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FRANCOPHOBIC IN
'LAND OF THE PURE'**WORLD 11**
NEPAL PRESIDENT BHANDARI
INITIATES GOVT FORMATION**AVENUES 12**
TIPS TO ACE
JEE MAIN

LUCKNOW, WEDNESDAY MAY 12, 2021; PAGES 14 ₹3



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TO LEAD INDIA
IN SRI LANKA
14 SPORT

Centre, states doing their best to tackle Covid crisis: Rajnath



Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath interact with senior officials as he reviewed the Covid hospitals set up by DRDO and HAL in Lucknow on Tuesday

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday said the Centre and the state governments are doing everything possible to tackle the COVID-19 crisis, while asserting that only those who perform commit mistakes.

"The speed displayed by the Uttar Pradesh government in tackling the COVID cases should be praised. Mistakes can be committed by anyone. Only a person who performs will commit mistakes. But this is

not the time for criticism, if anyone spots any loophole and offers suggestions, the state government will welcome it," he told reporters here.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accepted this pandemic as a challenge and the government is doing everything possible to tackle this challenge," he said, adding that many countries are helping India at this hour of crisis because of the good diplomatic relations forged by the prime minister.

The Lok Sabha MP from

Lucknow visited a 255-bed COVID hospital built by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) at the Haj House here and conveyed condolences to the families of the COVID-19 victims.

"You may or may not have seen today's news. The World Health Organization (WHO) has praised the work of the Uttar Pradesh government. It is not a small thing," Singh claimed.

The defence minister said, "All the state governments and the Centre are doing every-

thing possible to tackle this challenge. I want to reiterate that only a person who performs will commit mistakes and he should not be criticised, but should be given suggestions."

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath thanked the prime minister and the defence minister, and said, "People must follow the guidelines of the Centre and the state government. This will help break the chain of transmission of the virus," he said.

■ Also See Page 3

WHO praises UP gov't for 'trace, test & treat' policy in rural areas

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The World Health Organisation (WHO) appreciated the efforts of the Yogi Adityanath government for working on the formula of trace, test and treat and admitted that officials were going door-to-door for testing people in the rural areas.

A WHO tweet posted late on Monday said: "In India's most populous state Uttar Pradesh, the state govt has initiated house-to-house active case finding of #COVID19 in rural areas to contain transmission by testing people with symptoms for rapid isolation, disease management & contact tracing."

In its report referring to the major campaign to prevent Corona in rural areas of UP, the WHO, described how the state government approached houses in 97941 villages of 75 districts to check the infection along with isolated patients and providing them medical kits. Various WHO teams visited 10,000 homes in rural UP to cross check the Yogi government's Covid management on the ground. The team learnt about the condition of Covid management in villages themselves and quizzed patients

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Double vault by death in a month

NAVIN UPADHYAY ■ NEW DELHI

When the second Covid wave gripped India sometimes in March and new cases started spiraling like poppies from the seedlings of a deadly new variant, the country's numerous crematorium and graveyards still provided time and space to graciously perform the last rites of Covid-19 victims-and mourn in silence.

But the virus has turned deadlier by the day, and India's death rate has more than doubled during the last one month alone. The final resting places of the dead are now a scene of heart-rending chaos, where pyres burn round-the-clock and tears never stop flowing.

The way the death count in India has soared is alarming, to say the least. A month ago, on April 10 to be precise, India recorded 838 deaths as against 1,52,565 new cases for a fatality rate of 0.55 per cent. One month down the line on May 10, India recorded 3,29,491 cases and 3,847 deaths in a single day for a fatality rate of 1.17 per cent.

The death count clearly more than doubled in just one month.

But that may be an understatement going by the tale of horror emerging from all over the country with dead bodies piling up on pavements and being washed up on the banks

of Ganga in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and crematorium putting up "houseful boards", and experts talking about ten-time more fatalities than the official count.

The rise in India's death rate has not followed a uniform pattern State-wise. For example, while Kerala has a very low fatality rate despite high number of infections, others such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Delhi and Karnataka have far greater death count per thousand infections.

India's death count is now higher than the USA (which once recorded a fatality rate of close to 4-5 per cent), and Spain, Germany, and the UK.

France at this time around leads the globe in terms of fatality rate. The country on Monday recorded 292 deaths against the single-day infection count of 3,292, which translated into a fatality rate of more than 8 per cent.

France is followed by Turkey, Brazil and Italy even as a host of other nations have sub 1 per cent fatality rate.

One of the main reasons for India's growing fatality count is its collapsing health infrastructure in the face of the rising number of cases.

Oxygen shortage, unavailability of ventilators, and vanishing life-saving drugs, have combined to create a dreadful

scenario where more patients are dying due to reasons other than Corona infections.

Reports are pouring in from all over the country showing a gross mismatch between the bodies arriving at crematorium and the numbers of dead in official ledgers. There have been numerous TV and print media reports of fatality undercounting from West Bengal, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Odisha, Kerala, Karnataka, Bihar, Haryana, and Chhattisgarh.

Covid-19 IN INDIA	
TOTAL CASES:	2,33,17,414 (+3,25,375)
DEATHS:	2,53,705 (+3,678)
RECOVERED:	1,93,48,547 (+3,27,155)
ACTIVE:	37,05,272
MAHA:	51,79,929 (+40,956)
K'TAKA:	20,13,193 (+39,510)
KERALA:	19,67,406 (+37,290)
UP:	15,45,212 (+29,272)
DELHI:	13,48,699 (+12,481)

CAPSULE

MODI WON'T TRAVEL TO UK FOR G7 SUMMIT

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will not travel to the UK next month to attend a summit of the G7 grouping in view of the prevailing coronavirus situation, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Tuesday.

BID TO STALL CENTRAL VISTA: CENTRE TO HC

New Delhi: The Centre has told the Delhi High Court that the PIL seeking stay on the construction of Central Vista here amid the raging Covid pandemic was just another attempt to stall the project which has been facing such attempts from the beginning on one pretext or another.

ED FILES CASE AGAINST ANIL DESHMUKH

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a criminal case under the anti-money laundering law against former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh in an alleged "bribery" case, official sources said on Tuesday.

3 L&T MILITANTS KILLED IN J&K ENCOUNTER

Srinagar: Three Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) militants were killed in an encounter with security forces in Anantnag district of Jammu & Kashmir on Tuesday, police said.

'Miracle drugs' no silver bullet

WHO's thumbs down to Ivermectin, IRMC no to Tocilizumab

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Disappointing in trials but still trusted by the anxious Covid patients. "Miracle drugs" Remdesivir, Tocilizumab, and Ivermectin and Plasma therapy continue to find favour with people pinning their hopes on them to cure themselves of Covid-19 cure in the absence of any sure-shot cure.

But, medical experts are divided over the efficacy of these so-called "miracle drugs" with the World Health Organisation (WHO) giving them thumbs down, indicating that these were false hopes in the fight against the pathogen.

Still, the patients see them as a ray of hope, which is reflected in their huge demand and black marketing and hoarding.

In fact on Tuesday, the WHO recommended against the general use of Ivermectin for Covid-19 treatment stating that it can be used only for clinical trials. The drug is typically used for the treatment of parasitic roundworm infections. "Safety and efficacy are



important when using any drug for a new indication. @WHO recommends against the use of ivermectin for #COVID19 except within clinical trials," Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist at WHO tweeted.

The warning came a day after the Goa Government decided to provide Ivermectin to all persons above 18 years of age as a prophylactic treatment of Covid-19.

Similarly, while the State Governments across the country are pulling all stops to ensure adequate availability of anti-viral Remdesivir and Tocilizumab to curb black marketing and ensure its easy availability, the government's Covid strategists like Dr. Randeep Guleria from the AIIMS and Dr Balram Bhargava from

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) have asked the public to not expect much from these injections.

Dr Guleria has been from various platforms reminding the doctors to exercise caution while prescribing Remdesivir to patients and said that the drug used to treat coronavirus disease (Covid-19) is not a 'magic bullet'. He advised doctors that the Remdesivir drug does not reduce mortality and is of no use if given to people with mild symptoms.

Again, even though various States like Delhi and Maharashtra have set up plasma banks for the needy Covid patients and social media flooded with requests for plasma donation, Dr. Guleria feels that plasma therapy has been ineffective in curing patients.

"Studies have shown that plasma therapy has a limited role and is not of much use. Less than 2% Covid-19 patients require Tocilizumab but it is being used a lot these days. The majority of patients with mild symptoms or those who are asymptomatic will improve with the treatment given to symptomatic patients," he said recently about the 'Miracle drugs'.

Echoing similar views, now a group of 18 clinicians and

public health professionals has expressed concern over the "irrational and non-scientific" use of plasma in Covid treatment. On Tuesday in a letter addressed to the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government, Dr VijayRaghavan, the ICMR and the AIIMS, demanded the removal of convalescent plasma therapy from national Covid clinical protocols and warned against possibilities of plasma use triggering virulent Covid variants while being of no clinical benefit among Covid patients.

The signatories include top vaccinologist Gagandeep Kang, Editor of the Indian Journal of Medical Ethics Amar Jesani, public health researcher Shahid Jameel, and other scientists including Oommen John, Gautam Menon, CS Parmesh and Anant Bhan.

However, many doctors across the States feel otherwise. Regarding antiviral drug Remdesivir to treat people infected with Covid-19, a section of doctors claimed that it is beneficial in hypoxic patients with Covid-19 (with blood oxygen saturation below 95), others feel that there is no need to wait for patients to get hypoxic. The second group of

Continued on Page 11

Now, bodies found floating in Ganga in Ghazipur

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Close on heels of the recovery of several bodies of suspected Covid patients found floating in Yamuna river in Hamirpur, many corpses were noticed on the banks of the Ganga river in Ghazipur on Tuesday. The place is around 55 km upriver from Bihar's Buxar, where around 80-90 bodies were found floating on Monday.

Ghazipur District Magistrate MP Singh told mediapersons on Tuesday, "Our officers are present on the spot to investigate and ascertain where the bodies came from. A probe into the matter is underway."

Shocked by the sight of bodies floating in the Ganga river, local residents feared the spread of Covid in the area. They complained of stench coming from the bloated, decomposed corpses, and accused the authorities of ineptitude.

"We informed the administration about the matter, but no action was taken by them. If the situation continues like this, there is fear of us getting infected by corona," Akhand, a local resident, told mediapersons.

Union Minister of Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Tuesday termed the incidents as "unfortunate" and asked concerned States to take immediate cognizance of the incident.

Centre asks states to check disposal of bodies in rivers

New Delhi (PTI): The Centre on Tuesday asked states along the Ganga to ensure strict vigilance and check future incidences of people dumping bodies in the river and its tributaries.

In a letter to District Ganga Committees which are chaired by district magistrates or collectors, the National Mission for Clean Ganga — the apex body that monitors rejuvenation of the river and its tributaries — also asked the authorities to dispose unidentified bodies of suspected COVID-19 victims in accordance with safety protocols.

"Ensure strict vigilance along length of the river within territorial jurisdiction of the district to prevent and check such future incidences of people dumping dead bodies in Ganga and its tributaries and of any other activity hazardous for river Ganga and health and hygiene of the area," NMCG Director General Rajiv Ranjan Mishra said in the letter to the chairpersons of the committees.

It has also asked them to submit an Action Taken Report (ATR) to the NMCG in the next 14 days, the letter said. Mishra said dumping of bodies/partially dumped bodies/decomposed corpse not only causes pollution in the river, but is also unhygienic and increases the risk of spreading infections in communities inhabiting the banks of rivers.

Indian mutant scares world, 17 nations hit

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In just six months, the double mutant Covid variant — identified as B.1.617 — which was first detected in India last December, has spread its tentacles in at least 17 countries, including the United Kingdom, Brazil, Philippines, Argentina, Canada, etc.

On Tuesday, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it as a "variant of global concern". Several countries have put travel restrictions for passengers coming from India as a result of the surge in cases here due this mutant virus.

The B.1.617 variant was first detected in India on December 1, 2020. It contains mutations from two separate virus variants -- E484Q and

L452R. The variant is said to be lethal and infectious with scientists holding it partly responsible for the second and massive resurgence of coronavirus India which has seen many deaths in the second wave of Covid-19.

The B.1.617 variant of the coronavirus consists of at least 3 sub-lineages - B.1.617.1, B.1.617.2 and B.1.617.3. The B.1.617.2 lineage is now growing in prevalence across the country.

Earlier in March, Union Health Ministry had said a new "double mutant variant" of the coronavirus had been detected in addition to many other strains or variants of concern (VOCs) found in 18 States in the country.

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A saviour of bereaved

DEEPAK UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

Hope always has a trick up its sleeve to steal its way through the despair even during the difficult times of Covid-19. A lighthouse is always there to beacon you.

The other day in Rajasthan's Sikar district, the village community refused to help the family cremate the body of an elderly woman Sayar Kanwar who had died of suspected coronavirus. Despite the repeated pleading of the deceased poor husband, the villagers did not go anywhere close to the body and even asked her husband to go away.

The village was in the grip of fear as in Sikar district, 21 people died of Covid-19 in 21 days since April 15 after they attended the funeral of a corona patient.

When tehsildar of Sikar district Rajni Yadav learned



that villagers have almost boycotted and distanced themselves from the family of the dead, she decided to act herself.

She immediately stepped out of her office and reached the spot wearing a PPE kit and made arrangements for the funeral of the woman.

Before this, Yadav requested community health centre authorities to provide an ambulance to carry the body to the cremation ground. But when no ambulance came for two hours, she went around the area in search of the vehicle.

After some hard work, the Dhod village Tehsildar managed a private vehicle for tak-

ing the woman's body to the cremation ground.

With not many around and the market closed, she alone made all made preparations for the last rites at the cremation ground.

Deriving such all-out support, the grieving and shocked husband lit the funeral pyre of his wife.

"I took the initiative to take the body to the cremation ground in a private vehicle because the ambulance could not be arranged in time. I went to the funeral ground for the preparations because there was no one to assist the elderly man who had two minor grandchildren," Yadav said, adding modestly that it is a small social service from her side in a national crisis.

HOPE & despair

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Life-threatening diseases are often pushing patients into despair. Reports pouring in from hospitals show that everyday Covid-19 patients are contracting a complication — ICU psychosis — while undergoing prolonged stays at Intensive Care Units or High Dependency Units for treatment of the affliction caused by the coronavirus.

Prolonged stays at ICUs or HDUs in the midst of a number of gadgets and health parameter monitoring equipment as also life support interventions like ventilators and oxygen administration paraphernalia are also turning patients into insomniacs.

This coupled with negativity due to the uncertainty of

the cure amid fluctuating health parameters is taking a further toll on the patients plunging them into despair.

Cases of ICU psychosis have been reported from Lala Lajpat Rai Hospital, formerly Hallet Hospital, in Kanpur.

Such patients do not respond properly to the doctors or the paramedics attending them. Some are even angered when prodded to take medicines or meals. Some victims of ICU psychosis display bouts of acute anger and have to be given antidepressants or sleep medicines.

According to reports, many of such patients are of younger age or with a background of active field duty.

Reports quoting Professor Ganesh Shankar of Psychiatry Department of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi Memorial Medical College, Kanpur suggest life-threatening diseases

like Covid induced unconsciousness in some patients who are often unable to comprehend things properly. The ICU psychosis is also known as delirium.

Experts contend that such patients need counseling by psychiatrists or psychologists who can seek to instill positive thinking in the patients with a reassurance that their condition is improving and everything will be alright soon.

Such measures can help the patients in regaining their confidence and ultimately reviving the psychological wellbeing in the midst of the trauma.

Assistant Professor of Psychology at Gargi College, University of Delhi, Dr Poonam Phogat, said, "ICU Psychosis is a disorder that occurs in patients who are in intensive care due to a certain illness."

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Monitoring in villages should continue in same vein: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Aiming to break the chain of infection and keep villages safe from corona infection, a massive trace, test, track and treat campaign is currently being conducted in more than 97,000 revenue villages in Uttar Pradesh. “This campaign should be conducted with full readiness. Antigen test of every symptomatic person or suspect should be done and the number of RRTs increased,” Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said during his regular Team-9 meeting in Lucknow on Tuesday.

The CM said that monitoring committees are doing door-to-door visits in villages and screening people and are also providing medical kits to home isolated patients and others with symptoms.

“This system of medical kit distribution should be constantly monitored. Provide the name and phone number of the monitoring committees to the person who receives a medical kit so that at the time of exigency they could be contacted. Besides, a copy of this should be made available to the local public representatives through the District Magistrate so that MPs/MLAs can get medical kits and communicate with the people. This will also enable cross verification of the system. Every person with suspected symptoms must have an antigen test,” he added.

The CM said that in view the assessment of experts, special arrangements for protection of children need to be made in all districts.

“For this, paediatric ICUs with a capacity of a minimum of 10-15 beds in all district hospitals and 25-30 beds in medical colleges should be prepared. There should be a minimum 100-bed paediatric ICU at the divisional headquarters.

Five dead after consuming hooch in Jaitpur

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Five people died while four others were critical after consuming spurious liquor in Jaitpur area of Ambeknagar after which they were taken to a private hospital for treatment.

On being informed about the tragedy on Tuesday, Samajwadi Party MLA from Jalalpur reached the village after the incident and it was then that the local police took cognisance and initiated legal action. As per reports, some residents of Shivalp village brought the intoxicant from Azamgarh and about a dozen locals and some residents of neighbouring Makhampur village shared the alcohol on Monday night after which everyone’s health deteriorated. While four deceased were natives of Makdoompur, another was from Shivalp village. The bodies of the three deceased were even cremated by their kin. Police managed to seize two bodies and sent them for autopsy. The role of Excise department and local police personnel came under fire once again after the incident. An inquiry was initiated on the matter at the behest of the DM.

Meanwhile in Maharajganj,

‘1,011 MT oxygen supplied across state in last 24 hours’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With a record supply of 1,011 metric tonnes of oxygen in the state in the past 24 hours, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that all districts are being supplied the life-saving oxygen as per requirement.

“Of the total supply of 1,011 MT oxygen, 632 MT was supplied to refillers and 301 MT to medical colleges. Oxygen availability is getting better in larger and higher transition rates districts like Varanasi, Lucknow, Prayagraj, Kanpur. A new train with eight tankers reached Lucknow on Tuesday. There is already a Jeevan Rakshak Express with 10 tankers parked in Lucknow railway station,” he said.

Yogi further said, “As per the need of districts, oxygen would be distributed. Apart from Gautam Budh Nagar, Ghaziabad, Moradabad, spe-

Necessary medical equipment and medicine should be made available. Physicians and other staff should be trained in this regard. This work should be done fast,” he said.

Yogi said that ventilators and oxygen concentrates have been provided in all districts. “ACS, Health, and Principal Secretary, Medical Education, should ensure that these devices are operational in each case. Contact the districts concerned and get their problems resolved in this regard. If the ventilator or oxygen concentrator is not reported to be functional, then the accountability

cial focus needs to be given to districts with high infection rates. Oxygen supply should be made by making separate action plans for all the districts.

“Besides global tenders have been floated for cryogenic tankers while some tankers are also being provided by the Centre. Additional tankers have been received from Reliance Industries. The number of tankers is increasing steadily, this has helped to improve oxygen supply,” he said. The CM said there was a need to improve oxygen supply to the patients in home isolation. The fluid was made available to Covid patients undergoing home isolation, suspected patients, non-Covid patients suffering from severe disease, or any one who needed oxygen as per medical consultation,” he said.

“A necessary guideline in this regard should be issued

of the DM/CMO concerned will be fixed,” he instructed.

“Availability of all medicines considered as life-saving including Remdesivir is being ensured in the state. The Centre has also increased the daily allocation of Remdesivir for UP. In government Covid hospitals, this injection is completely free of cost. This is being made available to private hospitals by the DM/CMO as per requirement. All District Magistrates and CMOs should ensure that whenever a patient is given this injection, there is a doctor present along with the nursing staff. Complete details

today itself. All districts must ensure adequate supply of oxygen to home isolated patients. In view of the report of oxygen audit, the balance in supply and distribution of the fluid should be made,” Yogi said.

The CM said that the chief secretary should continue to monitor oxygen plants being set up by the Union government.

“Sugarcane Development and Excise departments have also been giving support in oxygen production and supply. The process has been initiated to set up an oxygen plant in 70 districts,” he said.

Yogi directed officials to review the functioning of oxygen plants to be set up in Health and Medical Education departments on a daily basis. “Oxygen plants were also being set up by the private sector and they should be provided all necessary facilities as per rules,” he said.

of the demand, supply, and consumption of this life-saving medicine should be maintained,” the CM said.

“Uttar Pradesh is the most vaccinated state with 1.39 crore doses being administered. Vaccination of the 18-44 age group is now being conducted in 18 districts. On May 10, around 50,157 people in this age group were inoculated. Thus, more than 1.66 lakh people aged 18 to 44 have been vaccinated in the state so far. Vaccine waste in this age group is also going down which is currently, it is 0.6 percent,” he said.

306 deaths, 20,463 new cases recorded in UP



Samples being collected for Covid testing at RMLIMS in Lucknow

Pioneer

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After a 2-day lull, Covid deaths breached the 300-mark again with 306 patients succumbing to the deadly virus in Uttar Pradesh in the last 24 hours. As many as 20,463 new cases were reported while 29,358 patients recovered in the same period.

With the Covid graph on decline, the recovery rate is getting better and the positive rate is going down, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said while interacting with his Team-9 members on Tuesday. He said planned campaigns with the policy of trace, test, and treat are yielding good results. “On April 30, there were 3,10,783 active Covid cases in the state, whereas today it has been reduced by more than 95,000. At present, there are 2,16,057 active cases. The state’s recovery

rate is continuously getting better. So far, over 13.13 lakh people have successfully won the battle against corona,” the CM said.

In the last 24 hours, 2,33,705 samples were tested, including 1,10,000 RT-PCR tests. So far, 4,34,04,184 samples have been tested in the state.

Meanwhile, Meerut’s daily case count remained the highest on the second consecutive day. The district recorded 1,368 fresh cases, followed by Gautam Buddha Nagar (1,229), Lucknow (1,154), and Bareilly & Saharanpur (959 each).

In terms of deaths, Lucknow’s tally was the highest at 23, followed by Kanpur (16), Gautam Buddha Nagar & Jhansi (12 each), Agra & Azamgarh (11 each) and Basti (10).

Meanwhile, Lucknow incharge of Covid Roshan

Jacob had a meeting on the follow-up of home isolation patients, testing and vaccinations. She said all works related to home isolation are being carried out by the CHCs.

Emphasising that allotment of home isolation should be done at the CHC level instead of ICC level, Jacob imparted training to all the home isolation incharges on how to talk to them and feed the data on the portal.

She also took stock of the testing and vaccination and was informed that it was being carried out on a war footing. However, she expressed concern over less testing in Aliganj, Red Cross, Aishbagh and Silver Jubilee.

She also said that a strategy should be made so that testing can be carried out at PHCs and efforts be made to test 10,000 people on the basis of their symptoms.

CITYBRIEFS



SCHOLARSHIP

Vansh Narang, a student of City Montessori School, Kanpur Road Campus, has been offered admission with a scholarship of US\$ 62,000 by the prestigious Arizona State University of USA for pursuing higher education there. This scholarship has been offered to him for the entire study period of four years. Apart from this, the University of Arizona, USA, has also offered him admission with scholarship.

ADMISSION PROCESS STARTED AT KMCLU

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Language University initiated the admission process

to its various UG and PG courses on Tuesday. An official said that the prospectus has been uploaded on the university website and the application process will also be started soon. All the students will be able to register for admission by depositing registration fees through an online portal. e-posters related to the admission process have been circulated to the students through the website and other social networking sites. Coordinator of the admission committee Prof Sauban Sayeed said that the last date of admission for UG courses is June 15 while that for PG courses is June 30.

पंजाब नैशनल बैंक
पंजाब नैशनल बैंक

Circle Office, Lucknow (West): General Administration Department, 4-A, Habibullah Estate, Hazratganj, Lucknow-226001

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Circle Head (Lucknow West)

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रामपुर बाग, बरेली-243001

निविदा विधि विस्तारिकण सूचना इस कार्यालय की इ-निविदा सं. 06, 07, 08, 09/डब्ल्यू/वि. पा.मं(ब.) / 2021-22 जिनको दिनांक 11.05.2021 को 12:30 बजे खोला जाना था, की खोले जाने की तिथि अपरिहार्य कारणों से विस्तारित की जाती है। उक्त निविदायें अब दिनांक 14.06.2021 को 17:00 बजे तक जमा की जा सकेंगी तथा उनको दिनांक 15.06.2021 को 12:30 बजे खोला जायेगा। निविदा की अन्य शर्तें एवं नियम पूर्वतन रहेंगे।

अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारिषद मण्डल, बरेली। पत्रांक- 730 दिनांक :- 11-5-2021
“राष्ट्र हित में विजली बचाव तथा बल्व के स्थान पर एल.इ.सी. प्रयोग करें”

‘Cong leaders irresponsible, habitual liars’

Lucknow (PNS): Finance and Medical Education Minister Suresh Khanna termed the Congress leaders irresponsible and habitual liars. He said that during these pandemic times, the Congress leaders are misleading and spreading confusion in society instead of extending a helping hand to people. “It is the fallacy of the Congress leaders that they spread confusion about the vaccine and question the relief measures by the government,” Khanna said.

Khanna’s remarks came in response to Congress state president Ajay Kumar Lallu questioning Covid control measures and availability of oxygen and life-saving drugs.

He said it’s common knowledge that the state government has made all the arrangements for Covid treatment and Congress leaders should refrain from doing petty politics. “Vaccinations are taking place in the state, the Congress leaders are unnecessarily raising doubts about control measures and availability of life-saving drugs and oxygen. Congress leaders are now making a fool of themselves because the campaign of tracking and tracing infected people in urban and rural areas has come in for praise by WHO,” Khanna said.

Amitabh Thakur challenges compulsory retirement

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Compulsorily retired by Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on recommendation of UP government in March this year, IPS officer Amitabh Thakur challenged the order in the Lucknow Bench of Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT). Thakur maintained that the move of the MHA and UP government was completely unlawful and taken with prejudice and personal grudge against him as a result of which his entire family mentally aggrieved.

The officer further charged that he along with some other officers were singled out without any concrete government policy and were removed from service citing no other reason except for ‘public interest’. Sources said that Thakur approached the CAT after the MHA reportedly denied sharing information with him regarding his compulsory retirement and said that it could not be provided. The MHA denied the information under Section 8(1)(i) of the RTI Act, 2005. Thakur got a reply in Hindi from the MHA on April 26 against his three questions sought from the ministry through RTI.

“Disagreeing with the decision, Amitabh preferred the first appeal saying that the decision had already been made in this case and hence denial under

Section 8(1)(i) was not correct,” said Nutan Thakur, the wife of the former IPS officer. “Amitabh also called denial of information related to his livelihood as being against the basic spirit of the RTI Act,” Nutan said. When asked about this, the Home Ministry officials refused to comment and said that they were not aware of any RTI reply to Amitabh Thakur. He was compulsorily retired with immediate effect in ‘public interest’ on March 23 last. Thakur was ‘not found fit to be retained for the remaining tenure of his service’.

“In the public interest, Amitabh Thakur is being given premature retirement before completion of his service with immediate effect,” a Union Home Ministry order said.

In 2017, Thakur had urged the Centre to dispose of his request for change of cadre to any state other than UP, saying the ‘bias’ against him did not exist anymore after the then ruling Samajwadi Party was routed in Assembly polls. The officer was suspended on July 13, 2015, days after he accused SP patron Mulayam Singh of threatening him. A Vigilance enquiry was also initiated against him. However, the Lucknow Bench of Central Administrative Tribunal stayed his suspension in April 2016 and ordered his reinstatement with full salary with effect from October 11, 2015.

IIM-L prof suggests models for retail shops to recoup

Lucknow (PNS): Professor (Marketing) at the Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow, Devashish Das Gupta, is working on models for big and small retail shops to recoup in the pandemic times when businesses are suffering huge losses. Gupta gives the mantra of focusing on 20 per cent of the customers who contribute 80 per cent of the sales for the big retailers and the pooling of 10 small retail shops for hiring one delivery company.

He said that people were not buying from stores and

online services were not available for all the retailers.

“What I am in the process of recommending is that big customers’ personalised sales can be arranged. The big retailers can go through the database and find out who are the top 10-20 customers and then focus on them which would give some turnover. It is better to be operational and have some sales. A peek in review could be arranged for them. They can go to the customer in a mobile van or they can allow one or two of their customers to come to the store and book the entire store

for them for one hour so that they can feel safe,” he said.

Gupta said the customers would feel happy that they were being treated in this manner and sales would happen. He said that for the small retailers the study was still on and they had talked to 10-15 retailers.

“One of the models which I saw was that of small retailers associating themselves with the photostat shops which are closed now and telling the customers to send their requirements on WhatsApp. The same requirement is then sent to the photostat shop and then a

printout is taken from the photostat shop which is then stuck to the package being delivered that gives it some orderliness when the delivery finally happens,” he said.

He said that this was being done because there were conflicts regarding what was being ordered and what was being delivered and also to overcome the psychology of the housewife that they were being overcharged. “This is also a confidence building measure. The small retailers can also pool in resources and hire delivery men,” he added.

the pioneer

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

For information- In my Army Service Book, date of birth of my son Ganga Das Yadav has been mistakenly marked as 10.08.1995 while the correct date of birth is 16.08.1996. Ex-Serviceman JC-326976A Sub Prem Das Yadav Son of Late Bhagwan Das Yadav. The residence Address-Vill & Post-Bhadiya. Teshil-saidpur. District- Ghazipur

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Haj House Covid facility inaugurated

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh dedicated to the people the 255-bed Covid hospital constructed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in cooperation with the Uttar Pradesh government and civil authorities the at Haj House here on Tuesday. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the defence minister lauded the efforts of the state government under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted that the close collaboration between HAL and state authorities made the construction of the Covid hospital possible.

Yogi thanked the Central government for its continuous support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The HAL-UP Covid hospital has been constructed in less than 20 days. All 255 beds of the hospital are equipped with oxygen facilities. It has 130 oxygen supported beds, 100 beds that are HFNC supported and 25 beds that have ventilator support while 150 oxygen cylinders have been arranged through close cooperation between the UP government and HAL for initial operation at the hospital with



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at the Haj House Covid facility in Lucknow

Pioneer

plans to establish a modern oxygen plant at the facility. The state government has assured all essential supplies for running the hospital.

The hospital has the best modern medical care facilities. The dry run at the hospital was successfully conducted in the presence of District Magistrate

Abhishek Prakash, chief medical officer of Lucknow and HAL Lucknow, general manager on May 9 and the memorandum of understanding was signed. The hospital will be managed by the Lucknow district administration.

Officials said that HAL was instrumental in procure-

ment, installation and commissioning of the infrastructure and would ensure maintenance and servicing of the X-ray machines, nebulisers, oximeters, wheelchair, stretchers, BP monitors, multi para display monitors for ICU beds, CCTV monitoring system, ECG machine, bio chemistry

analyser, incubator, serum electrolyte analyser, cell counter etc.

“The UP government will involve itself in hospital operations and management through Care India with focus on availability of medicine, hospital consumables, logistic and management of oxygen refilling,” an HAL official said.

During his one-day visit to Lucknow, Rajnath Singh reviewed the operations of the 505-bed Atal Bihari Vajpayee Covid hospital constructed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at Avadh Shilpgram in Lucknow. He was conducted around the hospital and showed the world class facilities and the specialist medical care being provided to the patients by the Armed Forces.

The hospital is run for the citizens by selected doctors and medical staff of the Armed Forces moved from across the country for the purpose. The defence minister interacted with the medical staff and lauded their grit and selfless service.

General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Lt Gen Y Dimri gave an overview of the multifaceted role being played by the Central Command of the Indian Army in supporting the fight against COVID-19.

10 cases of black fungus detected in last 15 days

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

A Covid-induced rare but serious fungal infection known as mucormycosis or black fungus has reared its head in Lucknow with 10 being reported in the city hospitals in the last 15 days in post COVID-19 patients.

President of UP ENT Association and faculty of neurosurgery department at SGPGI, Dr Amit Keshri, said that black fungus cases were being reported from across the cities in Uttar Pradesh and hospitals in Lucknow were also getting these cases.

He said that they had already circulated guidelines for doctors because early prevention was very necessary since this fungal infection could lead to loss of vision and affect the brain.

Dr Keshri said that normally 5-10 mucormycosis cases were detected in a year but this time there were 10 cases from different hospitals in Lucknow in the last fortnight and in one of the patients the eye had to be removed. While stressing that people should not panic, he said black fungus was a serious fungal infection caused by a group of moulds called mucormycetes.

“These fungi live in the environment, particularly in soil and in decaying organic matter such as leaves, compost piles or rotten wood. People contract mucormycosis by coming in contact with the fungal spores in the environment. For example, the lung or sinus forms of the infection can occur after someone breathes in the spores. People can catch the infection if the sugar levels are high. When the immunity is low, a person is prone to catching all kinds of secondary infections but this is happening more in hospitals than at homes,” he said.

Dr Keshri said that the fungus entered the body through the mucosa of the nose and grew because of the dryness which comes through invasive tubes used for oxygen.

“It is called black fungus because the tissues which die because of the fungus look black,” he added.

“We have started getting cases but the situation is not as bad as it is in Maharashtra and Gujarat. However, there may be several small hospitals which may not have seen the disease,” he added. The senior doctor admitted that most patients in early stage do not know that they have the disease and its progression is very rapid hence a high degree of alertness is needed in diagnosing this fungal infection.

“Early diagnosis of cases is important for treatment and better outcomes. It is only

Covid-19 patients down with mucormycosis at Meerut hosp

Lucknow (PNS): Amidst reports of Covid-induced black fungus or cases of mucormycosis among recovered patients in Maharashtra and Delhi, three cases with the identical infection have been reported from a Meerut hospital. Of the three patients, one is from Muzaffarnagar while the other two from Bijnore and all were being treated at a private hospital in Meerut.

Nephrologist & renal transplant physician and incharge of the private hospital, Dr Sandeep Garg on Tuesday confirmed the cases and said that the condition of patients was being closely monitored. “Covid patients who are being given steroids and are diabetic or under chemotherapy or those having undergone organ transplant have been facing new challenges due to this fungus which is attacking people with low immunity and those who are in a serious condition,” he said.

Dr Garg further said that of the three patients diagnosed with black fungus, one is a diabetic, another is a transplant patient while the third one is a normal patient. “All of

them were infected with Covid for some time and were administered steroids to strengthen their lungs. As per medical literature, the recovery rate for this fungus is around 50 per cent if diagnosed at an early stage,” he said. Experts maintain that the first nine days after coronavirus infection are very important. “If there is a complaint of black fungus, we treat the patient as serious. This fungus can damage the skin as well as nose, lungs and brain,” head of Pulmonary Medicine department of King George’s Medical University, Lucknow, Dr Suryakant said.

The pulmonologist said that black fungus is already present in air and land and as soon as a person with weak immunity comes in contact with it, there are chances of him or her contracting the infection. “The longer the patient stays in the hospital, the greater the risk,” he said.

The fungus first enters the body through the nose and then reaches the brain with the bloodstream from the lungs. The higher the infection, the more severe the symptoms,” he said.

when we get cases late that we have to remove a part of the eye or even entire eye. The patients report with problems in their vision and we carry out an MRI and this happens because this fungus comes in the sinus which is close to both the eye and the brain,” he said.

Dr Keshri admitted that many times the patients were unfit to take a surgery of such a nature because of post-COVID-19 weakness.

He said that the cases reported were in the age of fifties, mostly diabetic and on oxygen therapy.

“The high risk patient group includes patients receiving steroids as a part of their COVID-19 treatment and those who have received immunomodulatory drugs like Tocilizumab, previously immunocompromised patients on cancer treatment or with autoimmune conditions and on steroids for other medical condition, solid organ transplant, impaired renal functions or renal failure, patients on ventilators and on long term oxygen therapy, patients with low number of white blood cells and iron overload,” he said.

Talking about diabetic COVID-19 patients, he said that they had high sugar levels and they were being given steroids that were immune suppressants which made them prone to infection.

“There should be a judicious use of steroids because many people are taking them without consulting doctors and monitoring sugar levels,” he said. Dr Keshri said that at the SGPGI they were not providing services to these patients as they were on Covid duties at the medical institute. “Our post-Covid facility is filled with post Covid patients from our own hospital,” he pointed out. Nodal Covid officer at Lok Bandhu Hospital, Dr Arun Tewari, said that excessive instrumentation when oxygen was delivered through pipes became the source of infection for this disease. “This is an invasive fungus which acts when there are immunosuppressants in the body otherwise in a normal person it will not induce any significant infection but when a patient who is diabetic has taken immunosuppressants then this fungus will grow,” he said.

According to Dr Tewari, the black fungus first invades the mucous membrane in the nose and then spreads to adjacent areas as it can enter the bone moving through soft tissues and the hard tissues in the adjacent organs. “It can enter the eye orbit and affect the vision. There are drugs to control this but if it enters the bone then there is no drug and we have to remove that portion of the body,” he said.

Liquor shops to remain closed till further orders

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

While liquor shops in some UP districts re-opened on Tuesday, those in Lucknow will remain closed till further orders. District Excise Officer SK Mishra said the shops were to re-open on Tuesday following the order of the Lucknow DM but no decision could be taken in this regard. “In view of the Covid cases, the DM has yet to decide if the shops will

open in the city. The shops will open only after an order from the DM office is issued,” Mishra said. The government has put the onus on respective district magistrates after the liquor sellers pressed their demands for reopening of shops due in view of the losses .

“In Mathura, the district magistrate denied permission for opening of the shops,” sources said. They said liquor shops remained closed in

Lucknow, Mathura, Unnao and Barabanki. “There are some districts where liquor sellers have been allowed to open the shops,” the sources said.

A liquor seller in Lucknow said the shops in Lucknow are unlikely to open in view of the Covid cases. Liquor Sellers’ Welfare Association general secretary KL Maurya said a delegation would meet the Lucknow DM on Wednesday to decide the course of action.

Thailand woman’s death: FIR against SP leader for ‘defamatory posts’

Lucknow (PNS): An FIR was registered against Samajwadi Party spokesman IP Singh and two others for writing “defamatory posts” on social media in connection with the death of a Thailand woman who was admitted in RMLIMS and undergoing treatment for Covid-19. Police spokesman Nitin Yadav said the FIR was registered against IP Singh, Mahendra Kuriya and Ramdat Tiwari under IT Act and Section 500 of IPC for defamation.

He said the FIR was registered at Gautampalli police station following a complaint by Anoop Kumar Pandey, who is personal secretary to Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Seth.

In the complaint which he addressed to the Commissioner of Police (Lucknow) DK Thakur, Pandey stated that some posts were written on social media to defame the Rajya Sabha MP and his family. Pandey further said police should take cognisance of a tweet by IP Singh, which was retweeted by Ramdat Tiwari who also tagged others.

“The contents are absurd and fake and there is a need for a thorough probe into this act. Similarly, Mahendra Kuriya

also made a defamatory post and it also needs to be probed,” he said. Pandey also demanded a probe into the mobile number, passport number and other details of the woman as also her call detail records.

“We want police to find out the places in Lucknow where the woman stayed, the people she met during her stay in India, the person who helped her in medical emergency and how she got admission to hospital,” he said.

Pandey said the police should probe the role of Salman whose name surfaced in WhatsApp messages doing the rounds.

“The police should also probe how IP Singh and others got the messages about the woman or how the members of the group found the defamatory messages. The police should scan the Twitter accounts of the above-named people,” he said.

He said some people were working as a gang spreading mean and filthy messages about reputed personalities to malign their image. “Such elements are using social media platforms to propagate defamatory messages and are creating disorder in society and in the country,” he added.



Circles drawn for social distancing outside a liquor shop in Lucknow

Pioneer

45-yr-old man found battered to death

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Unidentified miscreants battered to death a 45-year-old man and dumped his body on roadside in Gosainganj some time on Monday night. The incident came to light on Tuesday morning when the body was spotted by locals.

The victim was identified as Ram Sajewan of Raniikheda locality. His son Ravi identified the body on reaching the spot after he was informed by villagers about his father’s murder.

In his complaint, he alleged that some unidentified persons killed his father on the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday. There were injuries on the face and other body parts of the victim.

Inspector Brijesh Singh said a case of murder was registered against unidentified accused. “The police suspect the role of some insider. Ram Sajewan was staying all alone for the last

one year after separation from his wife. He may have been killed over some personal issue,” he said.

Meanwhile, a man who had recently sold his land to a property dealer was found murdered in Gosainganj on Tuesday. His body was recovered from railway tracks. Police’s claim that the man was run over by a train made his family members livid. They petitioned the case to senior officials after which a case of murder against the property dealer and his accomplices was registered.

The deceased was identified as Keshan of Gosainganj. He had gone to meet property dealer Mohit and his aides Ram Kumar and Savitri and take the money they owed to him. His brother Nankau Yadav said Keshan had gone to take the money on the call of Mohit but did not come back.

“They killed Keshan and threw the body on the railway

tracks to make it look like a mishap. Mohit had an eye on Keshan’s land. Liquor was Keshan’s weakness and Mohit and his aides took advantage of that and got the land registered in their name,” his brother alleged. He also named Sudhir, Sudhakar, Gulab and Aditya.

In another case, a 22-year-old software engineer, Shani Sah, ended his life at his house in Gudamba on Tuesday. He was working from home due to lockdown. Police said Shani recently got a job at a private company. “Shani was found hanging from the ceiling with a rope tied around his neck in the afternoon. His family called the police and a team reached the scene. We did not get any suicide note, so the reason why he took the extreme step is not known,” the police said.

In another, a man died while his wife and mother-in-law suffered grievous injuries in a road mishap in Bathara on

Monday afternoon. The deceased was identified as Sooraj Singh of Unnao. Reports said Sooraj, his wife Ankita and mother-in-law were coming to Lucknow for some work in a car. Around 2:40 pm when he reached Banthra, a speeding truck hit the car from opposite direction. The trio were rushed to Sarojinagar CHC where Sooraj was declared brought dead. A case was registered in this connection.

DUPED

Unidentified miscreants duped a scientist of National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural Property in Jankipuram. Reports said Dr Sanjay Prasad Gupta got a message regarding deduction of Rs 8,078 from his bank account and he contacted police. The police said the miscreants cloned the victim’s ATM card and withdrew the money.



LMC workers carrying out a sanitisation drive in Sarojinagar on Tuesday

Pioneer

‘Indigenous 2-DG drug can reduce viral infection, subsequent multiplication’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) and Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (IITR) jointly organised a webinar on the occasion of National Technology Day on Tuesday.

Dr Anant Narayan Bhatt, senior scientist at Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO), was the guest speaker. He is one of the lead members of the team which discovered 2-DG (2-Di-oxy glucose) drug against COVID-19.

Dr Bhatt, in his address on ‘Development of indigenous anti-Covid medicine’, said that this wonder indigenous drug had the capability to reduce the viral infection

“This wonder indigenous drug had the capability to reduce the viral infection and its subsequent multiplication in the body due to which the virus lost the ability to re-infect the other host cells”

and its subsequent multiplication in the body due to which the virus lost the ability to re-infect the other host cells.

Throwing light on how the virus infects the humans, he said that there were three main stages of virus-borne diseases; multiplication of virus, high resistance response and destruction of respiratory system. He said the 2-DG drug was very effective during the first two stages of the infection by neutralising the virus. He explained

that the 2-DG drug affected the structure of the new virus’ outer layer envelope proteins in multiplication of new viruses, making it unable to infect the surrounding new cells. He also disclosed that

due to the anti-cancer activity of this drug, it was possible to use it in the treatment of cancer in future. “This drug got clinical trial approval from Drugs Controller General of India for further trials on humans,” he said, adding that soon 2-DG may prove to be the solution for COVID-19. Earlier, welcoming the participants, Prof SK Barik said that different scientific fraternities of the country had joined hands in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic in various ways.

CBMR celebrates Technology Day

Lucknow (PNS): The Centre for Biomedical Research (CBMR) celebrated National Technology Day by organising a special lecture by Dr Rohit Srivastava, head and professor of the department of biosciences and bioengineering at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay.

He delivered his lecture on ‘Affordable Healthcare for India’. The lecture was attended by all CBMR research scholars and

scientists. During his lecture, Prof Rohit Srivastava shared his experience of translating the basic lab discoveries into affordable medical devices. He demonstrated how basic fundamental science-backed innovative technologies could help common man in getting affordable diagnostics and therapeutics, including affordable technologies for blood chemistry, bio-absorbable bone screws,

biodegradable sponges for wounds, microneedle patch and pump for transdermal drug delivery etc.

He emphasised on promoting interdisciplinary collaborations among medical professionals, clinical researchers, biomedical scientists and engineers for translating fundamental scientific and technological discoveries into innovative devices for the benefit of society.

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Rush for Eid purchases seen at Dalmandi



Rush of people for Eid purchasing at Dalmandi in Varanasi on Tuesday

Pioneer

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Heavy rush of people was seen at Dalmandi for purchasing of articles as the festival of Eid is around the corner when the market shops were opened during the morning hours. Similarly, the rush of retail shopkeepers and others was also seen at Visheshwarganj, the biggest foodgrain market of the region,

and various vegetable markets including at Chandua Satti, Pahadia, Panchkoshi and others. It was the 12th day in succession of the ongoing corona curfew and during the day hours, the markets, roads, Ganga ghats and other places wore a deserted look as the police tightened noose against those who were involved in violating the lockdown orders. Meanwhile, former mem-

ber of the Central Haj Committee, Government of India, Dr Iftikhar Ahmad Javed has appealed to the Muslims to celebrate the festival of Eid staying at home in view of imposition of corona curfew to prevent the spread of coronavirus pandemic. He said that as most of the business establishments are remaining closed, the people should offer namaz of Eid staying at the home as they did

last year. He appealed to the Muslims to avoid the spread of pandemic and follow the Covid guidelines whenever they go outside the home for purchasing of essential items and other work. He also appealed to go outside the home only by wearing masks and maintaining social distance for celebrating the festival in a happy atmosphere.

City chief of Samajwadi Party (SP) Vishnu Sharma expressed concern over the serious crisis being faced by the weavers due to continuous corona curfew and other prevailing financial situation being created by the coronavirus pandemic. According to him, the condition of the weavers in this parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister (PM) has deteriorated to a lowest ebb as till date the recession of saree industry has not yet been recovered from the nationwide lockdown which was imposed last year when a large number of powerlooms and handlooms were closed down. He said that now due to partial lockdown, the weavers of Lohta, Bunkar Colony, Saraiyya, Bajardiha, Madanpura, Pitarkunda and other places are facing starvation like situation. He urged the state government to announce a relief package for the weavers immediately.



A view of the Sangam Ghat during lockdown in Prayagraj on Tuesday

Pioneer

Positive impact of lockdown witnessed in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Lockdown has caused a positive impact in Prayagraj where the number of new Corona cases is coming down drastically from over 2000 per day to around 200.

On Monday night the report of the Chief Medical Officer says that 10,703 persons had given samples out of which only 286 were found Corona positive, and 965 were discharged from hospitals and home isolation after testing negative. However, six persons died of Corona on Monday.

In the mid of April Prayagraj had been producing over 2000 cases per day, and the

district had found place among the top five worst hit district in Uttar Pradesh.

The UP Government had on April 29 announced that weekend curfews will cover Mondays as well. It had later extended the order till May 6 and then extended it further till May 10.

The Allahabad High Court had on April 27 urged the state government to impose a lockdown for two weeks to contain the sharp spike in coronavirus infections, and the lockdown worked effectively particularly in Prayagraj.

Following is the chart of over a month to support the above finding that lockdown

cut short the number of cases drastically.

Date.	Cases/Tests
O6.04	1084 / 8363, 07.04
1076 / 7778, 09.04	1419 / ,
10.04	1682 / 9745, 11.04
1628 / 8417, 12.04	1704 /
11492, 13.04	2142 / 11972,
14.04	1891 / 10813, 15.04
2324 / 10960, 16.04	2236 /
11969, 17.04	2436 / 11567,
18.04	2416 / 9120, 19.04
2164 / 12660, 20.04	2122 /
12061, 21.04	2156 / 13651,
23.04	2183 / 11089, 24.04
2054 / 12228, 25.04	1874 /
10080, 26.04	1743 / 13377,
27.04	1598 / 13686 28.04
1493 / 13549, 29.04	1267 /
13691, 30.04	1389 / 15599,
01.05	1145 / 13339, 02.05.

984 / 10006, 03.05. 863 / 11770, 04.05. 683 / 11434, 05.05. 596 / 11743, 06.05. 645 / 12255, 07.05. 456 / 9333, 08.05. 421 / 10222, 09.05 236 / 8535, 10.05 286 / 10703

Extension of lockdown for a week is expected bring down the number of fresh cases, if the Eid crowd is controlled effectively.

Markets in the old city areas are drawing crowd of buyers owing to Eid, but the officials are preferring not to turn harsh, but meetings with Muslim religious leaders are on to limit the number of namazis in the mosques and Idgha.

DM inspects oxygen plant at ESIC Hospital

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma inspected the oxygen plant at ESIC Hospital in Pandeypur area here on Tuesday which is the third government hospital of the city which has become self-sufficient in oxygen supply to the Covid and other patients. According to him, the 500 LPM (litres per minute) oxygen plant which was installed at ESIC Hospital was imported from Israel and after its arrival here, it has been commissioned within 24 hours.

'The plant will provide oxygen for about 100 beds. ESIC is a 60-bed Covid Hospital for which it is adequate,' said that DM. After the installation of this plant, the capacity of oxygen supply has



DM KR Sharma inspecting oxygen plant at ESIC Hospital in Varanasi on Tuesday

been increased to about 1250 LPM, by which oxygen is being supplied to 225 beds of three hospitals. 'To fight against coronavirus pandemic, efforts are being made continuously in the district as oxygen plants are

being set up in all government hospitals,' he said, adding that oxygen plants have already been installed at Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) Hospital, ESIC Hospital and Lal Bahadur Shastri (LBS) Hospital

at Ramnagar apart from these, plants are also being set up at Shree Shiv Prasad Gupta (SSPG) Hospital, BLW Central Hospital and others.

According to him, under the guidance of the Prime Minister, the sincere efforts are being made to provide oxygen to Covid patients. 'By the next month, all the seven government hospitals in the district will become self-sufficient in oxygen supply to the patients,' he added. Meanwhile, the ESIC hospital witnessed protest from the senior citizens who reached there for vaccination. As the DM also reached there for inspection, he tried to pacify the people who were raising their voices against the hospital. The shortage of vaccines was reported at many centres during the day.

Vaccination drive continues in BLW

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the leadership of General Manager (GM) Anjali Goyal, the major campaign of COVID-19 vaccination in Banaras Locomotive Works (DLW) is going on in a phased manner. In this direction, as many as 396 beneficiaries including 60 railway employees and 209 others got their first doses, while 108 and 19 second doses were vaccinated in BLW on Monday. All the beneficiaries above the age of 18 years after registering on the Aarogya Setu App / cowlm.gov.in have booked the slot of BLW and reach the Vaccination Centre at Employees Club carrying their identity proofs.

Health systems, vaccination and public awareness campaign are constantly being reviewed by the GM. During ongoing awareness campaigns at various places in BLW premises, the railway employ-



A woman getting a vaccine at BLW Vaccination Centre in Varanasi on Monday

ees and others are being appealed to get vaccinated. A total of 12,919 beneficiaries have been given the first dose of vaccination so far, while a total of 5,840 were fully vaccinated after getting their second shot also.

Public Relations Officer (PRO) Rajesh Kumar has appealed to the railway employees that those who are more than 18 years of age should join the vaccination

campaign, in view to break the chain of Covid infection and prevent the spread of coronavirus pandemic. He also appealed to all that even after the vaccination, they should continue to follow the Covid guidelines by maintaining social distancing, wearing masks and using sanitizers.

Meanwhile, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr VB Singh said that as many are not wearing masks properly, the threat

of pandemic spread continued. 'Experts say that due to wearing masks incorrectly, the risk of coronavirus spread continues so vigilance is essential while wearing or disposing the masks.

In this regard, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is also trying to make the people aware through social media.' According to him, vigilance behaviour of the mask is absolutely necessary. 'Masks should be worn only through the lanyard and removed with the help of lanyard. Do not remove masks where more than one person is around and one can remove the mask if one is sitting alone and while eating, take care to remove the mask. Do not tie the mask too tightly so that there is trouble in breathing and it should be worn covering both nose and mouth properly. As everyone cannot wear an N-95 mask so one should use double masks,' he suggested.

722 more test positive in Varanasi

VARANASI (PNS): In a major relief, the district continued recording a decrease for the third consecutive day in the positive cases during the last 24 hours. As many as 722 cases of COVID-19 were recorded on Tuesday evening increasing the total number to 76,361 crossing the 76K-mark. There is also a decrease in the number of deaths for the second day in succession during the last 24 hours as four deaths were recorded this evening and with this, the death toll increased to

654. As many as 1,333 patients of home isolation recovered, while as many as 89 have been recovered from the hospitals. The total number of patients cured in the district increased to 66,689 including 61,954 in home isolation and 4,735 in COVID-19 hospitals. In the first report of the day, 341 positive patients were found out of 4,765 reports received and this figure increased to 722 out of 10,561 received samples as per report provided by the Health department on this evening.

The total active cases decreased to 9,018 from 9,722 which was a day ago. On Monday evening, as many as 745 positive cases were recorded and the total number was 75,639, while 8 deaths were reported and the death toll was 650. Earlier, in view of finding hundreds of new positive cases, with 5 new hotspots, the number of active hotspots was 573 with 5 green zones having been converted to red zones by a day ago. Out of total 3,281 hotspots, 2,708 are green zones and 573 are red

zones.

The Health department continued the vaccination drive on Tuesday for the beneficiaries aged above from 45 years at vaccination centres of the district including Ramkrishna Mission Home of Service, Shree Ram Lakshmi Narayan Marwadi Hindu Hospital, Mata Anandmayee Hospital, Raja Baldev Das Birla Hospital, Mahila District Women Government Hospital, Pt Deen Dayal Government Hospital, and ESIC.

Oxygen Express offloads 2 LMO containers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The second Oxygen Express to Kanpur offloaded at Inland Container Depot. Continuing its fight against the pandemic, Indian Railways brought 40 MT of Liquid Medical Oxygen to Kanpur to be used for treatment of Covid patients in the city.

Oxygen Express with two loaded containers of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) started its journey to Kanpur after getting loaded from Durgapur on Monday late evening. It reached GMC yard at 9:20 hrs in morning and was then placed inside ICD Kanpur where Dy CTM Kanpur Himanshu Upadhyay and Assistant Divisional



Mechanical Engineer Vikas Kesari were present for monitoring of offloading and ensur-

ing no delays may occur. Immediately after its placement in the siding, decanting

was started and by 14:15 hrs, both the containers were decanted.

As decanting got completed, it was handed over to SDM Narvel Amit Kumar. Amit Kumar along with Tehsildar Ghatampur Gulab Chandra remained present in the siding throughout the decanting process. Entire operation inside the siding was organised by Terminal Manager ICD Amit Yadav.

This is the second Oxygen Express ran by Ministry of Railways to the city. First one with 80MT of oxygen was offloaded on Sunday.

After decanting, train containing empty oxygen containers was run back for Durgapur at 14:15 hrs for further loading.

NCR to receive 10 oxygen concentrators

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

North Central Railway is all set to receive 10 oxygen concentrators of 10 litres capacity each from Shakurbasti Stores Depot.

As an initiative under Mission Oxygen, Plasser India Ltd has provided 70 oxygen concentrators to Shakurbasti Railway Stores Depot as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility.

In his efforts to strengthen the Covid infrastructure at Central Hospital Prayagraj and Jhansi, General Manager NCR VK Tripathi put a request to Railway Board and got 10 of these oxygen concentrators allotted for NCR.

It is worth mentioning that as Prayagraj is getting gripped with the pandemic, Central Railway Hospital is battling hard in the fight against Covid. Central Hospital Prayagraj and Jhansi both have been nominated as Level 2 hospitals for admission of Covid patients. The hospitals are providing health care facilities to Railway as well as non-Railway patients down with Covid infection.

Principal Chief Medical Director, North Central Railway Dr. Anand Tandon told that they are in touch with Railway Board and it is expected that these oxygen concentrators will be delivered in the

hospital on Tuesday. These 10 oxygen concentrators will equally be divided between Railway Hospital Jhansi and Prayagraj (5 each).

With the installation of these oxygen concentrators NCR's fight against corona will get new momentum.

NCR is in the process of strengthening its health infrastructure against Covid and more such equipments will be provided to Railway Hospitals in days to come, told Dr Anand Tandon (PCMD).

RECOVERED COVID PATIENTS SHOULD NOT TAKE IT LIGHTLY: Recovered Covid patients should not take it lightly, said the North Central Railway General Manager VK Tripathi.

In his daily review meeting conducted with DRMs Agra, Jhansi, Prayagraj and other senior officers of North Central Railway, GM/NCR Tripathi emphasised the need for 100 per cent vaccination of Railway staff. He instructed the DRMs and other Principal heads of departments that constant vigil should be made and staff should be motivated to come up for vaccination.

General Manager expressed his concerns over post-Covid complications and counselling of staff recovered from Covid not to observe any carelessness and to follow all necessary precautions like

social distancing, frequent hand washing and wearing of mask. As informed by Deputy General Manager Mannu Prakash Dubey, till 10/5/21 a total of 2126 staff (along with their families) of NCR has recovered from Covid. General Manager instructed that staff recovered from the infection should not take it for granted now and should continue to use all precautions. He further emphasised that recovered staff needs aggressive counselling that infection from Corona virus doesn't provide life long immunity and risk of transmission of virus is equally apprehended even after one contracts an infection and recovers. Thus use of mask and maintaining social distancing is a must to all.

General Manager also instructed that all staff should get registered themselves on Cowin app and take earliest available slots available for vaccination.

RUSH AT LIQUOR SHOPS: The liquor lovers refused to follow Covid guidelines and thronged the wine shops to grab their stock.

After the order of opening liquor shops, people reached there and formed long queues not caring for social distancing. When the shutters went up at 10 am, the queues were broken and people fought to lift their required stock.

At many places police had to wield lathis for managing the crowd. Heavy rush was also seen at Kirana shops.

SHAMBHUNATH HOSPITAL INAUGURATED: Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Tuesday inaugurated Shambhunath Hospital in Jhalwa area and said that serving the patient is the supreme service.

This multi-speciality Uthman Shambhunath Research Institute of Medical Sciences and Hospital has 300 beds besides 100 beds for Covid patients. Allahabad City North MLA Harshvardhan Bajpai assured oxygen supply to this hospital from his oxygen plant.

Phulpur MP Keshari Devi Patel, Chail MLA Sanjay Gupta, MLC Surendra Chaudhary were present on the occasion besides the hospital management and the team of doctors including Dr Kaushal Kumar, Dr Deenanath Tiwari, Dr Dharendra Kumar Tiwari, and Dr RK Singh.

SUICIDE: A newly wed couple committed suicide by hanging themselves in Dandi Bazar under the Naini police station on Monday/Tuesday night. No suicide note was found from the spot, while the family members are unable to find out the reason behind this drastic step by the couple.

Parivartan Forum extends help for pregnant women testing positive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

In view of the ongoing Mothers Day events, the district administration in association with a leading non-governmental organisation, Parivartan Forum, had decided to provide a medical platform for the COVID-19 pregnant women, especially those who are in home isolation and require medical consultancy and are in need of essential medicines. Besides, it has also arranged for a free of cost special ambulance for them.

This was stated by Kanpur Divisional Commissioner Dr Raj Shekhar on Tuesday. He said it was a good and welcome gesture that many corporate houses and voluntary organisations were coming forward to support the local administration in strengthening and Covid management in several ways.

Dr Shekhar said this special initiative was started in Kanpur Nagar by the Parivartan team

headed by Anil Gupta, who released the details of the doctors who will be available for free tele consultation and also medicines and the ambulance services for coronavirus positive pregnant women who were in home isolation and needed special counselling by gynaecologist and special care and support. He appreciated this initiative extended by the Parivartan forum.

A few prominent doctors who are on the special list include Dr Rashi Mishra (9919041904) between 10 am and 12 noon, Dr Richa Bhalla (9450911537) from 12 to 1 pm, Dr Urooz Jehan (8400351786) between 12 noon and 2 pm, Dr Sakshi Gupta (9415052312) between 2 pm and 3 pm, Dr Pratima Verma (8707297575) between 3pm and 4pm, Dr Ramit Ahuja (9335342368) between 3 pm and 4 pm and several gynaecologists.

It may be mentioned here that as per the Covid protocol, the ambulance carrying preg-

nant women have to be separated and sanitised before each use. Ironically, in the present situation, the COVID-19 critical patients are being carried in ambulances which later on carry pregnant women to hospitals. There is total absence of sanitisation of ambulances, especially those ferrying pregnant women to hospitals.

Dozens of ambulance drivers have admitted that they have not sanitised their ambulances even once.

OXYGEN DEMAND: Meanwhile, the divisional commissioner said that due to the rapid increase in the demand for oxygen in the past one month, the UP government was laying emphasis more on setting up new oxygen generation plants in hospitals and arrangements of more oxygen concentrators.

He said that various voluntary organisations had expressed the desire to set up oxygen generators and concentrators. He said Rightwalk

Foundation of India was one such organisation which was helping various local administrations and hospitals in setting up oxygen plants and was donating oxygen concentrators.

He said out of the 10, four oxygen concentrators were donated to the Air Force Hospital, Chakeri and they were handed over to the AOC Air Commodore Baala Murali and SMO Dr Somashekhar.

The divisional commissioner thanked the CEO of Rightwalk Foundation, Samina Bano, and the team for their generous donation of oxygen concentrators to strengthen the Covid health infrastructure.

Meanwhile, Assistant Director, Industries, SP Yadav, said that only two industrialists would be able to set up oxygen the plant in the third phase of the pandemic. It may be mentioned here that 25 industrialists had expressed their desire to set up oxygen plants but only two have been approved.

Raghav Gupta first IRS to clear certification in international taxation



Raghav Gupta

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Raghav Gupta has become the first IRS in the country to clear the advanced professional certification in international taxation from the globally renowned International Board of Fiscal Documentation, Amsterdam.

Simple and reticent, Raghav Gupta just smiles on his achievement and says it is the blessing of the parents and mercy of the Almighty.

Gupta, currently Deputy Director (Raid) and posted in Kanpur, said international taxation was a vital issue for a growing number of business and individuals across the world.

He said this course had expanded the horizon and allowed understanding of how the international system of taxation worked and it was a subject of great importance.

Speaking about IBFD, he said it was a unique centre of expertise offering high quality information and education on international tax. He said its forte was a powerful research platform which allowed tax practitioners around the world to access this valuable content which could help them work faster and effectively.

He said in the present situation there was an imperative need to promote and disseminate the understanding of cross-border taxation at the highest level.

He said when tax issues arose across borders, they dealt with two different jurisdictions which sought the same sum of income or the same legal person thereby resulting in double-taxation. He said in the Indian context, where the tax administration was perceived to be aggressive and the laws uncertain, any protection offered by a treaty jurisdiction was important. Gupta said the course was highly challenging and replete with contemporary information and updates which made it extremely relevant. He said that he was confident that the course would prove highly beneficial for not only his career but for the country as well.

Elderly couple found dead

KANPUR (PNS): An elderly couple died under mysterious circumstances in Hatherea village under Ghatampur police station. Their bodies were in their house on Tuesday morning.

Murli Sankhwar (80) lived with his wife Ram Devi (75) in Hatherea village. His son Behari lives in an Ashram on the outskirts of the village. Behari's wife, son Arvind and daughter-in-law Sadhana live about one kilometre away in another village.

Sadhana said her grandfather-in-law Murli and grandmother-in-law Ramdevi were suffering from fever and cough about five days ago when she visited them. She said thereafter, she could not visit them again.

On Tuesday morning, when Sadhana again went to the house of her grandfather-in-law, she found the doors bolted from inside. On failing to get any response, she called some boys who scaled the boundary wall and entered the house and found the elderly couple dead. Murli was lying dead on the cot while the body of Ramdevi was lying on the floor a few steps away and a water jug lay close to her. The condition of the decomposed bodies suggested that the couple had died about 3-4 days ago. As the elderly couple was suffering from fever, cough and cold, not only their family members but the neighbours had also distanced themselves from them.

NCL to install 2 oxygen plants

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL), the Singrauli-based flagship subsidiary of Coal India Limited (CIL) is installing two oxygen generating plants of capacity 600 ltr/min in its Nehru Shatabdi Chikitsalaya, Jayant (MP) and Atal Chikitsalaya, Bina (UP) which will cater to people of Singrauli and Sonbhadra regions. This development comes in the wake of the second wave of Covid pandemic in the country. Mining about 115 million tonnes of coal annually NCL has a huge responsibility to fulfil energy aspiration of the country. NCL houses about

14,000 employees which are engaged in round-the-clock coal production, safety becomes of paramount importance for employees and their kin. In the trying times CMD NCL PK Sinha reaffirmed company's safety commitment towards dedicated coal miners who are tirelessly working round the clock in coalfields. Giving thrust on energy security in the testing times he exhorted for uninterrupted coal supply to the

Remaining eligible rly personnel should be vaccinated as soon as possible: NER GM

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The North Eastern Railway (NER) administration is fully alert towards the health of its employees in this difficult phase of Covid-19 infection. NER General Manager Vinay Kumar Tripathi in a virtual meeting with the principal heads of departments and Divisional Railway Managers (DRMs) instructed to always take special precautions regarding the health of railway personnel and take necessary steps in this regard. Tripathi said vaccination of railway personnel to protect them from Covid-19 is very important and they should also be encouraged for it. This vaccination programme is being carried out as a campaign

on NER as a result of which till May 9 at its headquarters and all the three divisions 88.2 per cent of the eligible railway personnel have been vaccinated. GM VK Tripathi instructed the officials concerned that remaining eligible railway personnel should also be administered vaccine as soon as possible. Under the vaccination campaign on NER, including Railway Protection Force (RPF)/ Railway Protection Special Force (RPSF) and medical personnel, 18,643 railway personnel above 45 years of age were administered the vaccine against Covid in which 6,303 railway personnel of the offices and workshop situated at the headquarters, Gorakhpur, 3,878 of Varanasi division,

5,336 of Lucknow division and 3,226 of Izzatnagar division were administered the first dose of the vaccine. Besides, a total of 5,647 railway personnel have been given the second dose of vaccine.

As per the instructions of the GM for administering vaccine to the line employees by running medical van of railways (SPARME) as Vaccine Express railway personnel were vaccinated at their work place/station. Apart from it he also reviewed the availability of necessary medical equipment and medicines for better treatment of Covid-19 patients in railway hospitals and directed to ensure availability of all necessary medical equipment and medicines.

Dadar-Manduadih spl from May 13

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration for the convenience of passengers will run the 01357/01358 Dadar-Manduadih-Dadar superfast summer special train from Dadar on May 13, 16 and 20 and from Manduadih on May 15, 18 and 22. All coaches in the train will be of reserved category and passengers travelling in it will have to follow the Covid-19 prevention guidelines, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh said.

DADAR-MANDUADIH SPL: The 01357 Dadar-Manduadih superfast summer special will on May 13, 16 and 20 depart from Dadar at 21.45 hrs, from Kalyan at 22.33 hrs, from Nasik Road on the second day at 00.45 hrs, from Bhusaval at 04.25 hrs, from Itarsi at 09.10 hrs, from Jabalpur at 12.30 hrs, from Prayagraj Chheoki at 18.27 hrs, from Varanasi at 22.30 hrs and reach Manduadih at 22.45 hrs.

MANDUADIH-DADAR SPECIAL: In the return journey, 01358 Manduadih-Dadar superfast summer special will

on May 15, 18 and 22 depart from Manduadih at 00.35 hrs, from Varanasi at 01.00 hrs, from Prayagraj Chheoki at 04.17 hrs, from Jabalpur at 10.50 hrs, from Itarsi at 15.00 hrs, from Bhusaval at 20.10 hrs, from Nashik Road at 23.30 hrs, on the third day from Kalyan at 03.08 hrs and will reach Dadar at 03.55 hrs. As many as 18 coaches, including eight of sleeper class, six of general second class, one of AC second-cum-third class, one of AC third and two of SLRD will be attached in this special train.

Bandra Terminus-Ghaziपुर City spl to run today

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration will for the convenience of passengers run the 09133/09134 Bandra Terminus-Ghaziपुर City-Valsad superfast summer special from Bandra Terminus on May 12 and from Ghaziपुर City on May 14. All coaches will be of reserved category and passengers will have to follow the Covid-19 prevention guidelines, CPRO (CPRO) PK said.

BDS-GCT SPL: The 09133 Bandra Terminus (BDS)-Ghaziपुर City (GCT) superfast summer special train will on May 12 depart from Bandra Terminus at 11.15 hrs, from Borivali at 11.53 hrs, from Vapi at 13.40 hrs, from

Surat at 15.00 hrs, from Vadodara at 16.55 hrs, from Ratlam at 21.00 hrs, from Kota on second day at 00.50 hrs, from Sawai Madhopur at 01.59 hrs, from Bharatpur at 04.14 hrs, from Achhnera at 05.14 hrs, from Mathura at 06.17 hrs, from Kasganj at 07.55 hrs, from Farrukhabad at 09.25 hrs, from Kanpur Central at 12.55 hrs, from Lucknow at 14.19 hrs, from Sultanpur at 16.35 hrs, from Jaunpur City at 17.42 hrs, from Varanasi at 20.10 hrs, Aunrihar at 20.57 hrs and reach Ghaziपुर City at 22.00 hrs.

GCT-VALSAD SPL: In the return journey 09134 Ghaziपुर City-Valsad superfast summer special train will on May 14 depart from Ghaziपुर City at 01.20 hrs, from Aunrihar at

02.07 hrs, from Varanasi at 03.25 hrs, from Jaunpur City at 04.42 hrs, from Sultanpur at 05.57 hrs, from Lucknow at 08.02 hrs, from Kanpur Central at 09.52 hrs, from Farrukhabad at 12.55 hrs, from Kasganj at 14.25 hrs, from Mathura at 16.05 hrs, from Achhnera at 17.20 hrs, from Bharatpur at 17.52 hrs, from Sawai Madhopur at 19.57 hrs, from Kota at 21.15 hrs, from Ratlam on the second day at 10.50 hrs, from Vadodara at 05.40 hrs, from Surat at 07.20 hrs and reach Valsad at 08.20 hrs. A total of 22 coaches, including AC second class- 1, AC third class – 5, sleeper class – 10, general second class – 4 and generator-cum-luggage van — 2 will be attached in the special train.

CSJMU Hackathon on for creating Covid & post-Covid solutions

KANPUR (PNS): On the occasion of National Technology Day, Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University (CSJMU) organised a Hackathon on 'Ideathon for creating solutions for Covid and post-Covid problems', on Tuesday.

CSJMU Vice Chancellor Prof Vinay Kumar Pathak along with Vice Chancellor of Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida, Prof Bhagwati Prakash Sharma, Prof Manindra Agarwal and Prof BV Phani of IIT Kanpur and Dr Srujan Pal, CEO, Kalam Centre inaugurated the event.

In his inaugural speech, Prof Pathak said during the first wave of COVID-19, India had become self-reliant in producing sanitiser and PPE kits. He said In the second wave, certain

new challenges were being confronted by India, mainly the shortage of oxygen and hospital beds. The Hackathon provided an opportunity to the youths, especially the students, to give their suggestions to overcome these challenges, he added.Prof BV Phani from IIT Kanpur said presently there were the highest numbers of active COVID-19 cases in India. He said so far, around 2.5 crore people had been infected by the novel coronavirus and about 2.5 lakh people had lost their lives. He said to prevent infection the first shield available with India was PPE kit which usually caused dehydration and skin diseases and at the same time, there was great problem in disposal of PPE kits also.

Students taking part in the Hackathon can submit their project on this subject, he said. CEO, Kalam Centre, Dr Srijan Pal Singh spoke on oxygen availability and Prof Manindra Agarwal from IIT Kanpur on SUTRA model.Dr Rashi Agarwal anchored the virtual programme and proposed the vote of thanks. Around 700 students from different colleges took part in the event. Registrar Dr Anil Kumar Yadav, Dr Sandesh Gupta, Dr BD Pandey and Dr Vivek Singh Sachan were also present.

SUICIDE: An assistant registrar of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur committed suicide by hanging himself in his residence on the campus late Monday night. He was identified as Surjeet

Das (40), a native of Assam. Das lived on the IIT-K campus with his wife Bulbul Das and two sons, Shobhit (6) and Suniyojit (18 months).

According to police, after Suniyojit tested positive for coronavirus infection last month, Surjeet went into depression. Even after Suniyojit recovered from the infection, Das failed to overcome his depression and was initially treated by a doctor in Delhi but when there was no improvement in his condition there, he had started homeopathic treatment in Kanpur. After taking dinner with family members on Monday, Das went to sleep in his room. Late in the night, he came out of his room and hanged himself from the ceiling fan.

Sonia, Rahul misleading people, abetting jab hesitancy: Nadda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress criticism of the Covid-19 management by the Modi-Government invited a strong rejoinder from the BJP president JP Nadda who on Tuesday asked the top Congress leadership to “stop misleading people, creating false panic and even contradicting their stands just on political considerations.”

In a four-page letter to Congress president Sonia Gandhi, Nadda accused her senior party leaders, including former President Rahul Gandhi, of creating “vaccine hesitancy”, at convenience “changing stands” on the lockdown issue and creating “confusion” over the Covid-19 strategy.

BJP president also went on to say that “now there is a new trend in Congress party to put all the blame on the Central Vista project”.

The letter came a day after the Congress Working Committee on Monday passed a resolution calling the second Covid-19 wave a “grave calamity and direct consequence of the Modi government’s indifference, insensitivity, and incompetence.”

Nadda accused Congress of mocking at the vaccine made in India.

“Vaccine that is made in India should be a matter of national pride. Instead, Congress leaders tried to ridicule it and create doubts in the minds of people. Even the chief minister belonging to your party indulged in such antics. In a nation that has almost no recent history of vaccine hesitancy, your party has the dubious record of trying to actively create [it], that too, in the middle of a once-in-a-century pan-



demic,” the letter said.

“The Congress Working Committee talks about the Modi government ‘abdicating’ its responsibility on vaccination. Is there so much of a communication gap between the Congress party and the states it shares powers in? In April itself, topmost Congress leaders were calling for decentralisation of vaccination”, he said.

Nadda also cited a surge in Covid-19 cases in Congress-ruled state such as Punjab.

Nadda defended the vaccination policy and said it had already ensured considerable coverage in priority groups by providing over 160 million vaccines to states in the first two phases.

“Even now it continues to give 50 percent of the total vaccines free if cost”, said the letter of BJP President.

Nadda said that BJP ruled states have announced their resolve to help the poor and underprivileged by providing vaccines for free.

“I am sure that Congress governments in various states also feel strongly for the poor, can they also come out with a similar decision to provide vaccines for free?”, he quizzed the Congress President.

Nadda accused the Congress of politicising the pandemic and the vaccination policy. He said in this fight against the pandemic, the conduct of the topmost Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, will be remembered for “duplicitous and pettiness.”

Vaccine shortage forces States to suspend vax drive for 18+

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Amid scarcity of vaccine supplies, many States have suspended vaccination drives for the 18-44 age group so as to prioritise those due for the second jab in the 45-plus age group. People who had registered to get Covid jab through the Cowin app returned disappointed from vaccination centres in some parts including Mumbai, Hyderabad, Patna, Bendi and other places as they were closed due to unavailability of the Covid-19 vaccine. Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Karnataka, West Bengal, Odisha, Telangana, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh have rescheduled appointments for the first time vaccine beneficiaries. Delhi and Andhra Pradesh have demanded to share the formula with other companies to manufacture the two Covid vaccines.

The shortage of Bharat Biotech’s Covaxin in many states is posing a problem for those who need to get a second jab. Covaxin has to be taken at an interval of 28 days.

Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope on Tuesday said the State

Government has suspended the Covid-19 vaccination drive for the 18-44 age group due to a shortage of jabs. “There is a dearth of vaccines, hence we’re considering holding off vaccination drive temporarily for 18-44 age group. 2.75 lakh vaccine doses are left for this age group that’ll be now used for 45 years and above group. Administering the second dose is a priority,” Tope said.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to allow other companies the right to manufacture the two Covid-19 vaccines administered in the country - Covishield and Covaxin. In his letter, Kejriwal said that the current supply of vaccine doses is not sustainable to meet the whole country’s demand, which will in turn be an arsenal in India’s fight against the deadly virus. “Only two companies are producing vaccines so far. They produce only 6-7 crore vaccines a month. This way, it will take over two years to vaccinate everyone. Many waves would have come by then,” he said.

Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have decided to restrict the vaccination process

only to the second dose. States like Kerala, Karnataka have increased the second dose share given the large numbers involved. Some have stopped walk in appointments.

In some States such as Odisha, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, vax centres has been shut to restrict crowds and manage the vaccination driver better.

In Madhya Pradesh, online appointments in some areas including Datia, Damoh, Jabua have been restricted.

In states like Haryana, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, the Governments have restricting the slots for appointments.

Serum Institute of India’s current production capacity is 60-70 million doses; the company indicated that it may not hit the 100-million-dose capacity until July. Bharat Biotech is producing about 10 million doses. Only 1,50,000 doses of Sputnik V have arrived from Russia, but it would take a few weeks for its roll-out.

To meet the demand, several states such as Karnataka, Odisha, Delhi, UP, Maharashtra and Kerala have decided to invite global tender to procure the Covid vaccine.

ing Covid guidelines,” the letter said.

On the Congress’s opposition to the Central Vista, Nadda said the need for a new Parliament was raised during the Congress-led United

CRPF commandants tasked to liaise with State police for access to seized Remdesivir, O2

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Amid continuing surge in Covid cases, CRPF chief Kuldip Singh has tasked the commandants of various formations across the States to liaise with the State police to hand over seized Remdesivir injections, oxygen concentrators and oxygen cylinders on “zimmanama” basis for use by the paramilitary in these “trying times.”

Due to the onslaught of the pandemic, the CRPF has also halted all training courses that begin in May.

Following reports of black marketing of these essentials required for Covid patient management, State police forces and law enforcement agencies across the country have raided and seized these items.

These precious lifesaving drugs and equipment, lying with police forces, can be used by the force to save the lives of the paramilitary personnel, officials said.

Through a communication on Friday, the CRPF has also sought a consolidated report of action taken by the offices under different operational jurisdiction by May 13 for perusal of the Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

The communication that has been sent to all the sectors

and zones/formations has also underscored the need to treat the matter as a top priority and monitor the progress, they said.

Meanwhile, the CRPF has postponed all training courses, in view of the spread of Covid-19, scheduled to commence this month till further orders. The new dates for commencement of the training courses will be intimated in due course to all the training institutions under the paramilitary.

As on Saturday, a total of 20,106 CRPF personnel contracted Covid-19, including 228 cases during the last 24 hours. Of this, 17,498 men have recovered and the paramilitary suffered 105 deaths due to the viral disease. The CRPF had 2,503 active cases in its ranks till Saturday.

Till Saturday, as many as 69,852 Central paramilitary personnel, including those of the CRPF, have been infected with Covid-19.

Out of this, 60,549 patients have recovered from the disease. The combined death toll across the paramilitary forces was 264 during the period. A total of 9,037 personnel across the Forces continue to be active cases.

Besides the CRPF, other paramilitary forces hit by Covid are the Border Security Force (BSF), Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Central

Industrial Security Force (CISF), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), National Security Guards (NSG) and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF).

A Deputy Inspector General of the CRPF and a Commanding Officer (CO) of the Border Security Force (BSF) have succumbed to Covid-19 this week. Another CO of the CRPF hit by the novel coronavirus is critical, sources said.

A section of officials in the CRPF feel the liaison with the State police should have been undertaken by the senior officials in the rank of Inspectors General, most of whom are IPS officers from various State cadres on Central deputation, for better outcome of the move aimed at offsetting the shortage of the vital medicines and equipment for management of Covid cases.

While the CRPF has a medical set of its own for treatment of its personnel through a range of field and composite hospitals, the CPFR has been stretched too far from crowd control in the first wave to conducting elections in the midst of the second wave in the recently concluded Assembly polls in West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry, they added.

Chhattisgarh Government was also constructing a new Assembly complex in the State.

Reserve 70% vaccines for 2nd dose: Centre to States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the footfall of people turning up for vaccinations has increased due to the recent spikes in Covid-19 cases, and those waiting for a second dose getting longer, the Centre on Tuesday asked the States to give priority to them during vaccination by allocating a minimum of 70 per cent vaccines for the second dose.

The States have also been asked to focus on minimum vaccine wastage and do regular follow up with vaccine manufacturers.

The urgent need to address a large number of beneficiaries waiting for a second dose of vaccine was stressed in a meeting held by Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan and Dr R S Sharma, the Chairman of Empowered Group on Technology and Data Management to Combat COVID-19, with state officials to review the status of COVID-19 vaccination on Tuesday.

States were urged to “ensure all beneficiaries who have taken the first dose are prioritised for the second doses”, the Union Health Ministry said in the statement.

In this regard, states can reserve at least 70 percent of the



vaccines supplied to them from the Government of India channel for second dose vaccination and the remaining 30 percent for the first dose.

“This, however, is indicative. States have the liberty to enhance this to as much as 100 percent. State-wise numbers on CoWIN have been shared with states for their planning purposes.

“The states were asked to undertake an awareness campaign for reinforcing the importance of complete vaccination with two doses of the vaccine,” the statement said.

Presenting details of States who have ensured high coverage of priority groups (like population aged 45+, frontline workers and healthcare workers) and the others, the Union Health secretary urged States to ensure that priority groups are

vaccinated.

States have been informed in a transparent manner in advance about the Covid vaccines being provided to them from Govt of India channel. The visibility for the forthcoming fortnight is conveyed to them in advance to enable better and more effective planning by them, the statement stated.

The next allocation for the period 15-31st May will be conveyed to them on May 14. It was pointed out that states can utilize the information regarding dose allocation for the next 15 days to plan their vaccination sessions.

States were also urged to minimise vaccine wastage, the statement said. While the overall levels have considerably reduced, Union Health Secretary pointed that there were many states which still

needed to substantially reduce the wastage.

“It was suggested to states and UTs to retrain and reorient vaccinators to ensure judicious usage of the vaccines.

“All wastage more than the national average hereafter is to be adjusted from the subsequent allocations to that state and UT,” the statement said.

In this context, it was also pointed out that certain states are able to report a negative wastage because the well-trained health workers can extract maximum doses per vial than what is otherwise generally earmarked.

In view of the payments pending from states to the private vaccine manufacturers, the states were advised to constitute a dedicated team at state level of 2 or 3 senior officers to coordinate with vaccine manufacturers on a daily basis and secure State Govt. Supplies promptly, the statement said.

This team is to also coordinate with private hospitals to facilitate their procurement thereby maintaining the momentum of the overall vaccination exercise in the State.

The District Immunization Officer and COVID Vaccination Centre Manager can increase the session capacity according to demand and can also visualise the target group in their upcoming sessions. Beneficiaries without relevant photo ID cards like senior citizens at old-age homes, etc., can also be registered, the ministry said.

Delhi, K’taka, others for global tender to meet jab shortage

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the Centre taking its own time to supply the vaccine at the domestic front, Delhi, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana on Tuesday joined several other States which have decided to issue global tenders for procurement of Covid vaccines to ensure inoculation of its people to save them from the second wave of pandemic. The other States seeking vaccines through a global route are Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha.

The Centre said it has so far provided more than 18 crore vaccine doses to States and UTs free of cost, but many of them have complained of an acute shortage of the jabs and are now prioritising people who need to be given their second dose within a prescribed period.

Two crore Covid vaccine doses will be procured through global tender to meet the increased demand and to facilitate vaccination of the age group of 18-44 years, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister and state Covid task force head C N Ashwath Narayan said.

“Till now, we had depended only on vaccines supplied by



the Central Government and it was not procured from the open market by floating tender. Now, it has been instructed to float the tender and to complete the process within seven days,” Narayan said.

Delhi Government too said it will float a global tender for procuring coronavirus vaccines.

Addressing a press conference, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia alleged that the BJP-ruled Centre was “forcing” State Governments to invite global tenders for vaccine procurement while the Telangana cabinet also decided to follow suit.

Officials said the Andhra Pradesh government will float a global tender in a day or two for the procurement of Covid-

19 vaccines from foreign manufacturers to complete the vaccination process as quickly as possible.

“We are exploring the option of buying the vaccine from any foreign manufacturer since there is a short supply of Covishield and Covaxin,” the state’s Principal Secretary (Health) Anil Kumar Singhal said while Uttar Pradesh Government had earlier this month floated global e-tenders to procure four crore doses of Covid-19 vaccines from licensed manufacturers.

State officials on Tuesday said that UP may directly procure a large amount of international Covid-19 vaccines such as Sputnik V and those developed by Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

2nd Covid wave risky for youth, says ICMR chief



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

If the first wave of Covid took into its grip the old people particularly those with comorbidities, the second ongoing wave of the pandemic is proving risky to more number of younger people as they might have begun going out for economic reasons and also because of some variants of SARs-COV-2 prevalent in the country.

This was stated by the ICMR chief Dr Balram Bhargava on Tuesday in response to a question on whether the younger population were getting more affected.

He said, “The comparison of data during the first and the second wave of Covid-19 has shown that there is not much age difference.

People above the age of 40 are more vulnerable for adverse outcomes.

“We have found that younger people are getting slightly more involved because suddenly they have gone out and there are variants also prevalent in the nation which may be affecting them as well,” he said.

India has been reeling under a calamitous second wave of the coronavirus infection.

An early trend of decline in daily new COVID-19 cases and deaths has been noted in the country even as Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha, and Punjab are among the 16 states still showing continued increase in daily cases, the government said on Tuesday.

Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana were among the 18 states and union territories showing continued plateauing or decrease in daily new Covid-19 cases.

Joint Secretary in the Health Ministry Lav Agarwal, however, said Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Punjab, Assam, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Tripura were among the 16 states and union territories showing continued increasing trend in daily new Covid-19 cases.

Fewer deaths during Covid surge: MCD

CHANDAN PRAKASH ■ NEW DELHI

The bodies of Covid-19 victims may have been flooding roads and pavements outside “house full” crematoriums and graveyards in the national Capital, but data provided by all the three Municipal Corporation show that fewer people died in corona-ravaged March and April than January when the pandemic was on a decline.

The death figures are inclusive of both general deaths and Covid-19 fatalities.

As per the figure provided by South Delhi Municipal Corporation, 3,620 deaths were registered in January. The number came down to 3,297 in February and 3,173 in March. In April, when the city bore the

deaths reported in January were at 1,426 and the number kept declining with the progress of Covid-19 — 1,345 in February, 1,134 in March, and 1,386 in April. The data of the East Delhi Municipal Corporation shows that a total of 8,724 deaths were registered between January and April.

In January, EDMC recorded 2,273 deaths while the numbers reported in February was at 2,214. Once again with the progress of corona the number came down — 2,006 in March, 2,231 in April and 756 up to May 10.

The reduction of death number at the peak of corona pandemic is baffling. During this period even non-Covid-19 patients were at the receiving end of unavailability of medical support and could not find bed in hospitals. It’s strange how in such a situation the fatalities rate came down.

The record surge in Covid-19 cases and its impact on collapse of health service was evi-

	SDMC		NDMC	EDMC
January	3,620		1,426	2,273
February	3,297		1,345	2,214
March	3,173		1,134	2,006
April	3,351		1,386	2,231



dent. It put a great pressure on hospitals and drained every ounce of oxygen. The city witnessed chaos and despair as worried family members ran from one hospital to another to get beds for their dear ones. The health infrastructure was stretched beyond its capacity. However, situation has improved with Delhi and the Union Government adding more ICUs, oxygen beds and care facilities

across the city.

When asked about the official data on the deaths during the coronavirus surge, a Delhi Government official said social media platforms were flooded with help, out of it some were not true. “The situation is improving with every passing day. We do hope that mortality rate reduces further and patients go to their homes,” the Delhi Government official said.

26 Covid patients die at Goa hospital

PTI ■ PANAJI

Goa Health Minister Vishwajit Rane on Tuesday said 26 Covid-19 patients died at the State-run Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) in the early hours and sought an investigation by the High Court to find out the exact cause. He said these fatalities occurred between 2 am and 6 am “which is a fact”, but remained evasive about the cause.

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, who visited GMCH, said the gap between the “availability of medical oxygen and its supply to Covid-19 wards in the GMCH might have caused some issues for the patients” even as he stressed that there is no scarcity of oxygen supply in the State.

Speaking to reporters, Rane admitted the shortfall in the supply of medical oxygen at the GMCH as of Monday.

“The High Court should

investigate the reasons behind these deaths. The HC should also intervene and prepare a white paper on oxygen supply to the GMCH, which would help to set the things right,” the Health Minister said after CM’s visit to the GMCH.

Rane said the medical oxygen requirement of the facility as of Monday was 1,200 jumbo cylinders of which only 400 were supplied. “If there’s a shortfall in the supply of medical oxygen, the discussion should be held about how to bridge that gap,” he said.

Rane said a three-member team of nodal officers set up by the State Government to oversee Covid-19 treatment at GMCH should give its inputs about the issues to the CM.

Earlier, the CM donning a PPE kit visited Covid-19 wards in the GMCH where he met patients and their relatives.

“There are issues over the availability of oxygen in these wards which need to be sorted

out,” the CM said. He announced the setting up of a ward-wise mechanism to ensure a smooth supply of medical oxygen.

“Doctors, who are busy treating patients, cannot spend their time in arranging logistics like oxygen. I will hold a meeting immediately to set up ward-wise mechanisms to ensure that oxygen is supplied to patients in time,” Sawant said.

The CM said there was no dearth of medical oxygen and cylinders in the State but the problem arises sometimes as these cylinders do not reach their destinations on time. Sawant said the State Government is making efforts on all fronts to tackle the pandemic.

“We have abundant supplies of (medical) oxygen. There is no scarcity in the State,” he said. Goa’s Covid tally stood at 1,21,650 as of May 10, while 50 deaths had taken the toll to 1,729, an official said.

Declare Maratha as SEBC, Maha urges Prez, PM

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Within a week after the Supreme Court declared the Maratha reservations as “unconstitutional”, the Maharashtra Government has urged President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to declare the Maratha community in the State as “Socially and Educationally Backward Classes” (SEBC), enabling it enjoy reservations in education and public employment to an extent of 12 per cent and 13 per cent respectively.

In identical letters written to President Kovind and Prime Minister Modi, on Monday, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray stated that though the State Government was of the opinion that despite 102nd Constitutional amendment, it continued to enjoy power, authority and jurisdiction to identify Maratha community as the SEBC.

“However, at this stage, such understanding pales into insignifi-

cance, in view of the authoritative pronouncement made by the Hon. Supreme Court,” he said.

“As a consequence of the majority view of Hon’ble Supreme Court, it is the President i.e the Union Government alone, which can identify and notify the Maratha community of state as SEBC, enabling it to enjoy reservations in education and public employment,” Uddhav stated.

“This is therefore, to earnestly request you that appropriate steps be taken, albeit in accordance in law, declared by the Hon’ble Supreme Court, to identify and declare Maratha community of my State as SEBC to enable them to claim the reservation in Education and Public Employment, at least 12 per cent and 13 per cent respectively,” the Chief Minister said, adding that the State Government would endeavour to the Centre’s hands in undertaking such an exercise.

On May 5, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme

Court - headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan – had declared the Maratha reservations as “unconstitutional” on the ground that there was no “exceptional circumstances” or “extraordinary situation” in Maharashtra which required the Maharashtra Government to break the 50% ceiling limit to bestow quota benefits on the Maratha community.

The apex court also struck down the findings of the Justice N.G. Gaikwad Commission which led to the enactment of Maratha quota law and set aside the Bombay High Court judgment which validated the Maharashtra State Reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) Act of 2018.

The Supreme Court also held the Bombay High Court’s June 27, 2019 order directing the Maharashtra government to bring down the quantum of the approved reservations recommended by the Gaikwad Commission from 16 per cent to 12 per cent in educational institutions and 13 per cent in Government jobs.

The apex court also held that a separate reservation for the Maratha community violates Articles 14 (right to equality) and 21 (due process of law).

It may be recalled that on November 14, 2014, the Bombay High Court had stayed an ordinance promulgated by the previous Congress-led DF Government ahead of the October 2014 State Assembly polls extending 16 per cent reservations to Marathas and five per cent to Muslims, saying that they were not in conformity with the law laid down by the Supreme Court in three cases. However, a HC bench, headed by the then Chief Justice Mohit Shah, had subsequently allowed reservations to Muslims in educational institutions, on the ground at that their educational achievements were “abysmally low” and that there was a need to draw them into the “mainstream of secular education”.

On its part, the BJP-led saffron alliance government – which came to power after the October 2014

Assembly polls --subsequently moved the apex court challenging the stay granted by the high court on an ordinance promulgated by the previous Congress-led DF government.

However, the Supreme Court rejected the State Government’s petition. The matter came back to the high court after advocate Vikas Patil filed an intervention petition in the Supreme Court on the issue. The apex court directed the high court to hear the bunch of petitions pending before it.

Following a massive agitation demanding Maratha reservations launched by Maratha Kranti Sena (MKS) which Organised 58 mammoth silent morchas across the state in 2017 and 2018, both the Houses of the Maharashtra Legislature had on November 29, 2018 passed a bill according reservations 16 per cent reservations in education and government jobs to the Maratha community in the state, thus paving way for enactment of a law.

Kerala’s iconic 102-year-old Left leader Gouri no more

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

K R Gouri, the lone surviving member of the 1957 Communist Government in Kerala passed away on Tuesday. She was 102 and was suffering from age related issues. The end came at a private hospital in Thiruvananthapuram.

Alappuzha born Gouri was the Revenue Minister in the EMS Namboodirippadu-led Communist Government that ruled the State during 1957 to 1959. She was the leader who introduced the land reform act in Kerala which sounded the death knell of zamindari system in the State.

Before getting elected to the Kerala Assembly in 1957, Gouri served twice as member of the Travancore-Kochi Legislative Assembly. She was Minister in five Governments that led by Namboodirippadu, E K Nayanar, A K Antony and Oommen Chandi. She will be remembered as the

best Chief Minister the State did not get, said a senior CPI(M) fellow traveller.

The CPI(M)’s campaign during the 1987 assembly election was “Keram Thingum Kerala Naadu K R Gowri Bharicheedum”, which when translated means Kerala, jam-packed with coconut trees would be ruled by K R Gouri.

Though the CPI(M)-led LDF has scored an impressive victory in that election, the CPI(M) leadership dumped Gouri and made E K Nayanar, the Chief Minister. Gouri, who felt deceived and let down did not get over that “treachery” committed by the caste leaders of the party that included Namboodirippadu and Nayanar.

She was expelled from the CPI (M) in 1994 by Namboodirippadu and his faction allegedly for anti-party activities. But she retaliated by launching JSS, a political outfit which forged alliance with the Congress and became a part of the UDF.

SIT to move court to seek appearance of CISF officials

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Special Investigation Team of the CID probing the Sitalkuchi firing case is likely to move court to secure the appearance of six Central Industrial Security Force personnel after they failed to turn up for interrogation on Tuesday, relevant sources said.

The new Mamata Banerjee Government had formed the SIT soon after returning to power with a thumping majority. The new Government also suspended Cooch Behar SP Debashis Dhar to facilitate the investigations.

Dhar had submitted a report to the Election Commission saying about 300 people had attacked the stated

booth leading the central forces to open fire.

The Election Commission after conducting a preliminary inquiry into the proceedings had said that the firing was resorted to under a justifying condition.

Four persons had died when the CISF opened fire at an alleged crowd of attackers outside a polling booth — in the fourth phase of Bengal Assembly elections— at Sitalkuchi in Mathabhanga sub-division of Cooch Behar district bordering Assam in North Bengal.

The SIT led by a DIG level officer had summoned an Assistant Commandant, an Inspector and four other personnel of the CISE. The respon-

SITALKUCHI FIRING

dents did not appear before the investigators after State police turned down a CISF request to appear digitally citing pandemic situation, sources said.

A petition seeking court order directing the respondents to appear before the investigating team is not ruled out,” sources in the CID said.

The SIT on Tuesday subjected sub-inspector Gobinda Das— who was among the first to reach the area after the firing — to a marathon grilling. It has also summoned Sub-divisional Police Officer of Mathabhanga Surajit Mandal on Wednesday. The then SP

Dhar is also likely to be summoned soon, sources said. The officials are likely to be asked as to who ordered the firing, what they saw prima facie after visiting the site and whether they had formed any opinion about who provoked the firing.

They are also likely to be asked as to whether any alternative measures could have been taken instead of resorting to firing, officials said.

The Chief Minister had earlier wondered “why the CISF had resorted to firing in the first instance and why they did not target the victims below their wastes and why most of the bullets were fired through

the chest or head of the victims.”

Meanwhile the State BJP leadership once again accused Banerjee for her appeasement politics saying, “instead of taking steps to control post-poll violence which is taking communal turn she is indulging in petty appeasement politics.”

Saying that “the truth will finally come out despite her efforts to implicate the central forces,” a BJP MLA said “she is trying to hit two birds in a shot ... first she is trying to inspire the criminals of her party by ordering a probe in their favour and more importantly she is trying to demoralize the central forces so that they hesitate to take strong action in subsequent elections.”



Three wheeler auto union starts the Auto Ambulance service for Covid-19 patients in Lucknow on Tuesday

PTI

Three LeT terrorists killed in J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A joint team of security forces on Tuesday eliminated three more local terrorists belonging to the pro-Pakistan Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) terrorist outfit in the Kokernag area of Anantnag district. So far eight terrorists have been eliminated in three different encounters since May 1.

On May 4, two Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists including a foreign terrorist were eliminated in Nathipora area of Sopore in Baramulla district while three local terrorists of Al-Badr terror outfit were gunned down in Kanigam area of Shopian on May 6.

According to a police spokesman, “the operation was launched in the wee hours around 4.00 a.m on the receipt of information about the pres-



ence of terrorists in one of the houses in Village Shiekhpora, Vailoo area of Kokernag.”

“During the search operation, as the presence of terrorists got ascertained they were given an opportunity to surrender, however they fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party which was retali-

ated leading to an encounter”.

The police spokesman said, “the joint teams also rescued all the civilians trapped in the gunfire and halted the operation for the time to ensure safety and safe evacuation of people from the area of gunfight”.

After rescuing all the civilians from the area, the operation was resumed and all the

terrorists were eliminated in the ensuing encounter.

According to a police spokesman the slain terrorists have been identified as Ilyas Ahmad Dar alias Sameer resident of Danwathpora Kokernag, Ubaid Shafi alias Abdullah resident of Batamaloo Srinagar and Aqib Ahmad Lone alias Sahil resident of Khandaypora Kulgam.

According to police records, “terrorist Ubaid Shafi was part of the terrorist group involved in carrying out the terrorist attack at Aaribagh area of Nowgam Srinagar on 01/04/2021 in which one Constable Rameez Ahmad attained martyrdom”.

Arms & ammunition including 01 AK-47 rifle, 02 pistols and incriminating materials have also been recovered from the site of encounter.

Bengal BJP MLAs to get Central security cover

PNS ■ KOLKATA

With the post-poll situation continuing to simmer in Bengal the Centre has decided to provide security cover to all the 77 the BJP MLAs of the State. The security cover will be provided by the jawans of the Central Industrial Security Force and Central Reserve Police Force, sources said.

The decision to provide central security cover to the BJP MLAs comes in the backdrop of preliminary report submitted by a team of Union Home Ministry officials, visiting Bengal to inquire into the reports of post poll violence. Similar reports have been obtained from the other central agencies reporting on Bengal, sources said adding most of the Legislators would be provided, ‘X’ ‘Y’ and ‘Z’ category security.

According to sources the ‘X’ category security would be pro-

vided to 61 MLAs while the remaining others would be covered by ‘Y’ category security. Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikari and former Railway Minister Mukul Roy who are already under central security covered would continue to get ‘Z’ category security, sources said.

When asked to comment on the decision taken by the Central Government a Bengal Minister said, “there is always a provision to provide security to the MLAs but if they decide to protect their own MLAs what can we say ... that is their decision ... but before taking such decisions they should remember that law and order is a State subject.”

Incidentally Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had opted for a security cover provided by the Railway Protection Force when she first assumed power in Bengal in 2011.

Covid claims 79 more lives in Kerala

KOCHI: It turned out to be a black Tuesday in Kerala as the State saw the passing away of two eminent persons, KR Gowry (iconic Communist leader) and Madambu Kunjikuttan, novelist, play right and actor of repute. The day culminated with the department of health confirming the death of 79 persons due to Covid-19. This is the highest number of persons to die in a single day since the pandemic was reported in the State in late January 2020.

According to the Department of Health, 37, 290 persons were diagnosed with Covid-19 during the 12 hours ending 6 pm Tuesday. This took the Test Positivity Ratio to 26.77. There were 4,23, 957 patients undergoing treatment for Covid-19 in various hospitals across the State which has been under lock down since Saturday last.

The unabated increase in the number of health workers getting afflicted with Covid continued on Tuesday. The State recorded 143 new health workers who were contracted with the pandemic. As per the daily releases issued by the Health Department, more than 100 health workers are getting afflicted with the pandemic.

The Kerala Government Medical Officers Association in a letter to the Chief Minister on Monday had expressed concern over the ever increasing number of health workers as this could lead to severe human resources shortage in the Covid treatment hospitals. **PNS**

NHRC asks Centre, States to ‘get their act together’ in Covid-19 response

New Delhi: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Tuesday urged Centre and States for universal coverage and non-discriminatory pricing of Covid vaccines. The NHRC also said that if feasible vaccination can be made free.

The Commission also asked Governments to put their acts together in order to meet the immediacy of response by setting up universally functional Covid-19 dashboards for real time information in public domain on the availability of hospital beds, oxygen, critical care medicines and devices. It has also asked for setting up 24X7 functional toll-free help lines and fixing the prices of Covid treatment resources.

“There should be universal coverage and non-discriminatory pricing of Covid vaccines in all health facilities of the country, and if feasible, vaccination should be made free for everyone irrespective of private or public health establishment along with adequate testing facilities for Covid-19 and timely reports,” said NHRC in its communication to Centre and States.

The Commission reiterated the Centre and States to adhere to its seven page advisory issued on May 4 regarding availability of hospital infrastructure including oxygen and medicines, real time information through dashboards, affordability, accessibility and pricing of treatments etc. The Human Rights Commission also urged the Centre and States on improved management of crematoriums and burial grounds, usage of electric crematorium and App based interventions to be promoted.

“The protection of Rights of Covid warriors engaged should be ensured and the body of a deceased Covid patient should be treated with dignity and handed over to the family ensuring all Covid protocols,” said the NHRC. **PNS**

Maha dismisses Vaze from service

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Invoking Article 311(2) (B) of the Constitution of India, the Maharashtra Government has dismissed the suspended controversial police officer Sachin Vaze, who is the prime accused in the twin cases of explosive-laden SUV near industrialist Mukesh Ambani’s residence and subsequent alleged murder of businessman Mansukh Hiran, from the service.

Mumbai Police Commissioner Hemant Nagrale on Tuesday issued the order dismissing Vaze. “The order was issued today under the provisions of Section 311 (2) (B) of Constitution of India by the Commissioner of Police, Greater

Mumbai,” the Mumbai police said in a statement issued on Tuesday.

Forty-nine-year Vaze is currently in judicial custody in connection with the twin sensational cases.

Vaze was an Assistant Police Inspector of the Mumbai Police attached to the Crime Intelligence Unit of the Crime Branch-CID.

However, in the wake of the SUV planting case, he was transferred to the Special Branch and then attached to the Citizen Facilitation Centre.

Vaze, who was the first accused to have been arrested by the NIA on March 13 five days after it registered an FIR in the explosive-laden SUV recovery case, was earlier suspended from the service by the

Maharashtra Government on the same day.

Vaze, who was arrested on March 13 in connection with the gelatine sticks laden Scorpion recovery case, was earlier booked under sections 120 (B) (criminal conspiracy) 286 (negligent conduct with respect to explosive substance), 465 (forgery) 473 (making or possessing counterfeit seal) and 506 -2 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and 4 (a)(b)(i) of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908.

Vaze was subsequently booked under sections 16 (Punishment for Terror act) and 18 (Punishment for conspiracy etc) of the stringent Unlawful Activities Prevention Act

One more doctor dies from Covid at AMU medical college

Aligarh (UP): Another senior doctor at AMU’s medical college died from coronavirus on Tuesday, taking the number of deaths from Covid and Covid-like symptoms among serving and retired faculty members of the university to at least 35, an official said.

Prof Shoaib Zaheer (56) is the second senior faculty member from the Department of Medicine at Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), who has died from the infection. Last week, the head of department, Prof Shadaab Khan, too had succumbed to it. He was Professor Zaheer’s brother-in-law.

Professor Zaheer has died just days after AMU Vice-Chancellor Tariq Mansoor shot off a letter to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), urging it to study if a particular coronavirus variant is circulating around the campus.



A city street wears a deserted look during complete lockdown imposed by authorities amid a surge in coronavirus cases across the country, in Amravati, Maharashtra on Tuesday

PTI

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Two to tango

Just like the Governments, the citizens are also responsible for the spurt in COVID-19 cases

American TV personality Wally Amos put it succinctly: "There are two reasons why people fail. One is irresponsibility. The second is fear." The Governments at the Centre and in the States take a fair share of blame for the inadequacies in medical infrastructure, resource management and planning even though the second COVID-19 surge continues unabated. But what about the citizens of the country? They are equal shareholders in the system and must equally share the blame for the behaviour that crosses all borders of civic responsibility. The visuals of a big crowd attending the funeral of a Muslim cleric in Uttar Pradesh's Badaun went viral on Monday. The cleric had died on Sunday and his body was kept in a local mosque for public viewing. Within hours, people began to converge near the mosque. It became an unmanageable crowd in no time, the people — most of them maskless — throwing all caution to the winds. There was no question of maintaining social distancing. There was no question of anyone asking them to at least wear masks. In fact, there was no mechanism available to either control the crowd or enforce safety guidelines. What does this show apart from the blatant neglect of the anti-COVID guidelines in public places? It is impossible to know how many among them were COVID positive or were recovering/had recovered or might contract



the virus due to transmission in a fortnight from now. The crowd has the potential to turn into a super-spreader by the end of May.

That the massing of people took the administration by surprise is one half of the story. The death of a prominent cleric should have automatically alerted the police department and the office of the district magistrate. The administration will now initiate action, file FIRs and maybe even order a probe. But the horse has bolted. If the officials had the latest contact tracing measures available, they would know how mammoth a task it is to contain the infection transmission. The other half of the story is the sad, thoughtless and irrational actions of the people who appear willing to put themselves and families at risk. Should we blame religious orthodoxy or obscurantism or retrograde beliefs for such irrational behaviour? No. Take the liquor shops, for instance. One will find long queues outside liquor vendors than at COVID hospitals, oxygen refill plants or vaccination centres. Marriages and other functions continue to take place with far more people in attendance than the permitted limit of 50. The families and friends of COVID patients continue to throng hospitals and often crowd the ICUs where their kin are admitted. Even now, very few people wear double masks and face shields are a rarity. It takes two hands to clap and if the people refuse to let common sense guide their actions, it may be the case of — to cannibalise a Marquez title — a chronicle of an unfolding, avoidable tragedy.

PICTALK



Smoke rises from a building after an Israeli airstrike in Gaza City

PTI

Stand united

It's time for the political class to stop bickering and fight against our common enemy

At a time when the nation is besieged with an unprecedented human tragedy, India's political parties have miserably failed to rise to the occasion. The daily war of words raging among headline-grabbers of our political class has given the impression that they are only bothered about consolidating their vote bank. Take the example of West Bengal. Both Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and the BJP leadership have been blaming each other for the Corona bomb that has pulverised the State's health system and seen an alarming positivity rate. But the fact remains that during the Assembly election campaigning, both sides brazenly flouted the COVID protocols and held massive road shows and rallies with thousands of unmasked people in attendance. It was the same scene in Uttar Pradesh, where a massive mobilisation took place during the panchayat elections. Once again, our political class showed a blatant disregard for the health risks that such campaigning posed for the common man. It's not only a violation of the COVID norms, but the bigger issue is the absence of even a symbolic concern for coming together to providing succour to the masses by way of health infrastructure, oxygen and life-saving drugs.

Be it at the State level or the Centre, the political class is bitterly divided even as India's hapless people are watching it with despair. The situation is so pathetic that even within the NDA, the alliance partners are blaming each other for the half-hearted measures being taken to control the pandemic. Anyone following the Bihar developments and noticing the attacks and counter-attacks by the JD(U) and BJP leaders, will feel nothing but shock. It's time Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the initiative and invited the senior leaders of all political parties to keep aside their differences and stay united in the fight against the pandemic. The PM should also ensure that all senior leaders, including the MPs and MLAs, are accessible to their constituents at all hours. It's unfortunate that many of them have remained locked inside their bungalows and flats in Delhi while, back home, those who voted them to power are running helter-skelter for a hospital bed or oxygen cylinders. At a time when profiteers and black marketeers are thriving on misery, the political class should mobilise the people to wage a war on such unscrupulous elements. Much can be done to help the people if only our political leaders show a collective resolve.



Francophobic in 'land of the pure'

Incited by an ultra-religious outfit, Pakistan is protesting France's views on the freedom of speech and radical Islam



BHOPINDER SINGH

The difference in the governance impulses and compulsions between the Fifth Republic, ie France, and the ostensible "land of the pure", ie Pakistan, could not be more glaring. Like all nations who have a mixed bag of heroes and villains to define its preferred narrative — France chose intellectual liberals likes Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau, whereas Pakistan has seemingly come under the irrefutable grip of illiberal like Mumtaz Qadri, Saad Hussain Rizvi and the likes of Baitullah Mehsuds. Genealogically also, La France espoused *Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite* (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity) whereas Pakistan invoked *Iman, Ittihad, Nazam* (Faith, Unity, Discipline), and the religiosity in the latter has only increased over time. It was only a matter of time before the sovereign sensibilities clashed directly, as they recently did, with the ensuing protest by the ultra-religious Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) which is protesting France's views on the freedom of speech, radical Islam and blasphemy and, therefore, seeking the expulsion of the French ambassador.

The history of the two unlike nations had been surprisingly robust, despite their foundational and fundamental anchorages though, in recent times, the crevices have sharply widened. The Pakistan Air Force had been France's largest aerospace customer, having got Mirage fighter aircraft, Exocet missiles, reconnaissance and civil aircraft, whereas the Pakistani Navy had ordered the Daphne-class and Agosta-class submarines — as also agreements to transfer civilian nuclear technology. But the recent strategic-bind in the Indo-French realm (including the much-banded Rafale fighters) has led to a definitive shift in the French preferences. But it did not go unnoticed across the restive Line of Control (LoC), especially since France also took a particularly hard line on terror (owing to its own unrest with Islamist extremism and violence)



and in openly siding with India at multilateral forums.

Beyond the visible optics, France was the only western power to support India after the latter conducted the nuclear tests in 1998 and was instrumental in facilitating India's entry into the non-proliferation regimes of Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), Wassenaar Arrangement and the Australia Group. In reciprocal bonhomie, Delhi took an unusually assertive stand to condemn Turkish President Recep Erdogan's (Pakistan's closest ally along with China) diatribe against French President Emmanuel Macron, after the French leader had openly called out "Islamist separatism" in the case of beheading a French school teacher. India's Ministry of External Affairs explicitly stated: "We strongly deplore the personal attacks in unacceptable language on President Emmanuel Macron in violation of the most basic standards of international discourse."

Meanwhile, Pakistan's patented double standards on religious extremism, dangerous dalliances and co-option of the clerical lot allowed for the



DESPITE IMRAN'S POSTURED MODERATION AND CLAIMS OF PROGRESSIVE OUTLOOK, HE HAD WILLINGLY DROPPED RENOWNED PRINCETON ECONOMIST ATIF MIAN FROM HIS ECONOMIC ADVISORY COUNCIL UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE LIKES OF THE TLP, OWING TO ATIF'S BELONGING TO THE AHMADIYYA FAITH

dangerous drift towards morphing the French beheading incident, into an uncompromisable *ummah* issue, triggering calls for the boycott of French products and expelling the French ambassador from Pakistan. Continuing to play to the electoral gallery simultaneously, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan kept reiterating and reminding that no one had done more than him in internationalising the issue of blasphemy — this whilst dealing with a supposedly "terrorist" organisation with a violent position and dubious track record on "blasphemy" in Pakistan. Despite Imran's postured moderation and claims of progressive outlook, he had willingly dropped renowned Princeton economist Atif Mian from his Economic Advisory Council under pressure from the likes of the TLP, owing to Atif's belonging to the Ahmadiyya faith.

France is moving in an exact opposite direction with counter-accusations of weaponising its famed policy of segregating the State and religion, a secular ideology known as Laicite. A new law called "Strengthening Respect for Republican Principles" has been introduced in the wake of

recurring Islamist violence to "free Islam in France from foreign influences"! Many accuse the same for right-wing populism with an electoral intent that will further the divide, suspicion and marginalisation of the minority community and the French State. The fact is that the right-wing parties led by Le Pen have gained enough traction to threaten Macron and, therefore, his competitive 'right-wing' stand have more to do with winning the next elections as opposed to concerns on dealing with extremism or personal conviction in free speech. It is this pandering, invocation and inflaming of the basest instinct of the masses that vitiates the popular emotions towards revisionism and "othering", be it in Paris or in Islamabad. That the intrinsically liberal French sensibilities will militate culturally with the conservative moorings of a society like Pakistan is a given, yet it need not spiral to the violent extent that it has, only if the political leaderships didn't play emotions selectively, in both countries.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

IRRATIONAL PRICING OF ANTI-COVID VACCINES

Sir — A frustrated Centre has justified the differential COVID vaccine pricing, telling the Supreme Court that the three-slab "liberalised, market-driven" rates for the Centre, States and private hospitals will incentivise demand, lead to higher production, competition and attract overseas investors.

In my view, however, the claim is without any evidence or rationale. Why is the Centre procuring the vaccines at one rate and the States have to buy the same vaccines for double the price or more? The Centre submitted in the Supreme Court that judicial intervention on the issue may have serious consequences. "Any overzealous, though well-meaning, judicial intervention may lead to unforeseen and unintended consequences in the absence of any expert advice," the Centre told the top court, adding that in such a "grave and unprecedented" crisis, the "wisdom of the Executive should be trusted". The Serum Institute of India, which is producing Covishield, is selling it to the Centre for ₹150 a shot. But the State Governments are paying ₹300 a shot, and private hospitals have to shell out ₹600 per vaccine. Bharat Biotech, which is also selling each shot of Covaxin to the Centre for ₹150, is charging the States ₹400 a dose while the private hospitals have to cough up ₹1,200 for each dose. With this, the Centre has not been able to justify the vaccine pricing.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

A DISTANT DREAM

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Hope floats" (May 11). There is no doubt that the regional parties have performed well in the latest Assembly elections. At the same time, the BJP hasn't ceded any political space to its opponents. Rather, it is the demolition of the remaining vestiges of the Congress' ability to present itself as a viable alternative to the BJP. The BJP's defeat in West Bengal seems spectacular because of the hype its leadership had created over its poll prospects. Minus the hype, the party's performance is alright. Over the last five years, its vote share has climbed from 10 per cent to 38 per cent; it has replaced the Congress and the Left as

Time gap between the shots



Amid the non-availability of slots and long queues for getting vaccinated, there exists some confusion over the duration before the second shot of Covishield. When this particular vaccine was first administered, the interval between the first and second doses was 28 days. In March, the Union Government sent revised guidelines that, based on experts' recommendation, the gap be increased from 28-42 days to 42-56 days. All States were advised to follow the new schedule.

Surprisingly, the first-dose certificate continued mentioning that the second dose was due after 28 days; the Aarogya Setu app mentions the interval between 28-56 days and

the FAQs on the CoWin website claim the recommended interval is 28-56 days but 42-56 days' gap gives enhanced protection, with the rider that people can opt for their choice as per their convenience. As a result of this confusion, only those in the age group of 45 and above who have waited 42 days are being allowed to take their second shot in Telangana. The others are being made to wait until 42 days but the special vaccination drive would already be over by May 12. Therefore, those who took their vaccine on or after May 1 would have to wait beyond 56 days of their having taken the injection.

The Government of India needs to address this confusion and end it before it spreads to other States and before the 18-44 age group starts getting its first dose of vaccination in right earnest. It is still a matter of conjecture as to why the Government, while accepting the experts' advice, tampered with the minimum interval of 28 days. Instead, it could have simply increased the maximum interval to 56 days as per the experts' suggestions.

N Nagarajan | Secunderabad

the principal Opposition party and set the political agenda for the State.

In Kerala, too, the BJP has changed the societal discourse, forcing the CPI(M) to repent its stand on women entering the Sabarimala shrine and emboldening a candidate in one constituency to declare that he did not want Muslims to vote for him. The party has also wrested Puducherry from the Congress. In this context, it would be premature to speak about the possibilities in 2024. Importantly, the third front experiments in the past have resulted in chaos and disasters. The consensus on leadership is a mirage and it instantly collides with the Congress' ambition of being the primary Opposition force.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

ENSURE A DECENT BURIAL AT LEAST

Sir — The ongoing pandemic has exposed to the world the extent of India's poor sys-

tems, be it healthcare or cremation grounds. The people have already paid a heavy price for the Government's poor preparedness to tackle the second wave. But even if the Government can't provide a decent life to its citizens, a decent cremation is not too much to expect or ask for.

For the Government, there is no dearth of funds for wrong priorities such as building statues, the Prime Minister's residence and a new Parliament building. But there's no money to be seen for free universal vaccination programme. India currently holds a whopping forex of \$580 billion but its citizens are dying on the streets for want of hospital beds, oxygen or medicine.

Girish R Edathitta | Kerala

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

We should not be dependent on just one or two companies. I suggest the Centre should collect the formula and give it to firms who can produce vaccines.



Delhi Chief Minister — Arvind Kejriwal



From May 17, pubs, bars and restaurants in England will be permitted to open indoors. But this does not mean we should throw caution to the wind. We must remain vigilant.

UK Prime Minister — Boris Johnson

We have all been reading about the COVID crisis in India. They have been hit with 3,00,000 new cases a day.



Hollywood star — Drew Barrymore

Our fast bowling unit is a great package where everyone works really hard while also understanding the other counterparts really well.

Indian pacer — Mohammed Shami

This is not the time for anyone to violate the guidelines. Be it police or people, both must show some rationality in approach.



Karnataka Home Minister — Basavaraj Bommai

FIRST COLUMN

MANAGING THE WORLD ORDER AMID COVID-19

The India-EU summit has aimed to address contiguity issues among the member nations



SUDHIR HINDWAN

Amid the Coronavirus pandemic, the recent virtual summit between India and the European Union (EU) has provided a huge platform for negotiations in trade, economic partnership and issues related to investment protection, bringing about contiguity among member countries. There are also subtle efforts to establish joint collaborations in Asia, Pacific and African regions. This certainly exhibits high level insight and understanding of both sides. It also points to the vision leaders need to acclimatise to a changed world order necessitated by the current Covid-19 pandemic. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, EU President Ursula Von Der Leyen and President of European Council Charles Michel displayed foresight for creating channels of negotiations for trade and global security and a fresh pathway towards inclusive democratisation of world politics. The summit spells out a prototype for the world community handling bilateral and multi-lateral ties through cooperation rather than confrontation. The pandemic has reinforced the need for the member countries to trust one another and bury their differences. The key issue is to bring as many countries to the negotiating table as possible for, in the context of tackling the pandemic, relaxing vaccines related Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (Trips) to help save maximum lives. The increasing support and agree-



ment with regard to limiting climate change issues and opening up gateways for renewable energy and development in technological knowhow along with channelling the sources of power generation and creating a mechanism to withstand any sudden threat posed by China's BRI (Belt and Road Initiatives) augur well for peace and prosperity of all member countries. The 2019 Japan EU deal was an effort in this direction. India and the EU have shared a positive relationship, with their trade share having crossed a decent landmark during last five years, much more than expected. During the last few years, there have been closer ties with Germany, Italy and The Netherlands, them being the biggest importers from India while Germany, France and Belgium being the largest exporters of goods.

The recent efforts at the summit would further boost and cement their ties and create a genuine environment for stabilizing economic growth (along with ensuring free flow of goods and services) strategic security, prosperity, stability and combating sudden challenges arising due to climate change. Further, help to India from EU's Civil Protection System during the second surge of Covid-19 will open avenues for closer integration.


Foreign relations operate with the help of efficient diplomatic system and diplomacy is all about right gestures and cooperation and coordination at the time of crisis. The Prime Ministers of Belgium and Spain and the French President appreciating India's efforts to combat the pandemic can only lead to further cooperation. There is, however, no lack of unanimity with regard to nuclear energy, sustainable development and environmental issues. Further negotiations may lead to creation of a strategic mechanism to provide a shield against terrorism, international crime, drug dealing, smuggling and cyber threat unleashed by the non-state actors. This may also accelerate maritime friendly ties and bolster up security around Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific areas which have lately become areas of concern.

These are changing times and many changes have occurred in international relations recently. The India-EU summit outcome endorses the fact that sharing a common strategic vision and a combined approach to ensure mutual economic prosperity through a multi-layered and multi-lateral strategy is going to dominate the world order in the coming days. What is required is to develop a fresh perspective for a more matured reliance on international cooperation between nations to enunciate a new strategy of retaliation, threatening a severe response to any attempt of destabilising the order. There are areas where strong relations can generate development funds for integrated education, medicine, science, technology and biotechnology among various nations across the globe.

(The author is a Professor and an expert on strategic affairs. The views expressed are personal)

Unmasking the face of political violence in West Bengal

The Government's failure to address the pre- and post-poll violence shows that there is no deviation from the established pattern



AVNI SABLOK

The author is Senior Researcher with the Public Policy Research Centre (PPRC), New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.

365 politically motivated murders. That tradition has grown from strength to strength since, irrespective of the party in power. Not long ago, the Left Front government in West Bengal chose to remain silent about instances of political violence which ultimately led to its downfall in the State Assembly elections. With the popular support of the Left Front waning in West Bengal, it did not hesitate to use police force to suppress any form of resistance. As a result, criminalization and politicization became the order of the day. Consequently, the TMC came to power by defeating the Left which ruled the state for the longest period of time. However, today, the TMC and its party workers seem to be emulating the Left approach by ignoring the recent post-poll violence.

As per facts and figures this is not the first time that the



bal confrontations were reported between TMC karyakartas and BJP leaders including party president JP Nadda and general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya. In post-election phase, and more recently, the convoy of the minister of state for external affairs, V Murleedharan, was attacked in West Midnapore. The minister has blamed the TMC workers for joining the BJP. Even prior to the elections, ver-

tures testify to the criminalisation of the public domain under the patronage of the state and partisan police force in the state of West Bengal. The criminalization of politics, which has seeped in West Bengal because of the prolonged political violence, has diminished the scope of dissent and differences. The foundation of democracy is built on voice of dissent and respecting differences of views and opinions, irrespective of ideologies.

A corollary to this principle is the fact that expression of dissent and differences is both a right and duty. While everyone enjoys the right to dissent and expression of differences in a democracy, it also enjoins on the citizens a duty to ensure that any actions to exercise these rights are peaceful in nature. In contrast, if the voice of differences is

expressed through violent means, be it the party in power or in opposition, then it is the duty of the government in power to undertake all possible measures to prevent the violent acts so as to protect the very edifice of democracy.

Being the largest democracy in the world, it is also important that multiple perspectives and ideological moorings must be appreciated and accommodated. The onus also lies with the leadership, both at the central and state levels, to comprehend two basic aspects of democracy. First, democracy is a system of governance in which the supreme power is vested in the people and which is exercised by them directly or indirectly through free and fair elections held periodically. This means that any party can come to power or voted out through periodic elections. Second, it

is also a system where each one gets right to express his/her views and participates in all desired activities provided these are peaceful in nature. Implied, any form of expression of dissent cannot amount to violent public actions, including over election results perpetrated by the workers of the ruling party.

The failure of the Government to address the recent pre- and post-poll violence allegedly resorted to by the ruling party workers establishes that there is no deviation from the established pattern of [mis]governance in West Bengal. Considering that the state leadership has miserably failed to address the challenge of political violence so far, the willingness of the newly elected Mamata Banerjee Government to uphold the democratic space in the state appears to be bleak.

The renewable energy-land conflict

Designed in 1981, Agrovoltaics is a promising tool that helps a land patch to be used for both farming and power production using solar panels



PRABIR BANERJEE

Agrovoltaics (or Agrophotovoltaic), despite its recent resurgence, is not a new concept. Designed in 1981, Agrovoltaics is a sustainable technique where the same patch of land is used for both farming as well as production of electricity from solar panels. Conventionally, we believe that land can only be used for a single purpose; for instance, farmers would, ordinarily, have to choose between energy generation or farming but agrovoltaics maximizes land efficiency by co-developing solar and agriculture together on the same piece of land.

For a country like India, where agricultural products and practices dominate a major chunk of the national economy, innovative synergic models like agrovoltaics can be practiced to increase agricultural land productivity. In addition, it will also cater to the nation's target of making a big push for renewables through solar, expecting to increase its renewable energy capacity from 380 GW to 450 GW by 2030, about 60 per cent of India's total energy capacity.

How does Agrovoltaics work?
French scientists found that Agrovoltaic systems increase global land productivity from 35 to 73 percent. Likewise, German research revealed that overall efficiency was increased by 60 per cent.

For one year, the pilot project used 720 bi-facial solar modules covering one-third of a hectare, mounted high enough that crops received almost the same amount of sunlight as under natural growing conditions. The system costs as much as a small solar roof system while crop production is sufficiently high and can be profitably sold on the market.

Agrovoltaics system increases the efficiency of energy production as solar panels are inherently sensitive to temperature, they warm up faster. But the crops cultivated underneath the photovoltaic (PV) panels emit water through their natural process of transpiration, reducing the panels' temperature, thus, increasing their efficiency.

Similar efficiency gains are seen in cultivation, it is observed that cultivation under PV arrays provided greater temperature stability and more atmospheric moisture — effectively creating microclimates conducive for growth.

Agrovoltaics in India
Early experiments in India found that agrovoltaics can potentially increase the overall value of grape farms more than 15 times as compared to conventional farming while maintaining the same grape production.

If this dual use of land is implemented nationwide, it can make a significant impact by generating over 16,000 GWh of electricity, which has the potential of meeting the energy demands of more



FOR ONE YEAR, THE PILOT PROJECT USED 720 BI-FACIAL SOLAR MODULES COVERING ONE-THIRD OF A HECTARE, MOUNTED HIGH ENOUGH THAT CROPS RECEIVED ALMOST THE SAME AMOUNT OF SUNLIGHT AS UNDER NATURAL GROWING CONDITIONS. THE SYSTEM COSTS AS MUCH AS A SMALL SOLAR ROOF SYSTEM WHILE THE CROP PRODUCTION IS SUFFICIENTLY HIGH AND CAN BE PROFITABLY SOLD ON THE MARKET

(The author is the co-founder and Managing Member of the Balipara Foundation, an NGO. The views expressed are personal.)



than 15 million people.

Numerous small-scale experiments in agrovoltaics have mushroomed across the country, particularly in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, with some generating up to 3MW. These programs still require a full cost-benefit analysis and rigorous monitoring to understand the impact on crop growth, power generation — and the viability of feasibly scaling these programmes.

However, this also has a challenging side — As India pushes forward to achieve its renewable energy targets, the rights and concerns of small and marginalised farmers across India face a new threat.

Many cases of land acquisition and displacement are picking up pace in the country. According to recent reports from Assam, where the villagers from Amdanga village, who form a part of Mikir Bamuni Grant cluster of villages in Nagaon district, claim that a 'Green Energy Plant' is bulldozing the rights and claims of marginal farmers.

However, displacing vulnerable and marginal farmers with minimal compensation, in an

already climate-vulnerable region, will only reduce the rural capacity to deal with climate challenges all the while offering no guarantee that solar power will contribute to their resilience in the face of global risk.

Assam ranks among the five least climate-resilient States in India's Climate Vulnerability Assessment report, 2021, with rural poverty and marginal farming ranking among the top reasons for this vulnerability. A decarbonisation transition is needed, but only if it can equitably build climate resilience cross-sectionally from urban centers to rural, marginal farmers.

Policy framework for agrovoltaics

Year-wise national targets for scaling agrovoltaics in India must be defined, coupled with pilot projects to sensitise stakeholders.

The explicit mention of Agrovoltaics is necessary for any law, scheme, or policy when cultivable land is used with PV. An agrovoltaic system could be designated in the land use plan as a "special area for agrovoltaics".

A prerequisite of a minimum of 80 per cent of the total surface

to be available and used for agricultural purposes can be set in place to ensure that the farmer or landowner continues to receive the agricultural subsidy allocated to the area in which case statistically the area does not count as sealed. The improvement of livelihoods of the partnering farmers must be prioritised.

As a model, agrovoltaics reconciles the need to decarbonize India's energy production systems, while minimizing land conflicts, especially with small and marginal farmers at greater risk of eviction for solar expansion.

It can also be a tool to create sustainable rural electrification in viable landscapes and build solar micro-entrepreneurship among rural communities.

This, in turn, would augment their agricultural incomes with renewable energy incomes which they can package and sell to the government or distribution firms. It is an opportunity to explore routes to rural development that protect farmer incomes while creating entrepreneurship opportunities, build renewables into electrification and benefit people across all levels.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

SINCE INDIA IS HOME TO ONE OUT OF EVERY SIX PEOPLE GLOBALLY, ALLOWING THE UNCONTROLLABLE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS WILL BE DEVASTATING FOR EVERYONE.

— CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI



IN THIS FIGHT, THE CONDUCT OF THE TOPMOST CONGRESS LEADERS, INCLUDING RAHUL GANDHI, WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR DUPLICITY, PETTINESS.

— BJP PRESIDENT JP NADDA

Moody's cuts India's growth forecast to 9.3 %

RISKS OF LONGER-TERM ECO SCARRING

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Moody's Investors Service on Tuesday slashed India's growth forecast for the current financial year to 9.3 per cent saying that the second wave of coronavirus infections hampers economic recovery and increases risk of longer-term scarring.

Moody's, which has a 'Baa3' rating on India with a negative outlook,said obstacles to economic growth, high debt and weak financial system constrain sovereign credit profile.

The US-based rating agency had in February forecast a 13.7 per cent economic growth for the current fiscal (April 2021-March 2022). As per official estimates, the Indian economy contracted 8 per cent in the previous fiscal ended March 2021.

"India is experiencing a severe second wave of coronavirus infections which will slow the near-term economic recovery and could weigh on longer-term growth dynamics.



"The surge of the virus, which has been driven by a highly contagious variant, has put significant strain on India's healthcare system with hospitals overrun and medical supplies in short supply," Moody's said.

Stating that the second wave of coronavirus infections hampers economic recovery and increases risk of longer-term scarring, Moody's said the reimposition of lockdown measures will curb economic activity and could dampen market and consumer sentiment.

However, it does not expect the impact to be as severe as during the first wave. Unlike the first wave where lockdowns were applied nationwide for several months, the second wave 'micro-containment zone' measures are more localised, targeted and will likely be of shorter duration. Businesses and consumers have also grown more accustomed to operating under pan-

demic conditions.

"As of now, we expect the negative impact on economic output to be limited to the April-June quarter, followed by a strong rebound in the second half of the year.

"As a result of the negative impact of the second wave, we have

revised our real, inflation-adjusted GDP growth forecast down to

9.3 per cent from 13.7 per cent for fiscal 2021 and to 7.9 per cent from 6.2 per cent in fiscal 2022," Moody's said.

Over the longer term, Moody's expects growth to be around 6 per cent.

"The credit profile of India is increasingly constrained by obstacles to economic growth, a high debt burden and weak financial system.

Policymaking institutions have struggled to tackle and contain these risks, exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic," it added.

Ambitious target of \$400 bn exports can be achieved this year: Goyal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A sharp rise in exports in April is giving a hope that the ambitious target of USD 400 billion merchandise shipments can be achieved this year, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday. He also said that the Department of Commerce has taken up several issues of exporters with the Ministry of Finance for their early resolution, like RoDTEP (remission of duties and taxes on export products), MEIS (merchandise export from India scheme), and inverted duty structure.

The minister added that there is a large potential for enhancing exports in several sectors like pharmaceuticals, engineering, auto-component, fisheries and agro-products.

The minister was addressing a meeting of export promotion councils. India's merchandise exports in April jumped by 197 per cent to USD 30.21 billion as against USD 10.17 billion in April 2020 and USD 26.04 billion in April 2019. "Performance of exports in April 2021 and 2020-21 gives a hope that an ambitious target of USD 400 billion merchandise exports can be achieved this year," the minister said.



Regarding certain issues being raised by exporters, Goyal said that they should approach the Covid helpdesk of the department for resolving the problems emanating due to Covid-related measures.

Rates for RoDTEP have not yet been announced by the finance ministry even as the scheme would have to be implemented from January.

Exporting community has time and again urged the government regarding the rates as it would help them in factoring in those rates while negotiating prices of goods with international buyers.

The reimbursement of taxes such as duty on power charges, VAT on fuel in trans- portation, farm sector, captive power generation, mandi tax, stamp duty and central excise duty on fuel used in transportation would make Indian products competitive in the global markets.

Inflows into equity mutual funds decline in April amid second Covid wave

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Equity mutual funds witnessed a net inflow of ₹3,437 crore in April, making it the second consecutive monthly infusion but lower than the amount recorded in March amid the second Covid wave.

The quantum is much lower than the inflow of ₹9,115 crore recorded in March, according to data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India released on Tuesday.

Equity schemes had consistently witnessed outflow for eight straight months from July 2020 to February 2021.

"The net flows into equity funds have continued, which is very encouraging. Flows slowed down a bit compared to

March largely because of the disruption caused by the second wave of the pandemic," G Pradeepkumar, CEO of Union AMC, said.

He also said the flow is expected to pick up pace once the pandemic is brought under control through increased levels of vaccination and other measures.

Making a similar statement, Arun Kumar, Head of Research at FundsIndia, said the inflow trend remains positive while the recent spike in covid cases is a concern and we need to monitor the impact on investor sentiment and behaviour in the near term.

"With the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic putting pressure on citizens to hold a higher emergency cor-

pus for medical needs, investor interest is a tad down and can be expected to recover in the waning phase of this health scare," Gopal Kavalireddi, Head of Research at FYERS, said.

Apart from equities, investors infused over ₹1 lakh crore in debt mutual funds in April after withdrawing ₹ 52,528 crore in March, on the back of strong inflows into liquid, money market and overnight segments.

Overall, the mutual fund industry witnessed an inflow of ₹ 92,906 crore across all segments during the period under review compared to an outflow of ₹29,745 crore in March.

As per the data, inflow into equity and equity-linked open ended schemes was at ₹3,437.37 crore in April.

Jewellery industry heading for 2nd consecutive sales washout on Akshaya Tritiya

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The gems and jewellery industry is staring at a sales washout on Akshaya Tritiya for the second consecutive year as most of the States are under lockdowns due to the raging second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic which has led to negative consumer sentiment, say industry leaders.

Akshaya Tritiya, considered as an auspicious day for buying gold and jewellery, falls on May 14 this year. I

ndia is the worst-hit among all nations with the second wave of the pandemic, which has been killing more than 3,500 daily and infect-

ing close to 4 lakhs daily for weeks. The massive caseload has nearly paralysed the medical infrastructure.

"The second wave of the pandemic is turning out to be much worse than last year with huge loss of life across the country. This has created an overall negative consumer sentiment. With almost 90 per cent of the states under lockdowns to curb the infections, retail jewellery stores are closed and no delivery is allowed. So, we are expecting a near washout of this Akshaya Tritiya as well," All-India Gems & Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC) chairman Ashish Pethe told PTI.

NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	14789.70	14900.00	14771.40	148570.75	-91.60
COALINDIA	146.45	156.75	145.15	155.65	8.60
NTPC	108.00	113.40	106.70	112.95	5.25
IOC	98.60	104.40	97.80	103.50	4.35
ONGC	112.55	118.70	110.75	118.00	4.10
POWER	449.60	461.00	446.90	462.45	8.75
POWERGRID	220.00	225.20	218.40	222.35	3.40
SUNPHARMA	698.50	721.85	696.20	708.00	9.80
UPL	67.30	68.845	66.790	68.25	8.65
TATASTEEL	1190.00	1246.00	1176.00	1230.00	13.65
TATACONSUM	62.00	64.90	61.60	64.20	7.05
EICHERMOT	2410.00	2477.90	2410.50	2472.55	25.70
ULTRACEMCO	639.00	661.95	631.00	646.95	62.40
SHREECEM	2720.00	2758.00	2674.20	2749.55	186.60
SRIN	356.85	364.40	354.75	361.10	2.40
NESTLEIND	16749.00	16949.00	16710.35	16860.95	73.65
RELIANCE	1915.00	1938.55	1901.00	1933.90	7.70
BAJAJ-AUTO	3860.00	3894.70	3811.25	3882.00	13.35
GRASIM	142.50	146.95	142.50	144.90	4.95
INDUSINDBK	923.95	957.00	922.00	947.65	2.25
BRITANNIA	3413.80	3434.70	3396.05	3421.00	7.20
ASIANPAINT	2533.00	2562.00	2521.30	2561.70	4.75
HEROMOTOCO	283.50	284.65	280.10	283.90	3.50
TATAMOTORS	309.55	320.75	308.10	314.45	-0.40
MARUTI	6980.15	6749.00	6660.25	6740.00	-24.00
SBILEE	99.80	101.50	99.50	100.10	-4.00
ADANIPORTS	751.00	789.70	730.75	761.65	-3.80
INFY	1336.90	1341.00	1325.10	1332.05	-7.50
DRREDDY	5325.00	5349.95	5271.30	5291.30	-36.25
ITC	203.90	206.50	203.75	204.10	-1.45
HCLTECH	908.50	912.45	905.10	907.45	-6.55
WIPRO	517.95	523.30	514.05	521.75	-4.20
TCS	3120.00	3128.90	3091.15	3120.00	-25.50
ITI	138.00	139.10	137.15	138.00	-12.00
ICICIBANK	66.00	612.90	603.25	607.95	-5.30
M&M	770.00	779.70	766.20	773.50	-6.95
BHARTIARTL	565.50	574.85	564.05	567.30	-5.25
HINDUNILVR	242.50	2426.00	2394.25	2409.50	-23.40
CIPLA	889.95	905.95	888.20	891.40	-8.85
TECHM	994.00	986.95	975.00	980.00	-10.50
AXISBANK	704.80	713.70	703.00	706.95	-8.30
HDFCBANK	1396.00	1424.00	1390.55	1425.55	-17.30
TITAN	1439.10	1457.95	1432.00	1436.40	-18.75
HDFCLIFE	678.00	681.50	669.90	671.00	-9.05
BAJFINANCE	5411.25	5458.10	5390.00	5423.00	-74.50
BAJAPINSV	11194.00	11310.65	11139.15	11177.30	-154.70
DIVISLAB	4120.10	4171.20	4059.10	4073.00	-66.30
HDFC	2489.35	2502.00	2447.60	2460.00	-71.35
KOTAKBANK	1776.60	1794.40	1753.25	1755.65	-53.70
HINDALCO	414.85	420.60	408.85	413.00	-12.75
JSWSTEEL	741.00	754.80	730.55	733.00	-25.65

NIFTY NEXT 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	36005.25	36310.25	35821.15	36034.40	73.25
GAIL	153.00	163.50	152.20	162.20	7.65
HINDPETRO	254.00	267.00	252.20	265.00	10.00
SIEMENS	1864.20	1963.90	1864.20	1948.95	65.95
ADANITRANS	1166.75	1216.00	1145.10	1200.00	36.45
ICICIPRULI	553.00	574.50	552.00	572.00	15.70
BOSCHLTD	13789.00	14388.45	13740.00	14428.95	29.75
HAVELLS	998.80	1032.00	990.00	1027.90	32.45
PETRONET	241.20	246.50	240.50	245.95	4.75
MARICO	471.30	487.40	465.00	479.95	9.20
JUBLFOOD	2749.90	2874.40	2740.60	2817.00	52.20
IGL	516.00	529.70	511.65	525.95	9.35
BERGEPAINT	720.00	737.75	715.15	735.35	12.20
PIDILITIND	1840.00	1882.80	1830.15	1873.60	26.75
CADILAC	626.65	633.00	622.60	631.30	7.30
AMBUJACEM	307.50	314.90	306.10	314.75	3.40
ACC	1870.00	1920.00	1865.25	1904.50	18.80
MCDOWELL-N	548.50	557.00	546.00	556.00	4.45
GODREJCP	708.85	717.65	700.00	715.00	5.75
BIOCEN	383.55	391.80	382.35	387.20	2.70
ABBOTINDIA	16108.95	16250.00	15910.60	16200.05	91.10
COLPAL	1517.80	1536.00	1510.40	1527.30	8.55
DABUR	522.75	526.80	520.40	525.50	2.75
YESBANK	13.10	13.40	13.00	13.15	0.05
PGHH	13700.00	13875.50	13627.85	13669.00	48.95
UBL	1204.55	1220.45	1194.85	1211.35	3.75
MRF	7791.40	7898.95	7766.35	7849.00	126.95
ALKEM	3031.40	3075.00	2997.20	3035.00	3.75
INDUSTOWER	257.90	263.70	255.00	256.95	-0.15
DMART	2850.00	2884.60	2825.00	2849.00	-3.45
HDFCAML	2794.60	2820.20	2770.10	2791.05	-3.55
BAJAJHLNG	3515.00	3557.00	3467.60	3520.00	-4.45
INDIGO	1670.00	1712.60	1664.65	1675.20	-2.50
ADANIANT	1292.10	1326.00	1284.00	1300.00	-4.10
DLF	263.95	271.70	262.00	265.00	-1.10
ICICIGI	1493.50	1513.00	1470.00	1486.45	-10.95
SBICARD	975.00	983.85	965.00	970.00	-7.20
PNB	34.85	35.35	33.75	35.30	-0.30
PEL	1700.00	1724.95	1685.00	1692.00	-15.00
MOTHERSUNI	233.00	240.40	230.65	232.40	-2.30
VEDL	288.20	295.75	282.20	289.45	-4.40
BANDHANBNK	289.00	294.80	286.15	291.90	-4.65
TORNTPHARM	2762.80	2773.00	2708.00	2715.55	-50.85
LUPIN	1219.90	1246.80	1193.00	1200.00	-22.55
APOLLOHOSP	3315.00	3315.00	3245.25	3361.00	-62.70
AUROPHARMA	1041.95	1063.90	1048.00	1028.00	-19.95
MUTHOOTFIN	1211.60	1218.55	1195.00	1197.85	-25.10
NMDC	195.00	199.80	188.20	195.65	-4.35
ADANIGREEN	1094.00	1094.00	1071.05	1076.10	-26.75
NAUKRI	4619.00	4619.00	4476.55	4482.00	-137.00

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP
BHEL	65.50	75.15	64.25	73.35
TATASTEEL	1187.00	1246.25	1176.60	1233.90
SBIN	356.50	366.25	354.65	364.45
SAIL	142.00	143.90	138.35	140.50
TATAMOTORS	309.95	320.70	308.25	315.65
COALINDIA	146.70	156.65	145.05	155.55
TATAPOWER	109.25	111.15	107.10	109.25
JSWSTEEL	740.00	755.60	730.90	734.20
ADANIPORTS	751.35	789.25	751.00	762.85
CADILAC	627.50	632.95	622.50	629.70
RELIANCE	1917.00	1938.65	1910.05	1933.70
HINDALCO	414.90	420.65	408.85	412.85
PNB	35.00	35.35	33.75	35.10
TATACHEM	683.65	709.25	677.05	696.80
HINDCOPPER	180.00	196.90	176.50	185.65
NMDC	195.00	198.85	185.05	196.90
INFY	1336.00	1341.30	1325.25	1330.70
NATIONALALUM	78.10	81.80	77.55	79.45
GRANULES	363.00	370.40	350.00	359.90
SUNPHARMA	699.00	721.90	697.05	707.85
JINDALSTEL	480.00	486.55	468.60	476.65
BPCIL	451.00	464.00	446.70	462.10
TATACOFFEE	163.60	180.90	162.50	171.95
GAIL	153.50	163.50	152.30	161.85
HDFC	2499.00	2500.45	2448.00	2463.05
IOC	99.00	104.40	97.95	103.70
UPL	678.20	688.35	668.05	684.05
NTPC	107.10	113.25	106.70	112.65
ONGC	112.40	118.95	110.80	118.05
KOTAKBANK	1780.00	1786.95	1753.35	1755.85
HCLTECH	909.95	912.45	904.80	909.15
DRREDDY	5329.10	5349.85	5272.00	5293.60
ULTRACEMCO	6300.00	6618.95	6300.00	6487.00
CIPLA	901.00	905.95	888.50	890.75
LUPIN	1251.20	1246.30	1193.00	1197.60
VOLTAS	969.00	1011.95	962.45	1010.30
BAFINANCE	5430.00	5457.75	5391.05	5426.55
IDEA	8.11	8.20	8.06	8.18

100 DAYS IN POWER

Myanmar junta holds pretense of control

AP ■ BANGKOK

After Myanmar's military seized power by ousting the elected Government of Aung San Suu Kyi, they couldn't even make the trains run on time: State railway workers were among the earliest organised opponents of the February takeover, and they went on strike.

Health workers who founded the civil disobedience movement against military rule stopped staffing government medical facilities. Many civil servants were no-shows at work, along with employees of government and private banks.

Universities became hotbeds of resistance, and in recent weeks, education at the primary and secondary levels has begun to collapse as teachers, students and parents boycott state schools.

One hundred days after their takeover, Myanmar's ruling generals maintain just the pretense of control. The illusion is sustained mainly by its partially successful efforts to shut down independent media and to keep the streets clear of large demonstrations by employing lethal force.

More than 750 protesters and bystanders have been killed by security forces, according to detailed independent tallies.



Anti-coup protesters from various township hold slogans that reads "Yangon boycott rally to clear all threats here in Yangon" during a demonstration in Yangon, Myanmar on Tuesday

"The junta might like people to think that things are going back to normal because they are not killing as many people as they were before and there weren't as many people on the streets as before, but... The feeling we are getting from talking to people on the ground is that definitely the resistance has not yet subsided," said

Thin Lei Win, a journalist now based in Rome who helped found the Myanmar Now online news service in 2015.

She says the main change is that dissent is no longer as visible as in the early days of the protests — before security forces began using live ammunition — when marches and rallies in major cities and towns

could easily draw tens of thousands of people.

At the same time, said David Mathieson, an independent analyst who has been working on Myanmar issues for over 20 years, "Because of the very violent pacification of those protests, a lot of people are willing to become more violent."

Police in Thailand arrest 3 journalists who fled Myanmar

AP ■ BANGKOK

Three senior journalists working for a news agency in Myanmar who fled after the military government ordered its operations to stop have been arrested by police in northern Thailand, their editor said Monday.

The three work for DVB, also known as Democratic Voice of Burma, an online and broadcast news agency, its executive director and chief editor, Aye Chan Naing, said in an email. Burma is the former name for Myanmar and is still used by some opponents of military rule.

He said the three, along with two activists, whom he did not identify, were arrested Sunday in Chiang Mai during a random search by police. They were charged with illegal entry into Thailand, he said.

From photos published by

local Thai media, it appeared that the journalists may have continued to report from a single-story house in which they seemed to have set up a makeshift video production studio.

Myanmar's junta, which seized power in February and ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, has attempted to silence independent news media by withdrawing their licenses and by arresting journalists. About 40 are currently in detention, including at least two who work for DVB.

Most of the detained journalists are being held on a provision in the Penal Code that prohibits comments that "cause fear," spread "false news," or agitates directly or indirectly a criminal offense against a Government employee." Violations are punishable by up to three years in prison.

Nepal President Bhandari initiates Govt formation

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal President Bidya Devi Bhandari has called on parties to form a new majority government by Thursday after the one headed by the embattled Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli lost a trust vote.

The Office of the President, in a statement on Monday, said President Bhandari has decided to invite parties to form a majority government pursuant to Article 76 (2) of the Constitution of Nepal.

She has allotted the parties three days' time, asking them to stake their claim to the government by 9:00 pm on Thursday, The Himalayan Times reported.

As per the constitutional provision, a candidate requires to submit signatures of lawmakers belonging to two or more political parties in parliament to the Office of President within the stipulated time. The President's announcement came shortly after Oli lost a trust vote in the House of Representatives. Oli, who decided to seek the trust of the 275-member House on his government, managed to garner only 93 votes, which fell

Gives 3 days time to parties to stake claim

short of 43 votes to reach the 136-mark and win the vote of confidence during a special session of the lower house.

A total of 124 members voted against the confidence motion while 15 members stayed neutral, Speaker Agni Sapkota announced on Monday. The session was attended by 232 lawmakers.

Oli, 69, lost the vote of confidence motion, days after the Nepal Communist Party Maoist Centre led by Pushpakamal Dahal 'Prachanda' withdrew its support, reducing the government to a minority.

After Oli lost the trust vote, the Nepali Congress, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) and a faction of the Janata Samajbadi Party led by Upendra Yadav urged President Bhandari to invoke Article 76 (2) of the Constitution to pave the way for the formation of a new government.

GLOBE TROTTING

ISRAEL SAYS AN ISLAMIC JEHAD COMMANDER KILLED
Jerusalem: The Israeli military says it has assassinated a senior commander of the Islamic Jihad terrorist group in Gaza on Tuesday. It said the militant was the head of the Islamic Jihad's rocket unit and identified him as Samih al-Mamluk. The military said other senior militants in the organisation were also killed in the same strike. Islamic Jihad confirmed the three killed in an airstrike in an apartment in Gaza City.

NASA SPACECRAFT BEGINS 2-YR TRIP HOME
Cape Canaveral (US): With rubble from an asteroid tucked inside, a NASA spacecraft fired its engines and began the long journey back to Earth on Monday, leaving the ancient space rock in its rearview mirror.

AZ PLANS BIG DEFENCE, SECURITY INVESTMENTS
Canberra: The Australian government released a big-spending economic plan for the next fiscal year on Tuesday that includes hefty investments in defence and national security as relations with China worsen. The government plans to spend 270 billion Australian dollars (\$212 billion) over the next decade on upgrading defence capabilities to "promote an open and peaceful Indo-Pacific," Treasury Department documents say.

Russian school shooting in Kazan kills 7 students, 1 teacher

AP ■ MOSCOW

A gunman attacked a school on Tuesday morning in the Russian city of Kazan, killing eight people — seven eighth-grade students and a teacher — and leaving 21 others hospitalised with wounds, Russian officials said.

Russian media said some students were able to escape the building during the attack, while others were trapped inside. Dozens of ambulances lined up at the entrance to the school after the attack, with access to the building fenced off by police.

Rustam Minnikhanov, governor of the Tatarstan republic where Kazan is the capital, said four boys and three girls, all eighth-grade students, died in the shooting. Minnikhanov's press service later said a teacher was also killed.

"The terrorist has been arrested, (he is) 19 years old. A firearm is registered in his name. Other accomplices haven't been established, an investigation is underway," Minnikhanov said after visiting the school, adding that security had been restored.

Authorities said additional security measures were immediately put in place in all schools in Kazan, a city 700

Russian media said some students were able to escape the building during the attack, while others were trapped inside

kilometres (430 miles) east of Moscow. They also announced a day of mourning on Wednesday to honour the victims of the shooting.

According to Tatarstan health officials, 21 people were hospitalised with wounds after the attack, including 18 children, six of whom were in intensive care.

Russia's state RIA Novosti news agency reported earlier that 11 people had been killed in the Kazan shooting. There was no way to immediately reconcile the differing death tolls. Police opened a criminal investigation into the shooting.

Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his condolences to families of the victims and those injured in the shooting and ordered the government to revise gun regulations in light of the attack. Russia's Emergency Ministry has sent a plane with doctors and medical equipment to Kazan.

While school shootings are relatively rare in Russia, there have been several violent attacks on schools in recent years, mostly carried out by students.

Iran rejects US claim that speedboats sparked encounter

AP ■ TEHRAN

Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard on Tuesday rejected the US Navy's claim that fast-approaching Iranian speedboats in the Strait of Hormuz sparked a tense encounter in the already sensitive region. The Guard's website, sepahnews.Com, published a statement Tuesday saying Americans were guilty of using "false narratives and unprofessional behavior" and should more strictly "abide by international regulations."

Specifically, the statement said the Guard's navy warned the US vessels to stop their "provocative and aimless shooting."

A day earlier, the US said the Revolutionary Guard sent 13 armed speedboats too close to US Navy vessels in the Strait of Hormuz on Monday. The Americans said a Coast Guard cutter fired warning shots when two of the Iranian boats came dangerously close.

The exchange comes as the United States and Iran engage in indirect talks in Vienna aimed at reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, which the United States left in 2018.

Pentagon spokesman John Kirby declined to comment when asked about the Iranians'

intentions.

"Sadly, harassment by the IRGC Navy is not a new phenomenon. It is something that all of our commanding officers and the crews of our vessels are trained to for," Kirby told reporters at the Pentagon. "This activity is the kind of activity that could lead to somebody getting hurt and could lead to a real miscalculation there in the region, and that doesn't serve anybody's interests."

It was the second time in two weeks that a US ship opened fire to warn vessels of Iran's paramilitary Guard.

On April 26, an American warship fired warning shots when vessels of Iran's Revolutionary Guard came too close to a patrol in the Persian Gulf. That was the first such shooting in nearly four years. The Navy released black-and-white footage of that encounter in international waters of the northern reaches of the Persian Gulf near Kuwait, Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

In the latest incident, Kirby said 13 Iranian vessels maneuvered at high speed toward six Navy ships that were escorting the guided missile submarine USS Georgia through the Strait on Monday. The sub was sailing on the surface.

Gaza terrorists, kids among 24 dead as Israel hits Hamas

AP ■ GAZA CITY (GAZA STRIP)

Israel unleashed new airstrikes on Gaza early on Tuesday, hitting the high-rise home of a Hamas field commander and two border tunnels dug by militants, as Hamas and other armed groups fired dozens of rockets toward Israel.

It was an escalation sparked by weeks of tensions in contested Jerusalem.

Since sundown Monday when the cross-border fighting erupted, 24 Palestinians -- including nine children -- were killed in Gaza, most by airstrikes, Gaza health officials said. The Israeli military said 15 of the dead were militants. During the same period, Gaza militants fired more than 200 rockets toward Israel, injuring six Israeli civilians.

This was preceded by hours of clashes Monday between Palestinians and Israeli security forces, mainly in Jerusalem but also across the West Bank. More than 700 Palestinians were hurt, including nearly 500 who were treated at hospitals.

The current violence, like previous rounds, was fueled by conflicting claims over Jerusalem, home to major holy sites of Islam, Judaism and Christianity. The rival national and religious narratives of Israelis and Palestinians are rooted in the city, making it the



A Palestinian man inspects the rubble of a partially destroyed residential building after it was hit by Israeli missile strikes, at the Shati refugee camp in Gaza City, early on Tuesday

emotional core of their long conflict.

In the past, cross-border fighting between Israel and Hamas, the group that rules Gaza, would typically end after a few days, often helped by behind-the-scenes mediation by Qatar, Egypt and others. It was not clear if that trajectory would be repeated this time.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned Monday that fighting could "continue for some time". Lt Col Jonathan Conrucus, an Israeli military spokesman, told reporters Tuesday that the military was in "the early stages" of strikes against Gaza targets it had planned well in advance.

The escalation comes at a time of political limbo in Israel.

Netanyahu has been acting as a caretaker prime minister since an inconclusive parliament election in March. He tried and failed to form a coalition government with his hard-line and ultra-Orthodox allies, and the task was handed to his sworn political rivals last week.

One of those rivals is Israel's defence minister who is overseeing the Gaza campaign. It is not clear if and to what extent the toxic political atmosphere is spilling over into military decision-making, though the rival camps have unanimously expressed support for striking Hamas hard.

FROM PAGE 1

INDIAN MUTANT SCARES WORLD, 17 NATIONS HIT

The UN health agency also said the B.1.617 variant of Covid-19 seemed to be transmitting more easily than the original version of the virus, and might possibly have some increased resistance to vaccine protections.

This can be reflected in the sharp surge in the cases and deaths in India which is reporting nearly 3 to 4 lakh cases daily.

India accounts for "38 per cent of global cases reported in the past week," as per the global data.

Up till April 27, B.1.617 variant had been detected in over 1,200 sequences uploaded on the open-access database GISAID (the Global Initiative on Sharing Avian Influenza Data) "from at least 17 countries", the global health agency said in its weekly epidemiological update on the pandemic. Most sequences were uploaded from India, the UK, the US and Singapore, it said.

Since then, more than 350 sequences of this lineage have been detected with prevalence increasing to 75 per cent at the end of April. The UK has already placed India on the red list, which prevents non-citizens or non-permanent residents from travelling to the country.

Globally, new Covid-19 cases increased for the ninth consecutive week, with nearly 5.7 million new cases reported in the last week -- surpassing previous peaks, the WHO update said. The B1617 variant has been deemed a 'variant of interest' instead of a 'variant of concern' by the WHO.

However, the WHO has classified the British, South African and Brazilian variants of Covid-19 as "variants of concern."

"Preliminary modelling by WHO based on sequences submitted to GISAID suggest that B1617 has a higher growth rate than other cir-

culating variants in India, suggesting potential increased transmissibility, with other co-circulating variants also demonstrating increased transmissibility," the WHO update said.

"Other drivers may include challenges around the implementation and adherence to public health and social measures and social gatherings (including mass gatherings during cultural and religious celebrations, and elections)," it added.

Earlier, the Indian Covid-19 variant was a "variant of interest" (VOI). The elevation from VOI to "variant of concern" (VOC) is done when a SARS-CoV-2 mutant shows evidence of fulfilling at least one of the criteria such as easier transmission/ increased severity of illness/reduced neutralization by antibodies/reduced efficacy of drugs and treatment and reduced efficacy of vaccines or vaccine escape ability, as per the WHO.

Last week, the Public Health England named B.1.617.2 a variant of concern as evidence showed that the virus had increased transmissibility.

'MIRACLE DRUGS' NO SILVER BULLET

doctors says the drug should be administered if the radiological investigation, including x-ray or CT scan, shows peculiar ground-glass opacity or lung lesions.

Prof GD Puri, Intensive Care, PGI said, "Various studies have found that Remdesivir given in patients of moderate covid 19 disease (Covid-19 patients developing hypoxia at room air), reduce the duration of hospitalization, only if started within the first 8 days of symptom onset.

"Remdesivir is not likely to be beneficial after 10 days, in patients already on a ventilator. It is also not indicated in patients with raised liver

enzymes (>5 times normal limit). It has the potential to worsen renal functions and may cause arrhythmia, so needs to be used with caution/ under monitoring."

He warned: "There are very limited indications for using Remdesivir and a very narrow therapeutic window, so it should be judiciously used."

However, critical care expert and former national president of the Indian Society of Critical Care Medicine, Subhal Dixit said, "In my opinion, all patients with lung lesions on scan should get remdesivir irrespective of hypoxia. Why wait for hypoxia to set in? I have used the drug in quite a few patients with Covid-19. My personal experience with remdisivir has been good."

"It all depends upon the selection of patients. Starting the drug at the right time is crucial. The beneficial effects of the drug are seen after 3-4 days. The drug also helps curtail the patients' oxygen needs," he said, according to reports.

Regarding Tocilizumab, a strong immune system suppressant, Dr GD Puri said since it can enhance the incidence of secondary bacterial infections in the patients, it should be used only after ruling out significant bacterial or fungal infections. "Various studies have not shown any mortality benefit in critically ill patients," he pointed out.

WHO PRAISES UP GOVT FOR 'TRACE, TEST & TREAT' POLICY

about medical facilities they were getting.

Not only this, WHO experts also carried out a thorough review of the work of 2,000 government teams working in the field.

"The WHO mentioned in its report how the Yogi government provided facilities for screen-

ing and treatment of corona patients in community centers, panchayat buildings and schools in rural UP. Two mobile vans were deployed in every block of the district by the government for Covid testing," a government spokesman said.

The official said that 1.41 lakh teams of Health department were working day and night for the campaign. Besides, the Yogi government has also deployed 21,242 observers to monitor the operation of Covid management.

LONG STAY AT ICU BACKFIRES

"But start to experience another set of serious psychotic symptoms. The reasons for it may be due to multiple sensory deprivations in ICUs with no windows, excessive sleep disturbance or irritability due to beeping machines, staff movement and excessive light, acute stress, medication reactions, excessive fever, toxins in the body, hypoxia and dehydration," added Phogat.

Due to these, the patients are in a state of delirium accompanied by delusions) and hallucinations, restlessness, agitation, paranoia, disorientation, and clouding (unable to recognise the time of the day, place at which they are and persons who are around), nightmares and other abnormal symptoms), Dr Phogat said.

A medical assessment and mental status examination of the patients is done to determine this condition. It is usually controlled by reviewing the medicines of the patient, checking in family members and familiar objects, bringing dehydration, fever, and infections. Patients may also be treated with anti-psychotic drugs, she said, adding such conditions may further deteriorate to despair.

Despair is a condition similar to depression. Clinical despair is profound and existential hopelessness, helplessness, powerlessness, and pessimism about life and future.

Pipeline officials hope most service will be back by weekend

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Hit by a cyberattack, the operator of a major US fuel pipeline said it hopes to have services mostly restored by the end of the week as the FBI and administration officials identified the culprits as a gang of criminal hackers.

US officials sought to soothe concerns about price spikes or damage to the economy by stressing that the fuel supply had so far not experienced widespread disruptions, and the company said on Monday that it was working toward "substantially restoring operational service" by the weekend.

The White House said in a statement late Monday that it was monitoring supply shortages in parts of the Southeast and that President Joe Biden had directed federal agencies to bring their resources to bear.

Colonial Pipeline, which delivers about 45% of the fuel consumed on the East Coast, halted operations last week after revealing a ransomware attack that it said had affected some of its systems.

Nonetheless, the attack

underscored the vulnerabilities of the nation's energy sector and other critical industries whose infrastructure is largely privately owned. Ransomware attacks are typically carried out by criminal hackers who scramble data, paralyzing victim networks, and demand large payments to decrypt it.

The Colonial attack was a potent reminder of the real-world implications of the burgeoning threat. Even as the Biden administration works to confront organized hacking campaigns sponsored by foreign governments, it must still contend with difficult-to-prevent attacks from cybercriminals.

"We need to invest to safeguard our critical infrastructure," Biden said on Monday. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said the attack "tells you how utterly vulnerable we are" to cyberattacks on U.S. infrastructure.

The attack came as the administration, still grappling with its response to massive breaches by Russia of federal agencies and private corporations, works on an executive order aimed at bolstering cybersecurity defenses.



Follow proper revision strategy

JEE Main May session has been deferred. MUSBA HASHMI speaks with NITIN VIJAY, Managing Director, Motion Education, who talks about how students can make the best of this time and score well

JEE Main has been postponed once again. While many are not happy with the continuous delays, but it goes without saying that it is definitely the need of the hour. More so, when the country is witnessing more than 3.5 lakh cases per day. “Nobody can do anything about this. The only positive part is that students are getting more time to study,” Nitin Vijay, Managing Director, Motion Education, says. With that being said, it is not the time for students to lose hope and or become complacent, instead they should utilise this period to study and work upon their weak subjects. “If a student was preparing to attempt the May session, we assume that he must have completed his syllabus. Hence, the students now have to follow proper revision strategies. They have to revise

every chapter twice at least in the next two months. Their focus should be on following correct revision strategies, this will help them big time,” Vijay tells you. Students can start by focusing on their weak concepts and practicing as much as they can. However, this might not be as easy as it sounds. The continuous delays might result in students losing motivation. Hence, keeping yourself motivated is the key. “Students have to keep themselves motivated. Thinking about the positive side of getting extra time for preparation might help. But, at the same time they have to realise that every student is getting the same amount of time. Hence, they have to utilise it in the best possible manner. This time will change their course of future. Students need to

Students have to keep themselves motivated. Thinking about the positive side of getting extra time for preparation might help

remove all the frustration and negativity and concentrate on their studies,” he explains. Improving speed is another factor students can work upon during this time. “Identify your mistakes and correct them. Most of the time, students tend to miss spotting their mistakes, this way they continue to do it. Next, work on your accuracy and speed. This will give you motivation to study. Learn to read questions in one go, this is one part that most of the students miss on. They don’t know how to read a question in one go,” Vijay says. The reason behind this is that students don’t read a question as a full statement, they read it word by word. “Try to read the question as a statement, picture what it says in your mind and then comprehend it.

Keep on practicing and you will learn to read questions in one go. Good strategy coupled with motivation will help you achieve good score,” he explains. He emphasises on the fact that these delays don’t mean wastage of time. It is clearly a bonus time for students. “If you and your family are safe at home, thank God and see the time as a gift. If you can change your mindset, you can change your life. It’s a game of mindset,” he says. He adds that the students at his institute have already understood this and are busy asking questions and solving problems without thinking about the rest of the things. “The ones who are genuinely interested in studies, can study any where at any time. They just need motivation,” Vijay says.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one.
— Mark Twain

Meet Manav Sthali warriors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Today, as a nation, we need to stand together to tackle the grim situation that we are in. The times are indeed challenging as the number of people not being able to procure oxygen, an ICU bed, vaccine and even food for that matter, is increasing every minute. The situation, however, has awakened many a conscience to come forth and support their fellow beings.

Manav Sthalians have always stood for a social cause dedicatedly and wholeheartedly extending maximum support during such times of distress. In our constant endeavours to render timely help, under the guidance of Mamta Bhatnagar, Director and Founder principal, Dipti A Bhatnagar, Principal, Manav Sthali School initiated Manav Suraksha — Manav Helpline on May 2 to provide real time information on the availability of beds in hospitals, oxygen, plasma, tiffin services, ambulances, lab/CT scan, chemist etc. in Delhi to the ones in need.

Manav Suraksha team is jointly managed by Anushasit Sainanis and Student Council members along with a team of 80 students who are working 24/7 to help people. The team receives an average of 800 calls a day and works on five levels. First, class-wise leaders are appointed to collect leads for portfolios that are oxygen, plasma, doctors, beds, tiffin service, medicines, and labs.

These leads are then verified by class volunteers. The PR team is in direct contact with patients and provides necessary help from collected leads. The core team manages and supervises the functioning of the Suraksha group and assigns tasks to volunteers. The IT team maintains a database of leads and resources. This list is updated twice a day. The FB team provides required resources to people who reach out on Facebook for help. In these grim times, the Manav Sthali warriors all stand together united as ever to extend ourselves to society.

UG courses at ISBF

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The next round of applications for admission into the undergraduate programmes led by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in India at the Indian School of Business & Finance (ISBF), New Delhi, are closing on May 15, 2021.

Students pursuing Accounting & Finance at ISBF will also be eligible for exemptions in eight out of 13 examinations of Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA).

ISBF has an intake of only 120 undergraduate students across its five programmes. It follows a rounds-based rolling admissions policy, which means that other things equal, applicants of earlier rounds have a higher likelihood of being accepted into the programme of their choice. It also means that applications will be closed as soon as all seats are filled.

Guide to choose the best course

As the need for healthcare services is on a constant rising spree, so is the need for the resources those who can ensure the smooth facilitation of such services. To meet the growing demands, graduates are often seen opting for a certified Hospital Administration course that helps them in enhancing their knowledge related to the healthcare management sector.

In simpler terms, Hospital Administration is a course that incorporates the studies related to the management of various operations and departments in a hospital. A professional who pursues the course and attains the title of a Hospital Administrator is responsible for overseeing and organising the health services and monitoring the day-to-day activities of a hospital or a healthcare unit ranging from managing staff and budgets to communicating between departments and ensuring appropriate patient care amongst other duties.

In times like these, when every health-worker is working extremely hard to contribute their bit in saving the human-race, the Hospital Administration course is gaining massive popularity and the students pursuing it are looked up with utmost respect and dignity. The rising demand for the health professionals emphasises on the need to choose from the significant courses available online.

Here is a quick guide of the best comprehensive and advanced Hospital Administration Online Courses that will definitely help learners add the right skill set to their portfolio as per industry-demand and land an instant job.

Henry Harvin: The Hospital Administration course offered by Henry Harvin equips learners with the most essential conceptual and technical knowledge in management and trains the students for all the hospital administration functions required in any healthcare unit. The course focuses on core topics like accounting, finance, human resource management, information systems, management, marketing, hospital laws, and many more. The 12 month course offers every participant live projects & case studies for improved understanding of the subject.

Medvarsity: The Master class in Hospital Administration course offered by Medvarsity is eligible for all the graduates coming with any disciplinary background. The Master class in Hospital Administration course enables students to acquire conceptual and technical knowledge in management and prepares the student for hospital administration functions



The Hospital Administration course offered by Henry Harvin equips learners with the most essential conceptual and technical knowledge in management

in a hospital. The curriculum focuses on core topics like accounting, finance, human resource management, information systems, management, marketing, hospital laws and many more. The 12 months online course covers four modules and offers live lectures with expert faculty from the healthcare industry.

Manipal University: The MHA (Master of Hospital Administration) Programme strives to prepare health professionals to transform into knowledgeable, ethical and innovative health administrators who can contribute positively to the betterment of the healthcare sector. The programme aims to create competent personnel in the field of hospital & healthcare in a professional manner to optimise care delivery and healthcare costs without compromise on quality. This course is a full-time postgraduate programme spread over two years. The university promises to groom all the budding administrators in

a highly academically surcharged environment.

Dr DY Patil Vidyapeeth's Centre for Online Learning: The institute offers online certificate course in hospital and health care management. Based in Pune, India, they offer this course via online mode. The programme's objective is to develop the most-competent hospital administration professional in the field of hospital and health care administration. Students, who hold bachelor's degree, are graduates in any discipline from a recognised university or are diploma holders are eligible for this course. The 300 hours course provides real experience to candidates who will culminate to develop a high degree of conceptual, analytical skills and quality technical knowledge base among candidates and preparing them well to manage complex health care domains.

ICRI: The online PG Diploma in Healthcare Management course offered by ICRI India aims to impart requisite knowledge and expertise on the concept objectives, operational policies, procedures, etc. in operational management of various departments of Hospital and Healthcare Organisations. This includes the development of conceptual skills in planning, policy formulation, healthcare financing, resource planning, hospital & healthcare material management, Hospital accreditation process in India, research methodology and healthcare services project work. Spanning over a period of six months, this course is available for all the undergraduates and postgraduates in Life Sciences, Microbiology, Biotechnology, Pharmacy, Medicine, Nursing, Homoeopathy, Ayurvedic and Veterinary Science with min 50 per cent.

Experience matters

Many B Schools are exploring the ways and means to provide experiential learning opportunities to their aspirants, says DR RAMAKRISHNAN RAMAN

Majority of aspirants who plan to pursue a Master of Business Administration (MBA) consider it as a programme that equips them with the necessary knowledge and skills, which can make them to build a lucrative career in business and management. Knowledge is imparted through lecture sessions, case based teaching, role play based learning, etc. Many Indian B Schools are exploring the ways and means to provide experiential learning opportunities to their aspirants. There are a few premier Indian B Schools which have made it mandatory to have experiential learning in every subject that is taught to the students.

Here are five popular ways by which Indian B Schools are offering experiential learning opportunities to their students.

Summer internship and live project opportunities
Summer internships and live projects provide students an opportunity to apply their learning to the real-world problems of organisations. Almost all B Schools have Summer Internships and live projects built in their curriculum. Summer Internship is an excellent platform provided to the students to 'learn by doing' which is 'experiential learning'. Given the rapidly changing business landscape, Summer internships are one of the most popular forms of experiential learning, which helps students to gain an insight into the demands of the workplace. Live project opportuni-

ties give the students an opportunity to apply and integrate theory with practice. They get to understand the how the decisions that they take and efforts that they put in, give results in real business scenarios.

Case competition by corporate
Several organisations launch their case competitions in select premier B Schools. These case competitions give a platform to the students to work in real world corporate challenges. This form of experiential learning is appreciated and sought after by the students. Case competitions not only helps them learn the nuances of business, but also gives them job opportunities with the same organisation which launches the competitions. Students who give the best solution to the case are offered jobs with lucrative compensation.

Capstone project
A capstone project is a multifaceted assignment that serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for students pursuing their management program. In this mode of experiential learning students pursue independent research on a question or problem of their choice, and engage in scholarly debates. They are guided by a faculty mentor who helps them to articulate and create a white paper or a journal article that reflects a deep understanding of the topic.

Students' councils activities
There are few B Schools in India which are fully student-driven where the

students pursuing their MBA are encouraged to participate in the decision-making process that helps them learn the experiential way and also shapes their personality. The Students' council is the student body responsible and accountable for almost all activities conducted on the campus of a B School. The teams consist of students from the first and second year who are led by coordinators. These coordinators form an executive council to oversee all activities. The executive council is empowered to plan their budgets, set goals and they work independently on all business processes related to admissions, placements, corporate relations, managing online presence, etc.

International immersion programmes

A few premier Indian B Schools offer their MBA students an opportunity to travel abroad and attend a partner B School. The students enrol for a few subjects which can help them take some credits for the fulfilment of their degree. Students often benefit from gaining critical cross-cultural skills, broadening their perspective and enhancing their understanding of business in a global context. International Immersion Programmes have proved to be a wonderful approach to experiential learning.

The writer is Director, Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Pune & Dean, Faculty of Management, Symbiosis International (Deemed University)

MBA International Programme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU), Israel is now welcoming applications for its one-year MBA International Programme.

The MBA International Programme at the Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management is a unique, integrative one-year study programme that couples a rigorous theoretical and practical academic programme with extracurricular

opportunities that serve to enrich the MBA learning experience.

Eligibility: Students with a bachelor's degree, GMAT or GRE, Professional or International Experience can apply for the programme.

How to apply: Log on to https://bgumanagement.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8j1Jd8vjkhpxYAR.

Last date to apply: June 30, 2021.

Webinar by Great Learning

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Great Learning, an edtech company for professional and higher education has announced that it will be hosting a webinar on Introduction to Android Studio today at 12 pm. The live session is free of cost and can be attended by anyone who is tech-savvy and looking to explore a career in application development.

The live session on “Introduction to Android Studio” by Faizan Parvez,

Instructor of Data Structure and Algorithm will shine a spotlight on the wide usage of Android Studio for building applications on android devices. The attendees will get an overview of the features of Android Studio that will further enhance the productivity while developing android applications.

People can register by visiting: <https://www.greatlearning.in/academy/learn-for-free/courses/introduction-to-android-studio>.

Balance leadership

Leadership style is about the way a person leads his subordinates. This varies from person to person. Therefore, right kind of leadership is all about striking a balance between all the major styles, says DR KULNEET SURI

Be it any organisation, from the highest rung to the lowest, one thing is common — everyone wants to be a leader. And why not. Being a leader sounds so powerful and exciting that it is hard not to want to be in that position of influence. However, being a leader is easier said than done. Reaching that powerful position may seem to be daunting at first but it eases out as time goes. But the fact is that for some people it stays intimidating all throughout if they do not tackle the responsibility head on right at the beginning.

Leadership style is all about the way a person uses to lead his subordinates and this style varies widely from one person to the other. Some leaders are the be-all and end-all of every decision while some others are all about delegations and do not take a step without discussing. The right kind of leadership is all about striking a balance between all the major styles.

When one takes up the role of a business administrator in any organisation, one is addressing the roles of both, a manager and a leader and balancing between these two can be a highly sensitive act. To strike the perfect balance between all styles of leadership, the following are the top questions that you need to ask yourself:

- Can the work get done with my intervention? If the answer is yes, then remove yourself from simply interfering and rather concentrate on motivating the team. Donning the hat of authority is only necessary when you need to implement changes to help the team perform better.
- How much do you focus on the results? Focusing on results is great but that should not be the only thing that you notice in any project. The focus should be more on the process as that way you will be able to find more alternatives to reach the same or better results.
- Are you the first person that people come to for advice? If the



answer to this is a big yes, then you are truly already being seen as a leader. If not, look at the changes that you need to bring forth to be seen as a supportive and inspirational figure.

■ What is the most discussed topic in your team? Is it the tasks at hand, the processes, the deadlines, or the strategy and big picture? Make sure that the discussions are balanced and the team is not leaning too hard in one direction or the other.

■ Do you ask the team to complete the tasks without feeling the need to explain the objective? Your team will only be motivated to go that extra mile if they understand the reasons behind accomplishing the task that they are assigned.

■ Who is held responsible when things go wrong? Do you blame yourself or the team? A great leader understands that the

The energy and the attitude of the leader are channelised through the team that he handles. Balance is necessary to ensure that the team stays positive and focused

failure or success of the team is ultimately his/her responsibility.

Achieving a balanced leadership style is necessary to ensure long-term success, both for the company and personally. The energy and the attitude of the leader are channelised through the team that he handles. Balance is necessary to ensure that the team stays positive and focused. Here are ways to be a true leader:

- Communicate: Clear and honest communication is the key to getting the work done in any organisation. Whether you are conducting a performance review or communicating your aims for the quarter, the subordinates need to know what you require of them, where they stand at present, and how can they get to the end.
- Know when to let go: You show your trust towards your team when you delegate the responsibilities towards them.

You have given them the direction that they require and now you need to let them follow it through. But do not forget to reward them when they actually manage to make your vision into a reality.

Be a mentor, not the boss: Put aside all the day-to-day distractions and schedule one-on-one time with the staff, take in their input, and listen to their grievances. The team will either listen to you out of fear or out of respect, and you can well understand which way works in the long-term. Be the mentor that understands the coordinates and their viewpoints and not the boss who merely orders. Engaging with the team encourages inputs and presents the opportunity to maintain a balance between your ideas and their views for the greater good of the company.

The writer is Senior Director at Institute of Management Studies, Noida

‘All our courses are industry-led’

The Atria University is all set to open its doors for the students this October.

SHALINI SAKSENA chats up CEO SAHEEM RAHIMAN, Excerpts

■ **How much learning are children getting with online mode?**

We all agree that a large amount of learning or effective learning takes place with peer learning and peering each other's opinions and all of these things have actually dried up in the online education model. Even in our own work life what I have noticed when the lockdown started all of us were working virtually and we would have amazing meetings at the beginning, when you want to solve a problem you want everybody to come up with new ideas. As the lockdown progressed, off late nobody wants to have contrary opinion on a call, nobody wants to have an opposing view on the call because they feel that they are not participating as much.

■ **Tell us about Atria University. It is a year old.**

It has been close to two years since we launched the product but we haven't gone live as yet for the first batch. First batch starts in October of this year. This is because Karnataka State Higher Education has announced the next academic year will start in October. We are also in the final phase of getting approvals for the university so all of that will be in place before the academic year starts.

■ **What are some of the courses that are being offered to students?**

We have five majors. One of them is mobility. Then we have Life Sciences. Number three is digital transformation. Then we have interactive tech. At No 5 is Energy Sciences. Degrees are BTech then Bachelor of Design (BDes) then BSc and BBA.

■ **How does a student apply?**

Just like in the outside world, a student joins the university for an undergrad programme. The student goes through foundation courses irrespective of whether they came from a science or commerce background from school. These foundation courses are for 12 months. Post that there is a six-to-nine-month period where the student gets to sample courses or projects in each of these areas, there are five majors and four degrees. They get to



Shaheem Rahiman
CEO, Atria University

sample each one of this or each one of them over a period of six to months.

■ **What about faculty?**

It's a very industry-led programme where the projects are also from the industry. Most of the courses are actually designed by industry leaders and academics are helping facilitate that. They will come on campus for a period of four weeks, teach and leave.

■ **What is the fee structure?**

We are priced at ₹7 lakh per annum for academics and then residential is ₹1.8 lakh.

■ **What's your vision in next five years?**

To be sustainable, I must think 10 years ahead. I am scaling between 5,000 to 7,000 students in 10 years on the campus. By the time the first batch goes out my goal is to make sure that everybody who joins us in this year, will actually be going out as employees and not necessarily searching for a job because the model itself allows for nine months of internship right from second year. The idea is student will be working with big organisations in the industry on these projects and will organically get absorbed in the companies that they've worked with.

Due to the present pandemic, many are suffering from psychological distress with increased levels of anxiety, stress and depression. It has deeply impacted the mental health of people which also suggests a troubled future. But it's also true that humans' ability to overcome adversity is often underestimated especially for the overwhelming majority who love to be with nature.

This is not to suggest that the impact of COVID-19 on mental health isn't real, nor that it won't be long-lasting in some cases. It is real, and it will linger for many. Nevertheless it's also important to underline that it's healthily therapeutic for people who spend time amidst Nature.

There is a Japanese practice of nature therapy — forest bathing or Shinrin-yoku. It is simply spending time outdoors under the canopy of trees. In Japanese, shinrin means forest and yok means bath, or immersing oneself in the forest and soaking in the atmosphere through the senses. In one study, Yoshifumi Miyazaki, a nature-therapy expert, found that people who spent 40 minutes walking in a forest had lower levels of stress. He said: "Spending time in the forest induces a state of physiologic relaxation."

Another researcher, Dr. Qing Li, found that trees and plants emit aromatic compounds called phytoncides that, when inhaled, can spur healthy biological changes

MIND IT

in a manner similar to aromatherapy, which has also been studied for its therapeutic benefits. There are various recent studies that have also linked nature to symptom relief for health issues like heart disease, depression, cancer, anxiety and attention disorders.

Love for nature is something that is deeply inherent in all of us. We are part of the ecosystem and nature as much as plants & animals are. No matter how many concrete jungles we create in cities, we are likely to get "naturally happy in the

surroundings of plants and trees.

Exposure to nature, or even just merely observing it, helps us in reducing anger, anxiety and stress. The impact of our brush with nature is not only emotional but physical and neurological as well. Experts call our innate tendency to connect to plants as biophilia.

Even for mood disorders it's beneficial to spend time in nature: There are numerous situations when we have a strong urge to relax in the lap of greens. For instance, when we are battling with a dilemma of

taking a key decision, we are often advised to go for a stroll in a garden before we jump the gun.

Similarly, after heavy rainfall, when we want to experience the pleasant dewy petrichor in the air, and enjoy the pristine hues, we find a reason to have our tryst with nature. Even when we are stressed or anxious, we get an urge to step out of our brick and mortar houses and walk towards a quiet place that is invariably green.

Nature helps us to connect with each other. When we see the beautiful natural scenery, sense of empathy and love lights up in our brain, but when we see only walls or buildings around as is during the lockdowns enforced, we are bound to be

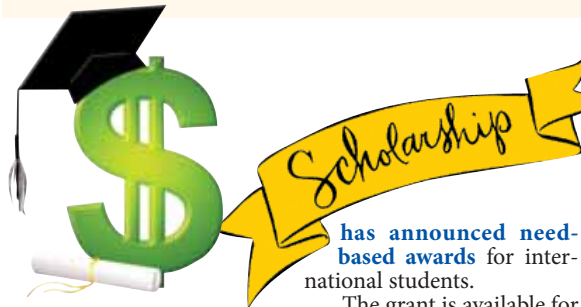
tensed up with fear and anxiety.

So whenever feasible, be amidst nature. Listen to the birds, feel the breeze, spot the leaves of the trees, beautiful flowers, or just take a moment to inhale the fresh air. Reconnect with the clouds as kids do; look for shapes in them. It can instantly put life into perspective.

Even if we can't get outside, try to bring the outside in. Draw up a chair by a window and observe nature, feel the breeze. Close your eyes and try to listen to some relaxing nature sounds like soothing birds singing, natural sound of water.

Nature is indeed the best therapist.

The writer is Dr Mukesh Kwatra, Founder, Smiling Tree



The University of Vaasa, Finland invites applications for Global Student Scholarships. The sponsorship will be rewarded to students who wish to undertake any master's degree programme can apply.

Eligibility: The students must be first-year applicants only. **Supporting documents:** A copy of the (foreign) degree certificate or a provisional certificate; Transcripts of university records.

Admission requirements: The students must complete 120 ECTS to be accepted into a master's degree programme.

Language requirement: The students must submit the following English language proficiency test scores: TOEFL PBT – 580; TOEFL IBT – 92; RPDT – a minimum score of 20 reading section, a minimum score of 20 in the listening section, and a minimum score of 22 in the writing section. Mybestscores is also accepted.

How to apply: Students are required to apply to their preferred master's programme online. Accepted students will automatically be considered.

Application deadline: The date is July 31, 2021.

The Baylor University

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AT LOKMAT MEDIA

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹5,000-₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/2c9ef2
Deadline: May 20, 2021

COURSE CREATION (FLUTTER) AT NULLCLASS TECHNOLOGY

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹8,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/1ee5c6
Application deadline: May 20, 2021

E-COMMERCE OPS AT MY POOJA BOX

Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/e3fe0b
Deadline: May 20, 2021

DIGITAL FORENSICS EVIDENCE EXAMINATION AT SYSTOOLS SOFTWARE

Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/fdc58b
Deadline: May 20, 2021

GIS ENGINEERING AT TECHNOVIQ IT SOLUTIONS

Location: Bhubaneswar
Stipend: ₹3,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/692d38
Deadline: May 20, 2021

MOBILE APP DEV AT SRI TECHNOCRAT

Location: Lucknow
Stipend: ₹7,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/1daf93
Deadline: May 19, 2021

FRESH JOBS

SOFTWARE ENGINEER AT FINTECH GLOBAL CENTER

Location: Remote
Stipend: ₹4-₹7 lakh per annum
Link: internshala.com/i/9c73a2
Deadline: June 5, 2021
Skill(s): C#, .NET, C#.NET, Node.js, C++ Programming, React Native, Angular 7.0

INBRIEF

SCHOLARSHIP TEST FOR ENGINEERS

The CareerLabs has announced CareerLabs Assured Placement Program (CLAPP) for engineering graduates of 2020 and 2021. This programme is launched with the aim to provide high quality placements for students by upskilling them on latest validated skills from industry in the areas of Embedded

Systems, Data sciences, UI and UX Design.

The CLAPP is one of its kind and a unique platform for all budding engineers to polish their skills and develop

new ones to be future ready. In order to provide equal opportunity for all, CareerLabs is enabling scholarships for placement assured programmes in numerous acclaimed colleges covering 20,000 students through a test — C.L.E.A.R.

The test which will be based on their aptitude and foundational engineering knowledge. On clearing the test, up to 1,000 students will be awarded with scholarships worth ₹2 crore.

Each student who clears the exam will be awarded a scholarship value of up to ₹25,000. All engineering graduates and students in final year of engineering will be eligible for taking the test which will be conducted free of cost.

ONLINE SUMMER PROGRAMME

The British Council has announced the 11th edition of its summer school programme that helps parents to give their children the confidence and tools to succeed in an evolving world.

The edition has been reimagined in view of the evolving curriculum in schools as well as the present COVID-19 scenario.

Fully online, the programme has

been designed to enable participants improve core communication skills while discovering their style and talents.

It is a theme-based programme that that excites children to learn rather than spend complete hours in front of a screen. The education system and the school curriculum is undergoing change

The theme — #Crafting Futures-

The Fun has been designed for children of age 5-17 years, segregated in age groups of 5-6 years, 7-12 years and 13-17 years to ensure age appropriate learning.

Dates: Crafting Futures Batch 3: May 24-June 4. Fee: ₹5,000 for 2 themes. For details visit: <https://www.britishcouncil.in/english/courses-children/summer-school-yl>

VOICE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR MPFI

The Indian Institute of Technology Madras researchers will collaborate with members of the Mobile Payment Forum of India (MPFI) to develop voice-based solutions, especially in multiple vernacular languages for digital money transactions in the country. This will provide a phenomenal platform not only for the increased adoption of digital payments in India but for

research opportunities as well.

These initiatives are being taken up by MPFI towards bringing 500 million active users on to the UPI payment platforms by 2025.

The MPFI is working to identify innovation across three levels; Human behaviour and adoption, Technology (design and safeguards), and policy (a data-centric view), to propel India over the next

decade.

Dr. Gaurav Raina, Faculty, Department of Electrical Engineering, IIT Madras, and Chairman, MPFI, said: "Digital and mobile payments, and in particular contactless payments, are important not just from an efficiency point of view, but also to mitigate risk against COVID-19. It provides a great opportunity to help yourself and also the ecosystem."

TWO PROGRAMMES FOR EXECUTIVES

The Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) Deemed to be University invites applications for PGDM (Executive) in Business Analytics and PGDM (Executive) in General Management, at Center for Executive Education, Tarnaka campus in Hyderabad.

Designed for working executives, these programmes follow flexible timetables with classes held over the weekends. The PGDM (Executive) in Business Analytics is a 16-month weekend

programme, while PGDM (Executive) in General Management is a 20-month weekend programme.

Ramesh Bhat, VC, NMIMS, said: "In a rapidly-changing work environment, every professional needs cognitive, digital, and practical skills that define a modern manager. A management education program that equips students with the necessary technical and strategic skill sets, along with a collaborative approach, will become necessary with businesses transitioning to Industry 4.0."

VIRTUAL WORKSHOP FOR BUDDING ENTREPRENEURS

The Sanskriti University in collaboration with Sleepwell Foundation and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) led an initiative for the young generation to motivate them to start a business and become a successful Entrepreneur.

This Workshop will be

conducted for three days online will discuss the topics for giving a better understanding about the concepts of business. The workshop is being conducted by trainers of MacLead Certification along with the domain experts and all the leading entrepreneurs sharing real-

life experiences and provide help to the students and budding entrepreneurs by answering their queries and clearing doubts.

The workshop organised for the students will help them to recognise their inner potential and start their own business without any hesitation.

Dhawan likely to lead in Lanka

First-choice Iyer's injury open door for Shikhar to captain India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran opener Shikhar Dhawan and flamboyant allrounder-turned specialist batsman Hardik Pandya will be locked in a two-way fight for India captaincy if Shreyas Iyer doesn't get fit in time for the white-ball tour of Sri Lanka in July.

India's limited overs specialists will be playing three T20 Internationals and as many ODIs in the island nation during the second half of July, when big guns like Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma will be in England for a marquee five-match Test series.

"It is still not clear if Shreyas will recover fully and will be match-fit in time for tour of Sri Lanka. Normally, a surgery of this scale along with rest, extensive rehab and training to get back in shape takes around four months," a senior BCCI source privy to selection matters said.

"In case Shreyas was available, he would have been the automatic choice for captaincy."

It's only logical that the two contenders for captaincy are 35-year-old Dhawan, who has had good "one and half IPLs" in last two seasons and Pandya junior, who is one of the most accomplished match-winners.

"Shikhar has had two very good IPL including this curtailed one and being the senior



most among those who are available for selection, he is a very strong contender. Also he has been a solid performer for India for past eight years," an

official said. As far as Hardik is concerned, his reputation as a white-ball match-winner can't be discounted either.

"Yes, Hardik hasn't been regularly bowling for MI or India in recent times. However, he is the man with x-factor and among options available. He is

INDIA'S LIMITED OVERS SPECIALISTS WILL BE PLAYING THREE T20 INTERNATIONALS AND AS MANY ODIs IN THE ISLAND NATION DURING THE SECOND HALF OF JULY

miles ahead of his peers in terms of being an impact performer. And who knows, may be extra responsibility brings the best out of him."

Pandya was included in the four-Test series at home against England so that his bowling workload is increased keeping the England tour in mind but it is learnt that the Baroda man is unlikely to bowl more than an odd over or two in the shortest format or ODI in near future.

"Hardik, after his back surgery to cure stress fracture, is not the same bowler anymore. He was a fast medium bowler before injury but to bowl at a brisk 135 kmph plus pace consistently, it could impact his back.

"So he is focussing more on

his match finishing skills," a person in the know of things said.

MATCHES IN COLOMBO

Colombo's R Premadasa Stadium will host all the matches in India's upcoming limited overs series against Sri Lanka.

"We plan to host the entire series at one venue. As of now, it has been decided that the Premadasa Stadium will host the fixtures. Obviously, it depends on how the situation is around that time," Arjuna de Silva, Sri Lanka Cricket's (SLC) Administrative Committee chairman, told *Sportstar* on Monday.

"With the Covid situation fluid, we cannot allow fans yet, so all the matches will be closed-door affairs," De Silva said.

India are reportedly set to arrive in Sri Lanka for the series on July 5 and, after the team completes its week-long quarantine, will play the ODI series starting on July 13. The T20I series will begin on July 22.

"As of now, we will stick to the protocol where the players will have to undergo hard quarantine for the first three days and in the next four days, they will be allowed to train. However, if there are any revised guidelines by the Health Ministry around that time, we will have to follow that," he added.

India missed trick by not picking wrist spinner: Kaneria

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Pakistan leg-spinner Danish Kaneria reckons India has missed a trick by not picking a wrist spinner for the World Test Championship final against New Zealand as young Rahul Chahar would have added another dimension to their attack.

Last week, India announced the squad for next month's World Test Championship final against New Zealand, to be held from June 18 in Southampton, and a five-match series against England from August 4.

"India has selected quite a strong team. Overall, their squad of is good. But the thing to note is that they have not selected a wrist spinner," Kaneria said from Karachi.

"They have finger spinners — Ashwin, Washington Sundar, Axar Patel and Ravindra Jadeja — but they don't have a wrist spinner, a right arm leg spinner," the leg spinner added.

Kaneria, who represented English county side Essex, said that the conditions in England is conducive for leg break bowlers.

"When you play in England, and I have a lot of experience playing there — eight years of county cricket in different conditions — there is moisture.

"When the season starts the county matches are going on and after that the sun comes out and the wicket gets baked and the moisture stays."

"Where there are seam conditions, a leg spinner is very useful and that's why I had a successful tenure when I played county cricket. So, it is a little concerning that there is no leg spinner in the team.

"Finger spinners can contain but having finger spinner and a wrist spinner can make an impact on the team," he added.

The 40-year-old, feels Chahar could have been a useful addition in the Indian team.

"Rahul Chahar, his height, the way he delivers the ball, he should have been in the team. New Zealand has Ish Sodhi, a tall leg spinner and Virat Kohli always struggles against a leg spinner as we saw it with (Adam) Zampa.

"So, I feel if there is place open for a leg spinner than Chahar, who has played for Mumbai Indians and India and has performed well, has googly, flipper and leg spin, could have been useful."

India head to the UK on the back of series victories against Australia and India but Kaneria cautioned that New Zealand are also a formidable side that has a strong bowling line up.

"Indian is playing good cricket, they have won series in Australia and then against England but NZ will not be an easy opponent as they are very tough in this type of condition where the ball seams. They have a very strong bowling line up. India's batting needs to deliver like Rishabh Pant did well in Australia but Ajinkya Rahane and Cheteshwar Pujara couldn't score many runs that is as cause of concern.

"You win Test cricket because of bowlers, once you have five top bowlers in your rank who can take 20 wickets there is a change of winning a Test match."

Some Indian players didn't like restrictions: Pamment

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Mumbai Indians fielding coach James Pamment has claimed that some senior Indian players did not like being subjected to restrictions inside the currently-suspended IPL's bio-bubble but it felt completely safe till the time cases from participating teams hadn't come to light.

Pamment did not elaborate on his assertion about the Indian players and did not take any names either.

"Some of the senior Indian guys don't like being restricted and told what to do," he was quoted as saying by *stuff.co.nz*.

"But we did feel safe — at no point did we feel the bubble would be compromised... We felt the travel was always going to be a challenge."

The New Zealanders, said he and the MI players started to feel apprehensive shortly before the competition was halted.

"It was when cases started to come with the teams. They were a little more fearful, a little more apprehensive," said the 52-year-old, who returned home on Saturday.

"Chennai (CSK)

announced their cases and we'd played Chennai at the weekend, so straight away, the dynamic changed. I certainly noticed from within my group. I'd spend most of my time with the Kiwis and the Aussies, their mindset had changed.

"We started to get Indian guys in our environment whose families were sick. There were bereavements as well and we were taking a bit of a cue from those guys who were saying 'no, we want to carry on' and the messages were coming back that this is a good distraction."

Pamment said at no stage did he feel his health was going to be put in jeopardy within the bubble set up by MI at a Mumbai hotel.

He said long before the suspension of IPL, he was aware of the pandemic getting worse in India and the event should not have been spread across six venues.

"If it (IPL) had been held solely in Mumbai, perhaps it'd have been easily managed."

India covered all bases for WTC final: Parthiv

PIANS ■ NEW DELHI

India have all the bases covered for the World Test Championship (WTC) final against New Zealand, said former wicketkeeper Parthiv Patel. Parthiv said that the fact that a batsman like KL Rahul is not finding a place in the squad shows how strong the batting lineup is.

"If we talk about batsmen — Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Ajinkya Rahane, Cheteshwar Pujara, Rishabh Pant — there's a proper band of proper bats-



men who can bat well in England. Everyone scored runs, and there is a spare batsman in KL Rahul. Imagine KL Rahul not finding a space in the Test squad, so how strong this squad could be," Patel told *Star Sports*.

The former Indian stumper from Gujarat said that India have a strong base of fast bowlers and spinners to pick from.

"You talk about fast bowlers, we've got (Jasprit) Bumrah, Ishant (Sharma), (Mohammad) Shami and if

either of them is not fit then there's Mohammad Siraj and Umesh Yadav. There's enough depth in the squad," he said.

"Then there is Axar Patel, who was probably been the man of the match in a lot of matches against England. He came in place of Ravindra Jadeja and it felt like Jadeja will be out. Now Ravindra Jadeja and (Ravichandran) Ashwin will be back, so I think this squad looks really strong," said Patel.

Eng players to skip remainder of IPL: ECB

PTI ■ LONDON

England have a busy international schedule from June onwards and the players are unlikely to be available for the remainder of the suspended IPL if the T20 tournament is rescheduled this year, says ECB Director of Cricket Ashley Giles.

The IPL was suspended last week after multiple COVID-19 cases inside its bio-bubble. There are two windows for the T20 event to be resumed this year — one is in the second half of September and before the T20 World Cup (October-November) and the other is



after mid-November.

But England's top players will be in action at both times. They have tours to Bangladesh and Pakistan in

September and October, while they will compete with Australia at the Ashes right after the T20 World Cup. "We're planning on

involvement of England players in England matches. We've got a full FTP schedule. So if those tours to Pakistan and Bangladesh are going ahead, I'd expect the players to be there," Giles said as quoted by *ESPNcricinfo*.

There were 11 Englishman in various franchises in the suspended IPL.

"None of us knows what a rearranged IPL looks like at the moment, where it's going to be or when. But from when we start this summer against New Zealand, our programme is incredibly busy," Giles said.

"We've got a lot of important, high-profile

cricket including the T20 World Cup and the Ashes. And we're going to have to look after our players."

Giles dismissed suggestion that this signals a change in approach from the ECB as the management had earlier allowed up to a dozen players to miss the Test series against New Zealand at the start of June due to their involvement in the IPL.

"The New Zealand scenario was very different. Those Test matches were formalised at the end of January, by which time all those contracts and NOCs (no objection certificates) were signed for full involvement in the IPL."

► short passes

MENDY SUFFERS TIBIA INJURY

MADRID: Real Madrid's hopes of clinching the La Liga title have been hit by another injury after the club confirmed that defender Ferland Mendy has a problem in his tibia.

VERRATI OUT FOR UP TO 6 WEEKS

PARIS: PSG midfielder Marco Verratti will miss the rest of the season because of a right knee injury. The Italian will be sidelined for four-to-six weeks, possibly forcing him to also miss the European Championship.

BUFFON TO QUIT JUVE

TURIN: Gianluigi Buffon said on Tuesday that he will bring the curtain down on his time at Juventus after nearly two decades at the end of the season, but will look to prolong his trophy-filled career elsewhere at the age of 43.

INIESTA EXTENDS KOBE STAY

TOKYO: Andres Iniesta celebrated his 37th birthday on Tuesday by signing a contract extension that will keep him at J-League side Vissel Kobe for two more years.

LÖW SET TO RECALL MÜLLER

BERLIN: Germany coach Joachim Löw has reportedly contacted Thomas Müller and is poised to reverse the forward's 2019 exile by naming him in his Euro 2020 squad.

BAUMGART TO COACH COLOGNE

COLOGNE: Relegation-threatened Bundesliga club Cologne on Tuesday named Steffen Baumgart from second-tier side Paderborn as head coach for next season — whether or not his new club remains in Germany's top flight.

IBRA TO MISS AT LEAST 2 GAMES

MILAN: Zlatan Ibrahimovic will be out for at least two matches with a knee injury, just a month before the start of Euro 2020, AC Milan coach Stefano Pioli said on Tuesday.

GUYANA RETAIN POORAN, HETMYER

ST KITTS: Nicholas Pooran, Shimron Hetmyer and Brandon King will be back in action for Guyana Amazon Warriors in the 2021 CPL after the franchise announced that it had retained 11 players from the last edition.

HUSSEY TESTS +VE AGAIN

CHENNAI: CSK batting coach Michael Hussey has tested positive for Covid-19 again. He had earlier got a negative result in his second test but tested positive in the third round and is now set to undergo another test on Thursday.

FULHAM RELEGATED

LONDON: Fulham were relegated from the Premier League with a 2-0 loss at home to Burnley on Monday that assured the Claret's of their top-flight status. Agencies

'Windies may never return to dominate world cricket'

PTI ■ KINGSTON

Pace legend Curly Ambrose believes the current lot of Caribbean youngsters doesn't really understand what cricket means to the West Indies and so the two-time world champions will never be able to relive the glory days again.

West Indies had lifted first two World Cup titles in 1975 and 1979 and it took 33 years for the team to claim another ICC title when Darren Sammy had guided them to the 2012 T20 World Cup crown and repeated the feat four years later.

"Most of the youngsters we have now probably don't quite understand what cricket means to West Indians in the West Indies and abroad because cricket is the only sport that really unites Caribbean people," Ambrose told *Talk Sports Live*.

"This is no disrespect to the players we have now because we have a couple of guys who have some quality in them and can become great, but what we



have to understand is that I don't think we will ever see those great, exceptional glory days again."

The 57-year-old, who claimed 405 wickets in 98 Tests between 1988 and 2000, said it is difficult to find talented cricketers from the island nation nowadays.

"It's going to be difficult to find another Viv Richards or a

(Demond) Haynes and (Gordon) Greenidge, a Brian Lara, Richie Richardson, you know, a Malcolm Marshall, Curtly Ambrose, Courtney Walsh, Michael Holding, Andy Roberts, and the list goes on and on, Clive Lloyd," Ambrose said.

"It's going to be extremely difficult to find those quality players again." Ambrose said West Indies team can improve their ICC rankings but won't be able to dominate the way it did in the 80s and 90s.

"When we were the best team in the world, West Indians all over the globe could walk and boast about how good we were because we were the best, so it's going to be difficult to see those glory days again," he said.

"Yes, we can be competitive and climb up the ICC rankings and be a force to be reckon with again, but those glory days, I don't think we will see them again."

Nadal casts doubts over Olympics participation



Rome: Two-time Olympic champion Rafael Nadal on Tuesday became the latest top tennis player to admit that he had not yet decided whether he would participate in the Tokyo Games this summer, still giving himself time to decide according to "circumstances."

The 34-year-old Spaniard won Gold in the singles in Beijing in 2008, adding another Gold in the doubles with Marc Lopez in Rio de Janeiro five years ago.

"In a normal world I would never consider missing the Olympics. There is no doubt about that," he said. "Everybody knows how important the Olympics are for me.

"Under these circumstances, I don't know. Let's see what's going on in the next couple of months. But I need to organise my schedule."

Nadal is the latest top tennis star to voice his concerns about the Tokyo Games. On Monday, Serena Williams said she was undecided about going to the Olympics. AFP

Indian shooters leave for training-cum-competition tour of Croatia

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Olympic-bound Indian shooting team on Tuesday left for Croatia for a two and a half months training-cum-competition tour, its final tune-up to the upcoming Tokyo Games.

With coaches and support staff in tow, a 13-member Indian shooting team took off for Croatian capital Zagreb, where it will undergo a training camp before leaving for Osijek to take part in the European Championships (May 20 to June 6) followed by the combined ISSF World Cup (June 22 to July 3).

"Team India takes off in 20 mins. Bon Voyage, Get the nose to the ground and work hard for your inevitable success team," Raninder Singh, president of the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) tweeted just before the team's departure.

The two Olympics bound skeet shooters Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Mairaj Ahmad Khan will be based in Italy.

The Indians, including Gurjoat Singh Khangura, took part in the ongoing shotgun World Cup in Lonato, where they could not make

the final of the men's skeet event on Monday.

The team left in a chartered flight arranged by the NRAI.

After the stint in Croatia, the team will directly leave for Tokyo to participate in the Olympics, beginning on July 23.

The ISSF World Cup in Osijek is being organised in place of the one earlier scheduled in Baku, Azerbaijan (from June 21 to July 2), which got cancelled due to a surge in Covid-19 cases in that country.

There will be nine coaches for the 13 rifle and pistol shooters but some coaches like Samareesh Jung, Jaspal Rana and Ronak Pandit could not travel with the team for various reasons.

Foreign rifle coach Oleg Mikhailov was also a part of the travelling contingent but longtime pistol coach Pavel Smirnov could not leave on Tuesday as he did not get his visa. He is likely to join the team next week.

As per the standard Covid-19 protocols in Croatia, the Indian contingent will serve a mandatory quarantine before starting the training.