. You should have medicines and equipment for everything; from cuts and bruises to an upset tummy. Keep it all handy because it's not easy to find a good vet everywhere. So it's best to be prepared. Take basic training from your own veterinarian so that you know what to do in a situation of distress. Apart from that, always pack extra leashes and bowls, they tend to always get lost somewhere, somehow. Another thing, I would say that keep your dogs in your sight at all times, if you're leaving them off-leash. They are just like kids. Also, always do a quick scan when you reach a new place, whether the place is safe to leave your pet or not.

There have been many travel shows. How do you think this one is different?

Tanveer: I think the charm of the entire show is that it's four individuals on an adventure across India. It's completely self-shot. It's raw and candid. There was not any production team travelling with us. It's not scripted at any level. All the drama that you will see in this series is real. Also, this is the only travel show in India that features dogs in it. It is the first of its kind.

Priyanka: I would say that we have captured India in all its quirkiness. We have covered different cultures and folks, from cities to rural villages, to even the indigenous tribes of India.

We have tried to capture the country in all its glory.

Did you at any point feel like giving up and returning home?

Priyanka: No, not really. What kept us going was the joy of every day being different. There were no two days that were the same. It was very addictive; you wake up in a new place, what you experience, whether it is good, bad, boring or exciting, it's different every day. We were very sad that the trip was coming to an end. We did not want to go back. However, we had already extended our trip by 20 days. Initially, we were supposed to finish it in 100 days but we took 120 days. Even though we wanted to extend it badly, we were running out of funds and had to get back to our work commitments.

What change would you like to see in India to make things better for people travelling with pets?

Tanveer: I think the change has already started happening. A lot more people are going out with their pets and experiencing extremes. Many people have opened pet-friendly resorts and homestays are, of course, a great idea. However, if we had to change one thing, I would ask people to be more comfortable with pets being around. The more people travel with their pets, the more businesses and the hospitality industry will accommodate us. I am not boasting but a lot of people have been inspired by our journey and a lot of people keep updating us on a daily basis that they've started travelling with their pets, especially dogs. Slowly and steadily, we will make India a pet-friendly country.

(The show will premiere on May 31 on Sony BBC Earth at 10 pm.)



CELEB TALK 30 MINUTES

Playback singer **SHALMALI KHOLGADE'S** foray into independent English music has proven fruitful so far. Her song with **SUNIDHI CHAUHAN**, *Here is Beautiful*, was nominated to the Vh1 Summer League 2021 and is in the fray to be declared 2021's Summer Anthem by Vh1. **TEAM VIVA** caught up with Shalmali for a quick chat

Make it big



What got you into music?

There is so much I could say, but I will try to keep this short. I love being on stage and I love singing. That feeling when I get on stage, in front of people, that's the reason why I'm a singer. I like being on the stage more than I like being in a studio. I knew I had to be in the performing arts, since when I was little, but it was in college that I realised I'm going to be a musician.

Which song has been the most challenging one for you and why?

I would say *Here is Beautiful* has been the most challenging one for me, yet. It was challenging in terms of the arrangement of the song since it's not just something that I sing. I composed and wrote it independently. There was a certain maturity that came with this experience since I didn't approach it as I would usually do, as a playback singer. *Here is Beautiful* had a very different sonic soundscape. When I composed it, it was

just on the piano, now it has a totally different avatar from when I first envisioned it.

Tell us about your song — Here is Beautiful? How was it working with Sunidhi Chauhan on this?

My love for my partner was what inspired the song. I wrote it as a gift for him, on a special occasion. I thought having Sunidhi sing it with me would really be the cherry on the cake. She was kind enough to agree and that's how we got down to doing the track, with no intention of releasing it. We had no idea that it would turn out to be so big and that it would be on the Times Square Billboard one day! No, we didn't have any such aspirations in mind, but working with Sunidhi to do something as organic and honest as *Here is Beautiful* made me really happy. Nothing comes close to the experience of working

with your idol. The kind of energy she brings into a room is unparalleled. It is well known how crazy she is about music, she simply can't see anything beyond it. Words fall short in describing the experience of working with her but it's been like a dream come true.

What were your feelings when Here is Beautiful appeared on the Times Square Billboard?

The first time I came across those pictures, I thought for a moment that these were photoshopped; it almost seemed like someone was playing a massive prank on me. When my team called me and said that it was true, that it was actually happening, I was taken aback. I hadn't even dreamt of being on the Times Square Billboard. Not so early into my stint in the independent English music scene, at least.



How do you feel about the song competing with Olivia Rodrigo's Driver's License at Vh1 Summer League 2021?

I'm not a competitive person at all, to begin with. That is why I haven't been on any reality shows or competitions, except for the competitions I signed up for when I was in college. I think this is the first time I'm part of a serious competition and it is making me feel very funny inside. For me, it's a big win just to be on the same page as these incredible artists and I have immense respect for every one of them. To hear my song being talked about in the same vein as Olivia's, I still can't get over this giddy feeling. To be a part of Vh1 Summer League, a platform graced by superstars such as Ariana Grande, The Weeknd and Bruno Mars, in itself is a big win for me.

Having said that, while I am not

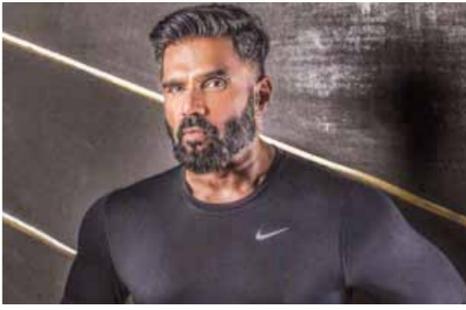
very competitive, I would be bringing everything I've got to the table with this League and I won't give up without a fight!

What's next for you?

Here is Beautiful is a single from my album *2X Side A*. Currently, I am working on my next album *2X Side B*, which will be released later this year. A couple of years back, I composed music for a Marathi film and it is releasing this year. Apart from that, I am really excited that I have several album releases lined up for this year. I'm not satisfied with releasing just one song and talking about that song incessantly. I want to give people an album to listen to because that's how I grew up, listening to albums. I love listening to the entire discography or the complete album that an artiste puts out. I want to be that artiste for others like me.

Family man

Actor **SUNIEL SHETTY** says that it is tough to take out time for your loved ones when you are part of showbiz. However, it isn't impossible



Suniel Shetty was treated to a performance depicting his relationship with his wife Mana Shetty by contestant Amit Kumar and super guru Amardeep during the dance-reality show *Super Dancer: Chapter 4*.

Looking back at his relationship with Mana, Suniel said, "This brings back so many memories. We have been together for nearly 40 years, nine years of seeing each other and 30 years of marriage. Being in this industry, balancing your family life and work is quite difficult and it's not possible unless you have a partner who is strong and believes in you 100 per cent. Hats off to her."

Actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra, who is a judge on the show, shared that she has known Suniel for many years

and has always been impressed with the relationship he shares with his wife.

"I have known Suniel for many years. I had attended his wedding as well, in an attempt to see the famous actor but he wasn't aware of me back then. This was in 1991, before I made my debut. He was a new actor and I felt proud because he belonged to our community and he was the first man from the bunt community to become an actor. That was really inspiring for me. Today also when I see Mana and Suniel, it is very inspiring because they still behave like friends. Mana is an incredible person, and I truly believe that they both are soulmates. She truly is the strength behind him," Shilpa shared on the show.

IND, NZ TO SHARE TROPHY IF WTC FINAL ENDS IN DRAW

PTI ■ DUBAI

India and New Zealand will be adjudged joint winners of the inaugural World Test Championship if their final clash in Southampton ends in a draw or tie, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Friday.

According to the playing conditions unveiled by the global body, "a draw or a tie will see both teams crowned as joint winners..." The ICC has also allocated a Reserve Day to make up for any lost-time during the regular days of the Final, scheduled to be played from 18 to 22 June, with 23 June set aside as the Reserve Day.

"Both of these decisions were made in June 2018, prior to the commencement of the ICC World Test Championship."

The Reserve Day has been scheduled to ensure five full days of play, and it will only be used if lost playing time cannot be recovered through the normal provisions for each day.

"There will be no additional day's play if a positive result is not achieved after five full days of play and the match will be declared a draw in such a scenario," the ICC stated.



In the event of time being lost during the match, the ICC match referee will regularly update the teams and media about the way in which the Reserve Day may be used.

There will be no additional day's play if a positive result is not achieved after five full days of play and the match will be declared a draw in such a scenario

The final decision on whether the Reserve Day needs to be used will be announced at the scheduled start of the last hour on the fifth day.

While India play at home with SG Test and New Zealand use Kookaburra at home, the final will be played with Grade 1 Dukes balls.

The final will also feature the implementation of three changes to international playing conditions, which were brought into effect with the ongoing World Cup Super League series between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka:

Short Runs — The Third Umpire will automatically review any call of a 'short run' by the on-field umpire and communicate the decision prior to the next ball being bowled.

Player Reviews — The fielding captain or the dismissed batsman will be able to confirm with the umpire whether a genuine attempt has been made to play the ball prior to deciding whether to initiate a review for LBW.

DRS Reviews — For LBW reviews, the height margin of the wicket zone has been lifted to the top of the stumps to ensure the same Umpire's Call margin around the stumps for both height and width.

'I didn't realise importance of adding pace to my bowling'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar says he never realised the importance of adding pace to his bowling in his formative years but once he did, it helped him "maintain that swing" which keeps batsmen guessing.

"To be honest, first couple of years I didn't realise pace is something that needs to be added," he said in a video posted by his IPL team SunRisers Hyderabad on its twitter handle.

"As I kept playing, I realised with swing I need to improve my pace because bowling in late 120kph or just 130kph, batsmen were adjusting to the swing. So, I wanted to increase the pace, but I didn't know how to do it..."

The 31-year-old has so far taken 63 wickets in 21 Tests, 138 and 45 scalps in 117 ODIs and 48 T20Is.

"Fortunately, I was able to improve the pace and that



really helped me in the later stages. So yes, when you have pace, not the express 140-plus, but bowling in the mid-130kph helps maintaining that swing and keep the batsman guessing," he said. Bhuvneshwar has been

troubled by injuries and was not considered for the upcoming World Test Championship final against New Zealand in Southampton and the five-match Test series against England.

Allegri In, Pirlo Out

HARSHIT BISHT ■ NEW DELHI

Serie A giants Juventus on Friday reappointed former manager Massimiliano Allegri as new head coach hours after parting ways with Andrea Pirlo.

The former AC Milan and Juventus midfielder Pirlo was sacked as *Bianconeri* failed to retain the *Scudetto* and finished fourth in the Serie A table.

Even though he won Coppa Italia and Supercoppa Italiana in his first job as a manager, a failed bid to win 10th consecutive Serie A title and another disappointing exit from the Champions League (R16 loss against FC Porto) led to his dismissal.

The club released a statement headlined "Good Luck, Andrea Pirlo".

"Pirlo has just begun the first steps of what will no doubt become a brilliant career as a coach," Juventus' statement read.

He followed Maurizio Sarri, who was also sacked last year after the club suffered a shock defeat against French side Lyon in the Champions League round of 16.

"My first season as a manager has ended," Pirlo said on *Instagram*. "It has been an intense, complicated but in any case wonderful year."

After Pirlo's departure, Juve turned back to serial winner Allegri, who won five straight Serie A titles between 2014



and 2019 with *The Old Lady*, including four Serie A and Coppa Italia doubles (2014-2018).

He also reached two Champions League finals in 2015 (vs Barcelona) and in 2017 (vs Real Madrid) but Juve ended up losing both of them. He was fired by the club two years ago.

"WELCOME BACK HOME, MAX! Massimiliano Allegri is the Juventus manager once more," Juventus said in a statement.

"Allegri finds a bench that he knows very well, a club that he loves and that loves him back, as today a new journey begins together, towards new goals."

The 53-year-old has reportedly signed a three-year deal with the club.

Konaté joins Liverpool

HARSHIT BISHT ■ NEW DELHI

Premier League club Liverpool FC on Friday completed the first summer signing after they snapped up young French centre-back Ibrahima Konaté from Bundesliga side RB Leipzig.

The Reds triggered the reported £36 million (\$50 million) release clause in his Leipzig contract.

The France Under-21 international has signed a five-year deal with boss Jürgen Klopp believing him to be the ideal long-term defensive partner for Virgil van Dijk.

Speaking to the club's website, Konaté said: "I'm really happy to be joining such a massive club like Liverpool."

"It's a really exciting moment for me and my family and I am really looking forward to meeting my new teammates, the staff and getting started on this new chapter."

The centre-back, who can also play right-back joined Leipzig in 2017 and made 95 appearances for the club. He was an integral part of the side which reached the Champions League semi-finals in 2020.

"I'm really pleased



we've been able to add a player of Ibrahima's quality to our squad and he is someone I've admired for a long time, ever since I first became aware of his potential," Klopp told the club website.

"After the problems we had with injuries in the centre-half position last season, there's no doubt it was clear it was an area of the team we needed to strengthen."

Klopp believes Konaté's physical qualities make him ideally suited to

the Premier League. "In Ibrahima we are signing a player who will add to the quality we already have here. His physical attributes are very impressive; he is quick, he is very strong and he is dominant in the air."

The 2019-20 Premier League champions had suffered last season due to season-ending injuries to Van Dijk, Joe Gomez and Joël Matip and Konaté's addition is part of a new long term project for the Merseyside club.

Tokyo hopes over for Saina & Srikanth

HARSHIT BISHT ■ NEW DELHI

2012 London Olympic Bronze medalist Saina Nehwal and former world number one Kidambi Srikanth hopes of qualifying for the Tokyo Olympics ended on Friday after Badminton World Federation (BWF) announced there will be no change in the current ranking list and no further tournaments will be played inside the Olympic qualification period.

"The Badminton World Federation (BWF) can confirm no further tournaments will be played inside the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games qualifying window," the sport body said in a statement.

"As such, while the qualification period officially closes 15 June 2021 as per the Revised Tokyo 2020 Qualification System, the current Race To Tokyo rankings list will not change."

Because of the ongoing health crisis, BWF on February 19 had decided to extend the qualification period to June 15 after postponing Malaysia Open Super 750 and Singapore Open Super 500 tournaments to a later date.

But with no improvement in the situation after a brief period too, the tournaments were shelved, which dashed Saina



and Srikanth hopes to earn a chance for qualification.

"The Olympic qualification process is in effect closed as there are no additional opportunities for players to earn points," BWF secretary general Thomas Lund said.

According to the qualification rules, the top 16 players — a maximum of two players each in men's and women's singles from a country — as on June 15 will gain direct entries.

Marin doubtful for Tokyo

HARSHIT BISHT ■ NEW DELHI

2016 Rio Olympic Gold medalist Carolina Marin is in the race to be fit for the Tokyo Olympics after she suffered a freak knee injury on Friday.

The three-time World Champion felt discomfort in her knee during training and after tests it was confirmed that she had an anterior cruciate ligament injury on her left knee.

The world number three announced the news in a Twitter post and said "I'm in the best hands."

"Today I suffered some discomfort during training that caused me to stop training," she said in a statement.

"After the first tests (we had) done, the doctors have realised that it is the anterior cruciate ligament of the left knee that is affected."

"Soon I will be able to give you more information. I am in the best hands, always. Whatever happens, #PuedoPorquePiensoQuePuedo (#ICanBecauseIThinkICan)."

Marin had previously suffered an ACL injury on her right knee on January 27, 2019, which kept her out of the courts for eight months.

AIFF extend Stimac's contract

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) technical committee extended Blue Tigers head coach Igor Stimac's tenure till September on Friday and also replaced Isac Doru with Savio Medeira as the team's interim technical director. "... The committee unanimously decided to extend national team head coach Igor Stimac's contract till September 2021," the AIFF said in a release. The former Croatian international Stimac, who won the Bronze medal with the team

in 1998 FIFA World Cup was appointed in May 2019 on a two years contract which was valid till May 15. At present Stimac is with the Indian team in Doha for upcoming matches in the 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers.

Already out of contention for a World Cup place, India will face Asian champions Qatar on June 3 before taking on Bangladesh (June 7) and Afghanistan (June 15) in their remaining group E matches, with an aim to qualify for the 2023 Asian Cup.

Panghal cruises into final

PTI ■ DUBAI

Defending champion Amit Panghal (52kg), in form Shiva Thapa (64kg) and second seed Sanjeet (91kg) win their respective semifinal bouts to reach the Asian Championship final in Dubai on Friday.

During an intense battle between World Championships Silver medalist Panghal and Bronze medalist Bibossinov, the Indian made a cautious start and tried to keep a distance from the opponent. He looked more aggressive later in the second round and hit some clean punches to put pressure on Bibossinov.

Panghal carried on the momentum throughout the match and stamped his authority over Kazakh boxer to secure a commanding 5-0 win. Aiming to win second successive gold, the

Indian boxer will take on Rio Olympic champion Zoirov Shakhobidin of Uzbekistan in the gold medal match on Monday. India is now assured of at least five Silver medals with four women already making their way into the finals earlier on Thursday at the prestigious event which is jointly hosted by the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) and UAE Boxing Federation. With 15 medals confirmed, Indian contingent also achieved their highest medal haul, surpassing the previous best of 13 (2 gold, 4 silver and 7 Bronze) from the 2019 edition in Bangkok.

On Thursday six-time World Champion Mary Kom (51kg) alongside three more Indian women pugilists-Pooja Rani (75kg), Anupama (+81kg) and Labuatsahi (64kg)-progressed into the finals.

Combat COVID-19 with Home Isolation

Govt. of Haryana

Only You and I can break the Corona Chain

Sh. Manohar Lal
Chief Minister, Haryana

Eligibility for Home Isolation

- In case of asymptomatic or mild symptoms.
- With adequate facility of home isolation and quarantine at patient's home.
- Persons with low immunity are not eligible.
- Elderly above 60 years of age and with sickness are eligible only after medical check-up.

Do's

- Maintain social distance.
- Don't skip meals, instead take 5 to 6 light meals.
- Drink more fluids.
- Avoid outside food, alcohol, tobacco and smoking.
- Set the time to watch TV and connect with friends and family through audio/video calls.
- Fulfill your hobbies and take proper rest.
- Do light exercises according to your health.

Don'ts

- Don't visit public places.
- Don't use public transport.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth or face.
- Don't share water, utensils, towels or bedding with family members.
- Don't visit the elderly due to their low immunity.
- Don't stop home isolation without doctor's advice.
- Don't take stress about your and family members' health, financial condition or job.

Proper use of Pulse Oximeter

Note the Reading if it Doesn't Change on the Oximeter for Five Seconds. Daily Check Your Oxygen Level After Every Four Hours.

Immediately contact doctor if oxygen level is less than 94 percent

सफाई, दवाई और कड़ाई, जीतेंगे कोरोना से लड़ाई

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