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THE CHILD:  
MADHAVAN  
13 VIVACITY

# Bengal Opp badly battered

8 workers of BJP and Left killed; TMC rejects allegation of party's role

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Ruthless attacks on the vanquished Opposition workers continued in West Bengal with at least 8 people losing their lives to alleged Trinamool Congress violence in various parts of the State in the past 24 hours or so, reports said.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee made a public appeal asking the people to remain indoors and refrain from engaging in violence, but political animosity degenerated into bloodshed.

Indian Secular Front worker Hasanur Zaman was repeatedly bombed to death at De Ganga in North 24 Parganas while BJP worker Haran Adhikari was shot in Sonarpur.

Another BJP supporter succumbed to bullet injury at Moynaguri in Jalpaiguri district of North Bengal. A third BJP worker was shot dead at Burapancha village near

Sitalkuchi in Coochbehar where CAPF firing had claimed four lives during the elections.

A woman was bumped off at Ranaghat in Nadia district while a Left supporter was killed in Murshidabad, sources said. Another BJP man was allegedly beaten to death at Belehata in North Kolkata, party men alleged.

Properties, including motorcycles, of BJP and CPI(M) supporters were destroyed at Chakdah, Haringhata and other areas of Nadia district, sources said.

Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh alleged that the houses of BJP men were vandalised and torched at Bhagwanpur and Patashpur in East Midnapore while saffron party offices were torched at Balurghat and North Dinajpur in North Bengal. He appealed to the Chief Minister to "stop this carnage and let the people live in peace."

Ghosh led a team of BJP leaders to meet the Governor at Raj Bhavan. He said, "Elections are over and whatever ill-feeling should now be forgotten... Instead of that our workers and those of some other political parties are being systematically targeted, beaten up, murdered and their properties destroyed. We have been forced to transfer the victims of this violence to other safer places. I request the Chief Minister to order her men to stop this or else we shall be forced to resume campaign from tomorrow."

Refuting the charges, TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said, "Our leader Mamata Banerjee has asked people not to indulge in violence. In none of the cases, the TMC is involved. In fact, it is the fight between the old and the new BJP men. The old BJP men are beating up the new entrants who went from the TMC."

## Nandigram recount was stopped at gunpoint, will move court: Mamata



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addresses the media in Kolkata on Monday

PTI

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The people of West Bengal had put the rulers of Delhi in their place by handing them out a stunning loss in the Assembly elections and this "proves that the BJP is not a shahenshah," Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said.

Mamata will take oath for the third time in a row as Bengal Chief Minister on May 5, senior party leader and Minister of the outgoing State Cabinet Partho Chatterjee said after the TMC Legislator party on Monday unanimously elected her as the Leader of the TMC Legislature Party. She alleged the BJP had

misused the poll body to defeat her but failed, "thanks to the people of Bengal". Refusing to let her anger on the Election Commission die down, Mamata complained how the counting of votes at Nandigram was manipulated at gunpoint to ensure that she lost by a wafer-thin margin.

"I have an SMS with me... it was sent by someone... it said the Returning Officer of Nandigram was forced not to order a recount at gunpoint... he said he had risk his life and family if he ordered a recount... But I will not take it lying down. I will move the court and definitely tell all the officials to preserve VVPAT and other papers," she said.

## India Inc calls for lockdown to save lives

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Supreme Court advised the Central and State Governments to consider a lockdown to break the chain of Covid-19 transmission, prominent industrialist and trader bodies have called for a nationwide shutdown.

Prominent industrialist and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) president Uday Kotak called for the curtailment of economic activity "to reduce suffering" due to the deadly second wave of Covid-19 cases in India.

"At this critical juncture when the toll of lives is rising, the CII urges the strongest national steps, including curtailing economic activity, to reduce suffering," Uday Kotak said in a tweet.

Kotak has asked for the highest-level response measures to address the rising wave of Covid-19 cases, as currently safeguarding lives is key to cut the transmission links. "The healthcare infrastructure and supply build-up are being undertaken on an emergency basis by the Governments at the Centre and States, but will take time," he said.

Earlier, several experts as well as leading economists suggested the Government a nationwide lockdown is the only solution to break the chain of Covid infections. From US epidemiologist Anthony Fauci to AIMS Director Randeep Guleria, all have suggested a complete lockdown.

An online survey con-

### UP EXTENDS LOCKDOWN FOR 2 MORE DAYS

**Lucknow:** The Uttar Pradesh Government has extended the coronavirus-induced curfew in the entire State by two more days, May 6. As per the latest order, the restrictions will remain in place in all 75 districts till May 6 morning. The restrictions were slated to be lifted on May 4 morning. This is the second extension of lockdown-like curfew in the country's most populous State.

ducted by the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) showed that at least 67.5 per cent participants are in favour of nationwide lockdown while 78.2 per cent people have said they agreed that corona has become uncontrollable.

CAIT national president and secretary general Praveen Khandelwal on Monday urged the Prime Minister to immediately impose a nationwide lockdown in order to break the chain of infections during the second Covid-19 wave.

CAIT said in the event of a national lockdown, the trading community across the country will ensure the supply of essential items like last year. Over 9,000 respondents participated in the online survey.

Amid an exponential rise in coronavirus cases, the SC on Sunday urged the Centre and States "to consider imposing a lockdown to break the chain in interest of public welfare".

## IAF plane flies 12 hrs at stretch from Frankfurt to bring oxygen

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sustaining the tempo of airlifting the much-needed oxygen from abroad, an aircraft of the IAF flew non-stop for 12 hours to bring home oxygen from Frankfurt, Germany. The C-17 transport plane ferried four empty cryogenic containers from there and landed at the Hindon airbase, Ghaziabad.

Similarly, another C-17 aircraft airlifted 450 oxygen cylinders from Brize Norton in the UK to the Chennai airbase in Tamil Nadu. In the past few days, the IAF planes carried out numerous sorties to ferry the containers from Singapore, Thailand and United Arab Emirates.

## O2 piles on K'taka agony, 24 die

PTI ■ BENGALURU

In yet another hospital tragedy in the country in recent days, 24 patients, 23 of them Covid-infected, died in Karnataka's Chamarajanagar due to alleged oxygen shortage in the last 24 hours, with the Government warning of stringent action against those found guilty.

The Government ordered a probe into the matter and appointed senior IAS officer Shivayogi Kalasad as the inquiry officer.

Following the incident, Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa convened a meeting with oxygen producers, where a number of decisions were taken to ensure supply of allocated quantity of oxygen to the State by the Centre. Among these



Relatives grieve after death of Covid patients due to shortage of oxygen cylinders in Chamarajanagara District of Karnataka on Monday

PTI

were to reduce the time taken to refill oxygen tankers, provide a green corridor for faster commuting of oxygen tankers and avoid unnecessary delay at toll gates. Utilising the service

of the LPG tanker tanker drivers in case of emergency was also another important decision.

Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar maintained that only

three people had died due of oxygen shortage and not 24 as reported, though he stressed that the probe would reveal the truth.

The incident evoked a sharp response from the Congress, with party leader Rahul Gandhi wondering "how much more suffering before the 'system' wakes up."

In heart-breaking episodes preceding today's incident in the country, a fire at a mall in Mumbai housing a Covid-designated hospital in March left nine, including those on ventilators, dead, while 22

Covid-19 patients who were either on ventilator or oxygen support, suffocated to death when their oxygen supply stopped suddenly due to a malfunction in the main storage at a civic hospital in Nashik.

## Mild Covid patients need not rush for CT-scan: AIIMS



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With people rushing for computerised tomography scan (CT-scan) at the slightest sign of Covid-19 symptom, the Government has asked them not to do so as it can have health side-effects as serious as cancer besides causing holes in their pocket.

"In mild Covid-19 illness CT-scan is not needed, rather it can result in cancer in young people in their later stage of life. One CT-scan is equivalent to 300 chest x-rays, it's very harmful," said AIIMS director and pulmonologist Dr Randeep Guleria.

CT scan and markers are being misused. A lot of people are getting CT scans done. There is no use of the scan in the early stages, as it will not detect Covid properly in mild cases, Dr Guleria said.

Guleria, who is also a member of the national pandemic task force, added blood

... it can result in cancer in young people in their later stage of life. One CT-scan is equivalent to 300 chest x-rays, it's very harmful"

tests can't always prove Covid infections as other underlying diseases can also trigger a spike in biomarkers.

The CT-scan machine takes cross-sectional images of the body using computers and rotating X-ray machines. They are being used to detect Covid infections by detecting signs of pneumonia or white patches in the lungs. More people are relying on the expensive scan than last year as reports suggest the mutant variants of the virus can go undetected in the gold standard RT-PCR test.

## Take criticism by Madras HC in right spirit, SC tells EC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday rejected the pleas of Election Commission of India to ban media reporting on the Madras High Court's observations that the poll panel was singularly responsible for Covid-19 deaths and it should be booked for murder.

Justices DY Chandrachud and MR Shah advised the EC to take the criticism by the Madras High Court in the right spirit. "The ECI is a sea-



soned constitutional body which has been entrusted with functions of conducting the elections. We cannot in today's times say media will not report the discussions that take place in court," the Bench said.

The Bench went on to point out that the discussions that take place in the courts are of importance and are in pub-

lic interest. "It's not a monologue that one person will speak and then judges will speak. We have an Indian pattern of arguments in court... There is an aspect of the application of mind. First prayer of don't report what is said in court was farfetched," said Justice Chandrachud rejecting the EC plea.

"When something is observed, it's in the larger public interest. They (Judges) are also humans and they are also stressed... Take this in the correct spirit," said Justice

## Kalaaignar at Stalin's coronation!

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu's sombre mood due to Covid-19 pandemic gave way to celebrations, music, dance and bursting of firecrackers since Sunday evening when it was known that MK Stalin would form the next government as the DMK won a comfortable majority in the legislative Assembly polls.

By late Sunday evening, the DMK headquarters and Stalin's personal bungalow came under a security blanket as the cops of the State Armed Police took over the entire route.

Limousines with Government number plates were the first ones to reach Stalin's house and since then there has been no end to the number of visitors calling in. DMK cadre from all over the State flooded the party headquarters as the route to Stalin's residence was completely taken over by security men.



It was fun, music and dance everywhere. Party activists with pictures of Stalin pinned to their pockets (a show of obeisance to Thalappathy, as Stalin is addressed by friends and cadre) were seen

distributing sweets to all those who had visited the party headquarters.

Iniyavan, popularly known as Idli King of Tamil Nadu, had come to the party office to pay

his respect to the Chief Minister designate. He made the day a memorable one to all those who had come to the party headquarters with a special gift. A specially made idli, aptly titled

Kalaaignar Idli, was Iniyavan's gift to Stalin. It took him and four of his assistants nearly ten hours to cook the idli which resembled the face of M Karunanidhi, the former Chief Minister and Stalin's father.

"This is a special idli and not for consuming. It has nine kinds of grains engraved on it with colouring agents approved by the Food and Drug Agency. This is our tribute to Karunanidhi as well as a welcome gift for Stalin," said Iniyavan, who holds a world record in the different varieties of idlis. Iniyavan can make more than 100 varieties of idlis, namely, chocolate idli, coconut idli, vanilla idli, jasmine idli, carrot idli and a host of steam cakes with different flavours.

Leaders of political outfits who called on Stalin in the party headquarters that include Vaiko, Thirumavalavan and communist party bosses took time off to see the new idli made by Iniyavan.

### CAPSULE

#### COVID HITS IPL: KKR-RCB MATCH POSTPONED

**New Delhi:** A Covid-19 outbreak left the star-sprinkled IPL on tenterhooks as Kolkata Knight Riders' Varun Chakravarty and Sandeep Warrier tested positive for the dreaded virus, forcing postponement of their game against Royal Challengers Bangalore, while cases also came to light in the Chennai Super Kings camp.

#### DELHI RECORDS MAX TEMP OF 39.7 DEGREES C

**New Delhi:** The national Capital on Monday recorded a maximum temperature of 39.7 degrees Celsius, one notch above the season's normal, according to the India Meteorological Department. The Safdarjung Observatory, which provides representative figures for the city, recorded a minimum temperature at 24.3 degrees Celsius. Partly cloudy sky with possibility of thunder and lightning is expected in the city on Tuesday, the IMD said.



# Honorarium of frontline, health workers raised by 25 per cent

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a bid to encourage and honour the tireless and unparallel contribution of all frontline and healthcare workers of the state, the Yogi Adityanath government has announced to raise their monthly honorarium by 25 per cent.

“During such challenging and testing times, the frontline and healthcare workers stood like shields, battling courageously and selflessly to protect and save the people and improve the condition of the state. Their contribution is unparallel. The government is committed to providing all support and will continue to encourage the frontline workers,” the chief minister said while praising the consistent efforts of the medical staff.

Emphasising that vaccination is the biggest weapon in the fight against coronavirus, Yogi urged the doctors to

encourage more and more patients to get vaccinated.

Highlighting the contribution of frontline and healthcare workers, the chief minister also stressed that because of their constant efforts, the state was not only been able to conduct maximum Covid tests that brought down transmission levels of the infection, but the state was also improving in terms of recovered patients as recovery rate was getting better consistently. Besides, as result of regular tele-consultation and timely provision of medicine kits, the patients in home isolation have also been recovering at a rapid pace.

“UP has an excellent experience of Covid management and our policies have even received global acclaim. With the contribution of frontline and healthcare workers, our victory in this battle against COVID-19 is certain. Every citizen of the state has an important role to play. Compliance

with Covid protocol is in everyone’s interest. Masks, sanitisation and physical distancing have to be included in our lifestyle,” the CM said.

Frontline and healthcare workers expressed gratitude to the chief ministers’ appreciation and increasing their financial incentives.

President of UP Pharmacists Federation Sunil Yadav and general secretary of Government Nurses’ Association Ashok Kumar welcomed the state government’s decision and said that the CM’s decision would encourage and will give a lot of confidence, hope and boost to thousands of workers and staff members working day and night amid the ongoing pandemic.

It is pertinent to note that an additional honorarium of 25 percent along with their basic pay will be paid to all frontline workers, working currently, including more than 8,000 pharmacists and nurses across

the state, over 12,000 doctors, more than 3,000 lab technicians, more than 1000 X-ray technicians, 2,000 health workers of NMH and all doctors, nurses, ward boys and other paramedical staff engaged in Covid care duty. Those serving as volunteers to treat Covid patients will get an increased 25 percent honorarium from the prevailing NHM rate per day.

Intensifying measures to curb the spread of the deadly virus and to increase manpower in the hospitals, the Yogi government has announced to rope in final year medical and paramedical students. The state government has also announced a special package to encourage their contribution and to equip the state with a trained man force. Final year medical students will not only be able to gain experience but will also be provided many other fruitful opportunities along with encouraging incentives.

## Covid patient among 5 of family killed in mishap

**Lucknow (PNS):** Five members of a family, including a critical Covid patient, were killed while another injured when a car rammed into a roadside tree under Nigoha police station area of Shahjahanpur on NH 24 on Monday.

Superintendent of Police (SP), Rural, Sajeev Bajpai said that the family was returning from Bareilly to Shahjahanpur along with a critical Covid patient when the mishap occurred near Lauda village.

In the accident, Ramnaresh (55), his wife and Covid patient Jamuka Devi (50), son Kaushendra (35), elder brother Hira Lal (60) and driver Vijay (35) were killed on the spot. Ram Gulam (42) was critically injured and was admitted to hospital. The family that went to Bareilly for treatment of Jamuka Devi was returning to Shahjahanpur after she was discharged from the hospital due to shortage of oxygen.

# BJP, SP claim success in panchayat polls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Even while the counting was underway, the ruling BJP and main opposition Samajwadi Party claimed success of their candidates in the panchayat elections.

UP BJP vice-president and incharge of Panchayat polls, Vijay Bahadur Pathak claimed in Lucknow on Monday that the candidates supported by the party have won in over 60 per cent seats of member district panchayat and member kshetra panchayt in the state and it will further increase when all results were declared by Monday afternoon.

“The party’s official candidates have performed as per expectation and even some rebel too have won. We are assessing the situation and a detailed report would be issued soon,” Pathak said. Though the political parties have fielded their candidates in the panchayat polls but party symbols were not used.

SP spokesperson Rajendra Chaudhary claimed that party candidates performed well in the Panchayat polls. “Our candidates have swept the polls in Etawah, Mainpuri, Azamgarh, Prayagraj and several other districts,” he said.

However, the State Election Commission confirmed that senior SP leader and Leader of Opposition in UP Assembly Ramgovind Chaudhary’s son Ranjit Chaudhary lost the election for zila panchayat member from Ward 16 of Ballia district.

Meanwhile in Mainpuri, BJP suffered a setback as party candidate and Mulayam Singh’s niece Sandhya Yadav lost to SP candidate Pramod Kumar by a margin of 19.07 votes. Sandhya is the sister of former SP MP MP Dharmendra Yadav.

In the 30- member district panchayat seats of Mainpuri, the SP won five and was leading in 11 seats while the BJP won 2 and leading in four others. Senior BJP leader and UP cabinet minister Ramapati Shastri’s nephew lost the pradhan elections in Mankapur area of Gonda district while BJP’s Harriya MLA in Basti, Ajay Singh’s sister-in-law lost the elections of member Kshetra Panchayat .

A dispute rose in Unnao during counting of votes on Monday morning when less ballot papers were found in the box. The ballot box of Banthar village in Sikendrapur , when opened, only 194 ballot papers were found when in the register it was noted that 140 people of the total 244 of Ward Number 2 had voted.



Winners pose for a picture on Monday

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## More than half-a-dozen dead before being declared elected

**Lucknow (PNS):** In a sad end to the panchayat elections, more than half-a-dozen candidates died before they could be declared elected. Repoll will now be held on these seats. Pinky, who contested for the village pradhan’s post in Kurawall of Mainpuri, won the election on Sunday but before the counting process started, she had passed away. In Rasoolpur village of Firozabad, Babulal was declared elected but he had died on April 25.

Savita won the gram panchayat election in Naura village of Amroha on Sunday but lost the battle for life two days ago. In Bhogala village of Unnao, Shivkali also won the elections but died two days before she could be declared elected. In Jaunpur’s Ramnagar block, Ram Chandra died before he was declared elected the village

head. Vimla Devi in Kapuri Ekauna village in Deoria died an hour before counting began on Sunday. She was declared elected hours after her cremation took place. In Barhalganj in Gorakhpur, Pawn Sahni won the election from Jaitpur village but did not live to see himself elected.

In some other districts, winning candidates died though their details were not immediately available. According to reports, most of the candidates died due to Covid-like symptoms but none of them had got themselves tested or treated because they did not wish to be barred from the counting process. State Election Commission (SEC) officials said that the process for repoll would begin after the counting process concluded.

In Chitrakoot, jailed former bandit Radhe alias Subedar Singh’s son Aridaman Singh was elected the pradhan of Shitalpur Tauraha village. Subedar was the right-hand man of dreaded dacoit Dadua and is presently lodged in jail. Elections were held for 58,194 gram pradhan, 7,31,813 gram panchayat members, 75,808 BDC members and 3050 DDC members.

Till late Sunday night, 11,2358 posts of gram panchayat members, 16,510 gram pradhans and 35,812 BDC members’ results were declared. There were mismanagement and crowd at every counting centre on the morning of Sunday when counting started even after strict directive by the Supreme Court. People thronged the counting centres and there were rampant violation of the Covid norms.

A total of 829 counting centres were set up to count the votes of 12, 89,830 candidates in the fray. Polling for 58,189 village panchayats of Uttar Pradesh took place in four phases, between April 15 and 29, with polling percentage ranging between 72 to 75 per cent . Termed as a semi final before the 2022 Assembly polls on the state, Panchayat elections have engaged all political parties for the first time.

Meanwhile, even after 36 hours, the Uttar Pradesh SEC could not complete the counting of ballot papers. Till Monday evening, results were declared of 23,2612 gram panchayat members, 38,317 pradhans, 55,926 kshetra panchayat members and 181 District Development Council (DDC) members.

Of the total 3,050 member district6 panchayat seats in the state, counting have been completed in 2,357 seats in which BJP had won in 699 places, SP in 689 , BSP in 266 and Congress in 66. Independents have also won in 637 seats. The SEC officials said that counting process is underway but due to Covid norms, the announcement of the results have been delayed.

## SDM Bareilly succumbs to coronavirus

**Lucknow (PNS):** Sub-Divisional Magistrate at Bareilly, Dr Prashant Kumar of 2018 PCS batch succumbed to the novel coronavirus on Monday. He joined as SDM in Bareilly in April. A batch mate of Dr Prashant from Lucknow said that their training at Lucknow had been aborted after a few candidates had tested positive and they were asked to join their respective districts. “Dr Prashant had tested positive and his condition worsened and he was put on ventilator support. It was decided that he would be airlifted by an air ambulance but unfortunately because of the inclement weather he could not be airlifted. The batch mates had contributed for the air ambulance,” said a batch mate of the SDM.

The batch had been given appointment letters in March in a programme organised at the Lok Bhawan which was followed by a training course that concluded on April 8.



### NOTICE

Neeta Devi, Record/Service document spouse of L/NK Shiv Narayan Tiwari (Service No. 13963496L), Resident of vill. Badauri, Post Kalyanpur, Distt. Fatehpur (UP). have correction/ change of Date of Birth 10/10/1968 to 26/11/1965 vide affidavit dated 30/04/2021 before notary of tahsil Bindki, Fatehpur.

### NOTICE

I Neeta Devi (existing name of spouse as per change of Next of Kin Record Service document) spouse of L/NK Shiv Narayan Tiwari (Service No. 13963496L), Resident of vill. Badauri, Post Kalyanpur, Distt. Fatehpur (UP) have changed name from Neeta Devi to Neeta Tiwari proposed aclopted new name vidi affidavit dated 30/04/2021 before notary of tahsil Bindki, Fatehpur.

# Health experts to help Team-9

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi government will set up a team of health experts to advise the Team-9 on Covid control in the state. The Team-9 consisting of ministers and senior officers has been the core group to address the issues in the wake of corona crisis and meets daily under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Reputed doctors from SGPGL, KGMU and RMLIMS will join the advisory committee. Yogi instructed the Medical Education and Health department to take necessary action in this regard.

Addressing a high-level Team-9 meeting on Monday, the CM said that the current strain of coronavirus has constantly been changing and is 30 to 50 times more infectious than it was in the first wave.

“In some cases, it has been observed that the virus is not detected in TruNat, antigen and RT-PCR tests



A Covid patient being taken to Lok Bandhu Hospital in Lucknow on Monday

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even though its presence in lungs is confirmed through a CT scan. Such a problem has also been observed in people without symptoms,” he pointed out. He stressed on the

need to have medical expertise to make further strategies.

He said an advisory panel of health experts should prepare necessary strategies on Covid containment. This

panel will be able to provide advice to the state-level Team-9 from time to time and the consultation of health experts will be useful in formulating strategy.

## BBAU to start foundation course in yoga

**Lucknow (PNS):** Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University is going to start a foundation course in yoga from May 21 in association with the Indian Yoga Association. The BBAU spokesperson said that the duration of this foundation course would be 50 hours and this course was supported by the Union AYUSH Ministry.

“This foundation course from May 21 to June 21 will be run in four batches of 50 hours each. The first batch will start from May 21 and the three other batches will be conducted from May 31, June 11 and June 21 respectively, so that the maximum number of people can get its benefit. This certificate course will be conducted online in which basic education of yoga will be imparted. Anyone between 16 years of age or older can apply for this foundation course,” the spokesperson said.

# BSP, Cong for free Covid treatment, vaccination

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Thee Bahujan Samaj Party and UP Congress said that the Yogi government should come forward and facilitate free treatment and vaccination besides helping the people with free supply of foodgrains and other essentials items till the pandemic is controlled.

In a tweet on Monday morning, BSP chief Mayawati demanded free Covid vaccines for all and free treatment for the poor. “Rising above party politics, all parties should demand that the Central government bear all expenses for the treatment of COVID-affected poor and weaker sections and administer the vaccine free of cost,” Mayawati tweeted in Hindi.

She said that if the Centre refuses to accept this, respective state governments must take up

the responsibility themselves by cutting down on non-essential expenditure. She also appealed to all political parties to rise above political lines to fight with the deadly infection and it would find strong support from her party.

Demanding free foodgrains along with monetary help of Rs 6000 per month to each family member of weaker sections, UP Congress spokesman Ashok Singh said in Lucknow on Monday that after lockdown during the first corona wave, a big section of the society was faced with financial crunch and now the second wave has shattered their courage on fighting the pandemic along with feeding their families and bearing monthly expenses.

Singh said that a large number of people had lost their jobs during the lock-

down while daily wage earners were the worst sufferers as no economical activity was underway. He said that it was the government’s responsibility to ensure that proper medical treatment was provided to each patient and ensure that no one died of hunger.

The Congress spokesman claimed that to ensure these basic relieves, the government must ensure free treatment to all poor and needy and provide free foodgrains and a monthly economic package till normal economic activities were back on track. He also appealed the UP government to focus on measures to extend immediate relief to the people, instead of criticising opposition parties for raising the voice of the people and highlighting failures of the administration in providing proper medical care to patients.

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# 3,058 test positive, 26 die

## DM constitutes Team-9 for containment

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow reported 3,058 fresh cases and 26 deaths in the last 24 hours. However, the encouraging part was that 5,686 patients recovered during this period. With the fresh recoveries, 1,76,136 people have defeated the coronavirus in the city so far and 36,384 patients are undergoing treatment in hospitals and in home isolation.

Besides, in the 2.29 lakh tests carried out in UP in the last 24 hours, 29,192 people tested positive while 38,687 patients recovered during the same period. However, 288 patients lost their battle to coronavirus across the state.

The surge can be gauged from the fact that in the last 17 days, the caseload has increased almost two-and-a-half times. On April 15, there were 1,29,848 people infected with coronavirus in the state and the number has increased to 2,85,832 in a fortnight.

The situation in Lucknow, Prayagraj, Jhansi, Gorakhpur and Chandauli remains critical as most of the deaths have been reported from these districts.

Meanwhile, 1,446 fresh cases were detected in Gautam Buddha Nagar, 1,404 in Moradabad, 1,311 in Kanpur, 1,222 in Saharanpur, 1,097 each in Gorakhpur & Amroha, 1,022 in Varanasi, 994 in Jhansi, 858 in Prayagraj and 833 in Meerut. As many as 25 patients died in Prayagraj, 21 in Jhansi, 19 in Gorakhpur, 17 each in Kanpur & Chandauli, 13 in Gautam Buddha Nagar and 11 in Varanasi.

Additional Chief Secretary, Health, Amit Mohan Prasad said that vaccinations are



People wait in a queue outside an oxygen plant in Talkatora area on Monday

Pioneer

underway in the state and those in the age group of 18-44 years are also getting the jabs. So far, 1,03,57,498 people have been given the first dose of vaccine while 23,76,640 have taken both the jabs.

Uttar Pradesh created a record by increasing the number of samples tested to 2.29 lakh. Earlier on April 24, 1,86,000 tests were done, of which only 38,000 people (22 per cent) were found infected. Now with 2.29 lakh tests and 20,192 positive cases, the positivity rate has come down to 10 per cent.

Out of the total tests, 1,29,026 were done through RT-PCR. Of these, 88,753 tests were conducted in medical colleges while 3,642 in district hospitals. As many as 22,518 samples were tested in central laboratories and 14,113 in private labs.

Meanwhile, for the effective containment of the second wave of the novel coronavirus infection, the district magistrate has constituted Team-9 comprising nine sub-committees to look into arrangements of ICU and oxygen beds in hospitals, effective monitoring of Integrated Covid Control and

Command Centre, proper supply of oxygen and availability of drugs. The committee for looking into proper supply of oxygen includes ADM-I, Transport Officer RP Dwivedi and Drug inspectors Brijesh Kumar Yadav and Madhuri Singh.

The district magistrate said that these committees were free to include and co-opt any expert in their teams and would submit their reports regularly to the district administration.

Meanwhile, Minister Medical Education Suresh Khanna and Covid incharge for Lucknow district Roshan Jacob inspected the oxygen bed facility being created in the psychiatric ward of King George's Medical University. During the inspection they were informed that the work was almost complete and only the installation of an oxygen supply network was left. Jacob directed the officials to complete the work within ten days.

She said that apart from these 140 beds, the KGMU was shifting three surgical areas to create an additional facility of 127 oxygenated beds within the next 48 hours so that the patients could get treatment at

the earliest.

Meanwhile, a senior doctor at the CMO office said that a good number of coronavirus positive senior citizens are recovering in home isolation in the district. "One must not fear and panic as most of the patients recover in home isolation and very few require hospitalisation. For speedy recovery, one must remain relaxed, live a healthy lifestyle, take the prescribed medicines, steam inhalation, saline gargles and continue the medicines for other diseases such as hypertension and diabetes after consulting the doctor on telephone. Ideally, these patients with comorbidities should be in hospital but if they have opted for home isolation they should remain in touch with the doctor," he said.

The official admitted that the maximum patients who were recovering were in home isolation. When asked how many COVID-19 patients in home isolation required oxygen, he said that they had not made any assessment in this regard. He added that the number of patients in home isolation had reduced to approximately 36,000.

## Containment in rural areas from tomorrow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Surveillance activities for the containment of coronavirus in rural areas of Lucknow will begin from May 5. Additional Director, Health, Dr DS Bajpai, who is overseeing the Covid containment activities in Lucknow, said it is being done in view of the increased number of cases in rural areas.

However, he pointed out that the positivity rate of Lucknow from 30 per cent last week has come down to 15-20 per cent at present. "The cases have also come down in Lucknow from over 6,000 per day to an average of 3,000," he added. Dr Bajpai said the areas to be covered under surveillance activities include Mall, Malihabad, BKT, Mohanlalganj, Itaunja, Gosainganj and Sarojinagar. "The number of teams are being finalised and they will consist of ASHA and Aanganwadi workers. Training is also being imparted to district-level officers, ASHA and Aanganwadi workers. A micro-plan is being prepared and it will be ready soon," he said.

He said the containment



activities would be carried out for till May 9. "Surveillance activities are extremely essential to control the pandemic because those who are positive may not be knowing so. The teams will visit each house with some questions, filling in the forms to find out how many people have influenza-like illness, problems related to respiratory distress and also whether they are suffering from hypertension and diabetes," Dr Bajpai said.

They will distribute medicine kits and brief the people in detail on what to do and what not to do. He said they are strengthening surveillance, increasing testing and treat-

ment facilities in the district. "Hopefully, the Chinhat Covid facility will also be started soon and one or two other hospitals will be started, easing the availability of beds," he said. Talking about the oxygen crisis in the district, he said there has been no such issue for a couple of days.

"Nearly 45 ton oxygen has arrived and we do not have any crisis. In fact, there was no crisis but it was created because of the panic situation. Every patient in the Lucknow is getting oxygen, whatever may be the arrangements. The demand has increased because people have started using oxygen at home. That demand was never there

earlier. It was the biggest challenge that we had two weeks back, and it is now easing because the government is providing us 200 oxygen concentrators," he said.

Dr Bajpai said there is no need to panic because there are sufficient beds and adequate medicines and oxygen supply, and with the surveillance activity starting soon, it would give out the ground reality for starting further activities in accordance with the prevalence of the virus.

"We are testing 30,000 to 40,000 samples per day in Lucknow," he added.

On rapid response teams and surveillance teams not being visible in the areas where they are supposed to be moving, he said it was a problem which existed about two weeks back. "There were a number of infections and all of a sudden there was a burst of cases, and it was found that after a person tested positive, it had to be fed in the portal. There was a gap which has been filled up now. Now the moment a person tests positive, the entry is made in the portal and a team visits the house the next day," he said.

## One lakh slots booked for vaccination of 18+

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

One lakh people in the 18+ age group have already registered and booked their slots across the state in the Covid vaccination exercise for this age group which commenced from Monday.

State Immunisation Officer Dr Ajay Ghai said that they would increase the number of vaccination centres after May 8 and also include private centres. "The vaccination campaign is currently running at 86 centres of the state and these will be increased after May 8," he said.

Dr Ghai said that they had received one consignment of the vaccine and would shortly receive the other consignment for the vaccination exercise



A youth taking vaccine jab at RMLIMS in Lucknow on Monday

Pioneer

UP, he said, had vaccinated 1.27 crore people but was still behind the state of Maharashtra.

ment for the vaccination exercise

## Mystery shrouds death of 70-year-old man

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Mystery shrouded the death of a 70-year-old preacher (Baba) whose body was found lying in a hut in Mathura on Sunday. Senior officers along with local police rushed to the spot after learning of the incident and started investigations.

As per reports, Bholamber of Fateh hamlet of Khair (Aligarh) had shifted to Mathura about a decade back and started living in a house in Vanshibat locality of Math in Mathura. In due course, he made several followers who used to visit his house to know about their future and ways to come out of miseries. On Sunday, when some people reached his house they were shocked to find Bholamber dead in a pool of blood and immediately called the police.

The victim seems to be hacked with a sharp-edged weapons after a struggle. The miscreants also pulled out his long beard causing facial injuries. SHO of Math police station Bheem Singh said that his

family and some local residents were contacted to confirm whether the victim had any enmity with anyone that could have led to his brutal killing. The police were clueless about any murder motive.

Meanwhile in Chitrakoot, a cricket match between children turned fatal when lightning suddenly struck leaving two players dead and causing burns to several others in Shikwa hamlet of Kota Kaidela police station area on Sunday evening.

As per reports, some teenagers were playing cricket in a field in Chitrakoot when lightning struck the ground in leaving Ramdayal (17) and Ashesh Kumar (12) dead, while Ankit (19), Brijesh Kumar (20), Deendayal (13), Golu (12) were critically injured. They were all rushed to a Community Health Centre (CHC) in Manikpur. CHC in-charge Dr Manish Kumar confirmed that two of the youths were brought dead while the remaining four were admitted and were undergoing treatment.

## Manager of petrol pump shot dead

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Thirty-year-old Jaswant Singh, who was a resident of Nigoha, was shot dead by unidentified miscreants while he was returning home from his workplace near Bhairampur Naharia under Mohanlalganj police station on Monday afternoon. He was the manager of a petrol pump in Sisendi. A foreign-made pistol and an empty shell were recovered from the spot while the deceased's motorcycle was found parked few yards away from the crime scene.

Police said Singh sustained bullet injuries in the head. The body remained lay there for a long time as it was a lonely passage. The body was noticed by some youth and one of them informed police. The victim was identified by a farmer, who is a regular customer of the petrol pump. He informed the deceased family about the incident. He is survived by father Arun Singh, wife Mamta and sons Arpit & Ashmit. Arun Singh said his son

did not have any enmity with anyone as he would always keep to himself. Interestingly, there were no signs of resistance by the victim on the spot. A purse was found from his pocket and it contained few currency notes, Aadhaar card, driving licence and some other documents. The victim was said to have been upset for the past two days as one of the petrol pump attendants had stealthily taken away Rs 8,000 from his cash bag and did not report back.

Meanwhile, a gang involved in taking orders online to supply Remdesivir injections and medical oxygen cylinders to people in need was busted. Forty per cent of the amount was asked for in advance and the rest was supposed to be taken after delivery, but the orders were never delivered. It was racket to earn fast bucks taking advantage of the prevalent crisis. The police claimed to have busted the gang but no one was detained or arrested.

## Portion of Lal Baradari at LU collapses

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A portion of Lal Baradari, the heritage building at Lucknow University, collapsed following rains and strong winds late Sunday night. While authorities said they have been contacting all government agencies for repair of the monument for a year, heritage lovers said they knew it was in store considering the dilapidated state of the building.

Heritage activist also said that with the current pandemic, there is little hope that some damage control could be done. Lal Baradari stands with its magnificent façade bang in the middle of the university and is a cynosure of all eyes. Built by Nawab Naziruddin Haider, the second king of Awadh in 1830, the monument was a part of Badshah Bagh, which came to be known as Canning College and then Lucknow University.

Incidentally, the building is neither under the Archaeological Survey of India nor State Archaeology Department, which has also delayed its conservation.

Lucknow University Vice-Chancellor Prof Alok Kumar Rai said that a very small por-



tion of the building collapsed. "The communication regarding the state of affairs of the monument has already been made to the authorities concerned. This is a heritage building and we cannot touch it. We have raised this concern with both the Centre and state government, but we have yet to receive any response. Communication has been going on for a year and we will again apprise the government of the incident to seek support or directions," he said.

Asked about the citizen's initiative which was started some time back for restoration of Lal Baradari, he said they

had received a proposal from an organisation which estimated the cost in crores and it was also forwarded to the Ministry of Culture.

The LU vice-chancellor said it was a very small portion which gave way, but their concern was whether they should touch the building. "The wall is in a dilapidated state and it was a miniscule portion which caved in," he added.

President of Lucknow University Teachers' Association (LUTA) Vineet Kumar Verma said it was unfortunate that it happened during the centenary year of the university.

"This monument has been in a dilapidated state for around 10 years. It was one of the main buildings of Badshah Bagh and its entrance was through the Machhli Dwar at the back. It is unfortunate that we were unable to protect the monument even though it required a minimum of Rs 20-25 lakh for restoration," he said.

Former professor from History department of LU, PK Ghosh said it was expected and he was not surprised. "I was expecting it because there was a wide breach in the monument. Nobody took care of the monument and presently too, no one will take care of it because the country is facing such a major problem," he said.

He said a huge amount of money was required for conservation of this monument. Giving the details of the history, he said Lal Baradari was a part of the marbled structure Mubarak Mahal, which was constructed close to it and it is the only remnant of the building. "We tried our best to conserve it but nobody took any interest. Personally, no one can afford the amount which is required for the restoration," he added.

### प्रधानमंत्री गरीब कल्याण अन्न योजना के अन्तर्गत

### प्रदेश के अन्त्योदय एवं पात्र गृहस्थी लाभार्थियों को मई व जून 2021 दो माह का निःशुल्क खाद्यान्न वितरण

अन्त्योदय अन्न योजना के अन्तर्गत 40,94,500 कार्डधारक से सम्बद्ध कुल यूनिट	प्रति व्यक्ति 5 किग्रा. खाद्यान्न (3 किग्रा. गेहूँ व 2 किग्रा. चावल) का प्रतिमाह निःशुल्क वितरण	पात्र गृहस्थी योजना के अन्तर्गत 3,17,70,844 कार्डधारक से सम्बद्ध कुल यूनिट
1,30,07,969		13,41,77,983

**दो माह के लिए कुल 14.71 लाख मी. टन खाद्यान्न का प्रधानमंत्री गरीब कल्याण अन्न योजना के अन्तर्गत निःशुल्क वितरण**

- खाद्यान्न का वितरण पर्यवेक्षकीय अधिकारी की उपस्थिति में पारदर्शी ढंग से ई-पॉस मशीन द्वारा आधार प्रमाणीकरण कराते हुए किया जायेगा।
- प्रधानमंत्री गरीब कल्याण अन्न योजना का खाद्यान्न राष्ट्रीय खाद्य सुरक्षा अधिनियम योजना के अन्तर्गत वितरित खाद्यान्न के अतिरिक्त दिया जायेगा।
- कोविड महामारी के संक्रमण से बचाव हेतु कोविड प्रोटोकॉल के अन्तर्गत सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग का कड़ाई से अनुपालन सुनिश्चित कराते हुए वितरण कार्य सुचारु रूप से सुनिश्चित किया जायेगा।
- कार्डधारक मारक लगायें तथा सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग का अनुपालन करते हुए ही राशन प्राप्त करें।

**वन नेशन-वन कार्ड योजना के अन्तर्गत पात्र लाभार्थियों व प्रवासी मजदूरों को पोर्टबिलिटी के माध्यम से प्रदेश के किसी भी उचित मूल्य दुकान से अपना खाद्यान्न प्राप्त करने की सुविधा**

**घबराने की नहीं है बात सरकार खड़ी है साथ**

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कोविड-19 का टीका लगाने के लिए [www.cowin.gov.in](http://www.cowin.gov.in) या आरोग्य सेतु एप पर रजिस्टर करें।

**खाद्य एवं रसद विभाग उत्तर प्रदेश**



# Results of 90 pc seats of pradhan, gram panchayat members declared

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The counting for three-tier Panchayat polls continued on the second day on Monday and the results of more than 90 per cent seats of gram pradhan, members of gram panchayat and kshetra panchayat was declared but the result of the members of zila panchayat was yet to be declared till the filling of this report.

The counting of votes for the seats of gram pradhan and members of gram panchayat, kshetra panchayat and zila panchayat had begun at 8 am on Sunday last and it is still continuing till the filling of this report. The counting was slow almost in all the blocks and thus it took more time in completing.

Out of total 694 seats of gram pradhan, the result of 656 seats was declared and similarly, out of total 1007 seats of kshetra panchayat, the result of 930 seats was declared but no result of 40 seats of zila panchayat was declared till the last news came in. Monika Pathak became the youngest gram pradhan as she won the election of Odawar gram panchayat of Pimdra block just at

the age of 21 years. Surendra Kumar was elected as gram pradhan of Thathara gram panchayat in Sevapuri block and he got the record 1,922 votes. Yogendra Kumar was elected as gram pradhan of Rasulaha gram panchayat of Sevapuri block for the fourth time in succession. Two brothers contested the election to each other for the gram pradhan of Basantput gram panchayat of Pindra block but the younger brother Ram Moorat Ram defeated his brother Ramsurat by a margin of 416 votes. Ram Moorat bagged 1,313, while Ramsurat got 1,099 votes. Out of total 8,978 members of gram panchayat, the result of 858 seats was declared. It is mentioned that as many as 4,772 candidates including 4,751 for the member of gram panchayat and 21 for the member of kshetra panchayat have been elected unopposed on various seats as they were only candidates who submitted the nomination papers for the various seats.

Nirmla had contested the election for the gram pradhan of Shrishti gram panchayat of Chiraiqaon block and also won the election but she had died before the counting. Similarly,

Dharmdev Yadav was elected as gram pradhan of Shivdasha gram panchayat but he had died before the counting. Veena Singh was elected as gram pradhan of Chumkuni gram panchayat but she had died before the counting. Sunra Devi had contested the election for the gram pradhan of Nandapur gram panchayat of Pindra block and she was in ICU for the treatment at the time of counting but breathed last immediately after her son informed on the mobile phone that she won the election by three votes. There will be re-election in these gram panchayat where the candidates had died even though they won the election as these seats will be supposed to be lying vacant.

Meanwhile, the open violation of the guidelines of Election Commission and corona protocol was seen after the declaration of results of various seats. The candidates and their supporters were seen taking out victory processions after the results were announced despite the section 144 of CrPC has been clamped and the Election Commission restricted for taking out the victory procession in view of the increasing cases of COVID-19.

As, the result of the election for 40 members of zila panchayat is still to be declared till the news last ame in but the BJP and the SP claimed to have won more than 20 seats. The both parties have also claimed to have won the maximum seats of gram pradhan, members of gram panchayat and kshetra panchayat. Some winning candidates of kshetra panchayat have also started chalking out strategies to ensure their victory on the post of block pramukhs. The members of kshetra panchayat elect the block pramukh.

It may be mentioned that a total of 10,749 candidates including 4,321 for 694 seats of gram pradhans, 4,509 for 986 members of kshetra panchayat and 554 for 40 members of zila panchayat were in election fray.

The counting also took place for 1,327 members of gram panchayat. Out of total 17,53,588 voters in eight blocks of district, a total of 1,158,260 (66.05%) electorates had cast their votes. The polling had taken place in Varanasi on April 19 under the second phase of Panchayat polls and the counting had begun on May 2 last.

# 21 patients succumb to COVID-19

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

As many as 984 new cases of COVID-19 were found in the district in the last 24 hours while a total of 21 patients succumbed to deadly virus. The number of corona infected continues to increase, it declined by 161 on Sunday night, a day before, and the number of deaths also stood at 21.

This is the first time since April 5, while in 24 hours, the number of newly infected people has come down to 1,000. Earlier, on April 5, 662 new infections were found. Thereafter, on April 6, there was a sharp jump in the statistics and in 24 hours, 1,084 new infected were found. This was confirmed by Dr Rishi Sahai, the Nodal Officer of Corona.

According to Dr Sahai, the number of those who conducted the testing on Sunday was less than on Saturday. A total of 10,006 people conducted the testing on Sunday. Out of this, 984 new ones were found. On Saturday, 1,145 new infections were found in the testing of 13,339 people. Nearly 20 per cent of the infected people need to be admitted to hospitals. However, on Sunday only 74 people were sent home after reports came negative.

New patients were admitted in their place.

The remaining patients are kept in home isolation due to lack of beds in hospitals. Many of them are in critical condition. Such people are demanding to get beds by calling Covid helpline number but no medical officer is listening. Such patients, who have been battling between life and death, have been put on oxygen. On the other hand, a total of 74 people from all the private hospitals in the city including Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital, Beli, Railway Hospital were discharged after the corona report came negative. In addition, the home isolation of 1,530 was completed.

Those in the grip of Corona included advocates, teachers and bank employees on Sunday. According to the Health department report, the High Court advocate, computer operator of BSA Office, Principal of Government Women's Polytechnic College, JE of Railways, Manager of Bank of Baroda, Naini, Railway Office Superintendent, JCO of Airforce Bamrauli, Two head constables, senior technician, teachers posted in Covid Control Room, Sector Magistrate, senior assistant to PNB, lab assistant posted on SRN and Manda CHC, High

Court Review officer, Beli Hospital optometrist, staff nurse of CHC Kaurihar and others.

**RSS TO DELIVER MEDICINES TO INFECTED:** The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has also started fight against Corona pandemic. Along with helping the attendants, the RSS has also pledged to deliver medicines to the infected. Those who have reported corona positive and are isolated at home are being given a kit of homeopathy medicines. It is free.

A kit of allopathic medicines has also been made by the organisation. The local administration has also assured cooperation in this move launched by them.

Prant Sewa Pramukh Nagendra Jaiswal said that due to the increase in the number of infected patients, there has been a shortage of beds in hospitals. Efforts are being made that most people become healthy by taking treatment at home.

As per the need, medical facilities are also being provided by telephone to the people. In addition, a kit of homeopathic medicines has been made. It is being distributed free of cost.

The patients are also being told as to what medicines are

to take. Phosphorus 200, Arsenic LB30, Carbovage 6 or 30, Bronia LB200 is placed in the heath kit. Carbovage 6 or 30 is to be taken three or four times when there is a lack of oxygen.

Those with lung problems are being advised to take phosphorus. Arsenic LB30 is life-saving and helps to increase immunity. When nervous, it can be taken two to three times.

This kit has been prepared as per the suggestion of Dr Manish Tripathi of RRT Covid-19 Varanasi, Officer in-charge.

Similarly kits of allopathic medicines were also made. It contains Azithromycin, Ivermectin, Paracetamol, Zincovide, Vitamin C tablets, Tablet Dolo, Ecosprin, Montair LC, Zedex syrup. However, only 70 per cent of the total cost of medicine is being taken from competent people. If the victim is not able to give, then he is also being given free of cost.

A group of 40 volunteers from the RSS are active in various areas of the city. It is finding out who is suffering from infection in which area and what are their needs. As per the needs of all, there is an initiative of cooperation from the organisation.

# Markets wear a deserted look on 5th day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The markets and roads in the city wore a deserted look continuously on the fifth day during the present phase of lockdown imposed on the instructions of the district administration and state government here on Monday. Internationally famous Ganga ghats, temples and historic sites of this one of the famous tourist places in the country also saw the similar look. Besides, on the instructions of the state government several other restrictions have been imposed in the district in view of continuous detection of a large number of Covid patients. During the lockdown, though, some people were seen moving in the markets till noon as they went outside their homes to purchase essential items like milk, bakery items, vegetables, fruits etc. However, the medicine shops remained open. In view of continuous spike in corona cases, all the activities in Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth (MGKV), Sampurnanand Sanskrit University (SSU) and all their affiliated colleges would remain suspended till May 15. Both these universities have closed their all activities on the instructions of the Higher Education department, UP Government.

Meanwhile, on the instructions of UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) Neelkanth Tiwari, free medical



Ganga ghats wear a deserted look during lockdown in Varanasi on Monday

Pioneer

consultation and distribution of medicine kits to the people having corona-like symptoms began at Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) office at Nichibag. The same facilities would be provided daily between 9 to 11 am where the doctors of Indian Medical Association (IMA) would remain present. Tiwari said that at present a large number of people are suffering from general cold, fever and other diseases so the arrangements have been made to give them proper treatment in time.

Besides, in view to provide

spiritual relief to the corona patients and others, the Gayatri Parivar members organised yajnas at their homes under the auspices of Gayatri Tirth Shatikunj, Haridwar and prayed the Almighty for triumph over deadly coronavirus. In the yajnas various articles and Ayurvedic medicines were offered so that the surrounding atmosphere can be made pure and free from viruses. Chief of Bal Sanskarshala and Mahila Mandal Konia Pushpa Rani said that since long our forefathers had always encouraged the people for plantation so that

the people could get sufficient oxygen but in the name of development, trees were rooted out which caused both air and water resources to be polluted. She appealed to all to realise the importance of trees. The yajnas were also performed at the places of Gangadhar Upadhyay, Anilesh Tiwari, Satya Prakash Gupta, Ghanshyam Karmyogi, Rajnarain Yadav, Ramesh Singh, Bechu Lal, Harishankar Maurya, Ayodhya Prasad, Vrijendra Mishra, Raman Kumar Srivastava and many others.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The fourth phase of the corona vaccination campaign has started dampening with each passing day. For the first day, where only 3,000 doses of the vaccine were received, on the second day, 12,000 were sent, increasing its number. But, compared to those who register, this dose is very less.

More than 15,000 people registered to vaccinate in the district on Monday alone. In the fourth phase, vaccine doses are being given to people from 18 years to 44 years. On Saturday, 2,410 people got vaccinated on the first day, now it will be vaccinated on Monday. ACMO immunization in-charge of Health department, Dr Teerath Lal said that on Sunday, 12,000 Covaxin doses were sent from Lucknow late at



night. With this, the vaccination campaign will be launched at 15 places on Monday, like Saturday.

Compared to experts, this campaign will not be conducted in the entire district due to lack of adequate dose of vaccines. Just as people aged 45 or

older are being vaccinated at 98 places across the district, people aged 18 to 44 are not getting vaccinated. Due to low vaccine dose, people of this age group will be vaccinated at only 15 places like Saturday. The places where the vaccine will be covered include CHC Jasra,

CHC Chaka, CHC Kotwa and CHC Jhunsi in rural areas.

In the city, people will be vaccinated by running one session each in Moti Lal Nehru Medical College, four sessions in Dufferin and Beli, one each in Manohar Das Eye Hospital, Railway Hospital, Primary Health Center Daraganj. The vaccine will be administered from 9 am to 5 pm. To get vaccinated, it will be mandatory for people to register on the Covid.gov.in portal. Vaccination will not be done without registration.

According to the Health department, people aged 45 or older will be vaccinated at all 98 locations as before. Adequate arrangements have been made for them. People must take Aadhaar to get vaccinated. Vaccination will not be done without an Aadhar card.

# Covid hospitals directed to install double generators

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Many private hospitals have also been converted into Covid hospitals due to the large number of people suffering from Coronavirus infection. Instructions have been given to install double generators here to ensure that electricity is not disrupted in these hospitals. It is planned to do this so that power system disruptions do not occur in hos-

pitals in the event of thunderstorms, rains or emergencies.

Most of the private hospitals declared as Covid hospitals in Prayagraj, Pratapgarh, Kaushambi and Fatehpur districts of division have the same generator installed. Power department officials have been instructed to inspect and ask hospital operators to install double generators. Superintending engineers along with Chief Engineer

Vinod Gangwar have started inspecting private hospitals in their respective areas. All are being reported to the Chief Medical Officer.

In the private hospitals that have been made Covid hospitals, instructions have been given to the officials of the concerned sub-station for 24-hour power supply.

The Chief Engineer informed that double generators are being installed in pri-

vate Covid hospitals so that there is no power interruption in the hospitals.

Most of the private hospitals declared as Covid hospitals in Prayagraj Pratapgarh Kaushambi and Fatehpur districts of division are equipped with the same generator. The officials of the power department were directed to inspect and ask the hospital operators to install double generators.

# GM reviews status of COVID-19 on NCR

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

COVID-19 vaccination of Railway employees below the age of 45 years have started. North Central Railway is taking all necessary measures to maintain safe and smooth train operation while protecting its workforce from COVID-19. As a part of this continuous exercise, General Manager Vinay Kumar Tripathi reviewed the status of COVID-19 on NCR with PHODs of NCR and DRMs of Prayagraj, Jhansi and Agra divisions through video conference.

North Central Railway is playing an important role in Indian Railway's initiative of ensuring faster availability of liquid medical oxygen through RO-RO and container train service. Besides formation of 04 MBWT (tank wagon) rakes in Jhansi division equipped with 106 wagons being used in the Oxygen Express, North Central Railway is also playing an important role in the fast transport of the empty and loaded rakes of the Oxygen

Express. North Central Railway has so far operated 6 empty rakes and 6 loaded rakes for transportation of Liquid Medical Oxygen through RO-RO and container trains.

With continuous monitoring of the three divisions and HQ of the North Central Railway, the Oxygen Express is operating uninterrupted at an average speed of more than 55 Kmph over the North Central Railway territory. So far, 15 liquid medical oxygen loaded tankers and containers have been transported to the national capital region through 6 loaded trains.

North Central Railway has intensified the immunisation drive of railway employees and their family members above 45 years of age, as well as started the vaccination of eligible railway employees and their family members below 45 years of age in Prayagraj, Agra and Jhansi divisions.

**SHOWERS BRING DOWN TEMPERATURE:**

Light to moderate showers in and around Prayagraj on Monday brought down the soaring mercury column to a pleasant weather.

Maximum temperature which was around 42 degree celsius a day before came down to 36 on Monday when the sky remained overcast with flash of electricque.

It was around 11 am when it started raining, and the showers continued for over half-an-hour.

Thunder storm in late night hours had suggested a change in weather conditions, and showers in the forenoon hours brought down the temperature.

Weather experts predict that the same weather conditions will continue in Uttar Pradesh for four more days, and after May 7, people will experience scorching hot weather once again.

**AU PREPONES SUMMER VACATIONS:** Corona threat looms large and as a precautionary measure University of Allahabad has pre-poned its summer vaca-

tions. Now the vacations will be from May 4, 2021.

An online meeting of all the deans of the university was convened by the Vice-Chancellor Prof Sangita Srivastava. It was decided in the meeting to prepone the summer vacations from the scheduled May 15, to May 4. University will observe the rescheduled vacation from May 4 and reopen on July 5.

The preponement of the vacation has been done in view of the fact that the University is seeing a rising number of fatalities among the teaching and non teaching staff due to Covid and the families of almost all the university employees are affected by COVID-19.

Meeting of the Examination Committee will be held shortly and the decision regarding the examinations and the results will be made when the meeting takes place. The stakeholders are required to wait for the meeting for relevant information.

# Varanasi records 17 Covid deaths

**VARANASI (PNS):** With the biggest ever 17 deaths during the last 24 hours, the death toll reached 599 and the increasing number of deaths is a matter of much concern for the district administration and Health department. But at the same time, there is a big relief for both the authorities in the administration and Health department as the district recorded a sharp decrease in the number of positive cases for the second consecutive day. As many as 992 cases of COVID-19 were recorded on Monday evening increasing the total

number to 69,467 crossing 69K-mark. As many as 2,224 patients of home isolation recovered, while as many as 115 have been recovered from the hospitals. The total number of patients cured in the district increased to 53,374 including 49,627 in home isolation and 3,747 in COVID-19 hospitals.

In the first report of the day, 723 positive patients were found out of 2,902 reports received and this figure increased to 992 as per report provided by the Health department in the evening and the total active cases decreased to

15,494 from 16,858 which was a day ago. On Sunday evening, as many as 1,294 positive cases were recorded and the total number was 68,475, while 11 deaths were reported and the death toll was 582. Earlier, in view of finding hundreds of new positive cases, with 12 new hotspots, the number active was 757 with 13 green zones having been converted to red zones by a day ago. Out of total 3,237 hotspots, 2,480 are green zones and 757 were red zones.

In the meantime, the district Health department continued the vaccination drive. The

vaccination drive was launched at as many as 70 centres including SVM Hospital in Bhelupur, divisional hospital of NER in Lahartara and community & primary health centres in urban and rural areas. The long queue of beneficiaries was seen at vaccination centres particularly in the divisional government hospital in Kabirchaura for vaccination. But for the beneficiaries aged above 45 years and below 45 years, as many as 17 vaccination centres have been made including the women hospital in Kabirchaura and Sir Sunderlal Hospital.

# DRDO Covid Hospital to be opened soon

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Work at temporary 750-bed Covid Hospital being made by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at Amphitheatre ground in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) is going on in full swing as the beds and other articles have already been brought here and they have started being placed there. According to information, this hospital may be started anytime around May 10, though the date of its opening has yet not conformed. In this hospital,

there would be 500 oxygen-equipped beds apart from 250 ventilator-equipped beds.

As the surge of the second wave of coronavirus is very fast, especially after the festival of Holi, the local administration and its arrangements were not sufficient to tackle the problems. In the first few weeks of last month, many patients had lost their life as they could not be provided proper treatment in time. Many of them failed to get berth in hospitals in time while a few lost their fight against corona in absence of receiving oxygen quickly. The

laxity in treatment of patients continued even till date as on Monday, the family members of eminent vocalist Padma Vibhushan Pt Channu Lal Mishra have levelled charges on a private hospital under the Kotwali police station for irregularities in treatment of some patients. Many such charges were also levelled on the biggest Covid hospital (Level -3) of the city in BHU. Though now the health and other systems have been brought back on the tracks to a great extent due to hectic recent efforts made by the government as well as the

local administration, still a large number of Covid patients is being detected every day. By Monday morning 723 new cases were found increasing the total number of patients to 69,198 and as the number of active patients continued increasing, the hospitalisation of serious patients has become a serious issue. In just two months, the number of active patients has increased from 36 to 17,581. According to information, with the opening of this temporary hospital, the problems would be solved to a great extent.



# People torch effigy of GSVMMC principal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Hundreds of agitated people torched the effigy of G SVM Medical College Principal Prof RB Kamal for denying admission to COVID-19 patients.

They alleged that despite the CM portal showing vacant beds in the LLR Hospital, COVID-19 patients were being refused admission on the ground that there was no vacant bed.

Shouting slogans, the mod threatened to intensify the agitation in case the principal was not removed immediately. The agitated kin of COVID-19 patients also sent a representation to the chief minister for the removal of the G SVM Medical College principal with immediate effect.

Corporator Raghavendra Mishra lashed out at the principal for not disclosing the vacant beds in the Level-3 Covid hospital and alleged that the beds were being given to the rich people.

He said when the CM's portal showed that beds were vacant in LLRH, the principal

had no right to refuse admission to COVID-19 patients. He demanded removal of the principal and an inquiry against him.

The G SVM Medical College principal could not be contacted for his comment.

It may be mentioned here that there have been complaints of corruption and 'black marketing' of Covid beds at LLR Hospital. Besides, there is a long wait for RT-PCR reports which are being released three to four days after the sample is collected. The corporator said one reason for the spread of COVID-19 was the delay in giving the RT-PCR report due to which the suspected coronavirus positive people were moving around the hospital for their report to start treatment or seek admission in any hospital. Others who took part in the effigy burning were Mahendra Tiwari, Pradeep Bhati, Vatsyay Tripathi and Sandip Awasthi.

**ASTHMA PATIENTS MORE PRONE TO COVID-19 ATTACK: DOC**

Noted chest specialist Dr

Kailash Gurnani said World Asthma Day was being observed on May 4 (first Tuesday of May, 2021). He said asthma was a chronic lung condition that caused inflammation in the airways causing narrowing of the airways which led to wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness and cough.

He said the virus causing COVID-19 was a respiratory virus majorly affecting the respiratory tract.

He said the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention had issued a warning for asthma patients to keep safe as they were more prone to COVID-19 attack.

He said asthma was classified as mild, moderate or severe and said patients with severe asthma experienced symptoms several times per day, and several nights a week.

He said in view of the COVID-19 which was dangerously spreading, asthma patients need to take strict precautions.

He said taking every possible precaution to prevent contracting COVID-19 was

the most effective way for asthma patients to stay healthy. He advised them to wear masks, wash hands frequently, not touch one's face and frequently disinfect hard surfaces and practice social distancing.

Dr Gurnani said asthmatics need to get as much fresh air as possible. He said closed spaces posed two risks for asthmatic patients, first was that COVID-19 was more likely to spread when people were in closed spaces because droplets took longer to dissipate when there was limited space and a lack of natural ventilation. He said that second was that closed spaces posed a risk to asthma patients who were frequently using chemical sprays to disinfect indoor spaces, since being in close contact with these sprays can irritate the airways and trigger an asthma attack.

He said one should avoid travelling or going out for vacation. He said airplanes, hotels and motels could put one in closer proximity to other people, which increased risk of contracting COVID-19.

He advised asthma patients

to store their medicines for any emergency. He said every asthma patient should work with one's healthcare provider to create an asthma treatment plan. He warned patients to refrain from changing their medicines without the advice of the doctor.

Dr Gurnani said one must take care to avoid triggers as in many cases, asthma symptoms were induced by exposure to certain triggers, including smoke, pet dander, dust, mold and pollen. He said it was important to stay healthy by recognising and avoiding asthma triggers as much as possible.

He said last but not the least, the COVID-19 pandemic had led to an increase in stress, fear and anxiety around the world. He said since strong emotions could trigger an asthma attack, it was helpful for patients with asthma to be aware of their emotional state, and find ways to cope with strong emotions. He advised meditation, mindful breathing, exercise, nutritious food, connection with family and friends.

## Reduction in bodies being brought for cremation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Municipal Commissioner Akshay Tripathi said on Monday that there was a substantial reduction in the number of bodies being cremated at Bhaironghat and Bhagwat Das ghat.

He said another problem which had cropped up was that people were leaving behind the bodies of their relatives, leaving the responsibilities of last rites on the police. He said if the bodies were unclaimed then as per the rule the bodies were being cremated at the electric crematorium.

The municipal commissioner had earlier stated that on May 1, 2021 a total of 516 dead bodies were cremated in the electric crematorium whereas 722 bodies were cremated in the traditional way using wood at Bhairon Ghat.

He said on May 2, 67 bodies were brought for cremation at the ghats.

He said there was also a decline in cremation at Bithoor ghat as well.

The municipal commissioner said that Kanpur Nagar Nigam had arranged a total of 3,812.9 quintals of firewood and the KNN store had a reserve of 2,675.22 quintals for firewood. He said the KNN was also in the process of purchasing more firewood for cremations.

He said every effort was being made to ensure that the dead bodies were disposed of as early as possible and appealed to the people coming to the ghats for last rites not to panic or create chaos so that the cremations could be carried out as smoothly as possible.

It may be mentioned here that 'pandas', who have a monopoly on traditional cremations through firewood, have started building pressure on the people to pay at hiked rates for cremation. They allegedly fixed two rates, one for day time and the second for cremation after sunset. Several people had alleged that the 'pandas' were dictating terms and the people were left with no other option but to agree to their terms.

The municipal commissioner said that a comprehensive sanitisation drive was being carried out all over the city during the weekend lockdown days.

He said apart from sanitation, garbage removal and drain cleaning was also being carried out on a war footing. He said all religious places and ghat which witnessed crowds were being regularly sanitised.

**SANITISATION DRIVE:** Mayor Pramila Pandey on Monday directed the officials concerned to prepare a roster for the sanitisation drive in the containment areas.

She said as a big number of places were declared containment zones, the Kanpur Nagar Nigam had decided to carry out a sanitisation drive in these areas on a roster basis. She said all the 110 wards would be brought under the sanitisation drive.

# Effective steps taken to increase freight traffic on NE Railway

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Several effective steps have been taken to increase freight traffic on North Eastern Railway (NER). As a result, on the NER the sequence of increase in loading of goods is going on continuously since last year. In April the first month of the year 2021-22, 0.3904 metric tonnes of goods were loaded which is 174.54 per cent more than the same period last year, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh said. This achievement in this difficult period of Coronavirus infection is the result of planned

concerted efforts of officers and employees of NER.

Besides Business Development Unit (BDU) has been constituted at the divisional, headquarters and Railway Board level for quick decision on the matters related to loading and unloading goods. Due to the efforts of the Business Development Unit, new freight traffic on NER like for Bangladesh and other parts of the country there was success in bringing automobile transportation and FMCG traffic (Maggie) on railway. In order to meet the demand of automobile traffic old ICF coaches were converted into

newly-modified goods (NMG) wagons by the railway administration. Besides on NER as many as 445 old ICF coaches were converted in NMG wagons. Moreover the average speed of goods trains was increased from 25.58 km per hour to 46.66 km per hour.

For increase in goods traffic the BDU teams contacted the local businessmen and as per their requirement the goods sheds were improved and expanded. Two big goods sheds in Bakshi Ka Talab situated near Lucknow and Nautanwa station located on Nepal border were found suitable for automobile traffic.

## Efforts to fight spread of Covid

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

In view of surge in Covid-19 cases in the country, NTPC is taking several steps to fight against the spread of virus. NTPC is adding to the capacity at all of the seven NTPC hospitals which are being used for treating Covid-19 infected employees. It has also tied up with Apollo Hospital for its Kavach facility which has brought immense relief to the Covid- infected patients since now they are getting better treatment even being in home isolation. The NTPC Medical Cell is constantly in touch with super-speciality hospitals across India and is doing its best to enable admission and care to critical patients amidst the present crisis. NTPC sta-

tions and project sites are extending support on a case-to-case basis by providing airlift on priority for critical cases. A dedicated Covid-19 helpline number for both present and retired employees and also for their families has been launched to provide them information about testing centres and probable treatment centres in government and NTPC empanelled hospitals. NTPC is making its employees use the e-Paramarsh application for telemedicine so that they can avoid going to hospitals and secure themselves from getting exposed to Covid.

Vaccination drives are being arranged so that all eligible employees and their family members can get vaccinat-

ed. NTPC has also collaborated with AIIMS, with senior doctors from the premier hospital imparting education to its staff about various facts related to Covid-19. Experienced medical professionals from AIIMS have communicated with all the employees and their family members regarding measures to fight the menace. All NTPC employees can take help from the 24x7 control room which has been made operational to coordinate with all the CMOs/HOHRs for managing the shortage of medicine. Besides the top management of NTPC, which includes CMD and directors review the overall situation daily and strategise ways to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic.

# Khadia & Bina to be rewarded for minimum power consumption

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

In Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL) on the occasion of Khanik Abhinandan Divas every year the best coalfields are honoured for their outstanding performance in various categories. However, no ceremony was held this year due to the Covid 19-generated circumstances. The NCL on Saturday on the occasion of K h a n i k A b h i n a n d a n D i v a s - 2 0 2 1 released the list of coalfields which have performed outstandingly in various categories during last year 2020-21.

According to the performance, the coal fields of the company were divided into two categories i.e. A and B and then selected for the award. In the first category, areas producing more than 10 million tonnes (MT) of coal annually were kept while in the second category areas producing coal less than 10 million tonnes annually. For the highest coal production Jayant and Bina won in their categories while Nigahi and Bina areas for the most departmental overburden removal. Meanwhile compared

to last year for maximum increase in coal production in their respective categories Dudhichua and Bina areas were selected, Nigahi and Kakri for departmental overburden removal and Dudhichua and Kakri for maximum increase in coal despatch.

Besides, for utilisation of maximum system capacity Jayant and Jhingurda were

den removal (shovel-dumper) and Jayant for overburden removal (dragline) were the best performers. In the category of the highest availability of heavy machines, Nigahi and Bina for dragline, Jayant and Jhingurda for shovel and Jayant and Jhingurda for dumper were selected. Dudhichua and Block B were selected for the highest percentage utilisation of social corporate responsibility (CSR) budget. Meanwhile along with Corporate Planning Department, Board Secretariat, Cost and Budget department, General Manager (Civil / Infra), the team posted in in Block B and Krishnashila and Jayant civil team members were selected for the Special Achievement Award for Innovation. In addition in different individual categories such as operators of best dragline, shovel, dumper, surface miner, grader, drill, dozer etc, best technicians of Excavation and Electrical and Mechanical departments, best supervisors and the names of best personnel for successful organisation of medical camps have been announced.



# IIT-Kanpur Metro station being developed as 'model station'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation Managing Director Kumar Keshav said that IIT-K would be the 'model station' for the rest of eight metro stations of the priority corridor.

He said the system installation had already begun and now the different departments of UPMRC like signaling-telecom, electrical were executing their part simultaneously to prepare for the trial run.

Keshav said the system installation had begun from the IIT Metro Station and once the set-up was finalised, it would be replicated in the other eight elevated Metro stations at the earliest.

He said under the Kanpur Metro Rail Project, a world-class Metro corridor was being built between IIT-K and Motijheel, covering a distance of nine kilometres and comprising nine Metro stations.

The UPMRC managing director said the civil works on the said stretch were in their last stages and finishing touches were being given at a rapid pace. He said besides these, now system installation work had also begun on the corridor and starting from the IIT-K Metro station, electrical and signaling-telecom equipment were being installed at the corridor.

Keshav said the IIT-K Metro station was being developed as a model station for the remaining eight elevated Metro stations of the priority corridor. He said some sig-



IIT-K Metro station, electrical and signaling telecom equipment being installed on Monday

Pioneer

naling-telecom equipment like signal poles and data communication antennae etc. had been mounted as samples at the IIT Metro station. He added that after the final approval, the same set-up will be mounted at rest of the Metro stations. He said subsequent to the final approval of the design, the work of installation would be started on a war footing.

The UPMRC managing director said they were experimenting with a new design of signals or signal poles in Kanpur Metro. He said usually, the design of the signal was rectangular whereas in Kanpur Metro oval shape signals had been introduced which were sleek compared with the Lucknow Metro signals.

He said the Metro engineers had started the installation of 'high-bay' lights at the

IIT-K Metro station on the road level. He added that very soon light installation would be started at the concourse levels (first floor of the elevated station) also.

He said air-conditioning systems were also being installed in the technical rooms of the IIT-K Metro station.

**FOUR SHOPS CATCH FIRE:** Four shops near the railway track laid for the thermal power plant in Panki caught fire due to electric short-circuit early Monday morning.

On seeing the fire, the CISF jawan on duty at the power plant called the fire brigade and the firemen fought with the flames for around two hours before the fire could be doused. By then, the entire goods in the four shops were gutted.

According to reports, the mattress shop of Sonu on Panki-Kalyanpur road caught fire due to short-circuit in electric cable around 4 am on Monday.

The fire soon spread to the mattress shop of Mahendra Singh, Singh Gadda House of Shivam Singh and fruit juice shop of Pachu Kumar.

The neighbouring shop owners informed the victims made attempts to extinguish the fire by pouring water from the buckets. In the meantime, fire tenders from the Fazalganj fire station reached the spot and controlled the fire after around two hours.

Panki Station House Officer Atul Kumar Singh said the fire broke out due to short-circuit in the electric cable supplying power to the shops.

'Rog Nivaran' Yajna' being organised by Arya Samaj on Monday.

Pioneer

Shastri, said the 'havan samagri' prepared from herbal plants, including mango, neem, basil and giloy leaves, was used for 'ahuti' in the yajna.

Citing a research work,

they said these 'yajnas' were able to wipe out over 90 per cent pollution in 100-metre radius for 23 days.

Chief of Arya Samaj, Virendra Mahlotra, Prakash Vir Arya, Shubh Kumar Vohra,

Chandra Kanta Gera, Dr Santosh Arora, Anil Chopra, Bal Govind Awasthi, Purohit Satyaketu Shastri and Vira Chopra took part in the yajnas in their houses with all family members.



# SII CEO: Cannot ramp up jab production overnight



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

States seem to have to wait more to get the adequate supply of vaccines, particularly Covishield with its manufacturer Adar Poonawalla of Serum Institute of India (SII) on Monday categorically stating that his firm cannot ramp up production overnight as vaccine making is a specialised process.

The statement of Poonawalla comes days after he had said that due to “pressure and aggression” for him and his family temporarily leaving the country for the UK, as “everyone wants the vaccine to be available in the quickest possible time.” This is likely to impact the vaccination drive that was kicked off from May 1 to cover 18 + population i.e. about 60 crore people.

In a statement here, Poonawalla said that it has orders from the Government to supply 11 crore more doses over the next few months on top of 15 crore already supplied, Poonawalla said. He further said that another 11 crore doses will be supplied to



states and private hospitals in the next few months. “We have got all kinds of support, be it scientific, regulatory and financial. As of today, we received total orders of over 26 crore doses, of which we supplied more than 15 crore doses. We have also got 100 per cent advance of Rs 1,732.5 crore by the GOI for the next tranche of 11 crore doses in the next few months,” he said.

Earlier in the day, the Union Ministry of Health said that 11 crore doses of Covishield are to come from SII during May, June and July. Another 5 crore doses of Covaxin have been ordered from Bharat Biotech India Ltd for the same months.

Poonawalla, however, did not give a timeline for supplying the vaccines. Pune-based SII can produce 6-7 crore doses a month and is reportedly planning to ramp up production to 10 crore by

July. Though the Centre has among various steps opened up vaccination for all above 18 years from May 1, the procurement of jabs has been left to states and private hospitals. This has led to state after state rushing to SII, which can meet only a small part of the demand.

Serum is licensed to manufacture COVID shots from AstraZeneca Plc and Novavax Inc. But so far, the government has approved only AstraZeneca’s Covishield vaccine for use.

The Government has also approved the homegrown Covaxin vaccine of Bharat Biotech. Russia’s Sputnik V vaccine too has been approved for emergency use.

SII CEO Poonawalla, who is currently in London, said the population of India is huge and to produce enough doses for all adults is not an easy task.

# IAF airlifts O2 from Germany to ease Indians’ breathing



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sustaining the tempo of airlifting the much-needed oxygen from abroad, an aircraft of the IAF flew non-stop for 12 hours to bring home oxygen from Frankfurt, Germany. The C-17 transport plane ferried four empty cryogenic containers from there and landed at the Hindan airbase, Ghaziabad.

Similarly, another C-17 aircraft airlifted 450 oxygen cylinders from Brize Norton in the UK to the Chennai airbase in Tamil Nadu. In the

past few days, the IAF planes carried out numerous sorties to ferry the containers from Singapore, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates.

An Italian air force transport plane landed here on Monday with a team of medical experts, oxygen generation plant and ventilators to help India fight the pandemic. The oxygen generation system capable of supplying the gas to the entire hospital will be deployed at the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) hospital in Greater Noida.

# Covid-orphaned kids adoption appeal alarms child rights body

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Alarmed at various requests appearing on social media such as twitter regarding the adoption of kids whose parents have died due to Covid-19, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has warned the common citizens/NGOs to refrain from doing so and written to States and Union Territories, urging them to inform child protection authorities about such orphans.

“The commission has been made aware of instances where it has been seen that many NGOs are advertising about the children who have become orphans after losing both their parents to Covid-19,” NCPCR chairperson Priyank Kanoongo has written to chief secretaries across the States in a letter.

He said that “in such a sad situation of the surge in Covid-19 cases in the country there are situations arising where the child has lost both its parents or is found to be abandoned. It may be noted that the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 provides for the procedure to be followed for children who have lost their family support and have become children in need of care and protection.”



The missive followed complaints that a few NGOs and individuals had been on their own on the social platforms like twitter and WhatsApp urging people to help such kids “get a new life and spread the word,” while sharing their contact numbers.

The procedure under the JJ Act, 2015 ensures that children are provided all the minimum standards of care and their rights are upheld and protected, Kanoongo said.

“Therefore, it is of utmost importance that these children who have lost their family support must be produced before the child protection authorities of the district, and information about these children must be shared with the

authorities”

He also pointed out that it was necessary for every individual, entity, organisation or NGO to ensure that any information received about orphaned and abandoned children during these Covid times is shared on the helpline 1098.

“Similarly, it is further requested that if any such information for an abandoned or orphaned children is received by any entity, organisation, NGO then the same can be also be informed to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights either through email (cp.Ncpcr@nic.in) or through telephone (011-23478250) for assistance and help to the children,” the letter said.

# MHA orders 5,000 paramilitary officials’ deployment in J&K for law and order

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has ordered deployment of 50 additional companies (5,000 personnel) of the Central paramilitary forces in Jammu and Kashmir to augment law and order security grid in the Union Territory from May 7. The move comes after a request to the effect was made J&K DGP through a letter on April 27 and it was approved by the Centre the next day.

The mobilisation is being made “for augmentation of existing deployment grid to effectively manage law and order and security duties.”

On the decision for



deployment of the 50 Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) or Central paramilitary companies, the order said, “The matter has been considered in this Ministry, it has been decided to provide 50 companies of CAPF (CRPF-20, BSF-10, SSB-10, ITBP-05 and CISF-05 com-

panies) to Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir by May 7.

“The UT Administration of Jammu & Kashmir is requested to work out the detailed deployment plan in consultation with the respective CAPFs and the deployment of the CAPFs companies

may be made only after completing the mandatory quarantine period to break the chain of coronavirus, reads the order issued on April 28.

Keeping in view the Covid-19 situation, the Home Ministry advised the Jammu and Kashmir administration to take necessary transportation/logistics/accommodation and other arrangements required in connection with deployment of the CAPFs within the UT, as per the Government guidelines on the subject. The deployment of the additional paramilitary personnel will be organised by UT Administration, added the copy of the order.

Presently, 60 battalions of the CRPF and 10 battalions of other CAPFs are deployed on the ground in the Union Territory for law and order as also for the security duty roles, sources said. The additional troops are likely to be also used for the conduct of the Amarnath Yatra, they added.

# ‘Erring’ cops booked in ISRO spy case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Monday said it has registered a case in connection with the “ISRO spy case” in compliance to a Supreme Court order of April 15 this year for taking action against the erring police officers who allegedly framed scientist S Nambi Narayanan in a false espionage case.

Earlier, the case was registered by Kerala Police on October 20, 1994, as Crime No. 225/94 at Police Station Vanchiyoor, Trivandrum against a Maldivian National under Foreigner’s Act on the allegations of overstaying in India after the expiry of the visa.

Subsequently, another case as Crime No. 246/1994 dated November 13, 1994, was also registered at Vanchiyoor Police station under Official Secrets



Act 1923 and Section 34 (common intention) of IPC against two accused Maldivian nationals on the allegations that they, in collusion with some others, had taken part in the activities against the sovereignty and integrity of India and indulged in other activities which would harm the cordial relations of India with its neighbours.

Later, the investigation of both the said cases was entrusted to a SIT of Kerala police. In Crime no. 246/1994, besides said two accused, four more persons including two scientists working at Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) of ISRO were arrested on the charges of espionage

activities.

Further, the investigation of both these cases was transferred to CBI. In the Espionage case, CBI submitted Final Report (charge sheet) before the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Ernakulam (Kerala) which was accepted by the Court. While submitting the said report in the Espionage case, the allegations pertaining to espionage were found to be false.

One of the scientists S Nambi Narayanan took the matter for taking action against the erring officials to the apex court by way of filing a civil writ petition.

The SC, in its judgement dated September 14, 2018 in the Civil Appeal No. 6637-6638/2018), awarded compensation of Rs 50 lakh to Narayanan on several counts and also ordered the consti-

tution of a Committee, for obtaining actual scenario including arrest, false implication of the said scientist and to find out ways for taking appropriate steps against the erring officials, the CBI said.

Accordingly, a Committee under the Chairmanship of a retired judge of the SC, was constituted by the Union Home Ministry, it said.

The Committee, after conducting inquiry, submitted its report before the apex court. Based on the said enquiry report, the SC through an order on April 15 directed the CBI to proceed in the matter in accordance with law, being a Court directed enquiry.

“Accordingly, as per the directions of Hon’ble Supreme Court, CBI has registered a case,” the agency said in a statement.

# Jaishankar rebuts Jairam over oxygen ‘shortage’ in Embassies

IANAS ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Sunday took on the Congress, which had attempted to project that the Central Government had collapsed and foreign embassies were reaching out to the Opposition for help with their Covid-19 medical emergencies.

On Sunday, the New Zealand Embassy in New Delhi tweeted an SOS tagging youth leaders of the Congress, saying, “Could you please help with oxygen cylinder urgently at the New Zealand High Commission? Thank you.”

Youth Congress president BV Srinivas responded to the request and tweeted an hour later saying, “We have reached New Zealand High Commission with oxygen

cylinders. Please open the gates and save a soul on time.”

However, the New Zealand Embassy apologised soon after, saying, “We are trying all sources to arrange for oxygen cylinders urgently and our appeal has unfortunately been misinterpreted, for which we are sorry.”

The apology came after Jaishankar rebutted Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, who had on Saturday accused the Government of being completely dysfunctional and unresponsive towards medical emergency at the Philippines Embassy.

On Saturday, the Indian Youth Congress had tweeted a video claiming that its members were providing medical emergency services at the Embassy of the Philippines in

New Delhi. Ramesh tweeted the video, saying, “While I thank @IYC for its stellar efforts, as an Indian citizen I’m stunned that the youth wing of the opposition party is attending to SOS calls from foreign embassies. Is the MEA sleeping @DrSJaishankar?”

To this, Jaishankar tweeted on Sunday morning, “MEA checked with the Philippines Embassy. This was an unsolicited supply as they had no Covid cases. Clearly for cheap publicity by you know who. Giving away cylinders like this when there are people in desperate need of oxygen is simply appalling. Jairamji, MEA never sleeps; our people know across the world. MEA also never fakes; we know who does.”

# Congress: Central Vista essential service, but jab will come in July, is this joke?



IANAS ■ NEW DELHI

Reacting to reports of the Central Vista as essential service, Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera has attacked the Union Government and raised questions about the vaccines.

Addressing a Press conference on Monday Khera said, “Central Vista is an essential service, amid this pandemic in the Capital where thousands are dying every day, lakhs are suffering and struggling for hospital beds, for oxygen, for medicines, in the same capital city, the Central Vista is an essential service, but the vaccine will come in July, is that a joke?”

He said over the last 15 days, the tragedies in the hospitals that we have all witnessed in Delhi, which is the capital city, a few kilometres from the Central Vista, hospitals are pleading through social media, through media, they are pleading, begging for oxygen.

“Is the vaccine available? We

**The Congress demanded auditing and distribution of foreign aid like injections, oxygen**

have been told by the manufacturers that it wouldn’t be available before July. I don’t want to remind Hon’ble Prime Minister what he said in January at the World Economic Forum that by August, 300 million people would be vaccinated,” he said.

The Congress demanded auditing and distribution of foreign aid like injections, oxygen and other drugs. “We request and demand from the Government, every day, please make public, share it with every Indian, where has this aid come from, where is it going – which state, which hospital, which agency,” he said.



Fourth consignment of medical supplies containing 60 ventilators arrives from UK

PTI

# FICN racketeer held from Bengal gets 6 years in jail

IANAS ■ NEW DELHI

A special NIA court in Kerala’s Ernakulam on Monday sentenced a fake Indian currency note (FICN) racketeer to six years rigorous imprisonment besides imposing a fine in connection with the Thrissur FICN case.

An NIA spokesperson said here that the special court for NIA cases in Ernakulam convicted Ali Hossain aka Mohammed Ali Hossain, 30, a resident of Murshidabad district in West Bengal, under several sections of the Indian Penal Code in a 2018 FICN case and sentenced him to six years rigorous imprisonment besides imposing a fine of Rs 85,000 on him for his role in procuring, possessing and circulating FICN in Kerala.

The official said that a case



was originally registered at the Thrissur East police station on August 19, 2018 against Hossain following the seizure of two FICNs of Rs 2,000 denomination from his possession.

Based on Hossain’s interrogation, 101 fake notes of Rs 2,000 face value each were recovered from his residence in Palakkad district.

NIA had taken over the case on October 27, 2018.

The official said that investigation had revealed that in 2018, Hossain had conspired with accused Alim Sheikh, a Bangladeshi national who is absconding, to smuggle FICN into Kerala, with an intention to use the same as genuine Indian currency for unlawful gains.



# Pak targets BSF patrol party, shatters peace

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Shattering peace prevailing along the 194 km long international border between India and Pakistan across Jammu frontier, the Pakistani rangers early Monday morning targeted a BSF patrol party in the Ramgarh sub sector of Samba by opening 'unprovoked' firing on them.

This is the first incident of 'unprovoked' firing on the Indian border guards after both India and Pakistan had renewed their mutually brokered ceasefire agreement from the midnight of February 24-25.

Luckily, the BSF patrol party escaped unhurt. Official sources in the BSF confirmed, 'no loss of life/injury was reported on ground zero'.

According to official sources, 'early Monday morning Pakistani rangers stationed' at one of the Pak post 'Tipu' and 'Hussain' fired around 20 rounds of small weapons targeting the working party of BOP Majra near mount no 8/36 pillar no 81". In response, BSF jawans exercised utmost restraint but maintained a close watch on the activities of the Pak rangers.

After gathering inputs and making preliminary assessment of the ground situation, PRO BSE, DIG SPS Sandhu, Jammu frontier in a formal statement claimed, "Pakistani rangers resorted to 'unprovoked' firing at 06:15 a.m in Ramgarh sector on BSF patrolling party ahead of fencing." No loss of life/injury was reported, he added.

Interestingly, the Ramgarh sector was wit-



nessing hectic activity for the last couple of weeks.

On March 16, 2021 alert BSF jawans had killed a Pakistani intruder in the same sector after he refused to retrieve inside the Pak territory and kept advancing towards the Indian side.

Several aeroplane shaped balloons with PIA written on it were also recovered from agricultural fields in the Hiranagar, Arnia and RS Pura sectors of Jammu frontier.

Meanwhile, local villagers in the border areas were living peacefully for the last two months and focusing on harvesting their wheat crops standing in the fields.

Local civilians bore the maximum brunt of cross border firing in the past and were leading peaceful lives since the past more than two months in the forward areas.

## 75 lakh people lose jobs in April as lockdowns sprout; unemployment at 4-month high, says CMIE

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The second wave of Covid-19 and the resultant localised lockdowns have impacted over 75 lakh jobs, taking the unemployment rate to a four-month high of 8 per cent, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) said on Monday.

The situation on the employment front is expected to continue to remain challenging going forward as well, CMIE's managing director and chief executive Mahesh Vyas said.

"In the month of April, compared to March, we have lost 75 lakh jobs. That is what has caused the jump in the unemployment rate," he told PTI.

The national unemployment rate touched 7.97 per cent as per the centre's proprietary data, with urban areas witnessing higher stress at 9.78 per cent and rural joblessness at 7.13 per cent.

The national unemployment rate had stood at 6.50 per cent in March, and the number on both rural and urban front was lower.

The second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a slew of pockets going under lockdown-like situation with only essential activities being allowed, which result in a chill in a bulk of economic activities and a resultant impact on jobs.

"I do not know about the peaking of the COVID wave, but I can see stress on the employment front," Vyas said.

What is likely to happen is that unemployment can remain at high levels, he said, adding that the labour force participation rate can also fall. "In worst situation, both can happen," Vyas added.

He, however, said that the situation right now is not as dire as the one witnessed in the first lockdown, when the unemployment rate had touched up to 24 per cent levels.

The country is reporting around 4 lakh new infections a day and over 3,000 deaths. In an address to the nation last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had advised states to look at lockdowns as a last resort, because of its impact on economic activity.

## T Rabi Sankar takes over as new RBI Deputy Guv

PTI ■ MUMBAI

T Rabi Sankar on Monday took over as the new Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India for a period of three years, the central bank said in a statement.

Sankar has filled the vacancy created after the retirement of B P Kanungo on April 2.

The other three deputy governors are Michael D Patra, who heads the all-important monetary policy department; Mukesh Kumar Jain, the commercial banker-turned-central banker; and Rajeshwar Rao. Sankar was Executive Director of the Reserve Bank before being elevated to the post of deputy governor.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet cleared Sankar's appointment as the new RBI deputy governor on Saturday.

"In pursuance with the Government of India notification dated May 3, 2021, T Rabi Sankar took over as the Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India today for a period of three years or until further orders, whichever is earlier," the RBI said.

## Parents abandon body of 2-month-old Covid+ baby in Jammu hospital

**Jammu:** In a shocking incident, parents of a 2-month-old dead Covid positive baby abandoned the body at a hospital in Jammu district and fled, an official said on Monday.

S.M.G.S. Hospital Medical Superintendent, Dr Dara Singh, said the parents ran away from the hospital. "The baby was admitted to the hospital on Sunday with congenital heart disease and other problems. The baby, who had tested positive for Covid-19, expired and the parents were told to test themselves for the virus. Instead of testing themselves or taking the dead baby's body, the parents ran away from the hospital," he said.

"Our efforts to trace them have failed so far and we have kept the body in the hospital mortuary." **IANS**

# Maha deaths drop to 567

N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

1.49 per cent.

With 78 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai increased from 13,294 to 13,372,

while the infected cases went up by 2624 to trigger a jump in the infections from 6,55,997 to 6,58,621.

In a relief to the health authorities, the number of Covid 19-triggered deaths in Maharashtra dropped further to 567 on Monday, while the state logged 48,621 new infections.

A day after the state recorded 669 deaths and 56,647 new cases, the daily deaths dropped by 102 while the infections came down by 8026.

The drop in the number of daily deaths in the state should be seen in the context of the fact that the daily deaths had gone up to 10-35 on April 28, while the state witnessed 802 deaths on May 1 and 669 deaths on May 2. With 567 new deaths, the total number of deaths in the state climbed from 70,284 to 70851. Similarly, with 48,621 infections, the total number of cases rose from 47,22,401 to 47,71,022.

As 59,500 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year went up to 40,41,158. The recovery rate in the state for the first time in several days rose from 84.31 per cent to 84.7 per cent.

The total "active cases" in the state dropped from 6,68,353 to 6,56,870 cases. The fatality rate in the state stood static at

## Mumbai BMC chief urges people to come forward for Covid testing

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Concerned by the sudden decrease in the number of Covid-19 tests being conducted in the metropolis, Mumbai Municipal Commissioner I S Chahal on Monday appealed to the citizens in the city to come forward to get tested so that "a minimum of 40,000 tests are done every day" in the country's commercial capital.

In an appeal made on a day when the number of daily Covid-19 tests dropped to 23,542 as against 56,000 tests done in a single day the metropolis last month, Chahal said: "It has been the consistent policy of MCGM to do maximum testing to flush out Corona virus from Mumbai's environment".

"Our highest single day testing from March 2020 till 10th Feb 10, 2021 when second pandemic wave hit Mumbai was 24,500," the civic chief said.

"However, immediately thereafter our testing was more than doubled & touched 56000 tests on a single day in April 2021. Our average daily testing in the month of April'21 was nearly 44000 per day," Chahal said.

"It has been observed that the testing figures have fallen in last few days from 50,000 plus to 38000 day before & 28,000 yesterday. It's likely to fall further during weekends," the civic chief said in the morning.

As per the Covid-19 update released by the Birhanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), the number of Covid-19 tests done on a single day dropped to 23,542 on Monday.

"Our aggressive testing policy has resulted in reduction of the positivity rate. This might have reduced the natural demand for home collection of swabs by our citizens in the last few days," Chahal said.

## J&K records 51 deaths on Mon

**Jammu:** The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir on Monday recorded 51 deaths, highest so far in one single day while 3,733 new cases of coronavirus tested positive taking the tally of active positive cases closer to 35,000 cases.

According to a media bulletin, only 11 Covid ICU beds have been left vacant in GMC, Jammu, four in Chest Diseases Hospital, 20 in Gandhi Nagar hospital, three in ASCOMS Hospital. The situation in Srinagar is no different. As per the media bulletin, only 1 Covid ICU bed was vacant in SMHS hospital in Srinagar, 2 in SKIMS, Soura.

Meanwhile, there has been no let up in the total number of new cases. On May 3 out of

3733 new positive cases 1294 were reported from Jammu division and 2439 from Kashmir division.

The death toll due to Covid 19 touched 2421 after 35 deaths were reported from Jammu division and 16 from Kashmir division.

Moreover, 1536 more Covid-19 patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals including 626 from Jammu Division and 910 from Kashmir Division.

Both the capital cities of Srinagar and Jammu continue to record the highest tally of positive cases despite observing corona curfew. On Monday, Srinagar recorded 1136 cases taking the tally of active positive cases to 10,143. **PNS**

## TN CM Palaniswami resigns

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami submitted his Government's resignation to Governor Banwarilal Purohit on Monday morning as a follow up to the Election Commission of India declaring the results of the Legislative Assembly election held on April 6.

M K Stalin, president of the DMK, who led his party as well as the Secular Front to an impressive win in the election would be sworn in as the next Chief Minister on Friday. The newly elected MLAs of the DMK are meeting at the party headquarters in Chennai on Tuesday to formally elect Stalin as the leader of the legislative assembly. Stalin had told media persons late Sunday evening that the swearing in would be

held at the Raj Bhavan in Chennai and it would be a simple affair. The mission to ensure a smooth transition of power began late Sunday evening and continued throughout Monday with bureaucrats and police officials calling on Stalin at his palatial residence many times.

In the 234 strong Legislative Assembly, the DMK would have 133 members while the AIADMK with 66 members would don the role of the principal opposition party.

The Indian National Congress, the principal ally of the DMK, won 18 of the 25 seats it contested, while the two Communist parties shared two seats each. The VCK, a Dalit outfit, managed to win four seats. The DMK will not include any of the allies in its government as the party commands a safe and secure strength in the House.

### COVID BRIEFS

#### PUDUCHERRY: LOCKDOWN EXTENDED TILL MAY 10

Puducherry: Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry Tamilisai Soundararajan on Monday announced that the lockdown to contain the spread of COVID-19 would be extended till May 10. She announced this while speaking to reporters after inaugurating a separate OP booth on the premises of Rajiv Gandhi Government Maternity Hospital here.

#### ANDHRA LOGS 18,972 FRESH CASES

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh crossed the One million mark in total recoveries of Covid-19 patients even as it added 18,972 fresh cases of the infection in the 24 hours ending 9 am on Monday. The latest bulletin said 10,227 patients had recovered in 24 hours, taking the gross to 10,03,935.

#### AHMEDABAD: W RLY SETS UP 19 ISOLATION COACHES

Ahmedabad: The Ahmedabad division of the Western Railway has set up 19 isolation coaches with 304 beds here in Gujarat amid the shortage of beds in hospitals given the surge in COVID-19 cases. Thirteen of these coaches, equipped with required medical facilities including oxygen cylinders, have been stationed at the city's Sabarmati railway station, while six coaches are parked at Chandlodiya railway station, it said on Monday.

#### 5 COVID +VE UNDERTRIALS FLEE FROM HOSP IN JAIPUR

Jaipur: Five Covid-19 positive undertrial prisoners getting treatment at the Chittorgarh District Hospital fled from the facility on Monday, but two of them were nabbed soon afterward, officials said.

#### SIKKIM: 27 NEW CASES, 1 MORE DEATH

Gangtok: Sikkim's COVID-19 tally rose to 8,468 as 27 more people tested positive for the virus while one new fatality pushed the death toll to 150, a health department bulletin said on Monday. The new COVID-19 cases were reported from East Sikkim district (13), West Sikkim (10) and South Sikkim district (4), it said.

## BJP likely to send Central observers to Assam to pick next State CM

**New Delhi:** The BJP is likely to finalise its choice of Chief Ministerial nominee for Assam in a day or two as internal consultation within the party has begun amid a suspense over whether it will continue with incumbent chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal or bring in a new face.

Sonowal and his powerful ministerial colleague Himanta Biswa Sarma are being seen as the two most obvious contenders for the top job. BJP sources said internal con-fabulation is on in the party, and the its parliamentary board may soon name central observers to preside over the meeting of its newly-elected party MLAs in Guwahati where they will pick their leader. Central observers generally convey the choice of the party top brass to the state leadership which in turn is endorsed by the

MLAs.

The ruling BJP-led NDA has retained its grip on Assam, bagging 74 of the 126 assembly

constituencies that went to polls, while the opposition Congress-led grand alliance managed to clinch just 50 seats. **PTI**

## Assam CM thanks people for victory of BJP-led alliance

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal thanked all sections of people for giving a clear mandate to the BJP-led alliance in the assembly election, results of which were declared on Sunday.

Expressing his gratitude to the people belonging to Barak and Brahmaputra valleys, and other parts of the state, the chief minister in a statement on Monday said, they had reposed their faith in

the BJP-led alliance due to its performance in four key areas.

The areas were "development carried out by the BJP-led government which manifested in every nook and corner of the state, its unrelenting fight against corruption, initiatives to strengthen peace and harmony, and committed efforts of the government to safeguard the identity and existence of the Assamese people from the influx which had significantly altered the demography of the state, especially lower Assam", the statement said.

## Coordinate with Centre to hike O2 quota: Raj CM to officials

**Jaipur:** Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has instructed officials to maintain constant coordination with the Central Government to increase the allocation of medical oxygen in view of the ever-increasing active cases of Covid in the state. Along with this, he has also directed to strongly advocate for providing tankers as per requirement to Rajasthan out of the oxygen transport tankers being imported through the central government.

The Chief Minister has said strict adherence to the Covid protocol is very important for lifesaving. He instructed that the epidemic red alert starting from Monday should be strictly followed the guidelines of Public Discipline Fortnight, there should not be any laxity in it.

Shri Gehlot was reviewing the supply of oxygen, availability of medicines, Covid condensation and the epidem-



ic Red Alert - Public Discipline Fortnight starting Monday through video conference on Sunday night.

He said that the consumption of oxygen in the state is increasing rapidly due to increasing compaction. Since the central government is allocating oxygen under the National Plan, it is very important to increase the amount of allocation in view of the need of Rajasthan. He said that there has been an additional increase of 350 metric tonnes in the production capacity of oxygen at the Jamnagar plant. In such a situation, Rajasthan gets an allocation of extra oxygen from there.

## Aligarh hospital demands ₹8,000 to hand over body

PNS ■ ALIGARH

During the covid pandemic, it has been seen that the sensitivity of Deendayal Hospital staff is dead. Beena Ghosh, resident of Begambagh, died on April 30, but Rs 8,000 were demanded to hand over the body.

Son Shankar was upset due to lack of money. After the matter went viral on social media, the DM in charge took cognizance and the investigation has been handed over to SDM. After this, the body was also handed over to Shankar.

Bina Ghosh was tested positive on 24 April, the same day she was admitted to the corona ward of Deendayal Upadhyaya Joint Hospital.

## Agra residents urged to return empty cylinders

PTI ■ AGRA

Two major NGOs here that have been providing oxygen to Covid patients, have urged their families to return empty cylinders.

About 200 oxygen cylinders and 15 concentrators, provided by the two nonprofit organisations — Shri Chetra Bajaj Committee and Help Agra — are lying with people being treated in home isolation, they told PTI.

"Some people are renting our cylinders further to other people at heavy rates. When we call them, they refuse to return them and tell us to keep the security amount," Shri Chetra Bajaj Committee Spokesperson Nandkishore Goyal said, adding the security amount varied from Rs 5,000 to Rs 6,000.

## NEW INNINGS IN LOCKDOWN



A married couple on their way to pray at the holy river Ganga amid lockdown in Varanasi on Monday



A bride and bridegroom wearing masks leave after registering their marriage at Bandra court, amid lockdown, in Mumbai, on Monday

### MAHA PHONE TAPPING CASE

## Rashmi Shukla moves SC, seeks no coercive action against her

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a new development in the much-discussed phone tapping case, senior IPS officer Rashmi Shukla on Monday moved the Bombay High Court, seeking a direction to the Mumbai police not to take any coercive action against her and urging the court for an urgent hearing in the case registered under the Official Secrets Act and other laws for allegedly leaking certain confidential documents.

In a criminal write petition filed through her advocate Sameer Nangre, Shukla — who is currently Additional Director General (ADG) of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) based in Hyderabad — sought a direction to the police to not take any "coercive action" against her. She also sought an urgent heading in the case, as she was apprehending her

arrest in the case.

Shukla's counsel said in the petition: "My client is one of the senior most officers of 1988 cadre in police service for more than 30 years....The approach of the respondent state is to arm-twist the petitioner by bogus and frivolous case".

"The petitioner has exposed the nexus between ministers and politicians and other gross corruption involved in assigning posting to police officers...This reveals courage and integrity of the petitioner in performing her official duties and making her best endeavours to expose and eliminate the corruption by bringing the guilty to books," Nangre stated in the petition.

"Instead of applauding and appreciating the work of the petitioner, the government authorities are involved in framing the petitioner in a false criminal case," the petition

stated.

The petition pertains to an FIR registered by the police at the BKC Cyber Police Station on March 26 based on a complaint filed by the State Intelligence Department (SID) against unknown persons for the alleged illegal phone tapping and invoked sections of the Official Secrets Act, Information Technology Act and Indian Telegraph Act.

Before the BKC police registered an FIR in the phone tapping case, Maharashtra Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte had claimed in a report submitted to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray that "it appears that Ms. Shukla herself had leaked the confidential report (to the former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis)".

On her part, Shukla skipped the summons issued to her to appear before the BKC on April 26 and April 28 for recording her statement in the

case.

It may be recalled that the SID had lodged a lodged a complaint with the police after Maharashtra's former chief minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis had on March 23 gone to town demanding a CBI inquiry into the alleged racket involving the transfers and promotions of police officers ranging from inspectors to high-ranging IPS officers.

Fadnavis had made his demand based on a confidential submitted to it in August last year by the then State Intelligence Commissioner Rashmi Shukla through the then the Director-General of Police Subodh Jaiswal on August 25, 2020 allegedly involving corruption in matters relating to the transfers and promotions of police officers ranging from inspectors to high-ranging IPS officers.



## Emphatic victory

The BJP lost the plot when it focused more on damning Mamata than advancing its core agenda

It's a classic case of "glass half full" battle of jibes for both the BJP backers and their critics. For the supporters of the saffron outfit, the victory in Assam and Puducherry and the massive rise in both the vote percentage and the number of seats in West Bengal are a reflection of the BJP's unmatched electoral management and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popularity. The saffron baiters have their own arguments. They contend that the BJP's victory against the Congress in Assam was predictable because the latter is no more a potent political force. Similarly, in Puducherry, it's the personal victory of All India NR Congress (AINRC) leader N Rangasamy and the BJP has merely benefited from the alliance. But in Bengal, where the real battle of 2021 took place, the BJP came a cropper. After all, it had thrown in everything it had in its ever-growing kitty of resources — political, financial and others. The Prime Minister himself addressed 18 rallies and Home Minister Amit Shah held dozens of massive road shows. Several other Chief Ministers, MPs, MLAs and party president JP Nadda camped in Bengal for months together and tried to create the necessary media buzz to defeat the TMC in the psychological space. Coincidentally, several initiatives of the CBI and the I-T department against the TMC leaders also came in handy for the BJP. Mamata and her supporters also kept alleging that the Election Commission was acting as a player rather than an arbiter.

On the other hand, Mamata got little support from the anti-BJP bandwagon. Though the Congress-Left alliance threatened to cut into her Muslim votes, a few erstwhile UPA leaders came in to campaign for her. Devoid of any serious policy and programme narratives, the campaign became highly personalised with Modi greeting Mamata with "Didi o Didi" catcalls and the TMC supremo hurling the choicest invectives at Shah. The BJP lost the plot when it focused more on damning Mamata than advancing its core political agenda. The Bengali-identity politics turned out to be far more assertive and lethal for the BJP which didn't realise that lord Ram would not threaten a woman who epitomised goddess Durga for millions of Bengalis. In fact, the more the BJP leaders ridiculed Mamata, the more sympathy she drew from the people of the State. The presence of a leader who could give a face to identity politics cost the saffron party in a big way. Most of the borrowed players — described as "rotten eggs" by Prashant Kishor — were seen as opportunists even by the BJP's own supporters. It's obvious that any cadre-based party can't assimilate such an overnight influx without alienating a section of its own supporters. The lesson for the BJP is loud and clear: Wherever the party is pitched against satraps, it would need to focus more on local issues and identity politics. The record of the last seven years shows that the BJP has not been successful in winning against powerful regional players in the State-level elections.

### PICTALK



People buy vegetables at a crowded market during the lockdown in Jalandhar

PTI

## Crunch time

The Centre must plan meticulously before it agrees to the SC's advice for another lockdown

Devastated by COVID-19's second wave, the nation is anxiously looking for solutions but seemingly can't find any. The Prime Minister, who had last year announced a hard lockdown, is now advocating a "micro-containment" strategy while the Supreme Court recently asked the Centre to consider imposing another lockdown. But considering the ferocity of the second wave — the exponential rise in cases, mounting death toll, shortage of medical oxygen, vaccines and hospital beds — and the loss of crucial time in the conduct of the Assembly elections and the Mahakumbh, the moot question is: Would another lockdown help contain the infection? There has been no significant improvement in Delhi even after a two-week lockdown — now extended for a third week — as the positivity rate continues to be alarmingly high. Further, even if a pan-India lockdown is imposed as a knee-jerk reaction to the court's suggestion, its impact on breaking the transmission chain is debatable. There's no doubt, however, that it would be a death blow to millions of underprivileged citizens already facing an existential crisis. We have seen how the hapless migrant workers again rushed back home from big cities fearing a lockdown, even before it was announced.

It is the duty of the Centre to make adequate arrangements for the return of these workers if it plans to enforce another lockdown. It must ensure that these people are not stuffed into trains or buses like last year because that would be another super-spreader. A reasonable period, at least two weeks, must be allowed for their safe return before the lockdown is effected. The Government should also transfer some funds via the DBT schemes into their bank accounts. Also, with the Supreme Court observing that no person shall be denied hospitalisation for lack of identity proof, the Centre must now consult States and formulate a national policy within two weeks. The situation is already out of hand and the entire population must be vaccinated as early as possible. With vaccine shortage and an uneven pricing policy haunting the States, getting the desired outcome from the inoculation drive is easier said than done. With reports that the second wave may hit its peak between May 11-16 before declining by May end, we must be prepared for the worst.

# Ignoring the warning signs

We were wilfully unprepared for this tsunami of an outbreak of COVID-19, though the telltale marks were all in plain sight

Anybody who has seen videos of the horrific 2004 tsunami that killed an estimated quarter of a million people, and there are several of these on YouTube, might have noticed in some videos that as much as 10-15 minutes before the tsunami actually hit the shore, water had started withdrawing from the beach. The students of middle-school geography will remember that it is taught as a classic warning sign of an impending tsunami; and we are actually taught at a very early age that one needs to find higher ground in such a situation. This lesson is redoubled in many coastal areas. Maybe some people did seek shelter when they noticed this, many did not. Yes, the tsunami might have gotten many of those who escaped anyway; it was so devastating that running away could do only so much. But even if it saved a few lives, the lessons in school would have been worth it.

That was a real tsunami, what we have in India right now is not a second wave of COVID-19 infections. We have an overwhelming tsunami of COVID-19 infections and, in Delhi and in many other cities across India, the healthcare system is overwhelmed. We know that at least 3,500 people are dying every day, at least in official statistics. India is inching up to 2,50,000 deaths and almost every family in Delhi at least knows either a loved one or a close friend who has died from the Coronavirus Tsunami. While the authorities now struggle with managing the situation, we have to start taking into account as to why we all ignored the warning signs.

And these were there. These were there for all of us to see and read about in the news. We knew there was a deadly new British variant doing the rounds; we knew that there was a new "double mutant" variant. Even with limited testing, we knew that there were hotspots emerging in and around Mumbai and Pune. But instead of herding



people to a higher ground and safety, like we should have if this were a real tsunami, we were mesmerised and walked into the exposed seafloor, trying to pick up coral and seashells. We travelled to Goa, crowded planes and airports and instead of managing travel from hotspots like the United Kingdom, or even domestic travel, we "celebrated" the rising numbers of air passengers through tweets. Instead of restricting air travel, either within India, from India or into India, we allowed hundreds of people to come in likely carrying new and exotic variants of the virus. The world, however, is scared of the new variants emerging from India and has pretty much closed its doors to India.

Some of us had read about the sudden rise in cases in Brazil, starting with the Amazonian city of Manaus and spreading across that South American country, and wondered whether India too could see such a tremendously debilitating tsunami of cases. Instead, we were told stories of Indian exceptionalism, how India had beaten



INSTEAD OF UNDERSTANDING WHY INDIA WAS SPARED THE 'FULL' IMPACT OF THE ORIGINAL CORONAVIRUS, WE ROLLED OUT A GRADUAL VACCINE PROGRAMME AND INDEED MADE A SONG AND DANCE ABOUT EXPORTING MILLIONS OF VACCINES ABROAD

back the virus and taking a cue from our leaders, across fields from politics to sports, we all let our guard down. Instead of understanding why India was spared the "full" impact of the original Coronavirus, we rolled out a gradual vaccine programme and indeed made a song and dance about exporting millions of vaccines abroad. Nothing against India's generosity to the world, but maybe here following a more selfish American philosophy might have ensured that more people in India were vaccinated and the death toll from this outbreak might have been less.

Yes, a large majority of those who have died were elderly and had led full lives, and while many of them might have died in this tsunami also, the issue is that a large number of people who died need not have died had the arrangements for more beds and oxygen been made earlier. Yes, the system might still have been overwhelmed, meaning that those who caught the disease early benefited from more resources but if the special COVID-19 hospitals in Delhi and

Mumbai had been established a week earlier, if a proper logistical programme had been thought out for oxygen transport a month earlier, many lives might have been saved. The Government is going around tom-tomming India's "low" COVID-19 Fatality Rate; in fact, with a bit of planning and organisation, it could have been lower still.

The fact of the matter is that we saw the warning signs but chose to ignore these; we all bought into the story of Indian exceptionalism. We blithely chose to ignore what was happening elsewhere in the world and believed that once we all start getting vaccinated, things will get even better. We went ahead and planned for massive religious functions like the Mahakumbh, we had parties on Holi and we put ourselves at risk. We ignored the warning signs, even though these were in plain sight for all of us to see. No wonder, now we find ourselves drowning in a tsunami.

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### MATCHES ARE AN OASIS THESE DAYS

Sir — The Indian Premier League (IPL) match between archrivals Mumbai Indians (MI) and Chennai Super Kings (CSK) recently was a perfect entertainer and certainly the match of this season so far. Kieron Pollard's stunning onslaught took the Mumbai Indians to an improbable win in a run-fest. The defeat also ended the Super Kings' five-match winning streak.

The MI came out with flying colours in a last-ball thriller. With 138 needed from the last 10 overs, they knew there was just one way to go about it and, in Pollard, they found the man to pursue the Herculean task. He muscled Jadeja for three sixes in the 13th over before smashing two more off Lungi Ngidi in the next. By the end of 14 overs, Mumbai were 130 for three. At the same stage in their innings, the Super Kings were 126 for four. Pollard raced away to 50 in 17 balls, the fifth joint-fastest in the IPL, and reduced the equation to 66 required from the last five overs. A match that witnessed an equal number of fours and sixes (30 each) is absolutely a bad memory for the bowlers. Remarkably, both teams displayed true teamwork to arrive at such a mammoth total. But Ravudu and Moeen Ali from CSK and Pollard and Krunal Pandya from MI deserve special applause. Let's hope the richest cash league will offer the best entertainment in the remainder of the series.

Satish Reddy Kanaganti | Nalgonda

### IT'S TIME TO BE HOPEFUL, CAREFUL

Sir — Winning over the first wave of COVID-19 was no mean feat for India. Buoyed by it, New Delhi started vaccine diplomacy to help other nations during the crisis. However, things turned upside down as the second wave hit us hard and sent our healthcare system reeling. Some sceptics applaud other countries for beating the second wave and compare it with India's "failure". However, we must keep in mind that we have a huge population and there are several other barriers. Despite all the constraints, our recovery rate is far better and mortality rate is too low. Even the US and Russia, among the developed

## BJP should introspect its failure



In the West Bengal Assembly elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) fell way below its expected number of seats. But in a surprise turn, Mamata Banerjee lost to Suwendu Adhikari, her former party colleague who switched sides months earlier and joined the BJP. It's time for the BJP and its leaders, who were earlier claiming to win more than 200 seats, to introspect about what led to their defeat. In an embarrassment for the BJP, its stalwarts such as Union Minister Babul Supriyo, former Rajya Sabha MP Swapan Dasgupta and Lok Sabha MP Locket Chatterjee fell like ninepins. The Assembly election

result is a dampener for the BJP if compared with the outcome of the 2019 Lok Sabha election. It had won 18 of the 42 seats and taken a lead on 121 of the 294 Assembly segments by garnering 40.2 per cent vote share. However, in this election, it won 77 seats — 44 seats less than the lead it had taken in the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

The people of West Bengal chose to rally behind Mamata Banerjee despite the vigorous canvassing against her by tall BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. It seems that the Trinamool Congress was successful in consolidating the Muslim votes and that had a direct impact on the election results. In Kerala, the LDF Government got due recognition from the voters for its efficient management of the State during the severe flood and its proper handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. It's good for the BJP to be ambitious but the recent Assembly results have shown that over-ambition is counterproductive.

Katuru Durga Prasad Rao | Hyderabad

nations with top medical infrastructure, were devastated by the second wave.

The Centre and State Governments are doing their best to fight the pandemic and utilising their resources to the optimum. The services of final-year MBBS students can be utilised for providing services like tele-consultation and monitoring of mild COVID cases after due orientation by and under supervision of faculty. It's time for all of us to work together and overcome the pandemic. The darkness will soon go away if every citizen follows the rules and precautions at individual level.

Aman Jaiswal | New Delhi

### TAMIL NADU'S DRAVIDIAN ICONS

Sir — These Tamil Nadu Assembly elections were the first time in the last five decades without the towering presence of the icons of Dravidian politics. This time, the State may well have seen the emergence

of one, perhaps two, new icons. Now the State has newly elected MLA and to-be-Chief Minister M K Stalin who is well suited for this new generation and for the DMK. He is 68 years old and has finally reached where he wanted to be for five long decades in the shadow of his father and one of the leading lights of the Dravidian movement, the late Muthuvel Karunanidhi.

However, the AIADMK hasn't done as badly as was expected, especially with the weight of an alliance with the BJP which was more like a liability. Stalin, because of his genealogy, long years in politics and two successive wins, in 2019, when the DMK-led grouping won 38 of the 39 Lok Sabha seats in the State, and now, can stake claim to being the next Dravidian icon.

Anshita Rochwani | Ujjain

## SOUND BITE

So far, refrained from ordering a sweeping lockdown. But if the people do not comply with the restrictions, harsher steps might have to be taken.

Punjab Chief Minister  
— Amarinder Singh

What we've witnessed over the last several years is China acting more aggressively abroad.

US Secretary of State  
— Antony Blinken

Everybody is building more and more oxygen plants, getting tonnes and tonnes of oxygen cylinders. How are we compensating for all the oxygen that we are forcefully drawing from the environment?.

Actor  
— Kangana Ranaut

Yeah, Sanju Samson is good fun to bat with. We all know he is a chilled fun character. He walked in and smacked his first ball for a six, which was quite amazing.

Rajasthan Royals opener  
— Jos Buttler

Nirvachan Sadan is the new crematorium in Delhi. Constitutional bodies (are) burnt here.

TMC leader  
— Mahua Moitra

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

TIME FOR COURSE CORRECTION



SHIVAJI SARKAR

Economic activities have been hit so hard by the lockdown that traders have cried for deferment of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and other taxes. According to the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), the daily loss of business owing to the lockdown in Delhi is likely to be around ₹600 crore while the total loss across the nation could be nearly ₹30,000 crore if full and partial lockdowns, night curfews and other forms of restrictions are taken into account. CAIT's secretary general Praveen Khandelwal says that non-compliance with these tax stipulations will attract huge penalties on traders across the country. There is no policy or revival plan and the economy is shrinking as people's incomes are in a tailspin, markets have sagging demand and activities are at a virtual thaw. A hard lockdown was imposed on March 24, 2020 without giving a simple thought on how 130 crore Indians would survive if their livelihoods were snatched away. It happened and the next three months revealed that the decision to close down all activities, except those centered around COVID-19, had led the country to a devastating path. Lakhs of the 18 crore migrant workers hit the road amid loss of work and dignity. Nearly 13 months down the line, the Government should have come out with a road map till now but, alas the nation became complacent about having conquered COVID-19 only to realise too late that the virus has not gone and has hit us with greater ferocity. Consequently, there has been an exponential surge in infections, a mounting death toll, lack of medical oxygen and medicines.

The State has largely remained a mute spectator compelling the courts to intervene and stop the administration from smothering voices being raised against the Government's monumental failure. Despite its massive failure to deal with the crisis, the Centre has claimed that all arms of the Government are working unitedly and rapidly to deal with the situation. The nation is still expecting some decisive action against the pandemic but with its ailing healthcare system and mounting death toll the situation is becoming grim day by day. Reports from the countryside say that half-baked hospitals are doing more harm and how the bodies are cremated remains a mystery. "The State has failed in its fundamental obligation to protect the basic fundamental right that is the right to life under Article 21", said Delhi High Court on April 30. The Bench, earlier during the same hearing, had noted the "complete failure of the State" when dealing with other pleas.

We have not suddenly plummeted into such a state. It appears that the nation was in euphoria of collecting brownie points and has given up all thoughts about the lives of its own people or the state of its economy. The latest indicators from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) about the banking system do not bring any comfort. The bank losses or Non Performing Assets (NPA) are mounting. In such a scenario, credit squeeze is obvious. The Rupee is plunging and petrol prices are at an artificial high. The time for correction has come. The Government needs to own up to failure on its part to control the pandemic. Further, it must also admit that it failed to provide employment and prevent loss of jobs following the demonetisation exercise and pushed the country into severe social and economic crisis. The Centre must reformulate the plan for resurgence of the country with the help of the Opposition, religious leaders and social groups not merely for Gross Domestic Product figures but for survival of the informal sector and the free flow of cash. It must give up all political ego. Healthcare should now become the bedrock of the nation's resurgence, supported by a prudent economic policy, even if that means forming a national Government.

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

Make the COVID jabs free for everyone



UTTAM GUPTA

There is a dire need to vaccinate at least one billion people within a short time and, given the pitfalls of differentiated pricing, the Centre should opt for inoculating everyone free of cost

“

THE COST OF PURCHASE I.E. ABOUT ₹40,000 CRORE CAN BE MET FROM THE ALLOCATION OF ₹35,000 CRORE MADE IN THE UNION BUDGET FOR 2021-22 (AN ADDITIONAL ₹5,000 CRORE WOULD BE NEEDED TO MAKE UP FOR THE DEFICIT). AS FOR THE SERVICE CHARGE FOR VACCINATION, THIS COST MAY BE PAID BY THE STATES FROM THEIR BUDGETS

*The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.*



even higher. The earlier arrangement was far from optimal as it entailed differential treatment of eligible people depending on the place they got the jab. While, those going to GVCs got it free, others opting for private hospitals, paid ₹250 per dose. Even as the involvement of private hospitals was justified in view of the need to cover a large number (there are 300 million in the 45 plus group) within a short time frame, putting a price tag to it and that too ₹100 over and above the price they paid to manufacturers militated against this objective. Indeed, this was a potent factor behind dismal results thus far with only about 20 million in a total of 300 million having got both the shots (even as other factors such as the initial vaccine hesitancy among the public at large as also supply constraints were equally responsible).

Under the new regime, even as the facility of getting a jab for ₹250 per dose at private hospitals for persons in the 45 years plus category has been withdrawn, the Central Government wants over 500 million people (50 per cent of about one billion of the adult population i.e. over 18 years whom it expects to get jabs from States and private hospitals' quota) to pay a price high enough to destabilise the budget of even a middle income family.

Consider the following two scenario: First, let's take the lowest in the price spectrum i.e.

Covishield — supplied for ₹300 per dose to States. Add service charge of ₹200 per dose (67 per cent of the price; this is the mark-up applied to ₹150 per dose being the price billed to private hospitals under the erstwhile dispensation), the recipient will pay ₹500 per dose. For two doses, this comes to ₹1,000. A family of four will have to shell out ₹4,000.

At another extreme, consider Covaxin supplied for ₹1,200 per dose to private hospitals. Plus service charge, the recipient will pay ₹2,000 per dose. For two doses, this will be ₹4,000. In this case, the dent on this family's budget will be ₹16,000.

Given the high prices at State centres and much higher at private hospitals and considering that vaccination from the GOI quota (50 per cent of total supply) is for free, people will tend to gravitate towards the latter. The clamour for getting vaccinated at GVCs will be so pronounced as to cause a complete breakdown of this network. This could be averted if only the State Governments decide to do free inoculation even out of the paid quota; however, this will require them to give heavy subsidy from the State Budget.

Already, some States like Maharashtra, Delhi and so on have announced their intent to give it all free and others are likely to follow suit. If, it has to be free for all involving subsidisation by the Centre or States then why go through such a cumbersome route?

Considering that the crisis is of an unprecedented magnitude (once in a lifetime) afflicting the entire population, there is a dire need for vaccinating at least one billion within the shortest possible time frame and given the pitfalls of differentiated pricing, the Centre should opt for inoculating everyone free of charge.

Apart from GVCs, all other stakeholders like the State health facilities, private hospitals, industrial establishments and so on should be involved in the vaccination drive. They can pick up their requirements directly from the manufacturers even as the GOI does overall coordination, negotiates a good price and makes payment.

Given the mammoth numbers i.e. two billion doses, a price of ₹200 per dose should be good enough to cover the cost and give good return to the manufacturers (here, it is pertinent to recall a statement by Adar Poonawalla, CEO, SII, "the firm was making a profit even at a price of ₹150 per dose"). The cost of purchase i.e. about ₹40,000 crore can be met from the allocation of ₹35,000 crore made in the Union Budget for 2021-22 (an additional ₹5,000 crore would be needed to make up for the deficit). As for the "service charge" for vaccination, this cost may be paid by the States from their Budgets.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

I THINK THAT THE PEOPLE OF BENGAL MADE A HISTORIC MISTAKE BY NOT GIVING THE BJP A CHANCE AND BY RE-ELECTING THIS CORRUPT AND CRUEL LADY. —BJP MP BABUL SUPRIYO



IT IS THE VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF BENGAL AND THE VICTORY OF DEMOCRACY. BENGAL HAS SAVED INDIA TODAY. THIS VICTORY HAS SAVED HUMANITY. —WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER MAMATA BANERJEE



The mysterious end of the quest for knowledge in India

What happened that made the development of science and technology less important after the great burst of scientific creativity in ancient India?



MARKANDEY KATJU

*The writer is a former judge of the Supreme Court of India. The views expressed are personal.*

Joseph Needham a brilliant British bio-chemist who had obtained a doctorate from Cambridge University in 1925, visited China several times. In his book 'Science and Civilisation in China' Needham posed the problem, known as "Needham's grand question", in respect of China, but which applies equally to India.

The question is this: Why did China (and India), which were far ahead of Western countries in science and technology at one time, later fell behind, did not have an industrial revolution, became backward and consequently victims of imperialism and colonisation?

There is no doubt that both India and China were at one time far ahead of the Western countries in science and technology. China invented gunpowder, the magnetic compass, paper and printing,

which, according to Francis Bacon, were the three most important inventions facilitating Europe to pass from the dark Middle Ages to the Modern age. But why did China's progress in science and technology stop thereafter? According to Needham it could have been the Confucian philosophy, which was incompatible with scientific development, which was responsible for this. But is this explanation not superficial?

As for India, it was far ahead of the West in ancient times. Indians invented the decimal system in mathematics, which was one of the revolutionary inventions in history. The numerals in the decimal system were known as Arabic numerals by the Westerners, but the Arabs called them Indian numerals. Were they really Arabic or Indian? To answer this we

may note that the languages Arabic, Persian, and Urdu are written from right to left. But if we ask an Arab, Persian, or Urdu writer, to write any number (say 259 or 1,379) he will write it from left to right. This indicates that these numbers were taken from a language which is written from left to right. And now it is accepted universally that the decimal system and the number zero, was invented in India.

The importance of zero can be understood by considering the following: The ancient Romans built a great civilisation of Caesar and Augustus. But if we were to ask an ancient Roman to write the number one million he would have been stumped. The reason for this is that the ancient Romans wrote their numbers in alphabets, V standing for five, X standing for ten, L for 50, C for 100, D for 500, and

then put six zeros after that. The ancient Greeks and Romans just did not have the imagination to conceive of a number called zero. By using zero our ancestors could conceive of astronomically large numbers. Thus, 1,000 had three zeros after one. If we add two more zeros we get one lakh and so on.

Aryabhata, who reputedly lived in the 5th Century AD worked on quadratic equations, the binomial theorem and calculated the value of pi to a fairly accurate degree. He also made significant contributions to astronomy, being perhaps the first person in the world to prove that the Earth rotates on its axis, thus causing day and night.

Brahmagupta and Bhaskar also made great contributions in mathematics and so on. In medical science India was at least 1,000, if not 1,500, years

ahead of any country. Thus, Sushrut, the father of surgery, invented plastic surgery in the 6th century BC while the Britishers discovered it only towards the end of the 18th century AD during the Anglo-Mysore wars, and that too, from a traditional physician who lived near Pune.

The harbour at Lothal in Gujarat, which is regarded as quite modern in its construction, was built around 5,000 years ago, and is regarded as part of the Indus valley civilisation. Why, then, did we fall behind the West? Why did we not have an industrial revolution? Why was our advance in science and technology blocked, while Europe produced Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, Descartes, Robert Boyle, Cavendish, Priestly, Lavoisier, Maxwell, Gauss, Max Planck, Rutherford, Heisenberg, Pauli,

Niels Bohr, Einstein, Schrodinger, Chadwick, Madam Curie, Otto Hahn in physics, chemistry and mathematics, William Harvey, Ross, and so on in medicine, Edmond Halley and so on in astronomy, James Hutton in Geology, Linnaeus, Buffon, and Darwin in biology, and so on. No doubt we produced CV Raman, Srinivasa Ramanujan, Chandrashekhara, S Bose and so on but these are just a handful

What happened that made in the history of India the development of science and technology less important (after the great burst of scientific creativity in ancient India), while in the West it became more important? This mystery is yet to be solved. Were there cultural, economic, or historical factors involved in this deceleration in learning? A lot of scientific investigation is called for.



# Govt waives IGST on import of Covid-relief material

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Monday waived Integrated GST (IGST) till June 30 on the import of Covid-related relief material donated or received free of cost from outside India for free distribution.

The Finance Ministry in a statement said the government had received a number of representations from charitable organisations, corporate entities, and other Associations/entities outside India seeking exemption from IGST on the import of Covid-19 relief material, donated/received free of cost from outside India for free distribution.

“Accordingly, the Central Government has ... Granted exemption from IGST on import of such goods received free of cost for free distribution for covid relief,” it said, adding the exemption would be

applicable till June 30.

This exemption would also cover goods already imported but lying uncleared at the Customs ports.

The Government has already exempted from customs duty import of a host of COVID-related relief materials, including Remdesivir injection and its APIs, Inflammatory diagnostic (markers) kits, medical grade oxygen, oxygen therapy related equipment such as oxygen concentrators, cryogenic transport tanks, etc, and Covid vaccines.

The IGST exemption given on Monday would be subject to nodal authorities, appointed by the state governments, authorising any entity, relief agency or statutory body, for free distribution of such relief material.

The said goods can be imported free of cost by a state government or, any entity/

relief agency/ statutory body, authorized in this regard for free distribution anywhere in India.

The importer shall before clearance of goods from Customs produce a certificate from the said nodal authorities that goods are meant for free distribution for Covid relief.

After imports, the importer shall produce, to the Deputy or Assistant Commissioner of Customs at the port within a period of six months from the date of importation or within such extended

period not exceeding nine months, a statement containing details of goods imported and distributed free of cost.

This statement shall be certified by the said nodal authority of the state government.

“This exemption shall thus enable import of the Covid

relief supply imported free of cost for free distribution with-out payment of IGST (up to the 30th June, 2021). As customs duty is already exempt , these imports will not attract any customs duty or IGST,” the ministry added.

India’s single day COVID infections had crossed a record 4 lakh mark last week. On Monday, 3.68 lakh new infections and 3,417 deaths were reported.

Last week, the government slashed IGST rate on import of oxygen concentrators for personal use to 12 per cent, from 28 per cent, for two months till June 30.

Under Goods and Services Tax (GST), the tax levied on consumption of goods or rendering of service is split 50:50 between the Centre and the state. Such tax is known as Central-GST or CGST and State-GST or SGST.

## Covid crisis, rollback of stamp duty cut impact Mumbai home sales

IANs ■ MUMBAI

The second wave of Covid-19 and the rollback of the stamp duty cut in Maharashtra impacted the housing sales in April, showed a report by Knight Frank India. The report noted that Mumbai recorded upwards of 10,000 residential property registrations in April 2021.

However, upon delving deeper into the property registrations data, it was found that, only 7 per cent of these registrations were from new

residential sales concluded in the same month, while 93 per cent of the registrations were from properties transacted between December 2020 to March 2021 for which applicable stamp duties were paid during the lower rate window, it said.

The Maharashtra state government in December 2020 had given a leeway of four months to homebuyers to register a property after the payment of stamp duty in order to prevent crowding of registration offices.

## Markets recoup initial losses to end flat

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex staged a smart recovery from the day’s low to end with marginal losses on Monday, propped up by robust buying in FMCG and telecom counters.

Reliance Industries and banking stocks accounted for most of the losses, while a rebounding rupee also provided support, traders said.

After plunging over 750 points in early trade, the 30-share BSE index made a U-turn to finish 63.84 points or 0.13 per cent lower at 48,718.52. In similar movement, the broader NSE Nifty closed 3.05 points or 0.02 per cent higher at 14,634.15.

Titan was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, shedding 4.58 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank, Reliance Industries, Axis

Bank, Kotak Bank, ITC, SBI, ONGC and ICICI Bank.

On the other hand, Bharti Airtel, HUL, Maruti, Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints, NTPC and Nestle India were among the gainers, climbing up to 3.98 per cent. “Domestic equities recovered sharply from day’s low despite weak global cues. While growing uncertainties about collection efficiency and asset quality of banks/NBFCs dragged heavy weight financials, strong buying in FMCG and Metals supported recovery in markets,” said Binod Modi, Head Strategy at Reliance Securities.

While persistent rise in second wave of COVID-19 cases has weighed on investors’ sentiments, steady corporate earnings with positive managements’ commentaries offered support to markets, he noted.

## High frequency indicators show economic activity ‘softening’: Crisil Research

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

India’s high frequency indicators have started to show a softening trend in economic activity, Crisil Research said on Monday.

“In India, the impact of state-announced restrictions are more clearly showing up across high frequency indicators - they all trended down for the second

consecutive week,” it said. Retail mobility fell 8.2 percentage points (pp) on average in the week ending May 2, while workplace mobility slowed 7.1 pp. Besides, toll collection through electronic mode declined 2 per cent on-week. Similarly, Goods and Services Tax e-way bill collection (volume) declined 6.9 per cent on-week for week ending April

25. Lately, India’s crushing second Covid-19 wave has been making new peaks with every passing day, as daily cases near the 4 lakh plus level.

“If it was any consolation amid the steep rise in daily cases and deaths, growth in recoveries, which lagged cases till last week, grew faster by 57 per cent in the week April 26-May 2. That com-

pared with 16 per cent growth in cases.” “Growth in daily cases in major affected states, such as Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh too slowed down, compared with the week ending April 25. But recovery rate has declined to 82 per cent as of May 2, due to the high base of confirmed cases,” Crisil said.

## Corporate revenue seen growing 6% in FY22 as second wave takes a toll: Ind-Ra

PTI ■ MUMBAI

With the second wave of the pandemic disrupting supply chains for most industries, India Ratings has projected an overall 6 per cent median revenue growth for corporates this fiscal over

FY20. However, this will be a high 21.2 per cent over FY21, the year of the pandemic when half of the year was almost lost in lockdowns; and the forecast is more than its own earlier assumption of 4.4 per cent, though. The service-oriented sector is the worst hit so far

when it comes to supply-side disruption from the second wave of the pandemic, the report said on Monday, adding this has pushed back their recovery beyond the current fiscal. While FY22 is likely to be better than FY20 for most of the sectors due to an improve-

ment in revenue benefitting largely from elevated prices and pent-up demand resulting in higher volume growth, volatile commodity prices along with interest rates reversal and the rupee fall are likely to cap profitability, the report added.

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	14481.05	14673.85	14416.25	14634.15	3.05
SBI LIFE	921.95	980.00	916.05	979.10	50.40
BHARTIARTL	530.00	562.50	529.05	561.05	24.30
ADANI PORTS	727.65	764.00	713.75	760.00	32.95
TATASTEEL	1031.95	1069.00	1018.50	1067.10	33.10
MARUTI	6480.00	6622.00	6400.00	6600.00	144.35
ASIANPAINT	2510.00	2595.10	2505.60	2590.50	54.10
HINDUNILVR	2345.00	2415.00	2340.00	2401.60	47.85
NTPC	101.40	104.60	101.05	103.40	1.85
BAJFINANCE	5316.30	5580.00	5291.25	5546.00	94.10
UPL	605.50	639.75	605.15	617.00	10.10
HINDALCO	364.40	372.20	357.65	370.00	5.60
TATACONSUM	661.85	682.50	661.00	675.55	10.55
NESTLEIND	16630.00	16574.95	16272.65	16519.70	210.45
HDFCLIFE	66.00	67.50	65.15	67.30	8.60
HCLTECH	886.75	910.45	891.00	909.90	10.95
ULTRACEMCO	6252.00	6380.00	6150.00	6342.00	63.05
GRASIM	1396.60	1425.05	1374.25	1414.00	12.25
JSWSTEEL	714.00	730.00	710.60	732.55	5.40
IOC	88.95	91.95	88.95	91.50	0.65
SUNPHARMA	653.95	663.95	650.10	659.10	4.65
BAJAJ-AUTO	3815.00	3906.80	3775.00	3858.80	25.05
HDFCBANK	193.00	194.90	193.70	194.90	6.70
DIVISLAB	4061.80	4147.30	4020.05	4079.55	17.20
DRREDDY	5193.95	5212.35	5140.00	5184.00	20.90
POWERGRID	217.00	222.85	216.75	223.90	0.85
M&M	744.90	766.55	740.05	753.95	1.40
HDFC	2265.00	2432.95	2265.00	2423.80	3.70
ITC	1325.50	1351.30	1319.15	1341.50	1.05
LT	304.90	305.50	304.00	303.85	0.20
SHEECOM	2790.00	2808.55	2732.60	2790.45	-6.25
BAJAJFINSV	10901.00	11110.85	10814.15	11030.00	-11.65
CIPLA	919.10	924.40	906.40	909.00	-1.35
BRITANNIA	3439.10	3478.70	3431.60	3440.75	-8.25
TATAMOTORS	289.30	294.75	285.00	293.10	-0.75
TECHM	960.00	965.00	955.00	957.00	-3.40
ICICIBANK	592.55	598.85	587.50	598.30	-2.20
INFY	1340.80	1361.00	1338.00	1349.00	-5.35
ONGC	108.15	110.70	106.00	107.60	-0.55
SBIN	349.60	352.50	341.40	351.45	-2.05
COALINDIA	133.00	133.45	131.20	132.10	-0.85
ITC	201.20	201.85	200.00	201.10	-1.50
EICHEMOT	2382.50	2416.25	2367.50	2399.00	-22.65
HEROMOTOCO	2779.95	2848.00	2766.65	2792.00	-27.15
KOTAKBANK	1735.00	1759.00	1706.00	1731.00	-17.80
WIPRO	487.95	496.00	483.25	486.50	-6.25
BPCL	419.00	429.05	415.40	416.15	-5.65
AXISBANK	706.00	708.00	692.10	703.50	-11.40
RELIANCE	1966.00	1979.00	1943.10	1956.00	-38.50
INDUSINDBK	929.00	967.70	899.00	913.50	-21.45
TITAN	1477.00	1477.00	1421.00	1423.70	-67.95

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	34526.25	35094.50	34416.25	35099.55	300.35
ADANIANT	1145.10	1264.40	1122.65	1255.60	96.90
MARICO	420.05	454.00	416.10	452.55	33.80
ICICIPRULI	521.95	554.00	520.10	545.30	31.80
INDUSTOWER	253.00	262.00	250.20	260.65	8.15
GODREJPROP	690.00	713.15	687.60	709.00	17.25
NMDC	152.00	159.65	151.00	159.30	3.55
ADANTRANS	1020.00	1095.05	1017.00	1073.00	23.10
CADILAHG	574.95	584.50	570.45	583.30	12.15
ADANIGREEN	1015.00	1042.80	990.00	1039.50	20.55
DMART	2845.00	2911.00	2822.90	2904.00	51.10
PEL	1655.10	1715.80	1654.50	1710.00	29.80
HAVELLS	984.90	1008.00	970.00	1006.00	15.75
ICICIIGI	1415.00	1443.00	1390.20	1434.35	20.35
BERGEPAINT	704.00	714.00	697.10	713.25	9.25
INDIGO	1620.00	1670.85	1612.20	1664.70	21.30
DABUR	538.75	548.40	538.00	543.30	5.25
LUPIN	3903.90	3940.00	3850.00	3928.00	37.75
AMBUJACEM	304.50	312.80	301.20	311.70	2.65
ACC	186.00	190.90	185.20	189.00	16.25
MCDOWELLN	517.00	526.00	512.55	523.60	4.05
SIEMENS	1861.00	1900.00	1855.00	1895.00	13.55
COLPAL	1478.00	1511.90	1467.15	1492.20	10.30
TORNTPHARM	2599.00	2557.50	2496.50	2525.00	15.75
HINDPETRO	232.95	237.10	231.00	236.00	1.35
MOTHERSUMI	214.00	219.40	210.90	215.80	1.10
MUTHOOTFIN	1155.00	1164.70	1135.00	1163.00	5.60
VEDL	1068.00	1082.90	1060.35	1073.50	4.00
ABBOTINDIA	15150.00	15272.55	15003.00	15179.50	27.75
DIF	244.00	248.95	241.75	247.35	0.45
GAIL	136.10	138.20	134.65	137.40	0.20
APOLLOHOSP	3208.80	3221.80	3140.00	3201.00	3.50
JUBLFOOD	2889.00	2922.30	2846.95	2893.90	2.20
ALKEM	2759.05	2838.90	2750.65	2760.15	1.10
PGHI	1357.00	1359.00	1340.00	1355.20	3.50
BOSCHLTD	13220.00	13554.45	13230.00	13502.05	-6.95
BAJAJHLING	3430.00	3468.00	3341.35	3417.10	-4.10
PIDILITIND	1815.50	1824.80	1796.00	1813.00	-2.80
VEDL	380.95	381.85	375.10	378.50	-1.15
BIOCIN	255.40	262.40	252.60	256.10	-1.15
UBL	1196.75	1220.00	1196.70	1205.80	-6.10
PETRONET	236.00	239.40	235.15	237.80	-1.25
SBICARD	972.00	984.80	962.75	979.00	-5.20
HDFCAMC	2769.10	2771.85	2735.75	2755.00	-21.35
MRF	80399.90	81127.95	79300.10	80000.00	-720.55
PNB	34.50	34.70	34.00	34.50	-0.35
NAUKRI	4880.00	4899.00	4825.00	4862.00	-52.70
AUROPHARMA	979.70	986.25	965.00	968.70	-12.15
IGL	504.95	508.65	495.75	501.00	-7.95
BANDHANBNK	324.90	330.00	314.40	318.95	-10.80
YESBANK	12.85	14.00	12.85	13.95	-0.60

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP
RELIANCE	1963.70	1979.00	1943.70	1959.25
SAIL	119.45	130.60	116.40	127.75
BAJFINANCE	5325.00	5598.50	5291.90	5552.95
TATASTEEL	1034.95	1070.00	1018.45	1064.55
ADANI PORTS	728.40	765.00	715.00	761.25
SBIN	350.00	352.35	341.70	350.45
TATAMOTORS	285.65	294.70	285.15	293.00
ADANIANT	1154.95	1263.00	1123.40	1255.60
INDUSINDBK	934.75	967.80	900.00	913.95
MARICO	419.80	452.80	416.25	445.40
BHARTIARTL	532.00	562.00	529.05	558.70
LT	1336.00	1351.30	1320.65	1342.15
JSWSTEEL	712.00	729.90	710.70	723.25
KOTAKBANK	1743.00	1758.60	1685.70	1724.30
TATAMETALI	1069.00	1264.60	1062.00	1255.95
HDFCBANK	1399.00	1421.65	1377.55	1413.10
TATACHEM	794.45	794.45	770.15	782.85
BHEL	47.95	54.50	47.45	53.40
CADILAHG	575.95	584.50	570.55	580.70
SUNTV	559.80	559.80	501.40	504.60
ICICIBANK	597.40	598.95	587.45	597.00
HCLTECH	899.50	910.00	891.25	907.40
DRREDDY	5200.00	5207.55	5141.05	5184.35
AXISBANK	706.95	707.90	692.30	703.00



# Ethnic guerrillas in Myanmar say they shot down copter

AP ■ BANGKOK

An ethnic rebel group in northern Myanmar said it shot down a Government military helicopter on Monday during heavy fighting over a strategic position.

The claim by the Kachin Independence Army came as protests against Myanmar's military government continued in Kachin State and elsewhere in the country. It would be the first aircraft shot down during recent hostilities between the government and ethnic guerrilla armies. There was no immediate comment by the government on the incident.

The Kachin are one of several ethnic minorities who have allied themselves with the nationwide protest movement against the military's February ouster of the elected government of Aung San Suu

Kyi, who was arrested and remains in detention. The country's ethnic minorities have been fighting for decades against the central government for greater autonomy.

Government offences are underway against the Kachin and the Karen, another ethnic minority in eastern Myanmar that maintains its own armed force and also has been the target of airstrikes. The fighting in Kachin and Karen states has displaced more than 45,000 villagers.

Col Naw Bu, a spokesman for the Kachin Independence Army, said his group's forces shot down the aircraft after government forces used helicopters and jet fighters in an attack on Momauk township, where the Kachin seized a base at the foot of Alaw Bum mountain from the government on March 25.



Anti-coup protesters burn tires and chant slogans with banner read "The Kamayut strike will be fight for to the end when we get victory" during the demonstration against the military coup in Kamayut township Yangon on Monday

**The ruling junta continues to face challenge in the cities and towns of Myanmar, where street protests are still being held more than three months after it seized power**

A video on social media said to be of the helicopter shows, at a great distance, an aircraft diving as the sounds of heavy weapons are heard. As the helicopter continues a steep descent, it appears to catch fire and leaves a trail of smoke. The video, and another taken from

a distance showing smoke from what was said to be the crash site, could not be independently verified.

Naw Bu said it was the first aircraft shot down in what has become a fierce battle lasting almost two weeks after the government attacked with heavy artillery and fighter jets.

"Good news! Our prayer has been answered. KIA shot down a terrorist's helicopter," Hkanhpa Sadan, foreign secretary of the guerrilla army's affiliated Kachin National Organisation, said on Twitter. Opponents of the military government routinely refer to its forces as "terrorists".

The ruling junta continues to also face a challenge in the cities and towns of Myanmar, where street protests are still being held more than three months after it seized power. Security forces often use

lethal force to break up the protests. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, which tracks deaths and arrests, said at least five civilians were killed Sunday on what protesters declared was Global Myanmar Spring Revolution Day.

The organisation said security forces have now killed 765 protesters and bystanders. The government puts the death toll at about one-third that figure and says its actions are justified to stop what it calls rioting.

The government also has kept up targeted arrests of activists and other people it considers to be behind the resistance movement. The Assistance Association says 3,555 people have been detained since the army's seizure of power. About 40 journalists are among those being held.

## Biden recalls raid on bin Laden in Pak in 2011

**Vows to prevent another terror attack on America**

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US will never waver in its commitment to prevent another terror attack on the country and to keep the American people safe, President Joe Biden has vowed, as he marked the 10th anniversary of the killing of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan.

The al Qaeda leader who evaded justice for 10 years after the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 met his end in a covert raid by US special operations forces on May 1, 2011 in the Pakistani garrison city of Abbottabad.

In a statement on Sunday, Biden, then Vice President, recalled that he joined President Barack Obama and members of the national security team, crowded into the Situation Room of the White House in 2011 to watch as the US military delivered long-awaited justice to bin Laden.

"It is a moment I will never forget," Biden said, while praising the intelligence professionals who had painstakingly tracked bin Laden down; the



clarity and conviction of President Obama in making the call; the courage and skill of the American team on the ground.

"It had been almost ten years since our nation was attacked on 9/11 and we went to war in Afghanistan, pursuing al Qaeda and its leaders. We followed bin Laden to the gates of hell — and we got him.

"We kept the promise to all those who lost loved ones on 9/11: that we would never forget those we had lost, and that the United States will never waver in our commitment to prevent another attack on our homeland and to keep the American people safe," the president said.

Biden noted that as a result of the efforts taken the US, his administration was bringing to an end the country's longest war and draw down the last of

the American troops from Afghanistan where al Qaeda is now a "greatly degraded" terror group.

The US and NATO formally began withdrawing their last troops from Afghanistan on Saturday, according to White House and military officials. President Biden set May 1, 2021 as the official date on which the remaining troops would begin pulling out, although the military has been flying equipment out of the country in recent weeks, according to US media reports.

There are between 2,500-3,500 US troops and about 7,000 North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) soldiers remaining in Afghanistan, the last of whom will leave the war-torn country by the end of September.

Under a deal signed last year between the Taliban militants and the administration of former president Donald Trump, foreign forces were to have left by May 1 while the Taliban held off attacking international troops.

Biden last month pushed back the May 1 pullout, saying some troops would stay on until September 11 this year, the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, citing the security situation.

**Saudi King names new Economy Minister, eldest son as adviser**

AP ■ RIYADH

Saudi Arabia's King Salman appointed a new Economy Minister and named his eldest living son as a special adviser in a series of royal decrees issued early on Monday.

The king named Faisal al-Ibrahim as the minister of economy and planning, a move that promotes him from his post as deputy minister in which he'd served as since early 2018.

Al-Ibrahim has previously held jobs with Aramco and in the country's Council of Economic Affairs and Development, according to Saudi state media reports.

Finance Minister Mohammed al-Jadaan had been serving as the acting minister of economy since last year. In another decree published in state media, King Salman appointed Prince Sultan bin Salman as a special adviser to his father.

The prince had been head of the Saudi Space Authority, leaning on his experience as the first Arab astronaut to go to space in 1985.

The space authority will now be chaired by Abdullah al-Swaha, who is also the minister of communications and information technology.

## US officials in West Asia to reassure jittery allies over Iran

AP ■ ABU DHABI

Top Biden administration officials and US senators crisscrossed the Middle East on Monday, seeking to assuage growing unease among Gulf Arab partners over America's re-engagement with Iran and other policy shifts in the region.

The trips come as the U.S. And Iran, through intermediaries in Vienna, discuss a return to Tehran's tattered 2015 nuclear deal with world powers that former President Donald Trump abandoned three years ago.

The United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf allies, excluded from Obama-era nuclear negotiations, have repeatedly pressed for a seat at the table, insisting that any return to the accord must address Iran's ballistic missile program and support for regional proxies.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., a key Biden ally dispatched on overseas diplomatic missions, told reporters in the UAE's capital of Abu Dhabi that he hoped to allay the sheikhdom's "understandable and legitimate concerns" about the return to the landmark deal and to create "broader engagement" with Gulf partners.

Coons said "close consul-

tation" with the UAE about the ongoing talks in Vienna was "important, expected and happening," adding that he hopes the Emiratis "may not just be notified, but actually help."

What that means remains unclear, as Gulf states now watch with resignation as negotiations gain traction in the Austrian capital. When asked to elaborate, Coons balked at the suggestion that the UAE's input had acquired any greater significance in talks with Iran over the last five years.

"I did not in any way mean to suggest that there was some deal in the works where the Emiratis would be securing anything," he said. "Vienna is the place where the United States government, the administration, is negotiating."

Regional tensions are rising. To pressure the Biden administration to lift sanctions and come back into compliance with the deal, Iran has steadily violated the accord's limitations on nuclear enrichment and stockpiles of enriched uranium. The long shadow war between Israel and the Iran has intensified, with suspected Israeli attacks on Iranian ships in volatile Mideast waterways and at Iran's Natanz nuclear facility.

## 2 ex-Lankan officials charged over Easter terror attacks

**Colombo:** Sri Lanka's Attorney General on Monday slapped 800 charges against two top former security officials for their failure to prevent the deadly 2019 Easter Sunday bomb attacks in which over 270 people, including 11 Indians, were killed.

The charges were unveiled in the Colombo High Court by the country's top law officer Dappula de Livera against former official in the defence ministry Hemasiri Fernando and former chief of police Pujith Jayasundera.

The duo has been accused of neglecting the prior intelligence input on the impending attacks, thereby failing to prevent the loss of life.

Nine suicide bombers, belonging to local Islamist extremist group National Thawheed Jamaat (NTJ) linked to ISIS, carried out coordinated blasts that tore through three churches and as many luxury hotels in Sri Lanka on the Easter Sunday in 2019.

A special presidential panel recently recommended that criminal action be taken

against both Fernando, Jayasundera and several other senior defense officials, including former president Maithripala Sirisena.

The trial of Fernando and Jayasundera is to be held before a 3-member bench for murder and attempted murder.

The probe panel appointed by Sirisena himself has found him culpable for the attacks. Sirisena as the then defense minister ordered the arrest of both Fernando and Jayasundera and both were in jail for many months before being given bail.

After the release of the probe report, a former Muslim minister was recently arrested for alleged connivance with the suicide bombers.

Rishad Bathiyutheen, the former minister of commerce, and his brother, who was also arrested, have denied accusations and dubbed the arrest as politically motivated.

Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, the head of the local Catholic church, has been demanding action against Sirisena.

## EU summons Russia envoy over blacklisting of its officials

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union has summoned Russia's ambassador after Moscow blacklisted eight EU officials in retaliation for the bloc's decision to impose sanctions over the imprisonment of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

The Russian list announced Friday includes European Parliament President David Sassoli and Vera Jourova, a vice president of the European Commission whose brief includes rule of law issues and disinformation.

European Commission spokesman Peter Stano said that Ambassador Vladimir Chizhov would meet in Brussels later Monday with

senior EU officials who "will convey to him our strong condemnation and rejection of this decision."

Stano said the Russian-imposed travel bans are "obviously very politically motivated and lack any legal justification. They are groundless." He said that "this all shows that Russia is determined to continue the hostile track of confrontation."

Russia's foreign ministry has accused the EU of wanting to punish Moscow for its "independent foreign and domestic policies" and of trying to limit its development with "unlawful restrictions."

EU foreign ministers will discuss tensions with Russia when they meet on May 10.

## 16 Niger soldiers killed in attack near the border with Mali

**Niamey (Niger):** An ambush on a military patrol near Niger's border with Mali killed 16 Niger soldiers and left one missing, the government said.

The patrol was returning from a security mission near the border with Mali in Tillia in the northern part of Niger's Tahoua region when it was attacked by a band of men riding motorcycles on Saturday evening, the Ministry of Interior said in a statement late Sunday. Six other soldiers were wounded in the ambush.

Niger's military also intercepted a group of suspected extremists Friday night, killing at least 24 who were preparing to attack Baibangou, a village about 100 kilometers (62 miles) north of the capital, Niamey,

according to a statement from the ministry of defense.

"While in police custody, before being transported to Niamey, the suspected terrorists tried to escape around 4 a.m. And 24 of them were shot dead by the army," the defense ministry said.

Both incidents are being officially investigated.

Niger and neighboring Burkina Faso and Mali are battling the spread of deadly extremist violence from groups linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group.

The increasing violence has killed thousands of people and displaced hundreds of thousands despite the presence of regional and international troops.

## Israeli settlers attack Palestinian village after shooting

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli settlers attacked a Palestinian village in the occupied West Bank overnight, setting brush fires and hurling stones, Palestinian officials and an Israeli rights group said Monday.

It appeared to be a revenge attack after three Israelis were wounded in a drive-by shooting at a nearby traffic junction on Sunday.

The Israeli human rights group B'Tselem said dozens of settlers attacked the village of Jaloud. It circulated videos showing the fires, with people shouting in the background. Israeli security forces arrested 11 Palestinians and four people were wounded by rubber bullets, B'Tselem said.

Ghassan Daghas, a Palestinian Authority official who monitors settlement activity in the northern West Bank, provided a similar account, saying the villagers had come out to defend the village after the settlers attacked.

The Israeli military said Israeli civilians and Palestinians hurled rocks at each other outside the village and that "a number of locations were ignited." It did not provide details on what triggered the violence. It said around 10 people were detained, but did not identify them.

Radical Israeli settlers have been known to carry out so-called "price tag" attacks on Palestinian communities in response to violence or perceived Israeli plans to restrict settlement activity.

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 war, and the Palestinians want it to form the main part of their future state. Nearly 5,00,000 Israeli settlers live in more than 100 settlements scattered across the West Bank, which is home to some 2.5 million Palestinians.

## Philippines protests 'blocking' of its patrol ships by China

**Manila (Philippines):** The Philippine government has protested the Chinese coast guard's harassment of Philippine coast guard ships patrolling a disputed shoal in the South China Sea, the Department of Foreign Affairs said on Monday.

It was the latest of dozens of recent protests by Manila's foreign affairs department, along with increasingly acerbic remarks by the country's top diplomat and defense chief about Chinese actions in the disputed waters.

The high-profile feud has escalated despite President Rodrigo Duterte's friendly stance toward China.

Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. Used an obscene phrase in a tweet demanding China get out of Philippine-claimed areas. "What are you doing to our friendship?"

Locsin asked.

"You're like an ugly oaf forcing your attentions on a handsome guy who wants to be a friend."

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana rejected China's demand that the Philippines end its patrols in the disputed region.

"While we acknowledge that China's military capability is more advanced than ours, this does not prevent us from defending our national interests and our dignity as a people with all that we have," Lorenzana said in a video message late Sunday.

In the latest incident, the Department of Foreign Affairs said it "has protested the shadowing, blocking, dangerous maneuver and radio challenges by the Chinese coast guard of Philippine coast guard vessels

conducting legitimate maritime patrols and training exercises" from April 24 to 25 near Scarborough Shoal off the northwestern Philippines.

Both countries claim the rich fishing area, which China effectively seized in 2012 by surrounding it with its coast guard and surveillance ships after a tense standoff with Philippine vessels.

The department said it also protested "the incessant, illegal, prolonged and increasing presence of Chinese fishing vessels and maritime militia vessels in Philippine maritime zones" in the disputed waters.

It said hundreds of Chinese vessels have been spotted by Philippine law enforcement agencies from January to March this year in areas around Scarborough Shoal and Philippine-occupied Thitu

Island, which Filipinos call Pagasa.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry has asked the Philippines to respect what it calls Chinese sovereignty in the disputed waters and "stop actions complicating the situation and escalating disputes."

China claims virtually all of the South China Sea. On Sunday, its People's Liberation Army said a Chinese aircraft carrier group recently conducted annual exercises in the busy sea lanes.

The escalating feud between Manila and Beijing started after more than 200 Chinese vessels suspected by Philippine authorities to be operated by militias were spotted in early March at Whitsun Reef. The Philippine government demanded the vessels leave.



## DOCYARD

DR HP BHARATHI

Deputy Chief Medical Officer

JINDAL NATURECURE INSTITUTE



# Time to heal naturally



One of the most common chronic diseases of the respiratory system, asthma affects more than 300 million people across the world with around one-tenth of them in India. While the prevalence of asthma is higher in developed countries, the burden of asthma-related deaths is much higher in developing countries like India. In fact, according to a report published by the World Health Organisation (WHO), over 80 per cent of asthma deaths take place in developing countries.

While environmental allergens like dust, pollen, insects and domesticated animals are the leading triggers of asthma, outdoor air pollution has also emerged as a problematic trigger. Researchers from the French Institute of Health and Medical Research found that high traffic intensity and ozone exposure has increased the risk factors in individuals living with asthma. With rising environmental pollution, the incidence of respiratory disease is increasing in India, particularly among children. It is important therefore to introduce a holistic approach towards the management of this condition through the use of naturopathy and yoga. Evidence suggests that a naturopathic approach can offer long-term health benefits to people with asthma by reducing the intensity of the disease, improving symptoms and lung function while significantly reducing drug requirement.

**While modern medicine works in a reactive approach to manage symptoms when they arise, naturopathy works to eliminate the cause and reduce the severity of the disease**

Modern medicine relies heavily on the use of steroid inhalation and anti-inflammatory drugs to manage the condition. These drugs work by reducing inflammation and mucus production in the airways, thereby improving symptoms and controlling the condition. However, the high cost of drugs and their potential side effects remain a cause of concern. A naturopathy based treatment, on the other hand, uses a drugless approach

which is much safer and sustainable.

Naturopathy is holistic rather than a compartmental way of treating and managing a condition. While modern medicine works in a reactive approach to manage symptoms when they arise, naturopathy works to eliminate the cause and reduce the severity of the disease. The Alternative system of medicine believes that all diseases are caused due to an accumulation of toxins or morbid matter in the body and negative vibrations in the mind. The therapeutic plan in naturopathy is executed in three phases — the eliminative phase, which focuses on cleansing the body of accumulated toxins, the soothing phase, which focuses on rejuvenating the body and supplying the necessary nourishment, and the constructive phase, in which the body's metabolic activity is regulated.

The treatment is divided into three therapy sections — Nature cure therapy, Diet therapy and Yoga therapy. Nature Cure therapy consisted of chest pack applied from 30 minutes to an hour once or twice a day depending upon the clinical condition of the patient. This was accompanied by a combination of hot foot and arm bath, partial massage therapy to upper back and chest, fomentation, Asthma Bath, Oxygen Bath, Steam and Sauna Bath, Enema, Steam Inhalation and Drainage therapy. Under the diet therapy, patients were prescribed nutritionally calcium-rich, non-mucus and non-acid generating food-items along with herbs and lots of water. Yogic kriya, Yogasana, Pranayama and Yoganidra spanning into a three-week programme with a gradual gradation in the severity of the practices was the third pillar of the treatment approach.

The study combined with a year follow up of patients had shown highly promising results. The naturopathy approach helped these patients to improve their lung function and symptoms while reducing the requirement of drugs in most patients.

## COVIDCARE

**ALMONDS:** Immunity has taken centrestage during the pandemic. So much so, that anything and everything that has immunity booster written on it is running off the shelves real quick. However, heightened immunity can be achieved at home without too much efforts.

Eating a handful of almonds every day can do the job for you. Almonds are a source of 15 nutrients such as magnesium, protein, riboflavin, zinc, etc. In addition to this, they are also high in vitamin E, which acts as an antioxidant



# DEALING WITH DOUBLE TROUBLE

On the occasion of World Asthma Day, MUSBA HASHMI speaks with doctors to tell you how one can manage the disease during Corona and what to do if one is unsure whether he is experiencing an asthma attack or COVID symptoms

Breathlessness, chest tightness and coughing, does these sound like COVID symptoms to you? Most probably, yes. However, the fact of the matter is that all these symptoms echo with asthma too.

While it is hard to identify whether a person is having an asthma attack or COVID because the patients are now presenting with newer symptoms, experts say that asthma patients should continue with their medications.

"People feeling breathless may sometimes confuse between Covid symptoms and an asthma attack. The major symptoms seen nowadays in Covid positive patients are breathlessness instead of fever or any other common Covid symptoms such as sore throat, headache,

cough etc. In such a situation it is best to use the inhaler so the asthma attack can be managed. In case of asthma patients having contracted Covid, inhalers and bronchodilators as well as other medications should be continued as per schedule. Nebulisers are again very useful in handling Covid induced bronchospasms. Asthma patients can easily use nebulization, with or without steroids, to help alleviate chest congestions and pressure," Dr Sandeep Nayar, Senior Director & HOD, Chest & Respiratory Diseases, BLK-MAX Super

## Things to keep in mind

- If you've recently recovered from an acute Covid infection, delay getting the vaccine until you're fully recovered and done with self-isolation and quarantine measures
- Also, if you had the infection after receiving the first dose of vaccine, then wait at least 1month after recovery before getting the other dose
- If, along with asthma, you also have other conditions causing immune deficiency like HIV or cancers, consult your doctor before getting the vaccine
- Do not step out of home. If unavoidable, wear a double

mask while going out

- Quit smoking as it can be very dangerous for patients with asthma or other respiratory illnesses
- Avoid outdoor exercises, focus on breathing exercises, and doing yoga indoors
- Take prescribed medicines and inhalers. Keep necessary medicines stocked up
- Eat a healthy diet rich in nutrients and proteins. Avoid eating out and foods rich in oil
- Take steam twice daily to avoid chest congestion
- Keep anxiety and stress levels as low as possible

Speciality Hospital, tells you.

Respiratory viruses can trigger and worsen asthma symptoms and if a person has uncontrolled asthma, they may develop or face severe Covid symptoms. Uncontrolled asthma can mean that there will already be inflammation in the lungs and airways will be compromised so in many cases Covid may even lead to pneumonia, fibrosis (thick and stiff lung walls) or other intense respiratory diseases.

"All asthmatics need to be compliant with their regular medications. Covid virus can also cause flare up of asthma in addition to

causing pneumonia. Hence, early medical advice should be sought in case of symptomatic deterioration," Dr Arunesh Kumar, Senior Consultant & Head Respiratory Medicine/Pulmonology, Paras Hospital, says.

Nayar adds that all asthma patients above 18 years of age must get vaccinated to prevent the deadly implications of the virus even if they get infected.

"Vaccination will not just help in protecting from the virus but will also help reduce the severity of the symptoms. However, those having had an immediate or severe allergic reaction to the vaccine or any of its ingredients, must consult their physician," Nayar says.

Many people don't consider asthma as a serious condition, however, asthma compounded by other infections can increase the risk. An important aspect for all patients is to know the triggers so one can keep away from them and be protected from another attack.

"Identify your triggers. If dust causes problem, try and keep your surroundings dust free. Maintain proper cleanliness at all times. At such a time, when differentiating between COVID and asthma attack has become a task, it is advisable that you are on optimum guard and eliminate anything and everything that can aggravate asthma," Dr. Deepak Verma, Internal Medicine, Columbia Asia Hospital, Ghaziabad, explains.

**In case of asthma patients having contracted Covid, inhalers and bronchodilators as well as other medications should be continued as per schedule**

— Dr Sandeep Nayar

## TRACK THE PROGRESSION



The second wave of COVID-19 has reported a surge in moderate to severe cases. DR

ISRARUL

HAQUE tells you

how one can monitor the progression of the disease

The second wave of COVID-19 has been characterised by a sharp spike in cases that has overwhelmed the healthcare system in India. Scenes depicting patient and attendants waiting for tests, oxygen and medicines have become common these days. The only solution is to fight back.

The first important observation during this time is that vaccinated people seem to be protected against severe form of the disease. Except a few rare cases, the vaccinated people have mostly recovered well. In addition to this, the infection rate among vaccinated people does not appear to be significantly lower than unvaccinated people. Third, vaccination doesn't provide absolute protection against infection or reinfection. This makes it clear that all citizens need to follow guidelines like wearing of masks, regular hand washing/use of sanitisers and social distancing norms. Fourth, the proportion of people with moderate or severe disease appears to be higher as compared to previous years pandemic. This too has overburdened the healthcare system. Fifth deterioration of patients in second week (from symptom onset) has been reported frequently. The most frequent deterioration has been reported from day seven to day 12 of symptom onset. Deterioration includes rapid decline in oxygen saturation level, markedly increased breathlessness overnight, chest pain, appearance of high grade fever after few days of being afebrile etc. Sixth, though elderly people and people with comorbidities appear to be at higher risk of adverse outcomes but severe disease isn't infrequent among healthy unvaccinated adults.

The picture appears to be gloomy. What can be done at this stage to minimise the loss of lives? Here are a few basic facts that are essential to manage the ongoing pandemic. The first part focuses on what can be done at home. The first step involves classification of disease severity at home. First, anybody testing positive for Covid-19 by rapid antigen kit or RT-PCR needs to isolate himself and monitor his oxygen saturation. Person with oxygen saturation of 94 per cent, 90 to 94 per cent and less than 90 per cent at room air are considered to have mild, moderate and severe disease respectively. These needs to be monitored at least four times a day till two weeks are competed or the person is completely symptom free. Second, we need to identify factors which predict the progression to moderate and severe disease. One important test which can be done at home itself is measuring pulse rate regularly along with oxygen saturation. If the pulse rate is persistently more than 100 on repeated measurement and oxygen saturation drops by more than five per cent on walking for six minutes then there are higher chances of progressing to moderate and severe disease. High Resolution Computed Tomography scoring is informative of disease severity too if it is done on day six of symptom onset.

By following the basic precautions and getting vaccinated will help us beat the virus.

The writer is Consultant Physician, Department of Medicine, Patna Medical College, Patna and is also functioning as Nodal Officer of COVID-19 Ward PMCH, Patna

# TB care is need of the hour

India accounts for over 27 per cent of the world's 10.8 million TB cases. Experts throw light on the ailment and talk about the role of community and survivors

TB has killed more people in history than any other infectious disease. Mycobacterium Tuberculosis continues to ravage communities and societies across the globe since its emergence 9000 years ago. India bears disproportionately large burden of the global TB incidence, accounting for over 27 per cent of the world's 10.8 million TB cases. This burden is further exacerbated as India also is a leading country for people with multiple drug-resistant forms (MDR-TB) that do not respond to commonly used medicines and aggravate mortality.

Multiple factors contribute to the growing rates of TB: Tuberculosis is a social disease. The under-privileged are disproportionately affected due to poor living conditions, malnutrition and access to healthcare. Stigma leads to underreporting and ostracization within the

community and the workplaces. The long treatment period leads to poor compliance, and the chronic nature of the disease leads to rising mortality.

"The severity of the epidemic has led to a host of TB control initiatives in the country with the Government committed to eradicating TB by 2025. We have made great strides in TB care. The scaling-up of diagnosis and treatment and an efficient system has saved millions of lives. However, while these successes are commendable, there remain gaps, such as the medicalised perception of TB, that need to be addressed. For too long, the focus has been on diagnosis and treatment of disease, with minimal attention to supportive services, making TB redressal a challenge," Dr Dalbir Singh, President, Global Coalition for TB, says.

TB is a multifaceted issue involving society, gender, and

inequalities. Viewing it through a solely medical lens hinders our opportunities for patient care. A TB patient's first interface with a medical service is often an unfamiliar hospital environment, where a heavy emphasis on technical knowledge and treatment procedures reinforces the patient's growing anxieties. A large part of making TB services accessible involves demystifying the disease. While counselling services ensure that patients are adequately sensitised regarding their illness, these are still centralised facilities that are inaccessible for many. We need to move towards decentralised patient-centric approaches that serve to reduce the burden on marginalised communities.

"While we work towards making TB care more accessible, we must also consider the experiences of those affected by TB. Often, programmes are designed from a position of expertise that

fails to account for the needs of those the programme aims to benefit. There is a glaring absence of the patient's voice in our TB control initiatives and a subsequent lack of understanding of the patient experience. The voices of those affected by TB matter because they break through pre-existing perceptions and provide real experiences and needs of those that have survived TB. There is a need for a sustained effort focused on benefiting them, easing their experiences, empowering them and making them the voice for change," Dr Rajeev Gowda, Former Rajya Sabha member, adds.

The fight against TB requires the combined effort of many sectors. The pandemic has shown us that it is possible to tackle such diseases if we work together and that there is much to be learned from the COVID-19 response.

## DadiKaKehna

*Pearly white teeth and picture perfect smile is on everyone's bucket list. ROSHANI DEVI shares simple and easy to follow home remedies that can help*



Dazzling white teeth is a dream of many. Everyone wants to get rid of yellow teeth for that perfect smile. Of course, one can visit a dentist but that will fall heavily on your pocket. Here are home remedies for the same.

Most homes have baking soda and yes, it can be used for almost anything — from cleaning toilets to getting rid of that stain in your favourite dress or shirt to even whitening the teeth.

Take two-four teaspoons of baking soda and add lemon juice to make a paste. Depending on the amount of baking soda, the added liquid will differ.

Apply a liberal amount onto the toothbrush and brush teeth for two minutes. Repeat the process a few times a week or until the desired results are achieved.

Believe it or not rinsing the mouth with coconut oil for whitening is age-old. Prior to brushing your teeth, use a spoon to scoop an appropriate amount of coconut oil up. Take one-and-a-half table-spoon of coconut



oil and put it into your mouth. Like the mouthwash, swish the liquid around for 10-15 minutes. Spit out the oil and then brush teeth. Repeat as necessary.



# UPGRADE YOUR OFFICE



## Decor can influence how productively you work from home, says RAGHAV GUPTA

With Covid-19 impacting us like never before, most of us are spending more time at home. Working from home, around the same environment, can become a mundane task. Along with work stress, being locked up at home, can impact us majorly. Changing the set up at home can increase our productivity as what we see and interact with directly influences our well-being.

A home office that inspires creativity is easy. It is also a great way to utilise quarantine time. Here are three basic tips which you can play around with and also infuse with your personal style.

Use bright colours as these help you stay awake and alive while keeping lethargy away. An accent piece is a great way to add a fun element to your space. Stress can sneak up on you but the good news is that you can keep the levels

down by simply using the right colours in your home. You might not even notice it, but your body and mind react to colours. For 2021 Pantone hasn't chosen one but two colours of the year — the neutral 'ultimate grey' together with a lovely yellow called 'illuminating'. This mix of colours conveys a message of strength and hopefulness that is both enduring and uplifting. Practical and rock solid but, at the same time, warming and optimistic, this union is one of strength and positivity. As grey is a neutral, soothing shade, hints of yellow can bring in a bright element that your space would be happy to have.

Working from home is the norm for plenty of professionals, but for some of us, we're just getting in the groove of working remotely for the first time. As we get used to that work-from-home life, it's important to rearrange your home work space in an organised way



that will keep you focused on your daily tasks with all the essentials you need. To help you upgrade your new work station, avoid getting too cosy or comfy, invest in a good office chair, a desk and, maybe, then add a fashionable cushion to go along with the arrangement. WFH can get boring and it's here to stay, so keep changing your cushions every month or so as these can add a new look to your home-office every month.

Last, keeping your surroundings

clutter-free can change the entire game. With fewer distractions around, your eyes will remain focused on tasks at hand. It's essential for your productivity — and your mental health — to keep your workspace organised. It may seem like a daunting task, but the incentive to start organising is undeniable.

—The author is director of e-commerce of an Indian brand of handmade rugs and accessories that are exported to over 90 countries across the world



## Shweta advocates sustainable fashion

Actress Shweta Tripathi encourages sustainable fashion for the sake of the environment. "I am a big advocate of sustainable fashion and I think if one is conscious of the environment, they'd always choose ethical clothing over anything else. Right from thrift stores to second-hand shopping, I'd like to encourage people to indulge in these practices and make a difference," Shweta said.

The actress treats her clothes with a lot of love and care to ensure they are not torn or damaged.

"The problem is that everyone thinks someone else will save the world. It's time to be that someone. If we all do our little bit, the world will be in a better place. I'd also like to tell people that even when it comes to sourcing for shoots, we try our best to cut down on new things," she added.

In her new web-series, the thriller *Escapade Live*, Shweta wears her own footwear. "For my character in *Escapade Live*, I'm wearing my own footwear as opposed to buying new ones because if there's something that already fits, I think it's really unnecessary to purchase new ones," she said.

—IANS

## Look good, feel great

Were you always curious about the secrets that beauty experts personally use? Here are some pro tips from SHAHNAZ HUSAIN



Beauty is a matter of cultivating some good habits to last you a lifetime. Here are some tips that I swear by to give you that extra edge:

Remember to cleanse your face every night, removing make-up and pollutants that are deposited during the day. I use an aloe vera and lemon cleanser for normal to dry skin. Glowing skin that is free from blemishes is the result of daily, appropriate cleansing.

Remove all creams, like cleansing creams, nourishing creams, under-eye creams with moist cotton wool, so that there is no moisture loss. Moist cotton doesn't



absorb moisture from the skin.

Moisture and protection are the life of skin, especially in winter, to keep the skin soft and smooth. Sun-exposure also causes moisture loss. Use sunscreen or sun-block before going out in the sun. Choose high SPF for sun-sensitive skin, while SPF 25 would suit most skins. Use a sunscreen gel for oily skin. When you are at home, apply moisturiser.

I have normal to dry skin. So, I apply nourishing cream at night, after cleansing, massaging it on the face with outward and slightly upward strokes. I include the neck in my massage routine and wipe off cream with moist cotton wool before bedtime.

Use a facial scrub for blackhead-prone, oily skin at least twice a week. Avoid scrubs on pimples, acne or rash, as well as very dry, dehydrated skin. It can deplete both oil and moisture, causing flaking of the skin. For normal skin, a scrub may be used once a week.

Use a face pack at least once or twice a week. I use a face pack daily. It consists of herbal powder and seaweed lotion, mixed with yogurt, honey and egg white. If your skin is oily, apply it more often. Packs help to deep cleanse the skin and tighten it, delaying ageing signs. The Shahnaz Husain Home Pack suits all skin types.

Keep your hair clean and never neglect shampooing the hair. It is very vital to your hair looking its best and staying healthy. Use mild herbal shampoo and hair rinse. After washing the hair wrap it in a towel and allow it to soak up moisture. Avoid rubbing the hair. Avoid brushing wet hair. Use a wide toothed comb.

—IANS

According to National Eating Disorders Association, the International No Diet Day on May 6 encourages the rejection of diet culture. This movement, started by Mary Evans Jones in 1992, celebrates the importance of body acceptance, diversity, and respect for all body shapes and sizes.

The day is dedicated to promoting a healthy lifestyle with a focus on health at any size. It aims to educate people about the right way to diet and not feeling guilty about indulging once in a while; create an acceptance of how your body looks and its uniqueness; and to end weight discrimination.

Nutritionist, sports consultant, psychologist Shwetha Bhatia, who is among the few dietitians recognised by the Indian Dietetic Association, Mumbai, shares her thoughts on the day's importance that may make you rethink your approach to dieting culture.

"We must respect people of all sizes and their unique battles with body shaming and weight loss. However positive body image in no way should be an excuse for quitting and remaining unhealthy. As humans we do have a psychological association with food. This can reach unhealthy proportions in the form of emotional eating," Bhatia says.

She emphasises, "Shooting for unrealistic body types is harmful. The focus should be on health and fitness rather than a certain size or number on the scale. Shape is largely determined by your genes. So is the tendency to store fat and build muscle in certain areas. Even when you begin to lose



## In diversity we trust

Despite thin being equivalent to fit in popular culture, an ideal body type is a misnomer



fat, it leaves areas that were never meant to store it first," she says.

With major celebs in her list of clients, Bhatia, 43, is a well-known name in the fitness and nutrition field. She says: "A fit body always looks good. Aesthetics is the by-product when you have more muscle and less fat. Spot reduction does not work. When you exercise, it is working the muscle rather than burning the fat sitting above it. Fat burning is

targeted through the diet. A diet is a combination of nutrients your body needs on a daily basis to survive, repair and adapt. Being on a diet therefore means doing the right things most of the time in line with your health and fitness goals. Going off the diet then means letting go once in a while in a way that it does not throw you off the wagon."

Finally, she advises: "Stop obsessing over calories and consumed and burnt: Exercise

is for improving fitness, not trying to cancel out cheat meals. Calorie burning is the bonus and not the goal of the exercise program. The caloric value of foods is measured in a controlled environment in a lab. But in your body, your hormones and enzymes decide how these calories are released and used.

All calories are not equal. Foods with similar calories take different pathways once digested and their fate depends on our hormones. Calorie counting without paying attention to quality and quantity of nutrients does not make sense, even within a calorie deficit plan. You may lose weight but healthy weight loss means less fat mass while gaining or maintaining muscle."

—IANS

## TRENDBLAZER



### COMFORT THE CHILD: MADHAVAN

Actor **R MADHAVAN** says it's important for people to explain the ongoing situation to children. "In all this chaos, uncertainty, and stress please spare a thought for the young kids at home. Their world has become frightening and they are being mostly neglected. Explain to them what's happening and make sure that they feel comforted and secure," he said. The actor makes his directorial debut with *Rocketary: The Nambi Effect*, based on the life of scientist and aerospace engineer S Nambi Narayanan.

### fairtalk DEEPIKA PADUKONE



As millions of us (me and my family included) strive to stay afloat, let us not forget that our emotional well-being in this current crisis, is equally important! Remember, You Are Not Alone. We are in this together. And most importantly, there is HOPE!

### dailytalk ANUSHKA SHARMA



I would like to appeal to everyone to unite and support our country in this hour or crisis. Virat and I are coming together to do our bit. We will share the details soon so that you can also become part of this movement. Remember, we are all in this together. Guys, please stay safe and take care of yourself.

### VICTORIA ON HOME SCHOOLING

**VICTORIA BECKHAM** spoke about how she spent her lockdown with David and their children. "When lockdown first happened, the schools were closed and we said the priority had to be the children. The most important thing was to sit and watch movies with the kids and cuddle them. I appreciate teachers so much more, home schooling is no joke. I can run a business, I can sit in a board meeting, but home schooling the kids is really, really tough."





# Covid bursts IPL bubble

## KKR-RCB match postponed after Varun Chakravathy, Sandeep Warrier test +ve; CSK non-playing staff which includes bowling coach Balaji also caught up

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A Covid-19 outbreak left the star-sprinkled IPL on tenterhooks as Kolkata Knight Riders' Varun Chakravathy and Sandeep Warrier tested positive for the dreaded virus, forcing postponement of their game against Royal Challengers Bangalore, while cases also came to light in the Chennai Super Kings camp.

The match, which was to be held in Ahmedabad on Monday evening, will be rescheduled some time later during the tournament, which will conclude on May 30.

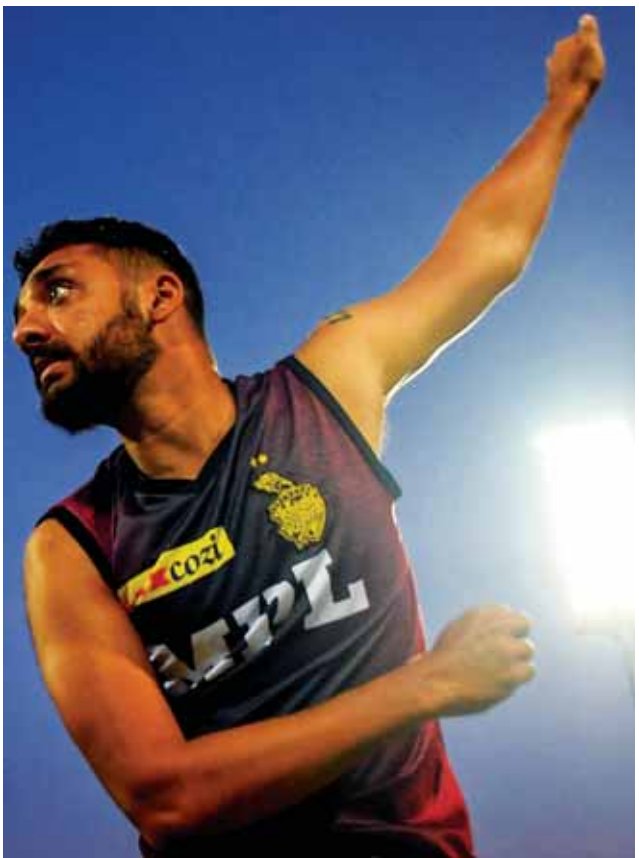
"Varun Chakravathy and Sandeep Warrier were found to be positive in the third round of testing in the last four days. All other team members have tested negative for Covid-19," the league, which features the biggest names in International cricket, said in a press release.

Apart from this, Chennai Super Kings CEO Kasi Viswanathan, bowling coach Lakshminath Balaji and a bus cleaner with the contingent tested positive on Sunday.

A top BCCI official, after declaring all three cases to be "false positives," later clarified that Balaji along with the unnamed cleaner had come out positive even in the repeat test.

"Three members of CSK contingent, CEO Kasi, bowling coach L Balaji and a bus driver had tested positive in the morning followed by negative Rapid Antigen test report," the source said.

"However second RT-PCR report found Balaji and bus driver positive again. The others in



Kolkata Knight Riders spinner Varun Chakravathy

@KKRiders

the team especially playing members have tested negative," he added.

CSK, currently based in Delhi, suspended their training for the day and are scheduled to face Rajasthan Royals on May 5. The team had been hit by Covid cases even in the 2020 edition which was held in the UAE.

There was cause of concern in Delhi too as a few groundsmen at

Monday's developments have definitely cast a shadow on how the Covid-19 threat would be managed for an event being staged across six venues — two at one time.

Leg-spinner Chakravathy and pacer Warrier, both 30, have been isolated and the rest of the KKR contingent has returned negative reports for now. Of the two, Warrier has not yet made the playing XI in any of the seven matches KKR have played.

"The Medical Team is in continuous touch with the duo and are monitoring their health. Meanwhile, the Kolkata Knight Riders have now moved towards a daily testing routine to identify any other possible cases and treat them at the earliest," the IPL stated.

"The Medical Team is also determining the close and casual contacts of the two positive cases during the 48 hours prior to collection of the sample that returned the positive test results," it added.

KKR last played on April 29 against Delhi Capitals in Ahmedabad and the development is bound to trigger anxiety in the league, which had been going along smoothly so far in a bio-secure bubble in front of empty stands.

"Now, the DC players (currently in Ahmedabad) will also have to be tested and every member of the team contingents that came in contact with Chakravathy and Warrier will also be contact traced through the app watch that has been given to everyone," a BCCI source said.

According to IPL's Standard Operating Procedure for Covid-19 management, any close contact

## Balaji's +ve test inside bubble puts Delhi IPL games in fix

**New Delhi:** Chennai Super Kings bowling coach Lakshminath Balaji testing positive for Covid-19 has left the BCCI in a fix about the next few IPL games in Delhi after postponement of Monday's evening match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Royal Challengers Bangalore in Ahmedabad.

While the entire KKR team has gone for a six-day hard quarantine, starting Sunday, after Varun Chakravathy and Sandeep Warrier returned positive, Balaji, who is a regular feature in the CSK dug-out has gone into isolation after returning with two RT-PCR positives on Monday.

"Balaji's positive report is certainly a cause of concern although the CSK players have tested negative. But normally, a lot of people start showing symptoms from the fifth or sixth day. There are discussions whether it is safe to go ahead with the next two matches in Delhi," a senior BCCI source told PTI. While DDCA president Rohan Jaitley told PTI that he hasn't been informed about any re-scheduling.

Since KKR team is doing everyday testing with six days of hard quarantine, many believe that the same rule should be applicable for CSK also before they play their next match. PTI

of an infected person has to isolate for six days and return three negative tests on days 1, 3 and 6.

It is learnt that KKR's pace spearhead Pat Cummins revealed the latest development to all the Australian players in the IPL after Chakravathy, while undergoing some shoulder scans for a niggle after Thursday's game, tested positive for the virus.

Chakravathy has appeared in all of KKR's matches so far and been one of their most successful players with seven wickets under his belt.

KKR and CSK had clashed on April 21 in Mumbai. IPL had dealt with positive

cases before the tournament started, including some high-profile names like Axar Patel and Devdutt Padikkal.

However, this is the first instance of positive cases in the middle of the tournament.

"The BCCI and the Kolkata Knight Riders prioritise the health and safety of everyone involved and all measures are being taken in that endeavour," the IPL stated.

Foreign players, who were already anxious about getting home with travel restricted from India, are edgier right now. But franchises would prefer the league to continue with necessary safeguards.

## Buoyant Mumbai stand in SRH's slippery path

### KEY PLAYERS

**BHUVNESHWAR KUMAR**  
The senior Indian pacer has leaked runs and has not looked in touch which is a concern for Sunrisers

**KIERON POLLARD**  
Polly won the IPL 'El Clasico' against CSK single handedly and his return of form is a big boost for Mumbai

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Back in the groove after two consecutive wins, defending champions Mumbai Indians will be firm favourites to put it past the turbulence-hit and bottom-placed SunRisers Hyderabad here on Tuesday.

Mumbai will enter the game after their four-wicket win over in-form Chennai Super Kings courtesy Kieron Pollard's blitzkrieg.

SunRisers, in contrast, suffered a humiliating 55-run loss to Rajasthan Royals, their sixth in seven games this season.

Mumbai opens Rohit Sharma (250 runs) and Quinton De Kock (155 runs) would be itching to give the five-time champions another strong platform and also convert their starts into big scores.

Mumbai's hard-hitting middle-order has clicked in the last two games, which would be quite pleasing for the team management. Pollard (168 runs), who blazed his way to a match-winning 87 off 34 balls in the last game, would be keen to continue from where he left.

The likes of Krunal Pandya (100 runs), Hardik Pandya (52 runs) and the flamboyant Suryakumar Yadav (173 runs) can be destructive on their day and the trio would be aiming to fire in unison.

However, the Mumbai bowlers would need to forget the hammering received at the hands of the CSK batsmen and start afresh.

The pace duo of Jasprit Bumrah (6 wickets) and Trent Boult (8 wickets) have been exceptional at the death and would pose a big threat to the SRH batting unit, which has been inconsistent at best.

Leg-spinner Rahul Chahar (11 wickets) has been the MI's main wicket-taker, but he would need

### VENUE: ARUN JAITLEY STADIUM, DELHI

## HEAD TO HEAD

Matches	17
Sunrisers Hyderabad	08
Mumbai Indians	09

### MEETING IN IPL 2021

Mumbai Indians beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by 13 runs in Chennai

## 248

Jonny Bairstow with 248 runs at an average of 41.33 in seven innings, is the highest run-getter for SRH in this edition of IPL

## 99

Jasprit Bumrah will become the sixth player to complete a century of matches for Mumbai Indians.

Faisal Features

support from Krunal, who has just three scalps.

However, there are problems aplenty for SRH.

They are over-reliant on their top-order, especially Jonny Bairstow (248 runs), but their middle-order has faltered most often.

Against RR, they dropped Warner and opened with Manish Pandey and Jonny Bairstow, with Williamson coming in at three. If they persist with the same line-up, the three need to fire on all cylinders.

Also, the likes of Vijay Shankar (58 runs), Kedar Jadhav (40 runs), Abdul Samad (36 runs) and Mohammed Nabi (31 runs), if he plays, will have to get some runs for the side to have any chance of building a momentum.

On the bowling front, star leg-spinner Rashid Khan has been the pick of the bowlers with 10 wickets but pacers Bhuvneshwar Kumar (3 wickets) and Khaleel Ahmed (4 wickets) would need to find their form too.

## 'There's no going back now'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Players, especially overseas recruits, are feeling edgier following the emergence of two Covid-19 cases in the Kolkata Knight Riders camp on Monday but teams feel "there is no going back" and the IPL should continue despite the ever-increasing threat of the raging pandemic.

Questions are being raised on how a strict bio-bubble created for the world's biggest T20 league was breached after KKR's Varun Chakravathy and Sandeep Warrier got infected with the deadly virus.

Foreign players, who were already anxious about getting home with travel restricted from India, are a more worried lot.

"There is no going back now with half of the tournament done. The news (positive cases in KKR) makes the BCCI's job more challenging," a franchise official said.

"We have been hearing that

a player got infected because he was taken outside the bubble for scans. So, it could have happened outside the bubble. As far as I know, everyone is strictly following the protocols laid out by the BCCI and there was no breach there," he added.

Another team official said the tournament should continue as long as more teams are not affected by the virus.

"Even if you have to pause the tournament, how long can you hold back? The only way is to keep isolating the positive cases and keep playing. The players are naturally more anxious now but it is mainly because they are not sure about how they would get back home," said the official.

UK, Australia and New Zealand have banned travellers from India and a sizable number of players competing in the IPL are from these countries.

"We should let the BCCI decide what is best for all of us.

Flooding them with too many opinions on what should be done following the cases at KKR would only lead to more confusion," said another top official of a team.

Five-time winners Mumbai Indians were already testing their players on a daily basis and other teams are likely to follow that in the wake of cases at KKR.

KKR players have been told to isolate in the room and even teams like Delhi Capitals have told its players and support staff to stay in their rooms after the development on Monday.

The two sides played each other four days ago.

"Following the news, we have been told to stay in our rooms and strictly follow the protocols. The players are fully aware that the situation outside is grim and the IPL bio bubble is a much safer environment at this point in time," said a support staff member of a leading franchise.

## No charter flight for Aussies at this moment: Hockley

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Cricket Australia currently has no plans to arrange a charter flight to bring its players back home from Covid-19-ravaged India once the IPL gets over, its chief Nick Hockley said on Monday.

Hockley insisted that Australian players are feeling safe and secure in the IPL bio-bubble but his comments came before it emerged that two KKR players have tested positive for the dreaded virus.

Mumbai Indians batsman Chris Lynn had recently requested Cricket Australia to arrange for a charter flight for Australia players after the tournament concludes on May 30.

"There's no suggestion at the moment of any charter flight," Hockley told Melbourne radio station SEN. "We're working closely and talking closely with the Australian Cricketers' Association, with the players and with the BCCI to make sure everyone's okay and the people have got full information.

"We've been in touch with the players there and they are generally in good spirits. The work the BCCI has done around the (bio-secure) bubble means they are feeling safe and secure, and those we've talked to are generally planning to complete their playing commitments."



## Slater lambasts Aus PM

**New Delhi:** Cricketer-turned-commentator Michael Slater, who is currently doing commentary in the IPL here, has launched a scathing attack on his country's Prime Minister Scott Morrison for not allowing its citizens to return from Covid-19 hit India, calling the travel ban a "disgrace".

Australia has shut its borders and not allowing any commercial flights from India because of the massive Covid-19 surge here which has led to all the players, support staff and commentators, who might have wanted to leave the IPL in a fix.

"If our Government cared for the safety of Aussies they would allow us to get home. It's a disgrace!! Blood on your hands PM. How dare you treat us like this. How about you sort out quarantine system. I had Government permission to work on the IPL but I now have Government neglect," Slater tweeted.

Threatening a five-year jail term or hefty fine, the Australian Government temporarily barred its citizens from entering the country if they happened to be in India within 14 days of their intended arrival. PTI

### boundarymeter

4s	810
6s	379

PLAYER	RUNS
1. Shikhar Dhawan (DC)	380
2. KL Rahul (PBKS)	331
3. Faf du Plessis (CSK)	320

PLAYER	WKTS
1. Harshal Patel (RCB)	17
2. Avesh Khan (DC)	14
3. Chris Morris (RR)	14

MOST SIXES	
1. KL Rahul (PBKS)	16
2. Jonny Bairstow (SRH)	15
3. Ambati Rayudu (CSK)	13

## SUMMER SLAM











Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting chats with opening batsman Shikhar Dhawan after DC's 7-wicket win over Punjab Kings on Sunday night

@DelhiCapitals

**CA to donate AU\$ 50K to support India**  
Cricket Australia on Monday pledged 50,000 Australian dollars to support India's fight against the devastating second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic and will also raise more funds in partnership with its players' association and UNICEF. The funds raised by CA will be donated to UNICEF Australia, which will utilise it in various relief initiatives in India.

**Cummins allocates donation to UNICEF Aus**  
KKR' Australian pacer Pat Cummins on Monday said he has allocated his \$ 50,000 donation to UNICEF Australia's India Covid-19 Crisis Appeal, a week after pledging the amount to PM CARES Fund.

**'Warner's days with SRH coming to end'**  
South African fast bowling great Dale Steyn said that David Warner's days with SunRisers Hyderabad may be coming to an end after he was removed as captain and dropped from the team for their match against Rajasthan Royals. "It's strange that he isn't a part of the playing eleven. It's understandable if they want to change ownership of captaincy for the next season, and keep Kane (Williamson) there. But David is still a phenomenal batter and I would still keep him in the eleven. But this might be the last time we see Warner in the Orange Army," Steyn told ESPNcricinfo.

POINTS TABLE							
			P	W	L	NRR	PTS
1		DC	8	6	2	+0.547	12
2		CSK	7	5	2	+1.263	10
3		RCB	7	5	2	-0.171	10
4		MI	7	4	3	+0.062	8
5		RR	7	3	4	-0.190	6
6		PBKS	8	3	5	-0.368	6
7		KKR	7	2	5	-0.494	4
8		SRH	7	1	6	-0.623	2

## shortpasses

**VALENCIA SACK GRACIA**  
**VALENCIA:** Valencia fired coach Javi Gracia on Monday with the club placed 14th in La Liga though safer from the relegation threat.

**PERERA RETIRES COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka all-rounder Thisara Perera on Monday announced his retirement from Int'l cricket with immediate effect.

**SL SEAL TEST SERIES WIN**  
**PALLEKELE:** Sri Lanka beat Bangladesh by 209 runs in the second Test to clinch the two-match series 1-0 at Pallekele on Monday.

**VARANE OUT OF CHELSEA GAME**  
**MADRID:** Raphael Varane is set to miss Real Madrid's Champions League second leg against Chelsea on Wednesday after the club confirmed he has sustained an adductor injury.

**BALE'S HATTRICK LIFTS SPURS**  
**LONDON:** Gareth Bale scored a hat trick as Tottenham stayed in the CL qualification race with a 4-0 win over relegated Sheffield United.

**MESSI LEADS BARCA WIN**  
**VALENCIA:** Lionel Messi missed a penalty but still scored twice, as Barcelona edged a five-goal thriller with Valencia to stay within touching distance of the top of La Liga.

**LYON DAMAGE MONACO'S BID**  
**PARIS:** Monaco's bid for the Ligue 1 title took a huge hit after an incident-packed 3-2 home defeat to Europe-chasing Lyon. Agencies