

OPINION 8
NEPAL SLIPS INTO
DEEPER CRISIS**WORLD 11**
HAMAS, ISRAEL
FIGHTING ESCALATES**SPORT 14**
SHAFALI, RADHA
TO PLAY IN WBBL

LUCKNOW, FRIDAY MAY 14, 2021; PAGES 14 ₹3



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ANURAG BASU
LAUDS SANYA
MALHOTRA
12 VIVACITY

States' jab tender not easy as global supply runs dry

Foreign vaccine makers busy meeting pre-orders for others

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

States have started floating separate tenders to procure Covid-19 vaccines from abroad, but experts feel they should not expect much from the global market which is facing acute shortages of vaccines, too.

Most of the foreign vaccine makers are busy meeting their pre-order commitments to other countries, experts said, giving the instance of the US which is stockpiling Pfizer made vaccines in a big way. Similarly, Australia on Thursday secured 25 million doses of the coronavirus vaccine produced by US pharmaceuticals manufacturer Moderna.

There is a serious dearth of vaccine in the global market, because the number of suppliers is limited and demand too high from across the world.

The Chinese vaccines are likely to be a strict "no no" for many countries considering that Seychelles, which mostly used Chinese vaccines made by Sinopharm to vaccinate its people, continue to report high cases.

Moderna and Pfizer are already busy executing existing orders of various countries. Recently, the European Union sued AstraZeneca, which developed Oxford University's vaccine known as Covishield in India, over not honouring the vaccine supply contract.

It is unlikely that AstraZeneca, which has a partner in India, will enter into a contract with any of the States floating global tenders for Covid-19 vaccines, said Dr RK Dhamija, head of Neurology Department of Lady Hardinge Medical College, Delhi.

The experts also said any order takes time to ramp up

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production since the key ingredients are biological in nature and can't be mass produced initially keeping safety in mind.

Public health expert KS Reddy from the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) said India should have placed order much earlier foreseeing shortages given the huge population to be vaccinated.

The experts also felt that instead of allowing States to look for import of anti-Covid vaccines on their own, the Centre should have taken up centralised procurement to ensure that it can bargain the vaccine at the competitive price and then made available to States as per their consumption.

Continued on Page 11

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES: 2,40,31,730
(+3,28,506)

DEATHS: 2,62,044 (+3,691)

RECOVERED: 2,00,54,010
(+3,25,213)

ACTIVE: 37,05,600

MAHA: 52,69,292 (+42,582)

K'TAKA: 20,88,488 (+35,297)

KERALA: 20,50,890 (+39,955)

UP: 15,80,980 (+17,745)

DELHI: 13,72,475 (+10,489)

Covishield 2nd dose gap raised to 12-16 weeks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

For the second time in three months, the Government has increased the intervals between two doses of Serum Institute of India (SII)'s Covishield from six to eight weeks to 12 to 16 weeks.

In March, States and UTs were told to increase the gap from 28 days to six-eight weeks "for better results". Now on Thursday, the Union Health Ministry said at a Press conference that it has accepted the recommendation of the expert panel to extend the gap between the first and second dose of the Covishield vaccine to 12-16 weeks. The current gap between two doses of the vaccine is six-eight weeks.

Earlier in the day, the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation had recommended the same to the Centre. No changes, however,

have been made to the interval of Covaxin, Dr VK Paul, Niti Aayog member (Health), said at a routine presser.

"This is beneficial both from the efficacy and the immunogenicity standpoint. This is a very good move because this is based on data that the Government received on the basis of which they made a good scientific decision to increase the gap," Adar Poonawalla, CEO of SII said.

Continued on Page 11

Sputnik V from next week

NEW DELHI: Sputnik V, the vaccine against the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) developed by Russia's Gamaleya National Centre, is likely to be the first foreign jab to be available in Indian market. The Union Health Ministry on Thursday said it will be available in markets across country from early next week. Dr VK Paul, member, NITI Aayog, said the local production of Sputnik V, often called the world's first vaccine against the viral disease, will begin in July. Hyderabad-based Dr Reddy's Laboratories will manufacture the vaccine in India.

PNS

COVAXIN TRIALS ON 2-18 YEARS OLD

India's apex drug regulator has granted permission for Covaxin trial on people of the 2 to 18 years age group, the Union Health Ministry said.

Bengal poised to fish out bodies floating in Ganga

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

With reports of dead bodies floating in the Ganga in adjoining areas of Bihar, the Bengal Government has placed the Malda district officials on alert asking them to fish out the bodies and arrange for their proper funeral, sources in the State Health Department said.

"There are reports of many bodies of people who died of corona floating in the Ganga in adjoining districts of Bihar. We do not want these bodies to float into Bengal causing health hazards and hence Rajarshi Mitra, the DM of Malda, has been alerted to take appropriate measures to fish out the bodies when they float into this State," a senior Health department official of the Bengal Government said.

Continued on Page 11



SEVERAL BODIES FOUND BURIED ON BANKS OF GANGA IN UNNAO; PROBE ORDERED

Unnao: The Unnao district administration has ordered a probe after some bodies were found buried on the Ganga riverbank in the Bighapur Patan tehsil area, officials said on Thursday. The district administration swung into action after locals spotted bodies buried on the Bakasr ghat of the river with some photographs of the bodies too going viral on social media, they said.

Serious errors in NRC draft, says Assam coordinator

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a serious development, I Assam's NRC Coordinator Hitesh Dev Sharma has informed the Supreme Court that "fundamental and serious errors" have crept in the draft National Register of Citizens (NRC) updating and sought "comprehensive re-verification."

Sharma in an affidavit said around 50,000 persons were found eligible to be included in NRC though their names were excluded from the draft NRC. "For a flawless complete NRC, names of these persons have to be included in NRC failing which NRC will lose its acceptability," said the affidavit submitted last week.

Detailing the discrepancies, the affidavit said out of around 30,684 people in Kamrup included in the supplementary NRC under the "Original Inhabitants" category, 7,446 were found ineligible while 23,345 were found eligible on ground other than "Original Inhabitant" category.

Continued on Page 11

PM to interact with DMs of 10 States to plan Covid strategies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid spike in Covid-19 cases across the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will directly interact with District Magistrates (DMs) of ten States from next week to work out containment strategy.

However, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said the PM-DMs meeting as an act of overlooking Chief Ministers and against the federal structure.

According to sources, the Prime Minister is scheduled to interact with the DMs of 54 districts of ten States and other officials from May 20 to devise strategy for speedy containment of the coronavirus cases with suggestions from the Empowered Group whose members will be present during the online interaction.

In the first phase, DMs of Maharashtra, West Bengal, UP,



Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Odisha, Jharkhand, Kerala, Puducherry and Haryana would participate in the video conferencing.

Maharashtra, the State with the largest positive cases in the country, will have the largest number of DMs who will interact with Modi, said sources.

Mamata has on several occasions attacked the Modi Government for violating the federal principles and bypassing the State Government.

Coronavirus survivor to corona warrior: A journey of sheer grit

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In this battle against Covid-19, there are a lot of faces around us that have fought hard, made a strong comeback and have set an example of courage and grit. They have showcased to the world that courage is a choice and willingness is the weapon to win any battle.

"Consider this as a war and yourself as a soldier" — Akshit K Thottam. Akshit K Thottam is a banker working in Gandhi town situated in Kutch, Gujarat. On April 6, he went for a test in a nearby hospital. After the test results were out, he was found positive with Covid-19. He shared his journey of successfully battling against Covid.

In the initial phase it was quite tough for him as he was living alone in Gujarat and his family was in Kerala. Urging the people to get the treatment as soon as possible, he said, "Keep your surroundings clean. If possible, change your pillow and bedsheets daily. Take as much rest as possible. Do a bit of yoga. Always keep your mind positive and try to be in touch with your family."

Informing the people about dos and don'ts, Akshit said, "You need to eat

healthy food. And drink as much water as you can. Try to do exercises that can keep your lungs active. Enjoy the sunsets and fresh air in the mornings and evenings". In a video message, Akshit sent his best wishes to everyone who is recovering from Covid-19.

Hope amid the pandemic: An elderly woman from Ujjain was suffering from 95 per cent lung infection. She successfully beat Covid after being on oxygen support for 80 days.

Continued on Page 11



Naxals turn to mainstream, thanks to corona scourge

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The coronavirus has triggered terror in the minds of the otherwise dreaded Naxals in their heartland Chhattisgarh where a number of top ultras have been afflicted with the deadly disease and deserted their ranks to seek better care and treatment in the nearby town and cities.

Driven to despair amid lack of medical facilities in the jungles, panic has gripped the ranks of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) following infection among a number of the commanders and deaths of a number of cadre owing to Covid-19.

While the Naxal leadership has in the past resorted to recruitment of children, the current move symbolises depravity of the worst kind as it is exploitation of children in the midst of a pandemic that has hit the entire humanity to some degree or the other. Former Director General of Border Security Force, Uttar Pradesh Police and Assam Police, Prakash Singh in a tweet said, "CPI-Maoist are learnt to have recruited nearly 700 schoolchildren



aged between 12-18 years during the coronavirus lockdown. A training camp for these schoolchildren was organised in the Abujhmad area of Chhattisgarh for a month."

The new recruitment is aimed at meeting the loss caused by desertion and despair.

Scrutiny of a number of letters of the Naxal cadres seized during combing operations in the Naxal-hit areas in Chhattisgarh and the State's triad with Andhra Pradesh and Odisha throws light on the state of mind of the naxals.

Continued on Page 11

All-out bid to set up O₂ plants, 1,594 in pipeline

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Amid growing reports of Covid-19 patients being unable to access oxygen, sometimes dying for want of it, the States and the Centre are going all out to mitigate the situation. As many as 1,594 oxygen plants (Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA)) are being set up across India.

Work is underway to set up 300 oxygen plants in Uttar Pradesh while Maharashtra is also setting up 350 such plants that will generate about 500 metric tonnes of oxygen a day.

Bihar will also set up 15 PSA plants in 15 districts while Haryana planned to install PSA at 60 hospitals. Delhi's AIIMS, Ram Manohar Lohia, Safdarjung hospital and Lady Hardinge Medical College are in the process of setting up oxygen plants by the end of this week.

Additionally, 1051 PSA plants sanctioned under the PM Cares Fund in March and April 2021 will be commissioned in the next three months in phases.

Of the 162 oxygen plants for which the Government had invited tenders in October last year, 74 have been installed and the rest is expected by June.

India's most populous State Uttar Pradesh is setting up 300 oxygen plants to meet the demand. UP had been receiving oxygen from plants in



Kashipur, Gazipur, Modinagar (Inox Air), Panipat and Roorkee, but that has clearly not been enough.

The State needed 960 tonnes of the gas, but could manage only 650 tonnes. It even planned a train to ferry oxygen from Bokaro, Jharkhand. Rather than trying to arrange for more, the Yogi Adityanath Government announced an oxygen audit with the help of the Indian Institutes of Technology Kanpur and Varanasi.

Maharashtra is in the process of setting up 350

Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) plants across the State that will generate about 500 metric tonnes of oxygen a day. The tender is being floated. Besides, the MVA Government in Maharashtra has come with a scheme that will return 100 per cent to 150 per cent of the investment of companies that set up oxygen generating plants in the state in the next couple of months.

Under the scheme, each district in the State will be equipped with oxygen generating plants.

Continued on Page 11

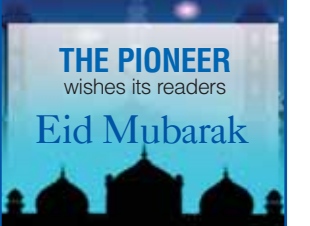
CAPSULE

OLI REAPPOINTED AS NEPAL PRIME MINISTER

Kathmandu: KP Sharma Oli, in his capacity as leader of the largest political party in Nepal's Parliament, was reappointed as the PM on Thursday after the Opposition parties, riddled by factionalism, failed to secure majority to form a Government.

TIMES GROUP CHAIRPERSON INDU JAIN DIES

Mumbai: Times Group chairperson Indu Jain died on Thursday at the age of 84, the flagship news channel of the group reported. In a tweet, Times Now called Jain a "lifelong spiritual seeker, pioneering philanthropist, distinguished patron of the arts, and passionate proponent of women's rights." Complications arising out of coronavirus infection led to her death, Times Group sources said.



HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Press and Offices of The Pioneer will remain closed on Friday, May 14, 2021 on account of Eid. The next issue of the newspaper will appear on Sunday

Dozens of bodies found buried in sand near Ganga in Unnao

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Barely days after bodies of suspected Covid patients were found floating in the Ganga river in Ghazipur, Ballia and Buxar (Bihar), dozens of bodies were found buried near the Ganges in Unnao. These bodies had not been completely burnt before being buried in sand. Tragically, stray dogs were seen feeding on the remains. A team of Unnao police was now engaged in an inquiry and searches were being conducted for more bodies.

District Magistrate of Unnao Ravinder Kumar said that the bodies were found buried in an area far from the river, after which a team was deputed to search for more such bodies, if any, in adjoining areas and carry out an enquiry to unravel the truth. "Action will be taken after the team submits its findings," he said.

Besides Unnao, over half-a-dozen bodies were found floating in the Ganga river in Chandauli. Soon after learning of the recovery of bodies, Joint Magistrate in Chandauli Prem Prakash Meena rushed to the scene with a team of officers, fished out the bodies and arranged for burial. The official suspected that unable to bear the cost of cremation, poor people of the area immersed

NHRC issues notice to govt

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Taking cognisance of a complaint over several dead bodies found floating in Ganga river in Uttar Pradesh and neighbouring Bihar, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued notices to the chief secretaries of both states and also the secretary to Union Ministry of Jal Shakti (Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation) on Thursday. The NHRC has asked for an action taken report within four weeks.

Issuing the notices, the Commission observed that it seemed the public authorities have failed to take concentric efforts in educating the masses and checking immersion of half burnt or unburnt dead bodies into Ganga river. The practice of disposal of dead

bodies in the sacred Ganga river is clearly in violation of guidelines of National Mission for Clean Ganga project of Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation.

The NHRC also noted that The River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Authorities Order, 2016, which relates to the measures for prevention, control and abatement of environmental pollution in the river and to ensure continuous adequate flow of water so as to rejuvenate the river to its natural and pristine condition and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, has laid down not only comprehensive principles to be followed for rejuvenation, protection and management of Ganga river but also cast a duty that no person shall do any act or

carry on any project or process or activity which, notwithstanding whether such act has been mentioned in this order or not, has the effect of causing pollution in Ganga river.

A complainant dated May 11 based on several media reports expressed apprehensions that these dead bodies were of Covid victims, hence their disposal in such a manner might seriously affect all those dependent on the holy river for their day to day activities. It was further stated that even if these dead bodies were not of Covid victims, then such practice/incidents are shameful to the society as a whole as that amounts to violation of human rights of even the deceased. The complainant requested the Commission's intervention for strict action against negligent public authorities, who failed to prevent such incidents.

the bodies in the river as part of the last ritual.

Only a few days ago, several bodies of suspected Corona victims were found floating in Ganga river in Ghazipur, Ballia in UP and Chausa area of Buxar in Bihar. The recovery of bodies in Buxar also triggered a blame

game between UP and Bihar with officials from both sides claiming that several bodies were a week old and had flown downstream. These incidents sparked fears about the scale of Covid crisis in the country. Officials of both states concurred that relatives of the deceased were probably unable

to find space for the last rites or were not in a condition to bear the cost. More reports of floating bodies also came in from north Bihar district of Katihar. Villagers living nearby claimed that they had been complaining to the administration to remove the bodies but the requests fell on deaf ears.

Gangs providing hospital beds to patients in Meerut at a premium

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With Covid cases spiking in western Uttar Pradesh, some gangs are on the prowl in Meerut providing beds to patients in state-run and private hospitals at a premium. In cases where patients require oxygen or ventilator, the facilitation fee automatically goes up.

Hapur businessman Prakhari Tyagi's wife tested Covid positive and was brought to Meerut's LLRM Medical College and Hospital where she was initially denied admission.

"As I stood at the Covid hospital gate contemplating the course of action, a stranger approached me and offered help. He promised to arrange a bed for Rs 25,000, to which I readily agreed and my wife was finally admitted," Tyagi said.

The modus operandi of the gang is that they stand and wait around the main gate of Covid hospital looking for harried relatives in search of beds and then offer their services at an exorbitant price. The mobile phone numbers of Deeeepu,

Ramesh and Sonka, supposed to be the facilitators, are doing the rounds in and around Meerut hospitals. On their part, the district officials claimed that fraud admission in hospitals was not possible because the system was centralised.

"There is some crisis, but it does not mean that gangs are working in the pretext of providing beds to the needy," District Magistrate of Meerut K Balaji said. With a surge in corona cases, people from adjoining regions are rushing their patients to Meerut for specialised treatment. It is estimated that half of the 3000 beds in Meerut are occupied by patients from Ghaziabad, Gautam Budh Nagar, Muzaffarnagar, Baghpat, Shamli and even from Delhi.

BJP MP from Meerut Rajendra Agarwal said that since Meerut is the centre of medical services in western UP, patients from neighbouring districts reach there for Covid-19 treatment. "Hence, it is no wonder that we have more patients in Meerut than the possible strength of hospitals. I have

written to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to increase the number of beds in hospitals in Meerut," he said.

On Thursday, Meerut reported 1,070 Covid cases, the highest in Uttar Pradesh. The other west UP districts reporting fresh cases in the last 24 hours included Gautam Budh Nagar (747), Muzaffar Nagar (373), Hapur (315) and Baghpat (271).

Such a large influx of Covid patients has led to paucity of beds in hospitals. Many patients have brought their own cots while numerous others were lying on the hospital verandahs. "Not all Covid positive cases need hospitalisation. People are bringing patients in the hospitals who can easily be treated in home isolation. We are advising people to not panic and treat patients at home. Since May 1, around 18,000 people in Meerut have tested Covid positive. "Hardly 20 per cent of them need hospital treatment. The rest can stay home and follow the Covid treatment protocol," Dr Sarojini Agarwal said.

1031.43 MT O₂ supplied across state in 24 hours

Lucknow (PNS): The UP government claimed that 1031.43 MT of oxygen was supplied to medical colleges, medical institutes, private hospitals and refillers across the state in the past 24 hours. Under self-production, 81.87 MT oxygen was also supplied through air separators units and 3,471 patients in home isolation were also supplied 26.44 MT oxygen through cylinders in the last 24 hours.

Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Awanish Kumar Awasthi said that a total of 1031.43 MT oxygen was supplied to Lucknow in the last 24 hours, of which 623.11 MT was supplied to the refillers by the Food Safety and Drug Administration. In addition, 313.02 MT oxygen was supplied to medical colleges and institutions in the state and 95.29 MT oxygen was supplied directly to private hospitals by suppliers. Awasthi said that 85.08 MT oxygen was supplied to Kanpur, 57.15 MT to Varanasi, 56.99 MT to Prayagraj, 261.41 MT to Meerut, 53.12 MT to Moradabad, 73.47 MT to Agra and 53.21 MT to Gorakhpur. Around 155.26 MT oxygen was supplied to Lucknow.

Prof Pathak leads AKTU team to save over 100 Covid patients

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University vice-chancellor, assistant registrar and physician have helped in the saving the lives of over 100 COVID-19 patients, including the staff and faculty of the university and their family members, in the difficult times of novel coronavirus pandemic. AKTU spokesperson Asheesh Mishra said Vice Chancellor Prof Vinay Kumar Pathak gave all possible help to the people affected by novel coronavirus infection in the ongoing epidemic.

Dr Ayush Shrivastava, assistant registrar of the university provided full support in this effort of the vice chancellor which included the relentless toil and running for medicines, oxygen or arrangement of hospital bed if required at any time of the day and night. Dr PK Pandey, consulting physician of the university, saved the lives of hundreds through his consultations.

Mishra said that in the last one month, Prof Pathak provided oxygen cylinders, life saving medicines, ambulances

etc. to the needy people affected by the virus and a special care room with three oxygen cylinders was prepared for any emergency.

"Sushil Verma, finance and accounts officer of the university, contracted COVID-19 infection and his health suddenly became very serious. When Prof Pathak received this information, he immediately sent an ambulance and got Sushil admitted to a private hospital with special efforts. Verma recovered after treatment in 15 days," he said.

Similarly, Dr RB Tripathi, a resident of Gomti Nagar, became infected with coronavirus and at that time there was no one at his house. Dr Tripathi called the vice chancellor in the middle of the night and told him that he was coronavirus positive and his oxygen level was decreasing, the vice chancellor sent an oxygen cylinder to Dr Tripathi in the night itself. He also arranged to get him admitted in a hospital. Dr Tripathi returned home after recovering from hospital in about 10 days," Mishra said.

Citing another instance, he said that the mother of

Praveen Kumar, an employee working in the university, tested positive for the novel coronavirus infection. When her condition worsened and she needed oxygen, the vice chancellor immediately arranged oxygen cylinders and provided oxygen to Kumar's mother.

"Along with this, Rambhauji Kanaujia, the mother-in-law of Vinod Kumar who works in the university, was infected by the coronavirus and her oxygen level decreased very rapidly. In such a situation, Vinod reported the condition to the vice chancellor and Prof Pathak immediately contacted the doctors. The physician asked to provide her oxygen support. The vice chancellor immediately arranged an oxygen cylinder and provided oxygen support to her and also arranged to get the patient admitted to King George's Medical University after which she recovered," Mishra said.

The vice-chancellor and his team also helped former officer of secretariat and advisor in AKTU, Nand Lal Yadav, his wife and son Shishir Ranjan who got infected.

Priyanka seeks probe supervised by HC judge

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra targeted the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh over the recovery of dead bodies floating in Ganga and other rivers of the state and burial of bodies along Ganga river banks in Unnao and demanded a judicial inquiry supervised by a high court judge. She further alleged that the state government was trying to fudge figures related to cases and deaths due to Covid infection.

With corona cases continuing to rise across the country, dead bodies have been found floating in rivers and water bodies in various states of India. In Uttar Pradesh, dozens of decaying bodies have been found in the Ganga river in Ghazipur, Ballia, Chandauli and other parts of the state. There have also been

reports of mass burials being carried out by deceased's kin on river banks in other parts of UP.

In a series of tweets on Thursday, Priyanka said: "According to the news reports, bodies are flowing in the river in Ballia, Ghazipur and hundreds of dead bodies are buried along the river in Unnao. Death figures in cities like Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Jhansi, Kanpur are being watered down by many times. Extreme inhumanity is happening in Uttar Pradesh."

Terming the situation in Uttar Pradesh as 'inhuman and criminal', the Congress leader alleged, "The government is busy sprucing up its image while people are suffering unimaginably and dying. Under these circumstances, a judicial enquiry should be immediately initiated under the supervision of a high court judge."

CITYBRIEFS

LSWA AWARENESS DRIVE

Liquor Sellers' Welfare Association (LSWA) carried out an awareness drive at shops after they opened on Thursday and pasted 'No mask, no wine' and 'No mask, no entry' outside. The drive was carried out by LSWA general secretary KL Maurya and other officer-bearers, including Devesh Jaiswal, Vikas Srivastava, Neeraj Jaiswal, Shanker Kanaujia and Sachin Jaiswal. Maurya said it's the moral responsibility of liquor

sellers to make consumers aware about the importance of wearing masks and practising social distancing.

GOLD MEDAL

Siddharth Narayan, a class III student of CMS, Aliganj Campus II, grabbed gold medal in National Hindi Olympiad, which was organised under the auspices of Hindi Utkarsh Mandal, Delhi.





कार्यालय : परियोजना प्रबंधक, निर्माण इकाई-14
यूपीपीओ प्रोजेक्ट्स कारपोरेशन लि०
(उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार का उपक्रम) CIN: U150UP197SGC004285
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पत्रांक- 135 / पीसीसीएल / परि प्रो-14 दिनांक: 11/05/2021

अति अल्प-कालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

एतद्वारा इस इकाई के अन्तर्गत जनपद रायबरेली के जिला विकित्तालय में 64 शैया, सामुदायिक स्वास्थ्य केंद्र रोहतास में 35 शैया तथा जिला विकित्तालय में 50 शैया हेतु मेडिकल गैस पावर लान्ड की खपतना से सम्बंधित निविदा सूचना संख्या-05/प्र.पी.ओ.सी.एल/परि.प्र.प्र.-14/2021-22 दिनांक : 11.05.2021 द्वारा ई-टेंडरिंग के माध्यम से प्रतियोगिता के आधार पर ऑनलाइन निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। उक्त कार्य की बिड दिनांक : 14.05.2021 से दिनांक 20.05.2021 अपरान्ह 3:00 बजे तक ऑनलाइन सर्वमिट की जा सकती हैं तथा तकनीकी बिड उसी दिन अपरान्ह 4:00 बजे अघोहस्ताक्षरी के कार्यालय में खोली जायेगी। निविदा से सम्बंधित आवश्यक सूचना, निविदा प्रपत्र, निविदा शर्त एवं ऑनलाइन निविदा अपलोड किये जाने व डाउनलोड किये जाने की विधि आदि का समस्त विवरण www.upprojects.org एवं <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर उपलब्ध हैं।

परियोजना प्रबंधक, निर्माण इकाई-14

EXTENSION OF SPECIAL TRAINS					
For the convenience of Rail Passengers, Railways have decided to extend the Periodicity of run of the following Special Trains as per the details given below :-					
Train No.	From	To	Via	Frequency/ Days of run	Period of Extension
09035	Mumbai Central	Manduadih	Lucknow	Friday & Tuesday	on 21 & 25.05.2021
09036	Manduadih	Dadar	Lucknow	Sunday & Thursday	on 23 & 27.05.2021
09049	Mumbai Central	Samastipur	Barabanki Jn.	Mon, Tue, Thu & Saturday	on 22, 24, 25 & 27.05.2021
09050	Samastipur	Mumbai Central	Barabanki Jn.	Wed, Thu, Sat & Monday	on 24, 26, 27 & 29.05.2021
09061	Bandra Terminus	Barauni Jn.	Lucknow	Monday	on 24.05.2021
09062	Barauni Jn.	Bandra Terminus	Lucknow	Thursday	on 27.05.2021
09073	Bandra Terminus	Gorakhpur	Barabanki Jn.	Sun, Wed, & Thursday	on 23, 26 & 27.05.2021
09074	Gorakhpur	Bandra Terminus	Barabanki Jn.	Tue, Fri, & Saturday	on 25, 28 & 29.05.2021
09087	Udhna	Chhapra	Varanasi Jn.	Friday	on 28.05.2021
09088	Chhapra	Udhna	Varanasi Jn.	Sunday	on 30.05.2021
09099	Bandra Terminus	Mau Jn.	Jaunpur Jn	Tuesday	on 25.05.2021
09100	Mau Jn.	Bandra Terminus	Jaunpur Jn	Thursday	on 27.05.2021
09117	Mumbai Central	Bhagalpur	Barabanki Jn.	Friday	on 21.05.2021
09118	Bhagalpur	Mumbai Central	Barabanki Jn.	Monday	on 24.05.2021
09123	Bandra Terminus	Ghazipur City	Lucknow	Monday	on 24.05.2021
09124	Ghazipur City	Valsad	Lucknow	Wednesday	on 26.05.2021
09129	Vadodara Jn.	Danapur	Lucknow	Monday	on 24.05.2021
09130	Danapur	Vadodara Jn.	Lucknow	Tuesday	on 25.05.2021
09175	Mumbai Central	Bhagalpur	Barabanki Jn.	Sunday	on 23.05.2021
09176	Bhagalpur	Mumbai Central	Barabanki Jn.	Tuesday	on 25.05.2021
09177	Mumbai Central	Bhagalpur	Barabanki Jn.	Wednesday	on 26.05.2021
09178	Bhagalpur	Mumbai Central	Barabanki Jn.	Saturday	on 29.05.2021
09181	Bandra Terminus	Danapur	Lucknow	Tuesday	on 25.05.2021
09182	Danapur	Vadodara	Lucknow	Thursday	on 27.05.2021
09303	Dr. Ambedkar Nagar	Guwahati	Lucknow	Friday	on 28.05.2021
09304	Guwahati	Dr. Ambedkar Nagar	Lucknow	Monday	on 31.05.2021
09453	Ahmedabad	Samastipur	Barabanki Jn.	Sunday	on 30.05.2021
09454	Samastipur	Ahmedabad	Barabanki Jn.	Wednesday	on 02.06.2021
09467	Ahmedabad	Danapur	Lucknow	Sunday	on 23.05.2021
09468	Danapur	Ahmedabad	Lucknow	Tuesday	on 25.05.2021
09501	Okha	Guwahati	Lucknow	Friday	on 21.05.2021
09502	Guwahati	Okha	Lucknow	Monday	on 24.05.2021
09521	Rajkot	Samastipur	Barabanki Jn.	Wednesday	on 26.05.2021
09522	Samastipur	Rajkot	Barabanki Jn.	Saturday	on 29.05.2021
09193	Mumbai Central	Gorakhpur	Barabanki Jn.	Monday & Thursday	on 17 & 20.05.2021
09194	Gorakhpur	Mumbai Central	Barabanki Jn.	Wed & Sat	on 19 & 22.05.2021
09133	Bandra (T)	Ghazipur City	Lucknow	Wednesday	on 19.05.2021
09134	Ghazipur City	Valsad	Lucknow	Friday	on 21.05.2021
09135	Surat	Bhagalpur	Lucknow	Wednesday	on 19.05.2021
09136	Bhagalpur	Ratlam	Lucknow	Thursday	on 20.05.2021
09429	Ahmedabad	Muzaffarpur	Barabanki Jn.	Monday	on 17.05.2021
09430	Muzaffarpur	Ahmedabad	Barabanki Jn.	Tuesday	on 18.05.2021
09435	Ahmedabad	Danapur	Lucknow	Thursday	on 20.05.2021
09436	Danapur	Ahmedabad	Lucknow	Saturday	on 22.05.2021
09005	Bandra (T)	Barauni Jn.	Lucknow	Friday	on 21.05.2021
09006	Barauni Jn.	Bandra (T)	Lucknow	Monday	on 24.05.2021
09097	Bandra (T)	Barauni Jn.	Barabanki Jn.	Saturday	on 15 & 22.05.2021
09098	Barauni Jn.	Bandra (T)	Barabanki Jn.	Tuesday	on 18 & 25.05.2021

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

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

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856 test Covid positive, 35 succumb

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The single-day Covid cases remained below the 1,000-mark on the second day on the trot on Thursday. The state capital recorded 856 fresh infections while 2,432 patients recovered. However, 35 deaths were reported in the district.

Besides, with the recovery rate in Uttar Pradesh reaching 86 per cent, the state is also witnessing a steep decline in the positivity rate, which continues to be below 10 per cent. However, the Covid fatality rate (CFR) is a concern, which is as high as 12.9 per cent.

The daily Covid positivity rate — the number of positive cases against the total tests conducted — is now 7 per cent, which was 16.84 per cent on April 24.

According to official figures in the state, 17,775 new infection cases were found in the last 24 hours. During this period, 281 patients died while 19,425 recovered. The government figures show that the total active cases in the state are 2,04,658. “It shows that the recovery rate in the state has now increased to 86 per cent,” a government spokesman said.

Although the number of new infections is decreasing in the state for the last two days, the death figure is not coming down in proportion to the recovery. A total of 16,646 deaths have been recorded in

the state so far.

Lucknow reported maximum deaths at 35 in the last 24 hours while the highest single-day infections (1,070) were found in Meerut and 15 patients died in the last 24 hours.

Besides, 288 new cases & 16 deaths were recorded in Kanpur, 747 cases & 11 deaths in Gautam Buddha Nagar, 354 new cases & 10 deaths in Jhansi, 504 new cases & six deaths in Moradabad, 775 new infections & nine deaths in Gorakhpur, 772 cases & six deaths in Varanasi, and 240 cases and five deaths in Prayagraj.

In Mahoba, eight new Covid cases were detected while 10 patients lost their lives. In Bahraich, 109 new cases and 12 deaths were reported while 10 patients died and 364 new infections were detected in Ghazipur.

Meanwhile, Lucknow DM Abhishek Prakash said that in order to break the chain of coronavirus transmission, it was necessary for every patient to be provided medicine kits while vaccination should be carried out at a faster pace. He said that to expedite testing, tracking and treatment, Chetak Bike teams have been constituted that will visit the homes of patients in rural areas and provide them medicine kits.

Prakash said it was impor-



A woman giving samples for Covid testing at RMLIMS in Lucknow on Thursday

Pioneer

tant to expedite the testing in the rural areas and a minimum of five static teams be stationed at the community health centres while local people should be informed about them so that they could get themselves tested. The DM said gram panchayats and nagar panchayats would have to ensure that vaccination camps were organised in their areas. He said that CHCs would have to be more active to keep an eye on home isolation patients

and tell them when it was important to shift to hospitals.

District Covid incharge Roshan Jacob on Thursday had a meeting with the authorities of Balrampur, RSM, Lok Bandhu and Civil hospitals on the issues of manpower and oxygen supply. Balrampur Hospital officials said they have 300 beds, of which 160 are occupied. They said they need manpower, technicians, BiPAP machines

and anaesthetists. He also said that work was in progress for changing the oxygen pipeline. The representatives of Lok Bandhu Hospital said they have 200 beds, of which 70 are occupied, and they need manpower to work with full capacity. They also requested for AYUSH doctors to help. Meanwhile, Joint Director, Health, GS Bajpai said they have found 3000 presumptive corona cases in rural areas during the surveillance.

Woman found hanging, father alleges murder by husband, in-laws

Lucknow (PNS): A Sitapur native alleged that his daughter's husband and in-laws first killed her and then hanging her to make it look like a case of suicide. He lodged a case at Chowk police station. The victim was identified as Priya Tiwari, who was married to Rishabh Tiwari of Dilaram Baradari in Chowk. Priya's father Jay Narayan Awasthi said she was being tortured for dowry ever since she got married. “I sought help from my relatives to help settle the dispute, but Rishabh and his parents were not convinced. On Thursday, I was informed about Priya's death. I suspect they killed her and hanged her to show that she committed suicide,” he said. Police registered a case of dowry death.

Meanwhile, a youth was found hanging at his house in Radhagran Colony under Thakurganj police station area on Wednesday night. As per reports, Ajay Sonkar (26) was found hanging from the ceiling with a saree tied around his neck around 9 pm. Police sent the body for autopsy and started further investigation.

Meanwhile, a resident of Indiranagar lodged a case against a youth of his locality, alleging that the latter lured his daughter into running away. In his complaint, he stated that the accused had an evil design in his mind for the girl and he had acted fresh with her in the past. “We had scolded him and he promised to distance himself from her. However, he lured my daughter into eloping with him in the afternoon on May 9,” he said.

DM for Eid celebrations with Covid guidelines



A makeshift shop selling sewain comes up in Old City on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr

Pioneer

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash on Thursday issues directions for celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr with Covid protocols. He said no programme would be organised in the hotspot areas and containment zones and no visitors would be allowed there as it would be considered as the violation of the Epidemic Diseases Act, Disaster Management Act, lockdown and Section 144. He said that in the rural areas, people must refrain from keeping stones,

soda bottles and bricks on the rooftops. “Nobody will be allowed to keep sharp-edged weapons in rural areas,” he said.

He said no sound instruments would be played between 10 pm and 6 am and no one would collect in a group of five or more for any programme or event without the permission of the city magistrate.

He said there would be no sale or bursting of firecrackers within a distance of 100 metres from any religious place, court, hospital and educational institution from May 10 to July 9.

GGA extends helping hand to KGMU

Lucknow (PNS): Global Georgian Academy (GGA) has come forward in this hour of need to help King George's Medical University deal with the novel coronavirus pandemic. KGMU spokesperson Dr Sudhir Singh said that the members of Global Georgian Academy who were international experts had formed a group to give advice and intellectual help to the KGMU.

“The aim of this group is to take care of the patients and the families of KGMU and Gandhi Memorial and Associated Hospitals. The group consists of multidisciplinary experts on different aspects of COVID-19 and will provide joint consultation,” he said.

Dr Singh said that it was expected that with their intervention, the COVID-19 management in Uttar Pradesh would further improve. Prof Dhavendra Kumar from London School of Medicine is the president of this group and KGMU Vice Chancellor Lt General (Dr) Bipin Puri its mentor.

Mobile phone looted by loader driver

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An unidentified loader driver looted a mobile phone from a man and pushed him down from the vehicle before speeding off in Vibhuti Khand police station area. The complainant said he was not given a copy of the FIR by police. Later, a case was registered in this connection.

Kedar Nath Saini of Surya Nagar in Para said he was coming to Lucknow on May 11 after being given a lift by the loader driver. Saini said he sat beside the driver and kept his bag carrying his mobile phone in between.

He said the driver stopped the loader at Polytechnic crossing for a while. “When I checked the bag and did not find my mobile phone, I enquired from the driver. The driver pushed me down and sped off,” he said.

He dialled police control room and a cop asked him to lodge a case at Vibhuti Khand police station. “The incident took place around 7:30 pm and I lodged a complaint around 11 pm the same day. I later sent another complaint by speed post the next day. I could not note down the registration number of the loader,” he added.

In another case, a woman

was deprived of her mobile phone in Vikas Nagar. Lord Shakespeare of Vikas Nagar said his wife Deepali Chaudhary's phone was stolen when she was taking a stroll in a park on May 8.

“Deepali was advised to walk by our doctor and she used to visit the Central Academy Park in the area. On May 8 evening, she reached the park and put her phone and bag on a bench. When she was done with walking, she noticed that her mobile missing was missing. She had also kept Rs 500 in the backcover of the phone,” he said.

Thunderstorm hits mango crop, causes premature fruit drop

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The thunderstorm on Wednesday evening hit the mango crop in Lucknow district. In addition to several other issues which the mango farmers are facing in the pandemic, this is another problem which has emerged. Experts said that though the impact of the thunderstorm was not too much, more storms were expected to come in future.

President of Mango Growers Association, Insram Ali, said that the impact of the thunderstorm was not too much but more such weather conditions were expected which would affect the mango crop. “Although the mango production is good this year, at 35 lakh metric ton, apart from the thunderstorm, our main problem is taking mangoes to the mandis in the period of lockdown,” he said. CISH Director Shaileendra Rajan said that mango farmers faced losses of premature fruit drop due to heavy winds on Wednesday night. “At some places, the fruit drop was as low as 1-2 per cent but there was fruit loss up to 6 per cent where the intensity of the wind was high and orchards were not surrounded by trees or other structures. Fruit drop due to heavy winds causes losses to the mango farmers. During the lockdown, the unavailability of quick and cheap transportation from the remotely situated mango orchards forces farmers to utilise these mangoes at the vil-

lage level. If the fruit drop is too heavy, then only it can be sold in the mandis, otherwise utilisation of premature fruits for making value-added products is the only option with them,” he said. Rajan said that premature fruit drop was a regular feature and losses depended on the frequency and intensity of the winds.

“The losses due to heavy winds vary from place to place. Sometimes it may be only 1-2 per cent but the losses can be colossal with 20 per cent premature fruit drop. In the Malihabad region, 10-15 per cent of matured raw mango fruits drop due to heavy winds and storms or for other reasons,” he said. He said that the Dussehri fruits had not developed and the stone and physiological maturity was yet to be achieved.

“In general, Dussehri fruits have attained very good size but if these are artificially ripened the quality will not be good to get good market price. Fruits will shrink and the taste will be acidic. The best utilisation is to prepare dishes that require raw mango fruits. People interested in making traditional products from unripe mango have a good opportunity to make panna, sweet chutney, khatai, instant pickle, and many other dishes. In the near future, if the fruit drop is because of storms there is a possibility that fruits can be forced to be ripened by the traders and sold out in the market,” the CISH director said.

Health dept plans to set up more paediatric ICUs for third wave

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

With reports suggesting that the third wave of COVID-19 could hit children in a big way, the Uttar Pradesh Health department has geared up to meet the challenge and plans are underway to establish paediatric intensive care units across the state. Director General Medical and Health DS Negi said that they had formed a panel of experts for this and would follow the recommendations of this group.

When asked why they were thinking on the lines of setting up paediatric intensive units, Negi said that this was because no vaccine had yet been developed for children and they were more vulnerable and in view of the warnings issued by experts that the novel coronavirus could affect kids in the third wave, there was no harm in making these preparations.

“The expert group has advised making preparations for the pediatric patients also,” he said. Negi admitted that discussions were still on through online meetings of the expert panel group and the department was waiting for the final recommendations on the basis on which it would act.

When asked if they had kept in view any timeline of the arrival of the third wave, he said that it could not be said when it would come but one had to be prepared. He also said that after surveillance in the rural areas, they were focusing on testing, contact tracing and tracking. Negi said that for the

third corona wave, the health-care infrastructure would also be strengthened.

Meanwhile, a member of the expert panel group, which is formulating the recommendations for the third wave, said that they were still debating and deliberating on various points. “In the first and second waves there were 12 per cent patients in the pediatric age groups out of the total COVID-19 population, but we feel that the numbers will be three to four times higher in the third wave and hence we should be ready for management of pediatric cases. What is also important is the training of healthcare workers and the availability of pediatric drugs and other medical supplies because it is seen that at the last moment all the supplies disappear and if we are prepared we will be ready to manage the situation,” the experts panel member said.

The member pointed out that this did not mean that children would exceed the adults in terms of testing positive because 60 per cent of the COVID-19 patients would still be adults. “The preparations for adult COVID-19 patients will continue but we will do more pediatric work. In the current scenario, pediatric COVID-19 patients are being treated only by the King George's Medical University,” the member said. The expert panel member said that this was expected because this had been seen in other countries.


“Whenever the schools open, the children will be unimmunised because vaccines

are available only for age groups up to 18 years. The children will be at a risk because the virus is mutating and it will try to look for a host which has no immunity against it,” the member pointed out. When asked what the panel was deciding in terms of decreasing the number of deaths witnessed in the second wave, the member said that in children, the novel coronavirus infection had been less severe.

“It was less severe (in children) in wave one and wave two and we do not think it will be severe in wave three unless and until the virus undergoes mutations which are not known. Deaths can be checked by stopping the transmission cycle either by Covid appropriate behaviour or by vaccination and if that fails by early detection and by oxygenating the patients before there is irreversible damage,” the member said. The member said that despite the large population, the health system responded well in the country and was able to manage the pandemic when countries known for their superior health infrastructure had failed. Regarding the oxygen crisis, the member said that oxygen preparedness would be there and the people had to be educated to take care of themselves.

“As per the trends which were prevalent, it has been seen that the first wave was light followed by a strong second wave and a light third wave and then a strong fourth wave. This was a trend which was noticed in the Spanish Flu also,” the member said.


<div>  <div> <div>बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ोदा</div> <div>Bank of Baroda</div> </div> </div>			DEMAND NOTICE
Notice Under Section 13(2) of 2002 for Enforcement of Security Interest			
Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized officer of Bank of Baroda Issued Demand Notices under Section 13 (2) of SARFAESI ACT 2002 to the Borrower/s/Guarantor/s herein below mentioned, Consequent upon the dispatch of such Notices through Post And returned Bank undelivered from the Borrower/s/Guarantor/s addresses. Through this Publication they are hereby called upon to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of publication of said notice failing which the bank will take the possession of the immovable and movable property will sell it through the process in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 8 & 9 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.			
Sl. No	Name & Address of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/Date of Demand Notice	Outstanding Amount	Description of the Immovable Property
Branch : B N Road, Nataraj Complex, 11, B.N. Road, Kaiserbagh, Lucknow.			
1.	Borrower : Sabbir Husain S/o Noor Mohd., 9/617 Sector-9, Indra Nagar, Lucknow - 226016 Co-Borrower: Fatima Sabbir W/o Sabbir Hussain, 9/617 Sector-9, Indra Nagar, Lucknow - 226016 Date of Demand:- 03.05.2021	Rs. 23,37,302/- + interest due since 01.01.2021	House No. 9/617, Type- L.I.G Sector-9, Indra Nagar Extension Yojana, Total Area 40.70 Sq. Mt., Bounded As: East: House No. 9/616, West: House No. 9/618, North: 6 Mt Wide Road, South: House No. 9/628
Date: 14.05.2021		Place: Lucknow	Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda


<div><div><div>KARVY</div><div>FINANCE</div></div></div>				PUBLICATION OF NOTICE U/S 13(2) OF THE SARFAESI ACT.	
Corporate Office :- Karvy Financial Services Ltd. 703/704, 7th Floor, Hallmark Business Plaza, Sant Dyaneshwar Marg, Opp to Guru Nanak Hospital, Bandra (E), Mumbai - 400051.					
Notice is hereby given that the under mentioned borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) who have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loan facility obtained by them from the Karvy Financial Services Limited and whose loan accounts have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). The notices were issued to them under Section 13(2) of the Securitization and Re- construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (SARFAESI ACT) on their last known addresses, but they have been returned un-served and as such they are hereby informed by way of this public notice.					
Loan Agreement No./ Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor (s)	Demand Notice Date	Demand Amount	Description of secured asset(s) (Immovable property) /ies	Date Of NPA	
Loan Agreement No. 545691 Avdesh ParmarBorrower Anita ParmarCo Borrower Having Addresses At : 66/226, Akhand NagarNaripura, Agra - 282001	22nd April, 2021	Rs.26,14,414/- (Rupees Twenty Six Lakhs Fourteen Thousands and Four Hundred Fourteen Only) as on 12/02/2021	All That Piece And Parcel of House no 66/226-A, Akhand Nagar, Kh. No - 173, Measuring area 83.61 Sq. Meter & House No 66/226-B, Akhand Nagar, Kh. No -173, Agra Situated at Naripura, Agra which is bounded as under: North By: By house of Smt. Anita Devi, South By: By 9'0" wide Gali, East By: By Property of Shri Radhey Shyam, West By: By 7'0" wide Gali	1st June 2017	
Loan Agreement No. 508005 Deepa GuptaBorrower Bhartendu Gupta ...Co Borrower Having Addresses At : 551, Ga/35/2, Purana Sardari Kheda Alambagh, Lucknow - 226005	22nd April, 2021	Rs. 2792833/- (Rupees Twenty Seven Lakhs Ninety Two Thousands and Four Hundred Thirty Three Only) as on 12/02/2021	All That Piece & Parcel of Shop No FF-54 At Khazana Complex, Ashiyana Colony, Khazana Market, Lucknow which is bounded as under: North By: By Shop No FF - 53, South By: By Shop No FF - 55, East By: By Corridor, West By: By Shop No FF-91	1st June 2015	
Loan Agreement No. 545660 Deepak Kumar Gupta ...Borrower Annu Kumari ...Co Borrower Having Addresses At : 22/75 Bagh Anta Loha Mandi Agra - 282002	22nd April, 2021	Rs.43,39,577/- (Rupees Forty Three Lakhs Thirty Nine Thousands and Five Hundred Seventy Seven Only) as on 12/02/2021	All That Piece And Parcel of Nagar Nigam No 22/74-75, Measuring Area 133.77 Sq. Meter Situated at Bag Anta, Loha mandi, Agra which is bounded as under: North By : By House of Smt Rajkumari Agarwal, South By : By 6'0" Wide Gali, East By : By Others property, West By : By 12'0" Wide Gali	1st Sept 2016	
Loan Agreement No. 545396 Devendra SinghBorrower Rekha DeviCo Borrower Having Addresses At : Plot No 4, Mauja Mathura Bangar Andhuram Summerpur Colony Mathura - 281001	22nd April, 2021	Rs.22,39,580/- (Rupees Twenty Two Lakhs Thirty Nine Thousands And Five Hundred Eighty Only) As On 12/02/2021	All That Piece And Parcel Of Plot No 4, Measuring Area 100.33 Sq.Mtrs. Situated At Mauja Mathura Bangar Androom Summerpuri Colony, Kharsa No 494, Tehsil & District Mathura Which is Bounded As Under: North By: By Colony Road 18', South By: By Yamuna Nagar Colony, East By: By House Of Sh Bachan Singh, West By: By House Of Sh Dinesh Chand	1st Oct 2018	
Loan Agreement No. 510330 Mr.Indar Kumar Jain ...Borrower MrsVimla JainCo Borrower Having Addresses At : Ews Hno 8, Indra Puram, Rajpur Chungi, Agra - 282001	22nd April, 2021	Rs.21,74,920/- (Rupees Twenty One Lakhs Seventy Four Thousands And Nine Hundred Twenty Only) As On 12/02/2021	All That Piece And Parcel Of House No 81 Ews. Measuring Area 27.87 Sq. Mts. Situated At Indrapuram Housing Scheme, Taiganj Ward, Agra Which is Bounded As Under: North By : By Ews Houses, South By: By 6 Meters Wide Road East By: By Ews Houses, West By: By House No 80 Ews	1st July 2016	
Loan Agreement No. 512807 Manoj Kumar SinghBorrower Sunil Singh Raghuvver SinghCo Borrowers Having Addresses At : 15/115 A, M.P. Pura Near Shanti Sweet Agra - 282001	22nd April, 2021	Rs.50,04,016/- (Rupees Fifty Lakhs Four Thousands And Sixteen Only) As On 12/02/2021	All That Piece And Parcel Of House No 15/115, Measuring Area 135.036 Sq. Mts. Situated At M.P. Pura, Taiganj, Agra Which is Bounded As Under: North By: By House Of Sri Poonam Singh South By: By Road, East By: By House Of Sri Roshan Singh, West By: By House Of Sri Kanhanya	1st Dec 2016	
Loan Agreement No. 540209 Yadunath Parashar ...Borrower Brjalva Parashar ...Co Borrower Having Addresses At :House No 31, Anand Puram, Kalauini Yamunapar, Mathura - 281001	22nd April, 2021	Rs.25,45,345/- (Rupees Twenty Five Lakhs Forty Five Thousands And Forty Five Only) As On 12/02/2021	All That Piece And Parcel Of Plot No 103, Admeasuring 92.89 Sq.Mtr. Situated At Bakey Mauja Shahjaadpur Tappa, Sonai, Androom Anandpuram, Tehsil Mahawan & District Mathura, Situated At Kharsa No 121 Which is Bounded As Under: North By: By Plot No 104, 50', South By: By Plot No 102, 50', East By: By Colony Road, 20' West By: By Plot No 125, 20'	1st June 2017	

The above borrower(s)/ or their guarantor(s)/mortgagor(s) (whenever applicable) are hereby called upon to make payment of outstanding amount within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which further steps will be taken after expiry of said 60 days under sub-section (4) of Section 13 SARFAESI Act. Furthermore, this is to bring your attention that under Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act, in case our dues together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by us are tendered at any time before the date fixed for sale or transfer, the secured asset shall not be sold or transferred by us, and no further step shall be taken by us for transfer or sale that secured asset.

Date : 12.05.2021
Place : Uttar Pradesh (UP)

Sd/-
Authorized Officer
For KARVY FINANCIAL SERVICES LIMITED


NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ


Notification
Pension Adalat June-2021, organised by North Central Railway, Prayagraj Division

As per guidelines issued by Railway Board, Pension Adalat will be organised by virtual means in Prayagraj Division of North Central Railway on 15.06.2021 (Tuesday). The Pensioner/Family Pensioner retired from Prayagraj Division may submit their grievance, if any, related to pension or settlement payment, in the DRM office Prayagraj by following medium latest by 25.05.2021.

- **By Whatsapp** - Scan your application and send it to **Mobile No. 7525001704** (Mr. Ajay Pratap Singh, WLI/PRYJ) by whatsapp.
- **By Email** - Scan your application and email it to **pkd070472@gmail.com**
- **By Post** - Send your application to Sr. DPO, North Central Railway, Prayagraj, Nawab Yusuf Road, Civil Lines, Prayagraj, UP-211001 by post. Please mention "Pension Adalat June-2021" on the envelop of your application.

Please mention following details in your application

- 1- Name of the applicant
- 2- Name of the deceased/retired employee
- 3- Designation/Last Working Station
- 4- Relation of the applicant with deceased
- 5- Correspondence Address
- 6- Mobile No.
- 7- Date of Retirement/Death
- 8- Nature of Retirement (Superannuation/VRS/CR/Death)
- 9- PPO No. (Photo copy to be enclosed)
- 10- Last Basic Pay and Pay Scale
- 11- Grievance in detail

Note:- To participate in "Pension Adalat June 2021" by virtual means, information will be sent to applicant on their mention Mobile No.

555/2021 V
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Cops keep close vigil on eve of Eid



Security forces keeping close watch in Dalmandi area on eve of Eid in Varanasi on Thursday

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PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The security forces were watchful, keeping close vigil on the activities of the people on the eve of Festival of Eid here on Thursday. In the morning hours, rush of customers to purchase various essential items were seen in many markets like Dalmandi, Nai Sarak and others. As the local administration was not in mood to repeat the same mistake as it had shown during the festival of Holi recently, the cops were seen taking out route marches in many places in view to ensure the implementation of Covid guidelines. On the occasion of Holi, groups of people

were seen openly violating all the norms, resulting in a second wave of coronavirus pandemic attacks with a high speed, paralysing all the local arrangements to fight against the pandemic. After Holi, in the month of April the district had found 45,346 positive cases with 176 casualties. However, since the administration has started taking some strict measures in this month, the number of corona cases has started declining. The district administration had put a two-day lockdown from April 29 which was, later on, extended till 7 am on May 17 on the orders of the state government. It was the 15th day of

corona curfew when during the morning hours, some markets witnessed heavy rush of people but after 1pm, most of them wore a deserted look. Despite this the maintenance of Covid guidelines on the festival of Eid on Friday would be a big challenge as the laxities, which were shown in Holi, may worsen the situation again. Last month, due to the detection of a huge number of cases, the health system virtually collapsed when the serious patients were seen struggling for oxygen, hospital beds, Remdesivir injections and even necessary medicines. Now with the efforts of Central and State governments, the situation has

improved to a great extent but now scarcity of sufficient vaccines has slowed down the process of fighting against coronavirus pandemic. At several hospitals, the beneficiaries were seen showing their anger as they were deprived of getting their first/ second doses on time.

Earlier, on the instructions of District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma, electric nebuliser machines and electric steamers are being distributed to different government hospitals as the doctors have recommended for nebulisation and steam for the better treatment of Covid patients in most of the hospitals during this second wave of pandemic. However, it was seen that these equipment are not available in sufficient quantities in the open markets.

In this direction, as many as 25 electric nebuliser machines were given free-of-cost to the Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital by the DM. Besides, 100 electric steamers were also provided to the same hospital a few days ago. Such facilities will continue to be provided to various hospitals for better medical care of Covid infected patients. Meanwhile, on the direction of the DM, Jan Sewa Kendras (public service centres) were kept open from Wednesday from 10 am to 1 pm.

The DM has instructed the centre operators to keep the centres open regularly and receive the applications from those families whose earning persons have died and upload their online applications under the National Family Benefit Scheme..



A deserted view of Jama Masjid during corona curfew imposed in wake of rising COVID-19 cases in Prayagraj

Pioneer

Symptoms of black fungus found in Corona patient

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Symptoms of Mucormycosis (black fungus) have been found in a corona infected patient in the SRN Hospital in the Prayagraj district. An alert has been sounded after receiving symptoms of black fungus in a patient admitted to the Covid ward of SRN Hospital.

Necessary screening of other serious patients is being conducted. Following the guideline issued by ICMR, there is a high risk of black fungus in corona-infected and

post-covid patients (infection-free). According to experts, this infection is dangerous for weak immunity and diabetes patients.

According to ICMR experts, Mucormycosis (black fungus) infection spreads very fast in the body. It can also occur on the nose, eyes, brain, lungs, and skin. With this disease, the people also lost their eyesight. At the same time, the jaw and nose bone of some patients is melted.

Black fungus infection prey on those who have weak body immunity. The risk of

infection is higher in corona-infected or patients who have become infected with covid infection. Their immune system is weakened during infection, such people easily fall prey to this infection. Especially patients of corona-infected people who have diabetes are at higher risk. Mucormycosis (black fungus) can take a dangerous form in corona infected when the sugar level increases.

Experts in the Ministry of Health said that if there are mild symptoms, doctors should be immediately con-

tacted. If any of the above symptoms are seen, it may be a black fungus infection. According to Dr Sujit Verma, co-in-charge of L3 Covid Hospital SRN, symptoms of black fungus have been found in a patient. Treatment is being done according to the guideline.

Its symptoms included-- nose pain, bleeding or nasal congestion, nose swelling, teeth or jaw pain or tooth fall, blurred vision, pain and fever, chest pain, headache, fever, cough, breathing problem and blood vomiting.

40 MT more LMO brought for Purvanchal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In its tireless efforts to ensure uninterrupted operation of the Oxygen Express trains, Varanasi division of North Eastern Railway (NER) received yet another consignment of two containers of oxygen loaded with 40 metric tonnes (MT) at Madhosingh railway station on Thursday. Within a week, it was the third such delivery of oxygen brought for the smooth treatment and saving the lives of Covid patients. Under the ongoing supply process of liquid medical oxygen (LMO) by Indian Railways to various parts of the country, this third



Two more LMO containers arrived at Madhosingh station on Thursday

Pioneer

consignment of two containers with a total of 40 MT LMO were also brought from Durgapur for the Covid

patients of this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP). Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vijay Kumar

Panjiar and other senior NER officers were present there to monitor the unloading work of LMO at Madhosingh railway station.

Panjiar said that for continuous supply of life-saving oxygen, the Indian Railways is making its best efforts to deliver the LMO to different parts on time. Senior Divisional Operation Manager (SDOM) Rohit Gupta said that the train reached Madhosingh station from Varanasi station through Green Corridor as during passing of this train all the railway stations between the two stations were kept on high alert and strict security surveillance was maintained.

Admn starts preparations for third wave

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Taking a lesson from the second wave of COVID-19, the district administration has started preparations in advance to face the third wave of the pandemic for which the experts have warned.

The state ministers Dr Neelkanth Tiwari and Ravindra Jaiswal along with the local public representatives, Divisional Commissioner Deepak Agrawal and District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma held a meeting with the 10 senior child experts of the district on Thursday and discussed the strategy to chalk out a full-proof action plan to face the third wave of the COVID-19 as the experts have warned. The experts have warned that the third wave of the pandemic will mainly affect the children.



Officers and public representatives reviewing COVID-19 situation in Varanasi on Thursday

Pioneer

In the meeting, the child experts pointed out the possible challenges which could arise in case of the third wave and they also suggested the measures to be taken to face the challenge. After having discussion with the experts and paying attention to the points raised by them, the meeting decided to enlist the health

facilities to be required to face the third wave such as ICU, NICU, PICU, beds with ventilators, etc, by making coordination with the concerned departments and persons and develop these facilities in the hospital thereafter. The meeting decided to develop the health infrastructure in such a way that the COVID-19 or

other diseases could affect the children and the challenge could effectively be faced in case the third wave comes.

The meeting decided to chalk out a concrete action plan regarding this in a week and started making implementation on it in a month. The people will also be made aware regarding this, the meeting decided.

783 more test positive in Varanasi

VARANASI (PNS): The district recorded an increase once again after the four days both in the death cases and positive cases during the last 24 hours. As many as 783 cases of Covid-19 were recorded on Thursday evening increasing the total number to 77,727 crossing the 77K-mark. With 12 more deaths recorded during the last 24 hours, the death toll increased to 672. As many as 643 patients of home isolation recovered, while as many as 86 have been recovered from the hospitals. The total number of patients cured in the district increased to 68,456 including 63,559 in home isolation and 4,897 in COVID-19 hospitals. In the first report of the day, 475 positive patients were found out of 5,044 reports

received and this figure increased to 783 out of 10,089 received samples as per report provided by the Health department this evening. The total active cases also increased to 8,599 from 8,557 which was a day ago. On Wednesday evening, as many as 583 positive cases were recorded and the total number was 76,944 while 6 deaths were reported and the death toll was 660. Earlier, in view of finding hundreds of new positive cases, with 9 new hotspots, the number of active hotspots was 538 and there was no green zone having been converted to red zones by a day ago. Out of total 3289 hotspots, 2760 are green zones and 578 are red zones.

The Health department continued the vaccination drive

on Thursday at 55 vaccination centres for the beneficiaries aged above from 45 years at vaccination centres of the district including Ramkrishna Mission Home of Service in Luxa, Shree Ram Lakshmi Narayan Marwadi Hindu Hospital in Godowlia, Mata Anandmayee Hospital in Shivala, Raja Baldev Das Birla Hospital in Machhodari, Mahila District Women Government Hospital in Kabirchaura, Pt Deen Dayal Government Hospital, near Pandeypur and ESIC, near Pandeypur.

REMDESIVIR INJECTIONS: The district administration will now make the Remdesivir injections available to the family members of corona patients from Friday

and for the purpose, a counter has been opened at Rifle Club, here. There is no shortage of Remdesivir injections and the district administration has now decided to make the same available to the family members of corona patients through the Red Cross Society, the DM Kaushal Raj Sharma informed. The injection will be made available as per the availability on the daily basis and the maximum six boils of the injection will be made available directly to the family members of the patients on the basis of original receipt of doctors or hospitals and ID card of the patient, the DM informed adding, but the maximum three boils will be made available at one time. One injection costs ₹ 1800 to be paid at counter, he informed

4.10 lakh Covid vax doses administered

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

As many as 4.10 lakh Covid vaccine shots were administered to recipients of all age groups, including above 45 years and between 18 and 44 years, in the district till May 12.

While 3,16,290 beneficiaries had taken the first dose of vaccine, a total of 93,045 recipients had also received the second dose of vaccine.

Officials said the Health department has currently taken up vaccination exercise of recipients between 18 and 44 which is underway at 20 sites. A total of 25 sessions, including six in urban and 14 in rural areas, are being organised to cover the maximum number of beneficiaries. Besides, beneficiaries above 45 years are also vaccinated at other centres in both rural and urban pockets. Additional Chief Medical Officer and District Immunisation Officer (DIO) Dr Teerath Lal said that on an average, we are covering around 7,000 beneficiaries every day of all age groups including above 45 and recipients between 18 and 44 years.

For instance, a total of 7,532 vaccine shots were administered to recipients of all age groups in the past 24 hours which included 6,234 recipients of first dose and 1,298 of second dose, he said adding that more and more people are getting themselves registered on the Health department's portal for vaccination. Interestingly, there has been a steep rise in

the number of recipients between 18 and 44 years of age getting them registered with the CoWin portal. The fact is that a long queue of recipients can be spotted at six urban centres including MLN Medical College, Dufferin Hospital, Railway Hospital, MD Eye hospital, TB Sapru Hospital and Urban PHC (Daraganj) waiting for their turn. Similarly, elderly were also lined up to get themselves vaccinated at others centres including MLN Divisional Hospital (Colvin Hospital). Health officials admitted that as around 60 per cent of district population falls in the age category between 18 and 44 years, the number of such recipients was more compared to elderly group slot. As a result, 20 sites of vaccination have been reserved for them to cover the maximum number of this age group of recipients at the vaccination centres and also to create a database of people in the target age group.

However, getting registered on the CoWIN web portal and taking an appointment to get a COVID-19 vaccine jab has been mandatory for those aged between 18-44 years.

Officials, however, made it clear those who have already received the first dose at private or government vaccination centres and want to get the second dose, needn't get registered as their registration has already been made on portals. They would have to walk in at any government centre to get their second dose.

A senior health official said, 'There has been an increased demand for vaccination once the vaccination for the age group of 18-44 years is opened. And, for better management and control, registering on the CoWIN portal and taking prior appointments to get the shot has been mandatory for those aged between 18-45 years to tackle the rush of recipients. In the city, more eligible recipients are turning to Covid vaccination centres to get the shots. However, recipients from urban pockets turning up at vaccination centres is more as compared to rural community health centres.

OXYGEN EXPRESS OFFLOADS TWO LMO CONTAINERS: Fourth Oxygen Express reached Kanpur on Thursday. Kanpur has received 200 MT LMO through trains till date.

Indian Railways, in its bid to intensify the ongoing fight against Covid and ensure speedy and unhindered supply of oxygen, ran another Oxygen Express for Kanpur. The train containing 40 MT of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) in two cryogenic containers loaded from Tatanagar by South Eastern Railway reached Kanpur yard at night 01:29 hrs. It was immediately placed inside the Inland Container Depot for decanting where Dy CTM Kanpur, NCR Himanshu Upadhyay and Assistant Divisional Mechanical Engineer Vikas Kesari ensured timely offloading. After com-

pletion of decanting, the LMO was delivered to SDM. At 06:55 hrs, train carrying empty containers departed from Kanpur for further loading at Tatanagar.

This was the fourth Oxygen Express for Kanpur ran by Indian Railways in view of serving the needs of Covid patients of the city and adjoining area. Cumulatively, a total of 200 MT of LMO has been delivered to the city by Railways so far. The third Oxygen Express containing 40 MT of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) in two cryogenic containers loaded from Durgapur by Eastern Railway had reached Kanpur yard on Wednesday.

CELEBRATED: Vinod Rastogi Smriti Sansthan Prayagraj celebrated 98th birth anniversary of the legendary writer, poet, dramatist, actor, director, and drama producer Vinod Rastogi who is also known for his pioneering role in the revival of the fading folk theatre form of Uttar Pradesh-Nautanki. Owing to Covid restrictions this programme was organised live on facebook through webinar on Wednesday, and the guest speaker was a well known writer and director Vijay Pandit who joined from Lucknow. Vijay Pandit touched every aspect of Vinod Rastogi's personality and said that every part of his personality can be discussed for hours together whether it is the field of writing, direction, or drama at All India Radio as a presenter or the actor.

DC concern over spread of novel coronavirus in rural areas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Divisional Commissioner Dr Raj Shekhar, on Thursday, expressed concern over the spread of novel coronavirus infection in rural areas and said the UP government had taken it on priority to improve and strengthen the rural health infrastructure.

He said the district administration had been directed to strengthen the infrastructure in two community health centres (CHCs) by adding five oxygen beds in each as a Level-1 Covid facility so that the pressure on city hospitals, especially Level-2 and Level-3 Covid facilities, could be reduced.

The divisional commissioner said two CHCs in every district of Kanpur division had been identified and necessary steps were being taken by the administration and Health department to ensure that 50 oxygen beds were arranged there at the earliest.

He said other infrastructure like beds, oxygen supply through oxygen generation plants or oxygen concentrators or jumbo cylinders, doctors, nurses, essential medicines and testing facilities were to be ensured in these identified CHCs.

After visiting the CHC at Bilhaur, Dr Shekhar said it had space for 30 beds and more space was to be created for around another 20 beds.

He said the estimates for medicines and equipment and works to be done for increasing the beds had to be sent to the chief medical officer in the next two days. He said 20 oxygen concentrators would be made available under CSR to this CHC in the next 15 days.

He added that repair and renovation of the wards, bathrooms etc should be done by



Divisional Commissioner, Dr Raj Shekhar, visits Community Health Centre Bilhaur on Thursday

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next one week and the district magistrate and chief medical officer would monitor the progress of the work regularly so that necessary facilities could be ensured in these CHCs in time.

He later directed the principal of GSVM Medical College to ensure that the current pediatric ICU beds were increased from 10 to 60 at the earliest. He said this was being done in view of apprehensions of the third wave of CPOVID-19 as there was a need for robust preparations to tackle it. He said 30 PICU would be made functional by May 20 and the remaining 20 would be ready in the next one month.

The divisional commissioner said as warned by experts and scientists that the third wave of COVID-19 could be more infectious, lethal and

damaging, the UP government was taking every possible step to ensure the best possible advanced preparedness to handle the third wave effectively.

He said it was also true that the second wave of the pandemic was declining slowly and the number of positive cases had reduced drastically and also the discharge and recovery had shot up to a great extent.

He said the UP government had directed that the number of beds, oxygen generation plants, oxygen concentrators, pediatric ICU beds need to be increased, along with testing and vaccination and also massive awareness campaigns need to be launched so that people were aware of deadly virus and shared responsibility to check its

spread. He said the local administration was also making every effort for managing it all timely.

The divisional commissioner said the issue of non-functional ventilators was brought to the notice of the UP government and DG Medical Education and thus a team of engineers from BEL, Bengaluru had arrived and successfully managed to make the ventilators functional.

He said for an additional 40 PICU beds, the district magistrate and chief medical officer had been directed to make necessary arrangements by month end in the private hospitals.

The divisional commissioner was accompanied by the GSVM Medical College Principal Prof RB Kamal and AD Health.

DM inspects village, interacts with people

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar District Magistrate Alok Tiwari visited Hathipur village on Thursday to take feedback on the gravity of COVID-19. The district magistrate and his team visited homes and interacted with people and took feedback from them.

The district magistrate directed the MOIC to ensure that people above 45 years of age were vaccinated at the earliest to prevent the spread of the pandemic. He said all symptomatic people should be screened and given medicines as well.

The team carried an oximeter and tested the oxygen level of the people they con-



District Magistrate, City, Mr Alok Tiwari and his team visit Hathipur village on Thursday.

Pioneer

tacted and inquired about their health.

The district magistrate said

that all people in home quarantine should remain confined indoors, take medicines regu-

larly and stay in touch with the local health authorities.

It was claimed that on being asked if a sanitisation drive was launched in the village, the people said it had been done recently.

The district magistrate later admitted that vaccination was substantially less but added that Chief Medical Officer Dr Nepal Singh had been directed to ensure that testing was done on priority in the village.

The team also visited the surrounding areas and issued directives to the health authorities.

The district magistrate directed that sanitisation drive be carried out on a war footing in the rural areas.

Goods and properties worth lakhs of rupees gutted by fire

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Goods and properties worth lakhs of rupees were gutted by fire which broke out in a PVC sole granule manufacturing unit in Dada Nagar Industrial Area under Govind Nagar police station on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday.

The fire also spread to the adjacent coal godown, printing factory and the chemical godown and reduced them to ashes.

Panic prevailed in the locality as the drums filled with chemicals exploded.

Ten fire tenders from different fire stations, including the Fazalganj, Latouche Road, Colonelganj and Meerpur fire stations, were pressed into service and they managed to control the fire by around 8:30 am on Thursday.

According to reports, Umang Jain and Gautam Khemka of Swaroop Nagar own a PVC sole granule manufacturing unit in Dada Nagar. Reports said an electric short-circuit sparked a fire in the unit around 2:30am on Wednesday night. Due to strong wind, the fire soon spread to the neighbouring coal godown of Sadhana Enterprises and the nearby chemical godown of Sumit Agarwal of Shashtri



Fire broke out in four industrial units in Dada Nagar late Wednesday night. Pioneer.

Nagar and the printing press of his wife Ritika Agarwal. Panic

Manager of the chemical godown, Vinod Kumar Yadav, said around 200 chemical drums were lying in the godown but only 35 drums could be taken out from there with the help of firemen while the remaining drums caught and exploded, spreading panic in the locality.

Due to the powerful explosion in chemical drums, the main tin shed and the boundary wall of the godown collapsed. At the same time, the

tin shed of the granule factory collapsed and its boundary wall developed cracks and broke down at several places. The firemen also rescued a security guard and his family members who were trapped inside a railway parts manufacturing unit adjacent to chemical godown.

ACM (I) RP Verma also reached the spot with police force and took stock of the situation.

Officiating Fire Officer of Fazalganj Fire Station, Vinod Kumar Pandey, said electric

short-circuit was the cause of fire.

However, the amount of loss to goods and property could not be estimated.

ELDERLY MAN KILLED: An elderly man was killed when the wall of ADG Zone Bhanu Bhaskar's residence collapsed on him during the thunderstorm that lashed the city late Wednesday evening.

Two others sustained minor injuries in the incident.

According to reports, Kripa Shanker Tewari (80) of Satranji Mohal, Collectorganj, was returning home after a bath in the Ganga. He lived with his nephew Amit Mishra who said that Kripa Shanker used to go to Guptar Ghat everyday on bicycle for a dip in the Ganga. He said as usual, Kripa Shanker was returning from the ghat late Wednesday evening and he met the mishap. A thread manufacturing unit worker Raju, living with the security guard, and an auto driver also sustained minor injuries. Local residents immediately took Kripa Shanker to LLR Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries during treatment on Thursday morning. Kotwali incharge Ran Bahadur Singh said the elderly man was killed when the wall of ADG Zone's bungalow collapsed on him in the thunderstorm.

Concern over dozens of bodies found floating in Ganga

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur has expressed concern over dozens of bodies found floating in the Ganga stretch especially when the deaths were due to (COVID-19) and the highest from the surrounding rural areas.

It had drawn the attention of the district authorities towards the throwing of bodies into the Ganga in the surrounding districts and asked them to take immediate remedial measures to further prevent dumping of COVID-19 bodies in the river.

Head of department of environmental science at IIT-Kanpur, Prof Vinod Tare, had expressed concern over 71 bodies found floating in the river despite the massive Namami Gange Project which had advocated a halt to discarding dead bodies in the Ganga to maintain its sanctity.

The huge number of bodies clearly shows how the Namami Gange Project was being openly violated with the district administration doing little in this regard. It may be mentioned here that initially when COVID-19 struck it was stated that the infection spread only on touching the contaminated surfaces. Later many theories surfaced regarding the spread of novel coronavirus, one even saying that the virus was airborne and thus one should always wear masks when moving out of homes..

Prof Tare said that no such research was carried out that the virus could mix with water as well. He said if the water was the lifeline and was meant for human consumption then discarding dead bodies in the river in the times of pandemic was a great crime and needed rigorous punishment.

He pointed a finger at the National Mission for Clean Ganga for its failure to strictly maintain clean and pure Ganga despite millions of rupees being spent on the project.

In view of the acute crisis of wood for traditional cremation and no facility of electric crematorium in the districts surrounding Kanpur Nagar, the easy way is to dispose of the dead bodies in the Ganga.

Jowar farming can increase income of farmers: Mohan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

National Sugar Institute Director Prof Narendra Mohan, sharing the research on sorghum (jowar) in collaboration with the ICAR-IIMR, Hyderabad, on Thursday, said studies carried out at the institute indicated that while the juice from stem or stalk of the crop could be utilised for production of ethanol, jaggery and nutritive low calorie sugar syrup, the grains obtained as sorghum could be used extensively as a healthier flour in place of .maida' or wheat flour, particularly during the current coronavirus crises.

He said the research had brought to fore the fact that sorghum was a healthy alternative to the all-purpose flour.

Prof Mohan said this it could be a win-win situation for everyone, while the farmers could get a better price of the produce by utilising each part of the crop in an innovative manner, the country as a whole could get more ethanol to meet requirements of ethanol blending in petrol besides getting a healthier diet to reduce malnutrition, improving digestive system and immunity as a whole.

He added that the NSI had done research for the past two years and developed five sweet sorghum varieties (CSH 22S, SSV 84, SSV 74, Phule Vasundhara and ICSSH 28)

Prof Mohan said these were rich in protein, iron and copper, and this gluten-free grain had been known to play a crucial role in cellular function and repair. He said the rich quantity of potassium and phosphorus helped in lowering cholesterol and managing high blood pressure.

DC inspects L2 hospital

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Divisional Commissioner Yogeshwar Ram Mishra inspected L2 hospital on Wednesday. During the inspection he became aware about the patients as well as arrangements there. As many as 21 patients were found admitted in the hospital and he interacted with some of them regarding the facilities and role of medical staff. He directed the medical personnel for ensuring regular sanitation and timely availability of medicines. He directed the officials concerned to ensure cent per cent presence of medical personnel and contact number should be there in the register. He directed the CDO to keep a close watch on different teams working in the field. He instructed for contact testing in areas which were more affected and involve more teams for making the facilities available. During the inspection he was accompanied by DM Praveen Kumar Laxkar, CDO Shreelaxmi VS, ADM(F&R) UP Singh and CMO Dr PD Gupta.

REVIEWED: DM Praveen Kumar Laxkar reviewed the complaints sent on Jan Sunwai portal at Collectorate meeting hall on Wednesday. Expressing his discontent over increase in default references he directed the officials concerned to dispose of pending ones as soon as possible or else remain prepared to face the music. During the review the DM found 96

defaulter cases under Jan Sunwai portal and directed the departments concerned to dispose them of and inform without inordinate delay. Under RTI total 140 matters were reviewed. The meeting was attended by CDO Shreelaxmi VS,



ADM(F&R) UP Singh, ADM (land revenue) Hari Shankar Yadav, ADM (Namami Gange) Amarendra Verma, SDM Sadar Gaurav Srivastava, SDM Lalganj Amit Shukla and SDM Madihan Roshni Yadav and other officials concerned.

APPEAL: Muslim scholar Syed Alfeshani Abbas advised the people not to buy new clothes during Eid and celebrate the festival with simplicity in view of the current scenario. He made an appeal to do some shopping for poor and orphans, get new clothes for destitute kids and provide food to them and do it without discriminating on the basis of religion, caste or creed. He made an appeal to follow Covid guidelines.

CSMT-Chhapra spl to run on May 15

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration will for the convenience of the passengers run the 01365/01366 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) (Mumbai) - Chhapra - Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (Mumbai) summer special train on May 15 from CSMT and on May 17 from Chhapra. All coaches in them will be of reserved category and passengers traveling in them will have to follow the Covid-19 prevention guidelines.

CSMT-CHHAPRA SPL: 01365 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (Mumbai) - Chhapra summer special train will depart from Chhatrapati

Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (Mumbai) on May 15 at 12.30 hrs, from Dadar at 12.45 hrs, from Kalyan at 13.28 hrs, from Nashik Road at 16.00 hrs, from Manmad at 17.03 hrs, from Bhusaval at 19.35 hrs, from Itarsi on the second day at at 00.50 hrs, from Jabalpur at 04.50 hrs, from Satna at 08.15 hrs, from Prayagraj Chheoki at 11.45 hrs, from Varanasi at 16.40 hrs, from Jaunpur at 18.25 hrs, from Aunrihar at 19.40 hrs, Ballia at 22.15 hrs and reach Chhapra at 00.30 hrs.

CHHAPRA-CSMT SPL: In the return journey, 01366 Chhapra-Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (Mumbai) summer special will on May 17 depart from Chhapra at 19.40

hrs, from Ballia at 20.55 hrs, from Aunrihar at 22.50 hrs, the second day from from Jaunpur at 01.25 hrs, from Varanasi at 02.15 hrs, Prayagraj Chheoki at 06.15 hrs, Satna at 09.35 hrs, Jabalpur at 12.25 hrs, Itarsi at 16.05 hrs, Bhusaval at 21.30 hrs, Manmad at 23.20 hrs, on the third day from Nashik Road at 00.13 hrs, from Kalyan at 03.10 hrs, from Dadar at 03.50 hrs and reach Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (Mumbai) at 04.10 hrs. In this special train a total of 24 coaches, including 10 coaches of sleeper, five of general second class, six of air-conditioned third class, one of air-conditioned second class and two coaches of SLRD will be attached.

Running period of spl trains to be extended

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration will for the convenience of people extend the running period of the following special trains. However, their stoppage and rake composition will remain the same. All coaches in them will be of reserved category and passengers travelling in them will have to follow the Covid-19 prevention guidelines, CPRO PK Singh said.

MMCT-MANDUADIH SPL: The 09035 Mumbai Central (MMCT) -Manduadih superfast special train will run on May 21 and 25.

MANDUADIH-DADAR SPL: The 09036 Manduadih-Dadar Superfast special will run on May 23 and 27.

BDTS-GKP SPL: The 09073 Bandra Terminus (BDTS)- Gorakhpur special will run on May 23, 26 and 27. Besides 09074 Gorakhpur-BDTS special train will run on on May 25, 28 and 29.

UDHNA-CHHAPRA SPECIAL : The 09087 Udhna-Chhapra superfast special will run on May 28. The 09088 Chhapra-Udhna superfast special train will run on May 30.

BDTS-MAU SPL: The 09099 Bandra Terminus-Mau special will run on May 25. The 09100 Mau-Bandra Terminus special train will

run on May 27.

BDTS-GHAZIPUR CITY: The 09123 Bandra Terminus - Ghazipur City superfast special will run on May 24. The 09124 Ghazipur City-Valsad superfast special train will run on May 26.

MMCT-GKP SPL: The 09193 Mumbai Central-Gorakhpur superfast special train will run on May 17 and 20. The 09194 Gorakhpur-Mumbai Central superfast special will run on May 19 and 22.

BDTS-GHAZIPUR CITY: The 09133 Bandra Terminus - Ghazipur City superfast special train will run on May 19. The 09134 Ghazipur City-Valsad superfast special train will run on May 21.

CANCELLATION

Owing to operational difficulties and lack of adequate number of passengers the cancellation of the following trains will be done by the railway administration, CPRO PK Singh said.

LJN-AGRA FORT SPL: The 02179 Lucknow Jn - Agra Fort special train will remain canceled from May 15 to 31. Besides 02180 Agra Fort - Lucknow Jn special train will remain canceled from May 15 to 31.

503 beneficiaries vaccinated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the guidance of General Manager Anjali Goyal and under the leadership of Principal Chief Medical Officer (PCMO) Dr Sujit Mallik, a mega vaccination campaign is going on at Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) in a phased manner. In this sequence at the vaccination centre on Wednesday as many as 503



beneficiaries were vaccinated. So far, the first dose was given to a total of 13,486 people and the second dose to a total of 6,351 persons. General Manager Anjali Goyal is constantly reviewing the medical arrangements, vaccination and public awareness campaign. By running public awareness campaigns at at various places in BLW an appeal was being made so that more and more people got themselves vaccinated.

Initiative to help needy persons

CORRESPONDENT ■ JALAIUN

DM Priyanka Nanranjan inaugurated an ambulance which was arranged by the Bharat Vikas Parishad (BVP) and Prabhu Aaiye Trust. She appreciated the efforts of social workers during this Covid period. BVP regional president Ajay Itauria said it is



ADM Prameel Kumar Singh, City Magistrate Sunil Kumar Shukla, Dr Sanjeev Gupta, Prateek Kumar Agarwal, Deepak Gupta, Aleem, Anshul Vashith and Shailendra Arya were also present.

TMC takes dig at BJP after its three MPs lose WB polls

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress has scoffed at the BJP's "pitiable condition" where it had to field the sitting MPs and a Union Minister to contest the Assembly elections ... and ended up creating a "world record for electoral egg on face."

Taking a dig at the "world's largest political party", senior TMC leader and party Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien has said that the, "BJP fielded four sitting Lok Sabha MPs, including a Union Minister and a Rajya Sabha MP for Bengal polls. Three lost, two won. Now these two to quit as MLAs. They were elected last week! World's

largest party have set a world record for electoral egg on face."

BJP had fielded three Lok Sabha MPs Locket Chatterjee, Nisith Pramanik and Jagannath Sarkar and a Rajya Sabha MP Swapan Dasgupta. It also nominated Union Minister Babul Supriyo to contest from Tollygunge seat in South Kolkata. Save Pramanik and Sarkar all the other lost to the TMC

O'Brien's comment came in tandem with the resignation of two BJP MLAs Jagannath Sarkar and Nisith Pramanik who preferred to retain their Lok Sabha seats.

The BJP's tally came down from 77 — in the just conclude Bengal Assembly elec-

tions — to 75 after Sarkar a Ranaghat MP and Pramanik a Lok Sabha Member from Cooch Behar tendered their resignation after being asked by their parties to retain the MP seats. After submitting their resignations before Speaker Biman Banerjee, the two MPs (former MLAs) said that they had followed their party instructions. "We have followed the party's decision. Party has decided that we should resign from our assembly seats." Pramanik who defeated former Dinhat MLA Udayan Guha by a margin of only 57 votes, said, Jagannath Sarkar, won the Santipur assembly seat by over 15,000 votes. "It was their bad decision to field the MPs ... by doing so they not only projected their organizational weakness and paucity of able leaders to contest elections but also they opened their rear ... now after having resigned these seats they will definitely lose them in a fresh election because there is a wave for Mamata Banerjee," a senior Lok Sabha member of the TMC said.

Waive GST on vaccines, drugs, Stalin tells Modi

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Chief Minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi Stalin asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday to waive the GST on Covid-19 vaccine and other medicines being procured directly by the States. He pointed out that many States were purchasing vaccines and medicines directly from manufacturers to offset the shortage. Stalin pointed out in a letter to the Prime Minister, excerpts of which were released to the media, that the States were facing severe financial crunch because of the Covid-19 pandemic. To offset the economic crisis, the Chief Minister asked the Prime Minister to immediately disburse the pending GST compensation as well as rice subsidy pending for civil supplies corporations of States.

He also wanted the Centre to enhance the States' borrow-

ing limits from three percent of the State's GDP to four per cent. Since the revenue received by the Centre due to levy of cess on petrol and diesel has not been shared with the States, the Centre should provide an ad hoc grants-in-aid to the State to compensate for the loss of revenue due to the pandemic.

Stalin said that the increase in borrowing limits by one percent would help the States garner financial resources to meet the additional expenditure caused by the pandemic.

On Wednesday, a high-level meeting chaired by the Chief Minister had decided to issue short-term global tenders for importing Covid vaccines to inoculate all those in the age group of 18-45. The 13 lakh vaccine doses allocated to the State by the Centre would be insufficient to vaccinate all those in the 18-45 age group, said a senior official in the Department of Health and Preventive Medicine.

Indian, Pak soldiers exchange sweets at LoC on Eid-ul-Fitr

PNS ■ JAMMU

After several years a traditional exchange of sweets was witnessed between India and Pakistan on the occasion of Eid-ul- Fitr along the line of control in Jammu & Kashmir on Thursday. During the day jawans of the Indian Army met their Pakistani counterparts at various locations and exchanged pleasantries along with sweets.

In Jammu region, the sweets were exchanged by the representatives of both the Armies in an atmosphere of bonhomie & festivities at Poonch-Rawalakot Crossing Point & Mendhar-Hotspring Crossing Point in Poonch district. Similar meetings were held in Kashmir region at the Tithwal crossing on Kishanganga River in Tangdhar, Kupwara & Kaman Aman Setu in Uri.

Defence PRO in Jammu,Lt



Col Devender Anand said, "the ceremony is seen as a confidence building measure in the backdrop of recently agreed ceasefire between both the countries. The gesture was appreciated by both the armies and expected to promote good will & mutual trust".

"The newly achieved calm along the Line of Control as a result of renewed ceasefire has brought warmth, which has been displayed on several occa-

sions between the two neighbours.

Exchange of inadvertently crossed over youths on three occasions in the last two months at the zero line in Tithwal bode well for the future", Defence PRO in Srinagar said.

The exchange of sweets and pleasantries was conducted with full adherence to all Covid Protocols by both sides, he added.

French Embassy administering Moderna vaccine in Navi Mumbai sans Govt nod: Malik

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Minister and Senior NCP leader Nawab Malik on Thursday created a stir in the political circles here by claiming that the French Embassy in India had procured "non-permitted" vaccine @moderna.tx and was inoculating its citizens and their relatives at Navi Mumbai with a help of a leading private hospital.

Nearly a month after he kicked up a controversy by threatening to seize the stocks of Remdesivir from the exporting firms and supply them to the needy people, Malik virtually joined an issue with the Centre by demanding whether a "non-permitted" vaccine be allowed to be administered to the people. "Covishield, Covaxin and Sputnik V are the 3 Vaccines that are permitted in India by our government. According to information received by me, the French Embassy in India has procured the vaccine @moderna.tx and is inoculating their citizens and their relatives at Navi Mumbai with the help of @ApolloHosMumbai," Malik tweeted.

Seeking a clarification from Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, the Minister stated in another tweet: "Question arises, how can a non permitted vaccine be allowed to be administered? If they can get it, why can't

Indian Government get it for our citizens too. The Government and the Health Minister @drharshvardhan must clarify".

Slamming the Minister for making non-issues into issue, leader of the Opposition in the State Legislative Council Pravin Darekar of the BJP said: "There are no exact details available about his allegations. As per my information, every embassy has made provisions of Covid-19 vaccines for its own staff working here. However, the Maharashtra government is not taking care of its own people in the State, but wasting time in pointing fingers at such non-issues." "This shows the kind of sensitivity this government has towards its people," Darekar said.

Malik's tweets should be seen in the context of the fact that the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) Government in Maharashtra, of which the NCP is a part along with the Shiv Sena and Congress, has been vociferous in its criticism of the Narenra Modi government over the shortage of Covid-19 vaccines in the state.

This is not for the first time that Malik has joined an issue with the Centre on matters relating to the handling of Covid-19 situation in the state. It may be recalled that on April 17 2021, Malik had created a sensation by threatening to seize the stocks of Remdesivir

from the exporting firms and supply them to the needy people.

Reproducing a letter written by Food & Drugs Control Administration, Gujarat, asking an exporter to make available Remedesivir vials (meant for exports) for meeting Covid-19 needs in its state, Malik had tweeted: "Here is the another proof of step motherly treatment given by central government to #Maharashtra. This is the approval letter to one of the export companies to supply stock of #Remdesivir to the state of Gujarat Only. Can these double standards be explained?"

In one of a series of tweets put out on the issue, Malik said: "It is sad & shocking that when the Government of Maharashtra asked the 16 export companies for #Remdesivir, we were told that the Central Government has asked them not to supply the medicine to #Maharashtra. These companies were warned, if they did, their license would be cancelled".

In a significant tweet, Malik said: "It is a dangerous precedent and under these circumstances, Maharashtra Government will have no choice but to seize the stock of Remdesivir from these exporters and supply it to the needy". He tagged the Prime Minister's Office and Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan in the tweet.

Raj to float global tender for Covid vaccine

Jaipur: In the State Council of Ministers meeting held through video conference on Wednesday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, important decisions were taken for speedy procurement of vaccine, medicines, oxygen concentrator and other necessary resources to deal with the situation of corona infection in the State.

The Council of Ministers unanimously approved the proposal to invite global tender to speed up vaccination and ensure availability of vaccine in the state. This will allow 40 million doses of vaccine to be purchased from foreign vaccine manufacturers. For this purchase as soon as possible, the National Health Mission will be made the nodal agency andsoon the Expression of Interest (EOI) will be issued.

Necessary to speed up vaccination for life protectionThe Council of Ministers expressed concern that the Corona Conduction is spreading rapidly. A large number of deaths are also happening across the country.

कार्यालय : परियोजना प्रबन्धक, निर्माण इकाई-14
यू०पी० प्रोजेक्ट्स कांपोरेजेशन लि०
(उपरी प्रवेश सड़क का चौक) CIN: U150UP1976SGC004285
3/7, विद्यालय बच, पोली नगर, सबनक-28 010 | website: www.upprojects.org
Email: upcpl.pm14@gmail.com, pm14@upprojects.org
GSTIN: 09AAACU3393F128

पत्रांक- 137 / पी०पी०एस० / पी० प्र०-14 दिनांक: 12/06/2021
अति अल्प-कालीन ई-निविदा सूचना
एतद्वारा इस इकाई के अन्तर्गत जनपद बरेली के एम सी एच विंग बहेली में 50 शेया एवं 30 शेया तथा एम सी एच विंग बहेली में 30 शेया हेतु मेडिकल नेस पाइप लाइन की स्थापना हेतु निविदा सूचना संख्या-06/एच पी सी सी एल /परि एच-~14/2021-22 दिनांक : 11.05.2021 द्वारा ई-टेंडरिंग के माध्यम से प्रसिद्धित दरो के आधार पर ऑनलाइन निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। उक्त कार्य की बिड दिनांक : 14.05.2021 से दिनांक 20.05.2021 अपरान्ह 3:00 बजे तक ऑनलाइन सबमिट की जा सकती है तथा तकनीकी बिड उसी दिन अपरान्ह 4:00 बजे अधोहस्ताक्षरी के कार्यालय में खोली जायेगी। निविदा से सम्बंधित आवश्यक सूचना, निविदा प्रपत्र, निविदा शर्तें एवं ऑनलाइन निविदा अपलोड किये जाने व डाउनलोड किये जाने की तिथि आदि का समस्त विवरण www.upprojects.org एवं <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर उपलब्ध है।
परियोजना प्रबन्धक, निर्माण इकाई-14

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala-147001.
Corporate Identity Number U40199PB2010SGC033813 Website : www.pspcl.in
Tender Enquiry No. MQP-176/2021-22/PO(M) Dated: 11-05-2021
Chief Engineer/ Metering, C-3, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala, invites E-tender for supply, installation, Testing, Commissioning, Reading, Analysis and 1 year O&M of 114 number Power Quality Meters complying to IEC 61000-4-30 Class A. For detailed NIT and tender specification, please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 11-05-2021 from 01:00 PM onwards.
Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>
RO NO. 76155/12/251/2021/4533 C186/21

कार्यालय अधिशासी ई-निविदा में किसी प्रकार की शुद्धि अभियन्ता, विद्युत जानपद एवं तिथि के विस्तारण तथा खण्ड, केस्को, आर०पी० ई-टेंडरिंग
एच०, कानपुर ई-निविदा सूचना वेबसाइट पर अपलोड कर दी अधोहस्ताक्षरता द्वारा अधोवर्तिता जायेगी, जिसकी सूचना पृथक रूप ई-निविदायें प्रथम-प्रथक दो भागों से समाचार पत्र में प्रकाशित नहीं की में पंजीकृत / अनुमोदित अनुमिती एवं जायेगी। तकनीकी योग्यता पूरा न कुशल ठेकेदारों से ई-निविदा के करने वाले निविदादाताओं की समुच्च दर्शित कार्यों हेतु निविदा पर विचार नहीं किया यू०पी०एन०आई०सी०, केस्को की जायेगा। कार्य की मात्रा घट-बढ़ ई-टेंडरिंग वेबसाइट etender.up. सकती है। अधोहस्ताक्षरता के पास nic.in/www.kesco.co.in पर बिना कोई कारण बताये किसी एक आमंत्रित की जाती है, ई-निविदा अथवा समस्त निविदाओं को प्रपत्र पूर्ण कर निविदादाताओं द्वारा स्वीकार / अस्वीकार करने का पूर्ण वेबसाइट पर ई-निविदा के समुच्च अधिकार सुरक्षित होगा। 1. (क) दर्शित खुलने की तिथि को 15.00 **ई-निविदा संख्या-07 / सी /** बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है। **2021-22 (क)** केसा हाउस स्थित सम्बंधित ई-निविदा के प्रथम भाग कालसेन्टर (सर्वर रूम, केसा हाउस को उसी दिन 12:00 बजे के उपरान्त (मु०) बिजलीघर एवं प्रबन्ध निदेशक वेबसाइट पर आन लाइन सार्वजनिक कैम्प कार्यालय के वातानुकलित रूप से खोला जायेगा। ई-निविदा संयंत्रों के वार्षिक अनुसरण का के समुच्च वर्णित निविदा प्रपत्र की कार्य। कार्यवधि माह 12, निविदा धनराशि का सुगतान आन लाइन प्रपत्र का मूल्य रू० 1,000+18% (आर०पी०जी०एस०, नेट बैंकिंग के जी०एस०टी० अतिरिक्त धरोहर माध्यम से) और नकद / बैंक ड्राफ्ट धनराशि रू० 2,500.00, निविदा के रूप में स्वीकार किया जायेगा। निविदा अपलोड करने एवं जमा करने निविदा प्रपत्र, दिनांक 14.05.2021 की तिथि-03.06.2021, निविदा खुलने के 12:00 बजे से निविदा के समुच्च की तिथि-04.06.2021 **2. (क)** दर्शित तिथि को आनलाइन 12:00 **ई-निविदा संख्या-08 / सी /** बजे तक वेबसाइट से डाउनलोड **2021-22 (क)** आर०पी०एच० परिसर किये जा सकते हैं। ई-निविदा के स्थित विभिन्न कार्यालयों में सामान्य प्रथम भाग में निर्धारित धरोहर सफाई सम्बन्धी वार्षिक अनुसरण धनराशि को केस्को, कानपुर के (नेट कार्य। कार्यवधि माह 12, निविदा बैंकिंग के माध्यम से) केस्को के बैंक प्रपत्र का मूल्य रू० 1,000+18% खाते में खाता सं० न० जी०एस०टी० अतिरिक्त धरोहर 628805018266 IFSC No. धनराशि रू० 5,000.00, निविदा ICIC0006288 आर०पी०जी०एस०/ निविदा अपलोड करने एवं जमा करने एन०आई०एस०टी० / बैंक गारण्टी / की तिथि-03.06.2021, निविदा खुलने डिमांड ड्राफ्ट / बैंक चेक के रूप में की तिथि-04.06.2021 **3. (क)** जमा की जायेगी तथा बैंक में जमा **ई-निविदा संख्या-09 / सी /** का साक्ष्य याच्यो यू०टी०आर० **2021-22 (क)** विष्णुपुरी स्थित केसको संख्या, पे-इन रिलफ मूल की प्रति अधिकारी आवास सं०-04 के लेन बैंक गारण्टी की मूलप्रति (इश्यूइंग के सुदृढीकरण के कार्य। कार्यवधि बैंक के कन्फर्मेशन मेल की प्रति) माह 01, निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य रू० ई-टेंडरिंग के प्रपत्रों के साथ 1,000+18% जी०एस०टी० अतिरिक्त आनलाइन अपलोड की जायेगी तथा धरोहर धनराशि रू० 2,500.00, ऑफलाइन मूलप्रति प्रस्तुत की निविदा निविदा अपलोड करने एवं जायेगी। निविदा के द्वितीय भाग में जमा करने की तिथि-03.06.2021, दरें एवं व्यवसायिक शर्तें होंगी। बिना निविदा खुलने की तिथि-04.06.2021 धरोहर धनराशि के तथा सशर्त **4. (क) ई-निविदा संख्या-** निविदायें खोली / स्वीकार नहीं की **10 / सी / 2021-22 (क)** केस्को के जायेगी। निविदा खुलने की तिथि को अन्तर्गत विभिन्न कार्यालयों, अवकाश घोषित होने पर निविदा उपभोक्ताओं एवं कालोनियों में 1.5 अगले कार्य दिवस में नियत समय एच.पी. सर्वमर्सिबल मोटर पम्प के पर खोली जायेगी। अधोनिश्चित अर्द्धवार्षिक मरम्मत कार्य। कार्यवधि ई-निविदाओं की पूर्ण प्रक्रिया माह 06, निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य रू० ई-टेंडरिंग वेबसाइट etender.up. 1,000+18% जी०एस०टी० अतिरिक्त nic.in/www.kesco.co.in के माध्यम धरोहर धनराशि रू० 6,500.00, से की जायेगी। प्री-क्वालीफाइंग शर्तें निविदा निविदा अपलोड करने एवं पूरा न करने वाले निविदादाताओं की जमा करने की तिथि-03.06.2021, निविदा पर विचार नहीं किया निविदा खुलने की तिथि-04.06.2021 जायेगा। निविदा का द्वितीय भाग **अधिशासी अभियन्ता (जान०) (Price-Bid)** को प्री-क्वालीफाइंग पत्रांक-356 / वि०जा०ख०के०(का०) शर्तों के प्रपत्रों की जांच उपरान्त दिनांक- 13.05.2021 "राष्ट्रहित में आनलाइन ही खोला जायेगा। ऊर्जा बचाए"

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, रायगढ़ (छ.ग.)
Phone No.:- 07762-222911, Fax No.:-07762-222923
Email :- nraigarh@gmail.com website - www.nagarigamraigarh.com
क्रमांक 326/वा.वि./न.पा.नि./2021 रायगढ़, दिनांक 12.05.2021
-: ई-प्रोक्योरमेंट निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना :-
नगर पालिक निगम, रायगढ़ वालन विभाग हेतु 02 नम स्कॉई लिफ्ट वाहन प्रदाय, कार्य की लागत राशि 63.00/- लाख रु., अमानत राशि 1.90/- लाख रु. निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क 3000.00/- रु. तथा कार्य की समयावधि 30 दिवस हेतु निर्माणकर्ता / अधिकृत विक्रेता / पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निविदा प्रपत्र "स" में देय होगा। उपरोक्त वाहन प्रदाय की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, विस्तृत निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी System Tender No. 76943 ई-प्रोक्योरमेंट वेब पोर्टल <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> से देखी जा सकती है, निविदा प्रपत्र के साथ निर्धारित प्रपत्र शुल्क जी.डी. के माध्यम से एवं अन्य दस्तावेज दिनांक 14.06.2021 अपरान्ह 04:30 बजे तक स्वीडपोस्ट / पंजीकृत डाक से मुख्यालय पद्धति से आमंत्रित की जाती है।
कार्यालय अभियन्ता
नगर पालिक निगम
रायगढ़ (छ.ग.)

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, रायगढ़ (छत्तीसगढ़)
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क्रमांक 344/वि.वि./न.पा.नि./2021 रायगढ़, दिनांक 13.05.2021
-: रुचि की अभिव्यक्ति (संक्षिप्त द्वितीय निविदा सूचना) :-
नगर पालिक निगम रायगढ़ क्षेत्रान्तर्गत युक्तिगत स्थल में शवदाह हेतु गैस आधारित ईसीनेटर सिस्टम स्थापित करने का कार्य हेतु मशीनरी/उपकरण प्रदाय एवं स्थापना कार्य हेतु निर्माता कंपनियों/अधिकृत विक्रेताओं से एच यूएल आधार पर कार्य "बी" में ऑफर ई-टेंडर से ऑफर पर स्पीड पोस्ट के माध्यम से दिनांक 21/05/2021 को शाम 4:00 बजे तक आमंत्रित किया जायेगा है तथा प्रस्तुत ऑफर दिनांक 21/05/2021 को शाम 4:30 बजे खोल जायेगा, कार्य की लागत राशि 47.00/- लाख रु. है। इस कार्य हेतु आयुक्त नगर पालिक निगम रायगढ़ के नाम से अमानत राशि रु. 35,500/- एवं निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क राशि रु. 1500/- जमा करना होगा। अन्य जानकारी निगम एवं शर्तें विभागीय website-www.nagarigamraigarh.com में देखी एवं डाउनलोड की जा सकती है।
कार्यालय अभियन्ता
नगर पालिक निगम
रायगढ़ (छ.ग.)

GOVT. OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER
CENRAL IRRIGATION CIRCLE, BHUBANESWAR
A-121
'e' Procurement Notice No.ACECIG 05 OF 2021-22
1. Name of the work : 1. Restoration to Krushnaprasad Saline Gherry from RD.500 Km to RD.10.20 Km under NABARD Assistance RIDF-XXVII.
2. Amount put to Tender : Varies from Rs.699.19 Lakh to Rs.423.74 Lakh
3. Bid Document Cost : Rs.10,000.00 for each work (online)
4. E.M.D : **Bid Security Declaration** to be furnished as per Annexure-III of Section-6 of Technical Bid Document.
5. Class of Contractor : "A" Class, "Special" Class & "Super" Class
6. Period of Completion : 12 calendar months (365 Days)
7. Other details are as follows:-
Procurement Officer Bid Identification No. Availability of Tender On-line for bidding To Date of Opening of Technical Bid (Cover)-1
Additional Chief Engineer, Central Irrigation Circle, Bhubaneswar-12 ACECIG PID 02 to ACECIG PID 05 of 2021-22 18.05.2021 10.00hrs 01.06.2021 17.00hrs 02.06.2021 11.00 hrs
E-mail ID :- secic_down@yahoo.com
Further detail conditions can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in
OIPR-32160/11/0006/2122 **Sd/-**
Additional Chief Engineer
Central Irrigation Circle
Bhubaneswar

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA e-mail: sephcbhpt3@gmail.com
C-254 OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, PUBLIC HEALTH CIRCLE, BHAWANIPATNA
Parmanandpur, Railway Station Road, Bhawanipatna, Dist: Kalahandi, PIN -766002
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
Identification No. SEPHC-BHPT- 01 of 2021-22 Dt. 03.05.2021
e-Procurement Notice
Name of the Work Laying of Pipeline, Construction of Reservoirs, External Electrification & ancillary works in Different ULBs under PH Circle, Bhawanipatna. 18 (Eighteen)
Total No. Of works Estimated Cost Approx. Rs 110.00 Lakhs to 490.00 Lakhs
Class of Contactor B, A, Special Class & ELBO Contractor
Period of Completion 3 to 6 Calendar Months
Procurement Officer. Bid Identification No. No. of works Availability of Tender On-line for Bidding Date & time of opening of Bid
2 3 3 4 5 6
Superintending Engineer, P.H. Circle, Bhawanipatna **SEPHC-BHPT-01 of 2021-22** **18 (Eighteen)** **17.05.2021** **31.05.2021** **01.06.2021**
For details can be seen from the Government website www.tendersorissa.gov.in
Sd/03.05.2021
Additional Chief Engineer,
Public Health Circle, Bhawanipatna
OIPR-13055/11/0001/2122

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Government on Thursday extended the near lockdown-like restrictions in the state till June 1 in an effort to break the chain of transmission of virus, even as the pandemic claimed 850 more lives and left 42,582 others infected.

The restrictions, which were to end in the normal course at 7 am on May 15, will continue till 7 am on June 1.

In its order extending the restrictions till June 1, the Maharashtra government imposed some additional restrictions which included a compulsion that any person entering Maharashtra would have to carry a negative RTPCR report "which will have to be issued to them from up to a maximum of 48 hours before the time of the person's entry to Maharashtra".

In case of cargo carriers, not more than two persons (driver + cleaner/helper) will be allowed to enter the state with a negative RTPCR report issued to them

at the point of origin of travel 48 hours before their departure. The report will be valid for seven days. The new order has exempted milk collection, transport and processing from the restrictions. It has allowed the personnel engaged in airport and port services needed for movement of cargo related to medicine or equipment needed for Covid management, to travel by local trains, mono and metro services.

Meanwhile, a day after the state recorded 816 deaths and left 46,781 fresh infections, the daily deaths jumped to 850, while there were 42,582 fresh infections on Thursday.

With 850 new deaths, the total number of deaths in the state climbed from 78,007 to 78,571. Similarly, with 42,582 new infections, the total number of cases climbed from 52,26,710

to 52,69,292. As 54,535 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year went up from 46,00,196 to 46,54,731. The recovery rate in the state went up from 88.01 per cent to 88.34 per cent.

The total "active cases" in the state dropped from 5,46,129 to 5,33,294. The fatality rate in the state stood static at 1.5 per cent.

With 68 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai increased from 13,972 to 14,040, while the infected cases went up by a relatively low 1952 to trigger a jump in the infections from 6,81,233 to 6,83,185.

The situation in Pune improved a bit as the "active cases", which had come below

one lakh mark three days back, breached the one lakh mark once again as the "active cases" dropped from 1,03,067 to 1,01,181.

Nagpur with 45,996 active cases stood second in the state, followed by Mumbai (36,338), Thane (30,922), Ahmednagar (28,862.), Satara (23,647), Solapur (21,233), Beed (18,499), Nashik (16,617), Chandrapur (16,367), Osmanabad (10,937), Jalgaon (10,911), Latur (9,712), Aurangabad (8,839), Jalna (6,881), Buldhana (6,787) and Parbhani (6,513).

Of the 3,01,00,958 samples sent to various laboratories across the state, 52,69,292 have tested positive (17.36 per cent) for COVID-19 until Thursday.

Currently, 35,02,630 people are in home quarantine while 28,847 people are in institutional quarantine.

Maharashtra cyber cell busts illegal online sale of fake Remdesivir, Tocilizumab vials

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Cyber police on Thursday ripped the lid off a racket involving an illegal online sale of fake Remdesivir and Tocilizumab vials filled with plain water to gullible relatives of patients undergoing treatment for Covid-19.

A day after a leading pharmaceutical company lodged a complaint with them that some of its distributors had illegally sold the water-mixed vials of life-saving drugs online, the cyber police registered a First Information Report against various unknown persons and are investigating the case. The preliminary investigations have revealed that unsuspecting citizens who placed orders on the so-called

"dealers" of the life-saving vials online were either defrauded or were sent vials containing water or some other liquid. In its FIR, the police have invoked provisions of the Indian Penal Code, IT Act, The Trademarks Act, Drugs & Cosmetics Act, for indulging in the fraud and playing with the lives of innocent citizens during the Covid-19 period.

The pharmaceutical company had approached the cyber police after it received many complaints from the citizens who had among other things complained that some mobile numbers were posted on various WhatsApp groups or other social media platforms claiming they were authorized dealers of

the complainant pharmaceutical company. The "dealers" offered to deliver the drugs on an advance payment of 50 percent through online transactions and rest on delivery.

Acting on the pharmaceutical company's complaint, the state cyber police immediately launched the investigations on multiple fronts, including shops, telecom service providers, and banks. "Our preliminary investigations have revealed that many needy citizens had even paid the full money in advance but when they followed-up on their orders for delivery, they got vague replies from the dealers in question. After some times, the phones of dealers were switched off, State Inspector General of Police Yashvi Yadav said.

Govt staff with med degrees can now practise: Centre



DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Perceiving the acute crisis of medical professionals across the country in view of the second wave of corona pandemic, the Centre has decided to do away with the archaic law which prohibited Central Government employees with medical qualifications and has now allowed such talents to undertake medical practice and also offer tele medical consultation.

However, this has drawn mixed feelings both in the medical fraternity and administration. Some have welcomed the move but some are against it.

The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) said the Central Government employees with medical qualifications can now extend medical advice and help during spare time and on a purely charitable basis. The change in rule may benefit about five percent of total Government servants who are also armed with a medical degree.

"In view of the unprecedented rise in the numbers of Covid-19 cases, and to utilise the in-house capabilities available in the Government to contain the spread of Covid-19 virus and to provide relief to the public, it has been decided that the Central Government employees holding recognised qualifications in any system of medicine requires no permission from the Head of

Departments (HoDs) concerned to undertake practice/provide teleconsultation," said a DoPT order dated May 12.

In reference to a February 1964 order of the Home Ministry which prohibited such acts, the DoPT claimed that in recent times it has been receiving queries/requests from Central Government servants for providing teleconsultation services during the current pandemic.

"Indeed this is a good decision as though we (people with medical degree and govt servant) used to advise and suggest the needy whoever approached us. When we used to turn down people citing government rule does not permit us to practice then they used to shrug shoulders on us. In a country like India, there is always a need to allow administrative officers armed with medical degree to practise. Especially during our postings in rural areas we used to realise the need," said a IAS officer who is also MBBS and has been into service for nine years but the rule prevented him to practice at times.

But a section of those who are seniors now expressed that they have already lost the touch and medical profession is not an overnight revision job.

"In a crisis everyone has to be fully hands on for the primary job they are doing. If bureaucrats start to act as doctors their primary task will suffer. Moreover most of

DoPT claimed that in recent times, it has been receiving queries/requests from Central Government servants for providing teleconsultation services during the current pandemic

us are not in touch with latest in the medicine/ no CME(continuous Medical Education) We need to be aware of treatments to do justice to patients and also do good referrals. Third where and with who will these 'doctors' consult? What is they are not available for follow ups?," questioned a IAS also a doctor and into the service for two decades now.

The bureaucrat, however, had a piece of advice and suggested that for the purpose it would be better to mobilize all Ayush doctors with a two day crash course to treat mild to moderate cases as they have spent five six years learning medicine.

The DoPT referred to the order that stipulates that the Head of Department may grant permission to Central Government servants holding recognised qualifications in any system of medicine to undertake practice.

"This would be subject to the condition that such practice/teleconsultation is undertaken during spare time, on a purely charitable basis, without detriment to the official duties to the Government servant concerned," the order said.

"However, it is desirable that the government servants should keep their departments concerned informed for record purposes only," it said, adding that this guideline will come into force with immediate effect.

Isolate jawans arriving from Andhra, T'gana to contain Covid strain, orders CRPF



RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The CRPF has directed its offices here to separately quarantine personnel arriving from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to check the spread of an "extremely virulent" strain of coronavirus present in these two States

"It is essential to take precautions to ensure this strain does not spread amongst the units. To ensure this, all personnel arriving from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana will be quarantined separately from other personnel being simultaneously isolated with coronavirus infection," a senior official said.

The official said the issue of the strain in these two States was discussed during a recent video conference held by CRPF Director General Kuldieep Singh with Inspectors General of Sectors.

All units have been directed to ensure no intermixing of quarantined personnel of these two States occurs with the other isolated cases.

The directive further stresses that any individual showing any illness or signs of discomfort must be immediately taken to the nearest hospital designated as Covid centre by observing all precautions. Such patients from these two

States must be isolated from others affiliated with the pandemic.

"Each unit must always have adequate stock of PPE kits, face shields, masks, gloves and disinfectant chemicals available for taking due care to check the spread of the virus," reads an order on the issue.

The CRPF directorate has also advised the medical branch to sensitise the medical officers and paramedical staff of all the units and take all preventive measures for protection of all the personnel.

Reports had suggested that N440K is a powerful variant reported in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana that spreads rapidly and leads to severe Covid-related complications.

As per reports, it is 15 times more virulent than the original variant. A person infected with the original variant reaches the stage of dyspnea (difficult breathing) or hypoxia (insufficient oxygen supply to body organs) within a week. But a person afflicted with the N440K variant shows these complications within just three-four days.

However, the Hyderabad-based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) recently denied the variant to be deadly or more infectious than other strains.

SC directs States to provide dry ration to migrant labourers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the States of Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to provide dry ration, adequate transport and set up community kitchens for benefit of the migrant labourers in National Capital Region. The apex court Bench comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan and MR Shah directed that this relief measures to migrant workers can be executed through Atma Nirbhar Bharat Scheme or any other scheme or utilizing the concerned State's public distribution system (PDS). The order also said that the three States shall ensure that adequate transport is provided to stranded migrant labourers who want to return home.

"While providing dry ration, the authorities of the States shall not insist on an identity card for those migrant labourers who do not possess (the same) for the time being. On self-declaration made by the stranded migrant labourers, dry ration be given to them," said the apex court's order.

Central government to also consider issuing necessary instructions to Ministry of Railways for transport of migrant labourers, it added. The Bench also said that enough publicity must be given about community kitchens for stranded migrant labours and two meals a day must be given. The Court directed that all the three States and Central Government must report back on the measures taken.

The order was passed on an application by activists Harsh Mander, Anjali Bhardwaj and Jagdeep Chhokar, who had moved an urgent application before the Supreme Court seeking directions to ensure that migrant workers are not deprived of ration and food security and are able to travel back to their homes at nominal cost. The application was filed in the suo motu case initiated by the top court last year.

EC sets up panel to identify shortcomings in recent Assembly polls



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election commission has set up a core committee headed by secretary-general of the ECI to identify shortcomings, learning and experiences from recently poll-gone States of Assam, Bihar, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Puducherry. The committee has been asked to submit its report within a month. The Committee will also examine the recommendations of the nine Working Groups (which were set up post Lok Sabha Elections, 2019) in light of experiences in the Poll gone States.

According to the EC, the core committee has been asked to identify shortcomings /gaps in the poll body regulatory regime, if any and the gaps in implementation and enforcement at the level of CEOs/ District officials.

"Need for Strengthening legal/ regulatory framework enabling ECI to more effectively ensure compliance of guidelines / directions including the Covid norms; Measures to ensure discharge of responsibility, like enforcement of covid protocol by the agencies/ authorities mandated under respective regulatory/ legal regime to do so irrespective of and in addition to ECI guidelines; Gaps, if any in the guidelines or at implementation level in MCC / regulatory regime leading to avoidance/ non-compliance by the Candidates/ Political parties' stakeholders; Measures to further strengthen the expenditure management regulation for induce free election and shortcomings in existing framework in providing protection to electoral machinery from pos-

sibility of reprisal after elections,' the EC said in a statement.

The Committee has also been asked to collate, analyse experiences, best practices across States/UT and suggest way forward and further reforms required.

The Election Commission came under heavy fire from the Trinamool Congress and the Madras High Court. While the TMC accused the poll panel of favoring the BJP and not clubbing the remaining phases into one, the Madras HC lashed out against the EC and called it the "most irresponsible institution in the country" that have done nothing to prevent political parties from breaching COVID-19 protocol.

"Deputy Election Commissioners of the EC and Chief Electoral Officers of recent poll gone States and few select Special Observers and Observers will be members of the Committee. While finalising its recommendations, the Committee will also take inputs from State Nodal Officers of different divisions like Police, Expenditure, Health authorities as well as from some DEOs, SPs & ROs identified by CEOs, Polling officials, BLOs about the issues and challenges faced at the grass root levels," the EC said.

The Commission had formed nine working groups of CEOs and Commission Officers covering various facets of election process including Electoral Roll issues, Polling Stations management, MCC, Voting processes & Materials inventory, Capacity Building, IT applications, Expenditure Management, SVEEP and Media interface as also Electoral Reforms.

Covaxin gets nod for phase II/III clinical trial on 2 to 18-year olds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Following concerns that the third wave might be more infectious to kids, the Drugs Controller General of India (DGCI) has approved Bharat Biotech's Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin for phase II/III clinical trial on those aged between two to 18 years.

According to the Union Health Ministry, the trial will be conducted on 525 subjects at various sites, including AIIMS, Delhi, AIIMS, Patna and Meditrina Institute of Medical Sciences, Nagpur. In the trial, the vaccine will be given by intramuscular route in two doses at day 0 and day 28.

"The DCGI, after careful examination, has accepted the recommendation of Subject Expert Committee and accorded permission to conduct the Phase II/III clinical trial of Covaxin in the age group 2 to 18 years, to its manufacturer Bharat Biotech," according to the Ministry in a statement here.

It added that the Subject Expert Committee on COVID-19 of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) had on Tuesday deliberated upon Bharat Biotech's application seeking permission to conduct



phase II/III clinical trials to evaluate the safety, reactivity and immunogenicity of Covaxin jabs in children aged 2 to 18 years. The committee after detailed deliberation recommended for grant of permission to conduct proposed Phase II/III clinical trials to certain conditions.

Covaxin is indigenously developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). It is being used in adults in ongoing vaccination drives. Covishield—the local version of Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine, which is being manufactured by Pune-based Serum Institute of India is also being given to adults. Recently, Sputnik V was approved to be imported from Russia by Dr Reddy's, but is yet to be widely available in the country.

Meanwhile, Bharat Biotech has submitted to the Centre its production plan for the next four months, informing that it can ramp it up to 7.8 crore doses by August, said an official from the Ministry.

India must ask Israel to shun aggression: Muslim leaders

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the ongoing tensions in Gaza, Muslim leaders of the country have condemned the Israeli attacks on Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem, Gaza and other places in Palestine and demanded that India must ask Israel to shun aggression.

"We believe that this aggression is part of Israel's terrorist tactics to evacuate Palestinian territories through violent acts and resettle Jewish settlers there, in clear violation of international law. An unjust and cruel campaign is currently underway to evacuate the Sheikh Jarrah area of Jerusalem, and for this, civilians, including children, the elderly, and women, are being subjected to severe atrocities on a large scale. The forcible eviction of Palestinians is a violation of all principles of human rights," said the leaders in a signed statement released on Thursday by the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind.

The leaders further said, "We also urge the Government of India, while respecting our country's long-standing foreign policy and its long-standing commitment to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause, to support the oppressed Palestinian people and pressure Israel to renounce its aggressive behaviour."

BRICS members discuss multilateral framework on Social Security Agreement

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) nations have converged on devising a multilateral framework on the issue of Social Security Agreement (SSA).

Social Security Agreement would help the international workers to port their benefit to their home countries thereby preventing loss of their hard-earned money, said the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

"Further they will be exempted from contributing both in home as well as host countries"

The decisions were taken in the first BRICS Employment Working Group (EWG) meeting in which the member nations resolved to enter into dialogue and discussion with each other and take the issue forward towards signing of the agreements. The two-day virtual meeting concluded on Wednesday with India assuming BRICS Presidency this year.

The prime agenda for the discussions were promoting Social Security Agreements amongst BRICS nations, formalisation of labour markets, participation of women in labour force and Gig and platform workers—role in labour market.

The representatives of International Labour

Organization (ILO) and International Social Security Agency (ISSA), who also took part in the meeting, made valuable interventions and suggestions on the agenda issues. They also expressed willingness to provide technical support in facilitating conclusion of such agreements.

On the issue of formalisation of labour market, member nations discussed various initiatives taken by them towards formalisation of jobs and how Covid-19 has enhanced informalisation risk.

On participation of women in the labour force, the member countries resolved to promote participation of women in remunerative, productive and decent work and to extend social security cover to the women workers engaged in informal sector. Impact of Covid-19 on participation of women in labour force was also discussed.

On the issue of Gig and platform workers and their role in labour market, the member nations discussed how the proliferation of Digital Labour Platforms is transforming the labour processes in the world of work.

Challenges faced by them and various measures being taken by member nations including extension of social protection system were also discussed.

Global road safety body writes to Gadkari to identify 'blackspots' on India's roads

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

The International Road Federation (IRF), the Geneva-based global body working for better and safer roads worldwide, has written to Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari urging him to circulate the scientific guidelines developed by the Indian Road Congress (IRC) for identifying and treating the blackspots in the country.

"The blackspots / grey spots removal from the road network definitely makes for a distinct and measurable difference in the road safety outcome in the states as measured through their accident / crash data records. However, the present ongoing blackspot programme delivered till date is without any appropriate scientific guidelines for investigation and rectification being used by the field officers of MoRTH, NHAI and NHIDCL," said K.K. Kapila, President, Emeritus, International Road Federation, in his letter to Gadkari.

"All countermeasures - short term, medium term and long term - adopted by the field officers assigned to remove blackspots are totally ad-hoc without any basis of scientific investigation for the blackspot / grey spot, uniformly across the country,"

Actively considering live telecast of SC proceedings: CJI

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India N V Ramana on Thursday said he is "actively" considering the proposal to live telecast the proceedings of the Supreme Court.

However, Justice Ramana emphasized that before initiating concrete steps to live telecast the court proceedings, he plans to seek a general consensus among his colleagues in the top court. He was speaking at the launch of a mobile application to grant access of virtual proceedings of the top court

to the media persons. "Transparency is a time-honoured principle when it comes to the judicial process in our country. Hearing of cases have always taken place in public courtrooms, with access being allowed not only to the lawyers and the litigants in a particular case, but also to the general public," said Justice Ramana.

He emphasized that access to the public is important, as court rulings, and more particularly the Supreme Court, have a bearing on the lives of people throughout this coun-



try. "The role of the media assumes importance in the process of disseminating information. Unfortunately, when

COVID-19 struck, the systems which were earlier in place could no longer be relied upon. The judicial system has had to

adapt quickly in order to ensure that justice dispensation does not stop in the country," added Justice Ramana.

He said, "I was a journalist for a brief time. That time we did not have cars or bikes. We used to travel on bus as we were directed not to avail conveyance of organisers of the event."

Justice Ramana also highlighted another feature on the official website and mobile application of the top court. "This new feature, called 'Indicative Notes' is aimed at

providing concise summaries of landmark judgments in an easy-to-understand format. This will serve as a useful resource for media persons and the general public who wish to be better informed about the rulings of the Court. Thanks are due to my predecessor Justice Bobde for initiating this," said Justice Ramana.

He cited that small issues are bound to arise, which should not be unnecessarily magnified. "I request everyone to be patient, to be encourag-

ing and supportive to the technical team to ensure that the application works without any problems. I hope that everyone gives the system the requisite time to evolve and expand", added Justice Ramana.

He added that directions have been issued to further rationalise the policy of granting accreditation to media persons.

He pointed out that many staff of the top court were also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. "Till date, approxi-

mately 800 Registry staff have tested positive. Six of our Registrars and 10 Additional Registrars have tested positive at different times. Unfortunately, we lost three of our officials to Covid as per the data available, 2,768 judicial officers and 106 Judges of the High Court have tested positive. We are yet to receive the data from two major High Courts. 34 Judicial Officers and three Hon'ble Judges of the High Court have lost their life, battling this pandemic," he added.

The vaccine hydra

The Government would do well to centralise the vaccination project and make it free for all citizens

The confusion over the multiple price brands for COVID-19 vaccines in India and their scarcity continues to hamper operations to manage the pandemic. The Prime Minister's Office, which is seized of the issue of rapid vaccinations, stated that the Prime Minister, at a review meeting on May 7, spoke about the need to sensitise States so that the speed of vaccination does not falter. The Health Minister has also asked the States to speed up the vaccination process. There are three issues with the requests from the Centre to the States. One, there is not enough supply of vaccines. Two, the multiple price bands are making the issue complicated, with private hospitals charging a range of high prices while the vaccination is free in the Government-run hospitals.



Three, the procurement of vaccines by the Central and State Governments is confusing as the Centre's policy has ended up making the States and private hospitals compete for the same supply. Twelve Opposition parties have now written to the Centre on how to end the reign of confusion: One, the Union Government should centrally procure all vaccines. Two, there should be a free and universal mass vaccination campaign across the country. Three, invoke compulsory licensing to increase domestic vaccine production. The signatories to the letter also wondered why only ₹5,000 crore of the budgetary allocation of the ₹35,000 crore was spent on vaccines

to date. Untangling the price and procurement beast is easier said than done.

There is no logical reason put forth by the Union Government for the complex pricing and procuring arrangements. The Centre procured all vaccines and distributed them to its centres, State Governments and private hospitals till April 30. Since May 1, the Centre procured 50 per cent of the vaccines while the State Governments, private hospitals and the open market keep vying for buying the remaining 50 per cent from manufacturers. From its share, the Centre is supposed to allocate vaccines to the States, depending on the demand. As to the pricing, the original price of ₹150 per dose was valid only for the first consignment. The Centre then capped the price at ₹250 but it became infructuous after the Centre inexplicably introduced price liberalisation measures. That means private hospitals can charge a person the cost of the dose plus administrative charges and, additionally, any other charges that may become applicable. It is this last criterion that has jacked up the price from anywhere between ₹800 and ₹1,300 per dose. An 18-year-old may not get a dose because the State he is a resident of may be giving priority to the older citizens. A resident of Delhi or Haryana may not be able to get a dose in the neighbouring Uttar Pradesh because the latter allows doses only for in-State residents. Why shouldn't the Centre centralise the entire vaccination project as that would resolve all avoidable complications and put an end to the class divide on account of different price slabs by making the vaccines free to all?

PICTALK



Mist floats through a neighbourhood in Shimla following heavy rain

PTI

At it, again!

There is clear and present danger that the Israel-Palestine conflict may get out of hand

The Israel-Palestine conflict never ends; there are only interim periods of a lull while both sides think of fresh ways to inflict damage on the opponent. The Coronavirus and its repercussions notwithstanding, Israel and Palestine are engaged in a bloody conflict that has already taken several lives on either side. It all began on May 12 with Israeli rockets claiming the lives of several Palestinian civilians. In a *quid pro quo*, five Israelis died of Palestinian rocket attacks. It is difficult to say which party started the conflict. Anyway, as they say, truth is the first casualty in any war. Israel's military campaign has been fierce, though there may have been Palestinian provocation. Its military offensive in the Gaza Strip killed 10 senior Hamas military officers. In the counteroffensive, the Islamic militant group fired hundreds of rockets at Israeli cities. Right now, it is an anarchic situation in Israel as the Jewish and Arab mobs are engaged in skirmishes on the streets. The Palestine conflict started with the birth of Israel and has continued ever since. The 'Partition Plan' of the UN created Arab and Israeli territories from the British territory. But it actually laid down the basis of an endless conflict.

All these years, their hate for each other has only grown. However, the current situation has a lot to do with Israel's internal situation as well. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has lost credibility and the people want him to go. In such a situation, the Palestine issue comes in handy. This conflict was just waiting to happen. In mid-2020, the UAE and Bahrain agreed to normalise relations with Israel. They signed the Abraham Accords, which was summarily rejected by Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas and the Hamas alike. The subsequent elections in Israel and Netanyahu's loss of popularity laid the foundation of the new conflict. After three inconclusive elections, Netanyahu of the Likud party and Benny Gantz of the Blue and White party signed a pact creating a unity Government in April 2020. Despite the formation of the unity Government and promises from Netanyahu that he would step down after 18 months, he didn't. But the average Israeli's hate for Palestine can be easily mobilised which sweeps all wrongs under the carpet. But sometimes war creates its own dynamics and the genie would just not go back into the bottle. Now there are genuine fears that a third *intifada* could unleash.

Nepal slips into deeper crisis

Having failed to prove majority in Parliament, the Oli-led Government has shoved the country into the throes of uncertainty



RISHI GUPTA

Despite a protracted political battle, the ruling Communist Party of Nepal (UML) failed to prove majority in the Lower House of Parliament on May 10. Prime Minister KP Oli held a series of meetings with the Opposition, including the Nepali Congress and the Janata Samajbadi Party, for support after the erstwhile faction of the CPN(UML) led by former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' withdrew support to the Government. In March this year, the Supreme Court had ordered against the dissolution of the House of Representatives by Oli amid his rift with party chairman Prachanda. This House was elected in January 2018 after Maoist Party chief Prachanda had agreed to merge his party with the Oli-led UML. However, the Government's downfall was inevitable as neither of the leaders had an ideological clarity nor a will to end the race for the premiership.

As Nepal is witnessing a significant health crisis amid the second peak of COVID-19, the political upheaval comes as an extra burden for the Nepalese people. An egoist, authoritarian and assertive Prime Minister, Oli has finally plunged Nepal into a political and humanitarian crisis. The healthcare system in Nepal was already in a shambles after the 2015 earthquake. While the political parties could have worked on improving health, education and employment in the post-earthquake phase, they all chose to deal with personal equations to be in power. In the last 10 years alone, Nepal has seen more than five Prime Ministers, with none completing their tenure.

Panic Plea: In a humanitarian plea to the international community, Oli, in an article in The Guardian, wrote: "The rise in the number of infections poses a serious challenge to our brave doctors, nurses, other care providers, citizen volunteers and the entire health service system." He added: "(Amid the) constraints of resources and infrastructure, the pandemic is turning out to be an



overwhelming burden. I have, therefore, appealed to the international community to help us with vaccines, diagnostic tools, oxygen kits, critical care medicines and equipment, to support our efforts to save lives." However, one needs to question the Prime Minister and his Cabinet whether they ever planned to bring in people-oriented policies for the nation's welfare. At its best, Nepal lacks all fundamental policy frameworks concerning its disaster management, humanitarian crisis or foreign policy. As a result of Oli's follies, his plea received a mixed response from the international community as in his two years-plus administration, Oli has isolated Nepal from the international community by failing to engage with them to serve the Chinese.

For instance, Nepal's geographical constraints notwithstanding, Oli chose to badmouth India's goodwill for political gains and compromised Nepal's integrity by signing the Treaty of Mutual Legal Assistance with China and allowing its embassy to micro-manage local affairs. Besides, corruption charges in the procurement of medical supplies to fight COVID-19 led to the



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Army's intervention last year.

The Wrong Advice: Advised by a handful of sycophants, Oli has isolated Nepal from a friendly United States. The latter has stood to the goodwill and democratic aspirations of the Nepalese people. At the same time, the US is irked with Oli after he showed no interest in joining the Millennium Challenge Cooperation (MCC), aiming to provide affordable and green transportation, electricity, regional security, peace and development to partners, only because China calls it a military platform. The US has often requested Nepal to consider the MCC as a priority. Still, all successive Communist Governments, especially Oli, have made it a US versus China deal.

Oli continues to be the acting Prime Minister until other parties are invited to prove their majority to form a new government. Considering Oli's quest for absolute control over the Government and political affairs, he will attempt to derail the formation of a new Government. In the past, too, Oli has misused the office in bringing new laws and dissolving the House.

Conclusion: Oli's ultra-

nationalistic outlook and power hunger are at the heart of the people's agony in Nepal. He chose to engage in a verbal spat with India when he could have asked India for humanitarian help last year. On the contrary, India still provided Nepal with vaccines and timely supplies of medical equipment. At present, to its best efforts, India will have the challenge to send prompt help to Nepal considering the crises at home. However, it is a wake-up call for the political leadership in Nepal to balance its foreign policy and bring in policies for the welfare of the people. While Oli holds the biggest responsibility for plunging Nepal into the current crisis, the Maoists, Nepali Congress and the Janata Samajbadi Party equally hold the responsibility for derailing Nepal's developmental process in the past. For a fact, bringing down a democratically elected Government has become popular culture in Nepalese politics.

(The author is an ICSSR Doctoral Fellow at the JNU and Visiting Fellow at the Asian Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs, Kathmandu. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS ARE SUPREME

Sir — The edit 'Two to tango' (May 12) is rational and cogent. As the write-up states, constitutionally our citizens are equal shareholders in the system and, hence, share the blame for the behaviour that crosses all borders of civic responsibility. In our democracy, laws are equally applicable to all, irrespective of political or other social positions of citizens. Therefore, stringent action against the violators is irrefutably paramount. The gargantuan crowd brazenly neglecting or ignoring the COVID protocols has the potential to be a super-spreader within a fortnight. Indeed, religion plays a covetable role in Indian politics and, ergo, those at the helm hesitate to act against the offenders, apparently eyeing the huge vote banks. In our secular democracy, faith is just a personal affair of the citizens and the regime has nothing to do in the people's religious beliefs. The religious doctrines cannot eclipse our constitutional provisions under any circumstances.

The elected regime is bound to exercise its unassailable constitutional authority against any religion or religious outfit/body to protect the secular status of our democracy. Religious freedom can be considered only as a constitutional compromise or privilege for the people. Demanding religious dominance in specific locations, solely considering the majority of particular religion(s) in the designated regions, not only jeopardises the unity and harmony of the people but also breaches the secular clauses of our Constitution.

Thomas KM | Kerala

BAN BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Sir — The havoc of COVID-19 has raised a series of questions. It has been said that the Corona virus is not natural, rather a biological weapon created in a lab for economic and geographical benefits. We have already witnessed two world wars, besides chemical and atomic attacks, but the third global war would be biological.

In recent reports emanating from America, it has been speculated that China is busy since the last six years in preparing

The battle is not over yet



This is in response to Prafulla Goradia's article, 'Decoding the Bengal election' (May 13). The West Bengal Assembly poll result seems to be great in contrast to the unprecedented success of the BJP in the State just two years ago, when it garnered a rich harvest of 18 MPs during the 2019 general polls and 40 per cent vote share, with the TMC performing marginally better in terms of both seats and percentage. It just goes on to show the damp squib the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah duo has delivered despite the full power of the Centre getting unleashed upon the State in the past

four months. However, taking a rational look in comparison to the 2016 Assembly polls, it is a massive advancement of the BJP in Bengal — from mere three MLAs to 77 — which is certainly not a joke. And if compared to 2019, the loss of the BJP in vote percentage is also not too drastic — 40 per cent just got reduced by 2-3 per cent, which is only negligible.

Indeed, it had seemed that the BJP would at last conquer the 'last frontier' of Bengal handsomely. Despite the apparent great success of the TMC, according to the number of seats gained, the situation on the ground is actually not too optimistic. With the "oxygen" of enjoying the status of the only Opposition party within the Assembly premises, coupled with the psychological boost of being the ruling power at the Centre, the Hindu consolidation programme would continue with more vigour and if the BJP retains power in New Delhi in 2024, the TMC surely would have to face much more hurdles in dealing with the saffron brigade in 2026.

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

TELANGANA SHOULD RESCHEDULE LOCKDOWN

Sir — It is a "better late than never" decision taken by the Telangana Government

for imposing a major lockdown in the State to reduce the prevalence of the Corona pandemic amid inadequate supply of vaccines, oxygen cylinders and the other emergency items.

We, however, would like to draw the attention of the Telangana Chief Minister in helping the people going out for medical consultation in the morning hours. He should reschedule the lockdown-free timings as 6 am to 12 noon instead of until 10 am. This is because, generally, the doctors working in the Government or private hospitals attend out-patient cases from 10 am onwards. The Government should consider the problems of the people who do not own a vehicle and depend exclusively on public transport for going to hospitals.

Katuru Durga Prasad Rao | Hyderabad

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

All the States, including Goa, are facing this major epidemic. Oxygen scarcity has been a headache for the Government.



Union Minister of State
— Shripad Naik



The sanctions are a swindle on the people, direct oppression on the poorest in society, an abuse of the

rights on the sick who lack medicines.

Iranian President
— Hassan Rouhani

Let's not play Doctor-Doctor at home. Follow only your physician or any reputed doctor. Don't just follow anything floating on whatsapp.



Actor
— Shekhar Suman



All My tweets are either 4 humanity or countrymen, from the point of view of a guy who has represented India at d highest level.

Former Indian cricketer
— Irfan Pathan

The federal Government needs to make bold changes and significant investments in order to defend the vital institutions that underpin the American way of life.




US President
— Joe Biden

FIRST COLUMN

AN APPEAL: COVID UPS AND DOWNS

It's time for all of us to come together and fight the pandemic selflessly



RAVI CHANDER KOCHHAR

It was towards the end of 2019 that the unknown disaster struck the globe in the form of COVID-19 and since then researchers and scientists have been burning midnight oil to find out how and where it started and how it spread. An answer eludes us even today. The pandemic created havoc around the world, the damages to industry and economies are still being assessed, the world has taken a hit and many countries are still trying to recover from the shock. Now, the second wave has hit the world community with a vengeance and the havoc it has created is worse than the first wave. It is upto the scientific community to quickly analyse how long the present wave will last. During the first wave, thanks to technology, it did not take long for mankind to shift to alternate means of survival and sustain business operations. The education system promptly went into the online mode that has now become the primary mode of teaching. It didn't take long to start virtual laboratory sessions and even the examinations were held online so as to recoup lost offline sessions and save an academic year. Work from home became the name



of the office game, allowing people to run offices and businesses through virtual workshops, seminars and conferences without having to travel at all. Shopping has more or less become an online phenomenon to avoid visits to crowded markets, food too is ordered online like never before and sensing the demand for delivered food, entrepreneurs have expanded the cuisines and culinary fare available for the consumers.

There has been a decline in some businesses in the organised and unorganised sectors, but then many new entrepreneurs have also sprung up ushering in new a wave of innovative ideas. Products such as PPEs, masks and ventilators and many more are being made and subjected to innovations, while those never manufactured in the country are being exported in under a year. The innovations and new systems, however, eluded the country's medical care apparatus with the health workers struggling to cope up with the pandemic and trying to put their best foot forward to ensure it contained as quickly as possible and ensuring that people respect safety norms and wear masks, maintain social distancing and wash their hands regularly.

The public healthcare system is bursting at the seams and politicising has only made it worse. This is something to be guarded guard against lest it demoralise the nation. Humanitarian aid is coming from various quarters, including from religious communities, offering volunteer services to provide free food at 'langars', free oxygen supplies and even beds in urgently erected centres. There are also disturbing scenes of over-burdened front line health workers overwhelmed by the scale of the surge. Equally disturbing are reports of black marketing of essential drugs and oxygen, fake admissions, fake medicine and medical equipment. All this adds up to a bizarre situation where the conscience of those indulging in these practices seems to have died. The need of the hour is for everyone to come together keeping politics at bay and fight the pandemic selflessly. Life, not money, is valuable as it will never come back. There is also the need to have a positive mind, it is no small achievement that despite a massive increase in positive cases, the recoveries are also in big numbers.

(The author is Group Pro Vice-Chancellor, Amity University, Uttar Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.)

Did 'Vaccine Maitri' unfriend Indians?

As India reels under the impact of the second wave of COVID-19, the sense of anger and helplessness among the nation's citizens is only growing

On January 16, 2021, India had rolled out its vaccine campaign. The country rejoiced, more so, because these were Indian made vaccines, a tribute to all our researchers and a strong endorsement of India's capabilities in the field of medicines. As the phase-wise vaccine programme began, there was a lack of transparency as to how the policy will work — how would the States be allotted the vaccines, would they be free, what is the stock that Indian government has procured and how the supply chain will be handled. However, the cases were falling, there was normalcy returning and there was immense hope that we will overcome the scourge of pandemic with vaccination rollout.

As the phase-wise vaccination started, India first saw vaccine hesitancy and there was wastage being reported from some States. At the same time India began the noble Vaccine Maitri initiative, everyone welcomed it, secure in the belief that the government was in control and had adequate supplies of the vaccine. The Budget Session saw an increasing feeling of having conquered the deadly virus with all ministers in the cabinet praising the Prime Minister for having planned like a *vishwaguru*, increasingly the chorus of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* also started being frequently thrown at the opposition members who questioned the quantity available with India versus those exported, my parliamentary question included. Globally all nations began to place advance orders to vaccine manufacturing companies and built a stockpile for their citizens as early as May, 2020. India only began to purchase from the first week of January, 2021. In the Union Budget the Finance Minister with a lot of fanfare announced an allocation of 35000 crore rupees exclusively for Covid vaccine and said would not hesitate to allocate more if the need arises.

The horror that was unfolding parallelly in Maharashtra sounded an alert to the central government that they were seeing an onset of second wave and had been working to reduce the impact but would need the support from the Central government. These alerts would not come in the way of BJP leaders applauding the PM for his leadership in ending COVID, the Health Minister from saying that it was the endgame for COVID in India. All this while the National Task Force was not even consulted nor a meeting convened. The Election Commission, not to be outdone, went ahead and declared an election festival in five States with a perfunctory warning of maintaining COVID protocols. Oblivious of the fact that the virus was uncontrollable, leaders were busy addressing election rallies. The numbers kept rising, shortage of medical equipment and medicine continued to be flagged but the ministers weren't bothered then but are now busy sharing professional videos to show the work they are doing. Remember, with the Indian Epidemic Act the Centre has an overriding control over the States despite health being a state subject.

The tsunami of second wave hit us hard and we are still reeling because of the impact. The country has been a witness to a total collapse at the Centre, all Ministers having reduced themselves to trolls and any suggestion or feedback being met with an unfortunate, political and whataboutery reply. The ivory tower that they have been confined to refuses to see the death and destruction- they refuse to acknowledge the scale of the problem or the deaths the second wave has left in its wake. We still do not know the number of dead, our crematoriums are full, new places are being iden-



APPROXIMATELY ONE BILLION INDIANS WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR VACCINES, ROUGHLY TWO BILLION DOSES, YET THE ORDER TO DATE HAS BEEN FOR MERELY 36.4 CRORE. WE STILL DO NOT KNOW THE WORK DONE BY THE GOVERNMENT TO PROCURE VACCINES FROM ABROAD. THE STATE GOVERNMENTS ARE NOW FLOATING GLOBAL TENDERS TO BE ABLE TO BUILD A VACCINE STOCK FOR THEIR POPULATION

The writer is a member of the Rajya Sabha representing the Shiv Sena. The views expressed are personal.



tified to carry out cremations. There are queues to cremate our dead, there are queues for oxygen supply, there are queues for vaccination, there are queues for beds. The most tragic scenes are being reported from our villages that do not even have basic medical support — forget the ventilators that are needed to save lives — and the bodies of the dead are being disposed of in the rivers. The government unfortunately is not firefighting with a coherent response to the pandemic but is rather concentrating its energy on 'setting a positive narrative' because the foreign media has started to ask tough questions.

There is growing anger and helplessness amongst the people. The larger problem is of lower testing, under reporting of cases and a slow vaccine drive. The state Chief Ministers began to raise an alarm of vaccine shortage and only when their voices started rising was it revealed that India had ended up sending out more vaccines overseas, to countries that were seeing lower impact of the pandemic than India, and the Health Department hadn't stockpiled vaccines. It was only on April 28 that the government released funds to Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech for more orders. As per the Minister of State for Finance, the government has totally paid out ₹4745 crores (₹5220 on April 28) for a total of 34.6 crore doses (16 crore on April 28) till date. India has covered 9.9 per cent of its population that has received the first dose and only about 2.6 per cent of those totally vaccinated. For Indian government to call it fastest and largest is yet another blunder.

When the Government, after pressure from all quarters, opened up vaccine for all as well as gave Emergency Use Authorisation to all

foreign vaccines, the assumption was the government would use the funds allocated in the budget to procure these vaccines and ramp up the vaccine drive. This again was not to be as the government left the procurement of vaccines for those in the 18-44 age group to the states and private hospitals at a price decided by the manufacturers. This led to three different price points for procurement for the Centre, State and private players. Today Indians are paying the highest price for these vaccines simply because of the ill-planned and unthought out policy of a central government. The question that needs to be asked is what happened to the allotted budget towards procurement and vaccination, why are the States, already reeling under financial constraints, forced to buy these vaccines at prohibitive costs?

Approximately one billion Indians would be eligible for vaccines, roughly two billion doses, yet the order till date has been for merely 36.4 crore. We still do not know the work done by the government to procure vaccines from abroad. It has been over a month since these EUA were given but yet no clarity when they would be available. The State governments are now floating global tenders to be able to build a vaccine stock for their population. Many States are running out of vaccines and have been forced to either ration the stock or shut down vaccination centres. Just when the drive needed to pick up it has been forced to slow down.

Various hospitals across the country were forced to move the High Courts to ensure their oxygen supply wasn't disrupted. Some hospitals also saw deaths due to shortage of supply of oxygen forcing the Supreme Court to step in and form an oxygen task-

force. Last week the Supreme Court said compelling States to negotiate with manufacturers, on grounds of promoting competition and making it attractive for new manufacturers, would adversely affect those in the 18-44 age group. The Government has called its vaccination policy 'just and equitable'; now it is for the people to realize the truth on ground. The government of India still controls the distribution despite saying it has a hands-off approach in State government procurements. It submitted in the SC that though the States are procuring the vaccines from the manufacturers, the Central government has, in consultation with the vaccine manufacturers, determined the pro-rata population of each State in the age group of 18-44 and each State will procure only that quantity so that there is no disparity in availability of vaccines between the States inter-se either based upon difference in their bargaining power.

The technological barrier has created a digital divide and the price barrier has created a class divide. The only way forward despite the government terming Supreme Court hearing on this matter an overzealousness on part of judiciary to get involved— would be for the courts to form a vaccination task force and get the government to adhere to the same. It is unfortunate that a government which was boasting of its Vaccine Maitri diplomacy and *aatmanirbharta* is now defending the same policy to justify the foreign aid coming in from various countries including Bhutan and Bangladesh, because of its own incompetence to prepare the country for a second wave. Unfortunately, transparency in distribution and allocation is still a distant dream, so is cutting out the red tape for quicker outreach.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

WHILE THEY WERE ALIVE, THEY DID NOT GET MEDICINE, OXYGEN, BEDS AND TREATMENT. NOW, AFTER DEATH, NO SHROUDS, WOOD OR THE GROUND FOR CREMATION.
— FORMER BIHAR CHIEF MINISTER LALU PRASAD



THE FLOATING BODIES IN GANGA...UNFORTUNATE. THE MODI GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO MAINTAINING PIETY AND CONTINUITY OF THE GANGA.
— UNION JAL SHAKTI MINISTER GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT

The culture of political violence in India is not new

The number of victims of political violence in our country is much higher than the number of deaths due to terror attacks

Politicians often capitalise on the emotions and beliefs of common people that can be regional, ethnic, and religious. They become an integral part of the political process. These values and beliefs become extremely intense and often lead to violence in the struggle for political supremacy. This phenomenon can be observed around the world as a means for gaining ultimate power. The issue of political violence has once again come to the fore in the wake of the recent Assembly elections in the five States, including West Bengal.

The struggle for existence has been marked by conflict, violence, oppression, and human rights abuses. In the 18th century, violence was considered almost the only way to achieve political goals. During the French Revolution, the Jacobin rebels tried to over-



RAJESH S. KHARAT

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throw the established political set up by adopting the formula of political violence and change the power structure. In Colombia, the Marxist-Leninist organisations like FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) resorted to violence for political change since 1964, in Peru, the Shining Path also followed the same tactics and its terror impact is still continues. Thus, one could observe that while some organisations advocate ideology motivated by political violence to achieve their goals, a few others use religion based political violence for their objectives, especially in the Arab-Asian countries.

In most of the developed and underdeveloped countries, the casualties and backlashes of political violence during the general elections or local conflicts is relatively low as compared to acts of terrorism. However, the situation in India

is the opposite. The number of victims of political violence in the Gram Panchayat elections and right up to the General Elections or domestic conflicts like intra-State, inter-State or communal and sectorial and caste conflicts is much higher than the number of deaths due to the terrorist attacks. It is an unanticipated phenomenon because such situation had never existed before, at least not on such a larger scale. Though, there were always exceptions. But a look at the violence in the last 50 years of General Elections in India reveals an astonishing picture of post-poll violence in India.

Between 1970 and 1990, there always were sporadic incidents of violence either during the pre-poll and post-poll period in the border states of India, especially in the Northeast States, viz, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram,



Meghalaya, and Tripura and also in Punjab and the Kashmir Valley. The demand for either right to self-determination or an independent State or a State with autonomous status compelled the rebels to use political violence to achieve their objectives. Moreover, the separatists were also protesting against the Union Government for frequent use of Article 356.

Until 1990, political violence was limited to targeting

Government property or particular officials which eventually forced the government to negotiate. However, the general public was not harmed at a scale that is witnessed today. The assassination of a particular leader of a politically motivated community during the election period began with the 1985 General Elections in Bihar when 63 people, including four candidates, were killed and 200 people were seriously injured. The same was repeated in the next general elections. Between 1990 and 2004 period, as reported, almost 644 people lost their lives in various elections in Bihar. The feudal society, corrupt and weak administration, and political uncertainties provided fertile ground to the local leaders who simultaneously took advantage of the deteriorating economic conditions and exploited a polarised

social space. Political power was seized in Bihar by the 'Bahubalis', who resorted to violence and gave birth to private caste militias, whose activities were a precursor to political violence in India.

Eruption of post-election political violence in West Bengal has dented the very composed image of the state. Despite limitations of economic and commercial prosperity, West Bengal as a state did maintain social harmony and respected faiths and religious sentiments. Though it was never free from conflicts based on communalism or ideological rivalries or caste conflicts, those sentiments and incidents were not used for power struggle. Unfortunately, the series of violence in Nandigram and Singur during the 2011 elections paved the way for using violence to meet political ends.

Unlike the developed urban

centres of West Bengal inhabited by the 'Bhadralok', the socio-economic and political atmosphere in its rural parts is yet to see the fruits of modernity. Paradoxically, much of the educated class has either migrated abroad or shifted to more developed parts of India, and for those in Bengal, their political existence is negligible. As a result, the political class in West Bengal essentially comprises the common man and activists with limited exposure to the real world. However, the political awareness and sensitivities of Bengali society are quite high because of their role in and contribution to the Renaissance and national movements.

The political activists remained only activists and followed the orders and dictated given or issued by their party leaders. In a way, political violence is becoming a determining factor in elections.

7% rise in FPIs' holdings in domestic equities

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The value of foreign portfolio investors' (FPI) holdings in domestic equities reached USD 552 billion in three months to March 2021, a surge of 7 per cent from the preceding quarter, according to a Morningstar report.

This was largely on the back of robust net inflows from FPIs, coupled with a strong performance of the Indian equity markets.

"As of the quarter ended March 2021, the value of FPI investments in Indian equities stood at USD 552 billion, which was considerably higher than the USD 518 billion recorded in the previous quarter," the report noted.

As of March 2020 quarter, the value of FPI investments in Indian equities was USD 281 billion. However, overseas investors' contribution to domestic equity market capitalisation dropped marginally during the period under review to 19.9 per cent from 20.1 per cent in December quarter.

Offshore mutual funds form an important component of total foreign portfolio investment, apart from other large FPIs, such as offshore insurance companies, hedge



funds, and sovereign wealth funds.

During January-March 2021, FPIs invested a robust USD 7.64 billion in Indian equities. In relative terms, it was much lower than the net inflows of USD 19.21 billion recorded in the previous quarter, but in absolute terms it is a significant amount, nonetheless, the report pointed out.

According to the report, positive domestic and global factors ensured that the interest of foreign investors in the Indian equity markets remains intact. Further, the announcement of the government's pro-growth budget was lauded by investors.

In addition, there was a gush of liquidity in the global financial markets after the US announced a USD 1.9 trillion pandemic relief package. This

ensured regular flows of assets into emerging markets like India.

Also, a rejig in some of the global indexes resulted in flows of assets into Indian equities, the report noted.

However, overseas investors turned net sellers in the month of April and offloaded net assets worth USD 1.6 billion in the wake of second intense wave of COVID-19. "Expectedly, this fanned concerns over the risks to economic recovery caused by the lockdown being imposed in several states to contain the spread of virus," the report said.

While this dashed hope of an early economic recovery, it also spooked foreign investors, leading them to adopt a wait-and-watch stance regarding investing in Indian equities, it added.

Intense bidding for KG-D6 gas in e-auction on DGH-approved platform

O2C, IOC bag supplies

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 14 users across sectors slugged it on a third party electronic platform for seven-and-half hours to secure natural gas supplies from the eastern offshore KG-D6 block before the oil-to-chemical (O2C) unit of Reliance Industries Ltd bagged most of the supplies, sources said.

Reliance Industries Ltd and its partner BP Plc of the UK, who are bringing a second set of gas discoveries in their Bay of Bengal KG-D6 block, had offered 5.5 million standard cubic meters per day of additional gas in the auction for a flexible tenure of between 3 to 5 years.

Gas users companies like Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Reliance O2C, GAIL Gas, Adani Total Gas Ltd, Torrent Gas, Torrent Power and gas trading companies like GAIL, Shell and IGS were locked in the intense bidding war on the e-auction that happened on May 5, sources in the Reliance-BP consortium said.

At the end of the

intense bidding war, Reliance O2C walked away with 3 mmscmd of supplies, offering better prices than competitors, they said.

India Gas Solutions (IGS) - a gas sourcing and marketing joint venture of Reliance and BP - bagged another 1 mmscmd, while IOC got a similar volume.

The remaining volume was picked by Adani Gas (0.15 mmscmd), IRM Energy (0.10 mmscmd), GAIL (30,000 cubic meters per day) and Torrent Gas (20,000 cubic meters per day).

This is the third auction that Reliance-BP conducted on a third party independent platform approved by the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH). The online web-based electronic bidding platform of CRISIL Risk and Infrastructure Solutions Ltd (CRIS) was also used for e-auction in February this year as well as in 2019.

In the three auctions, Reliance-BP has sold around 18 mmscmd of domestic gas from new fields in the KG-D6 block, which would help substantially reduce reliance on imported LNG, the sources said.

In the May 5 auction, Reliance-BP had asked bidders to quote a price linked to Platts JKM (Japan Korea marker), the

liquefied natural gas (LNG) benchmark price assessment for spot physical cargoes.

The lowest bid that could be placed was JKM minus USD 0.3 per million British thermal unit.

The highest acceptable bid would be JKM plus USD 2.01 per mmBtu.

The bidding, they said, started with a USD 0.45 discount to JKM price and intense competition led to the discovery of a price of JKM minus USD 0.6 per mmBtu (discount of USD 0.6 to ruling JKM price).

The intense competition indicates a preference for domestic gas vis a vis LNG for Indian consumers.

At current prices, the discovered price translates into a price of about USD 9 per mmBtu, but the buyers will be required to pay only the cap or ceiling price that the government has set for such fields.

The government sets a cap or ceiling rate at which natural gas from difficult fields like deepsea an be sold. This cap for the period April 1, 2021, to September 30 2021 is USD 3.62 per mmBtu.

Even though the gas prices for April-September 2021 are capped by the government notified ceiling price of USD 3.62 per mmBtu.

CAIT asks Piyush Goyal to stop delivery of non-essential items by e-commerce cos



FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) in a communication sent to Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has said that going one step further, various e-commerce entities even in the ongoing Covid-19 induced national emergency are delivering non-essential goods in blatant contravention of lockdown guidelines imposed by various State Governments.

The CAIT has also sent similar communications to Chief Ministers of all States urging them to take immediate cognisance of this violation by e-commerce portals.

The CAIT said that the sole purpose of the lockdown is to limit human-to-human interaction and reduce exposure of the general population to the

COVID-19 virus and thereby break the chain of the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, all non-essential activities, including the sale and delivery of non-essential items, are prohibited during the lockdown by ordering the shops to close in all such States.

It said that as a part of "break the chain", the State Govts have banned the sale and delivery of non-essential goods and services. The business community across the country has implemented these orders in letter and spirit even though it has caused severe economic hardship to the traders. It is a matter of great astonishment that some multinational behemoths, in blatant violation of Govt instructions/orders, are selling non-essential goods under the garb of essential goods and are putting at risk.

Covid Resurgence: Monthly output loss widened in mid-April

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Resurgence of Covid-19 has changed India's macroeconomic narrative from being a linear V-shaped recovery in FY22 to being a story of a lost quarter, says Emkay Global in a report.

Accordingly, the report cited that amid increasing geographical spread of virus, the bottom-up projections now suggest that for every month of current localised lockdowns, the output loss would now be ₹1.25 lakh crore from ₹75,000 crore as per the restrictions seen in mid-Apr 2021.

"The fall in secondary and tertiary sector capacity utilisation varies between 10 per cent and 40 per cent among states," said Madhavi Arora, Lead Economist, Emkay.

She said the estimates imply a monthly loss of GVA growth by 90 basis points compared with loss of more than 40 basis points in output growth per month during Covid-1 lockdown.

"Clearly, factors such as better adapted firms and policy response, stable financial conditions, vaccine drive, pent-

up demand release and robust global growth spillovers create growth buffers," she said.

"Assuming Covid-II peaks in May'21 and restrictions ease by Q2FY22, we mark down our FY22 GDP forecast to 9.9 per cent from 11 per cent earlier."

However, she pointed out that the situation is still in a flux, but as per current dynamics the expected Q1FY22 annualised growth is seen at 16.5 per cent from more than 22 per cent estimated before the second wave.Their estimated monthly loss of output of 0.9-1 per cent of GDP is much higher than the estimated welfare cost of universal vaccination at 0.6-0.7 per cent of GDP, thus making a successful vaccine strategy the cheapest policy path to economic normalisation. Lately, India reported record new daily increases in coronavirus infections, prompting new lockdowns and restrictive measures to curb the spread of the pandemic.

The exponential rise in new coronavirus cases in India is a humanitarian crisis. It also raises concerns about the country's economic recovery and currency fluctuations.

Job scenario worsens, unemployment rate shoots up to 8% in April



FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

As the severe second wave of Covid-19 and the resultant lockdowns bring economic activities to a halt, India's job scenario worsened in April 2021.

As per data published by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), India's unemployment rate rose 8 per cent in April, against 6.5 per cent in March.

"April 2021 turned out to be worse than expectations. We had expected labour participation rate to stabilise at its March 2021 level. The LPR had dropped sharply in March already after a modest fall in February. But, the LPR fell for a third consecutive month in April," CMIE's CEO Mahesh Vyas said.

It fell to 39.98 per cent -- the lowest LPR since May 2020, the month of a stringent nation-wide lockdown. The LPR in April 2021 is therefore the worst since the national lockdown, the CMIE said.

It attributed this fall is the result of the local lockdowns in several states. In Maharashtra, a state that imposed partial lockdowns, saw its LPR fall sharply from 44.2 per cent in March to 40.6 per cent in April.The labour force shrank by 1.1 million in April 2021 to 424.6 million compared to 425.8 million in March. In spite of this smaller labour force looking for employment, a greater proportion failed to find employment.

The employment rate fell from 37.6 per cent in March to 36.8 per cent in April.

Bitcoin slips below \$50k after Musk says Tesla won't take it

PTI ■ NEW YORK

The price of bitcoin fell below \$50,000 Thursday morning after Tesla CEO Elon Musk tweeted a day earlier that the electric car maker would stop accepting the digital currency as payment for its vehicles.

Musk on Wednesday cited environmental concerns for the change in policy.

"We are concerned about rapid increasing use of fossil fuels for Bitcoin mining and transactions, especially coal, which has the worst emissions of any fuel," Musk said on Twitter. He added that cryptocurrency is a "good idea on many levels" but its promise cannot come at a "great cost to the environ-

ment."

He also said that Tesla won't be selling any of the Bitcoin it owns.

The price of bitcoin slipped to \$49,880 in morning trading Thursday, the first time it's been below \$50,000 since early March. Tesla shares were poised for gains early Thursday after falling 4.4% on Wednesday.

Tesla said in February that it had invested around \$1.5 billion in Bitcoin and it planned to begin accepting the digital currency as payment "soon". The fair market value of Tesla's Bitcoin holdings as of March 31 was \$2.48 billion, according to securities filings.

Bitcoin relies on computers, which rely on electricity, to exist.



Comm Min seeks anti-dumping duty on certain rubber imported from 4 countries

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The commerce ministry recommended imposition of anti-dumping duty on a certain type of rubber imported from China, European Union, Japan, and Russia, in order to guard domestic manufacturers from cheap inbound shipments.

Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) has recommended the duty after

concluding in its probe that "Acrylonitrile Butadiene Rubber" from these regions has been exported at dumped prices into India, which impacted the domestic industry.

"The authority recommends imposition of definitive anti-dumping duties on import of subject goods originating in or exported from subject countries," DGTR has said in a noti-

fication.

The recommended duty is the difference between the landed value of the product and USD 2,086 per tonne.

Apcoet Industries Ltd had filed an application before the directorate for imposition of anti-dumping duty on the imports. It had alleged that dumping of the product from these countries are impacting the domestic industry.

Jio tops in 4G download speed, Vodafone in upload in April: Trai

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Jio topped the 4G speed chart with data download rate of 20.1 megabit per second, while Vodafone was ahead of others in upload speed at 6.7 Mbps in April, according to the latest data from telecom regulator Trai.

Jio has almost three times higher download speed compared to its closest competitor



Vodafone.

Though Vodafone and Idea Cellular have merged their

mobile business as Vodafone Idea Ltd, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) still releases separate network speed data of both the entities.

Vodafone recorded download speed of 7 Mbps in April, according to Trai's data updated on May 11. It was followed by Idea and Bharti Airtel with download speeds of 5.8 Mbps and 5 Mbps, respectively.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Industry body COAI has urged state governments to vaccinate the field workforce of telecom companies on priority basis as they ensure continuous operation of telecommunications infrastructure, which in turn helps keep the Indian economy running.

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has sought the support of the state governments of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, West Bengal and Punjab, among others, to consider telecom field employees as frontline workers.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic India's telecom warriors are keeping Indians connected. At a time when physical distancing is critical, the telecommunications sector is instrumental in access to healthcare services to work-from-home to online education.

"I urge the State Governments to prioritise COVID-19 vaccination for frontline workforce of telecom providers and ensure that India remains operational even as we fight this global pandemic," COAI Director General S P Kochhar said in a statement.

Telephone and internet services already fall under the 'essential services' category, as per orders and directives issued

“When the nation is fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, the telecom industry has stepped up and ensured availability and continuity of telecom operations throughout the country”

both by the central and state governments.

"When the nation is fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, the telecom industry has stepped up and ensured availability and continuity of telecom operations throughout the country," the statement said.

Goa, Uttarakhand and Ladakh have already categorised telecom warriors as frontline workers and are helping them get the vaccines on priority.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, the telecom warriors continue to work persistently to ensure uninterrupted service access for all. They are ensuring to keep us connected during isolation and helping to cater to increased demand and enabled provision of seamless services," the statement said.

Hamas, Israel fighting escalates

AP ■ GAZA CITY (GAZA STRIP)

Hamas sent a heavy barrage of rockets deep into Israel in a matter of minutes on Thursday and Israel pounded Gaza with more airstrikes.

The relentless escalation of hostilities came even as Egyptian negotiators held in-person talks with the two sides, intensifying efforts at mediation.

Previous fighting between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers, including a devastating 2014 war, was largely confined to the impoverished and blockaded Palestinian territory and Israeli communities on the frontier. But this round seems to be rippling farther and wider than at any time since the 2000 Palestinian intifada, or uprising, and is tearing apart the country at its seams.

While some rocket attacks have reached the Tel Aviv area, Arab and Jewish mobs have rampaged through the streets, savagely beating people and torching cars. Flights have been cancelled or diverted away



Smoke rises following Israeli airstrikes on a building in Gaza City on Thursday. Weary Palestinians are somberly marking the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, as Hamas and Israel traded more rockets and airstrikes and Jewish-Arab violence raged across Israel

AP

from the country's main airport.

Weary Palestinians, meanwhile, somberly marked the end of the Muslim holy month

of Ramadan on Thursday as militants fired one barrage of rockets after another and Israel carried out waves of bone-rattling airstrikes. Since the rockets began Monday, Israel has toppled three high-rise buildings that it said housed Hamas facilities after warning civilians to evacuate.

Gaza's Health Ministry said the death toll has climbed to 83 Palestinians, including 17 children and seven women, with more than 480 people wounded. Islamic Jihad confirmed the deaths of seven militants, while

Hamas has acknowledged 13 of its militants killed, including a senior commander.

Israel says the number of militants dead is much higher. Seven people have been killed in Israel. Among them were a soldier killed by an anti-tank missile and a 6-year-old child hit in a rocket attack.

A visit by Egyptian security officials was a significant development in international mediation efforts, which have been key to ending past rounds of fighting. The officials met first with Hamas leaders in

Gaza before holding talks with the Israelis in Tel Aviv, two Egyptian intelligence officials said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to talk to the press.

Still, both Israel and Hamas seemed determined to press ahead.

Even as word came of the mediators' presence, Gaza militants fired a volley of some 100 rockets nearly simultaneously, raising air raid sirens around southern and central Israel.

There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties — but the barrage appeared aimed at demonstrating that Hamas' arsenal was still full even after three nights of airstrikes and the killing Wednesday of several Hamas leaders involved in the rocket programme.

"The decision to bomb Tel Aviv, Dimona and Jerusalem is easier for us than drinking water," a spokesman for Hamas' military wing declared in a video message. Dimona is the site of Israel's nuclear reactor. "Our conflict will reach you whenever you turn any aggression against our people," he said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited batteries of the Iron Dome missile defence system, which the military says has intercepted 90% of the 1,200 rockets that have reached Israel from Gaza so far.

Oli reappointed Nepal PM as Opp fails to get majority

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

KP Sharma Oli, in his capacity as leader of the largest political party in Nepal's Parliament, was reappointed as Prime Minister on Thursday night after the Opposition parties, riddled by factionalism, failed to secure majority seats to form a new government.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari reappointed CPN-UML Chairman Oli, 69, as Prime Minister, three days after he lost a crucial trust vote in the House of Representatives.

The Office of President in a press statement on Thursday evening said that President Bhandari reappointed Oli as Prime Minister in his capacity as leader of the largest political party in the House of Representatives as per Article 78(3) of the Constitution of Nepal.

President Bhandari will administer the oath of office and secrecy to Oli at a ceremony at Shital Niwas on Friday.

The president had asked the Opposition parties to come up with the support of majority lawmakers to form a new government by 9 pm Thursday after Oli, lost the vote of confidence in the House on Monday.

Oli's appointment came shortly after Office of President said that no two parties or more

than two parties came to lay claim to forming coalition government by the given deadline that expired at 9 PM.

Oli will now have to take a vote of confidence at the House within 30 days, failing which, an attempt to form a government under Article 76 (5) would be initiated. Should both the steps fail, the House may face another dissolution and the country will move towards the direction of early elections.

Political parties were engaged in hectic negotiations to form a coalition government under Article 76 (2) for the past three days, but failed to bear any fruit.

Until Thursday, Nepali Congress president, who got backing from CPN-Maoist Centre chairman Pushpakamal Dahal 'Prachanda' was hopeful to get sufficient votes in the House to stake his claim as the next Prime Minister.

But as Madhav Kumar Nepal took a U-turn after his last-minute meeting with Oli, Deuba's dream to become the next Prime Minister was shattered.

The dissident faction led by Madhav Nepal within the CPN-UML, with their 28-member strength in Parliament had earlier decided to resign en masse from the Parliament paving way for

Deuba to claim for the post of Prime Minister.

On the other hand, Janata Samajwadi Party was also divided on the issue of extending support to Deuba as the next Prime Minister.

Upendra Yadav, President of JSP had assured Deuba to extend support, but Mahanta Thakur, another president of the party, who has backing from 17 out of 32 Lawmakers, rejected Upendra's idea.

The CPN-UML, headed by Oli is the largest party with 121 seats in the House of Representatives. However, Oli, needs to prove majority through a vote of trust in the Parliament within a month of his re-appointment.

Nepali Congress and Maoist Centre have 61 and 49 seats in the lower house. Their combined strength was 110, which is insufficient to win majority vote. At present 136 votes are needed to form a majority government.

Oli withdrew the action taken against four UML leaders including Nepal and assured to address their other demands. If 28 UML MPs had resigned, the total strength of the House would have been reduced to 243. Currently there are 271 valid members in the House. If they had resigned only 122 votes would be sufficient to stake claim for majority government.

As ethnic violence rocks Israel, Arabs cite deep grievances

AP ■ JERUSALEM

As rockets from Gaza streaked overhead, Arabs and Jews fought each other on the streets below and rioters torched vehicles, a restaurant and a synagogue in one of the worst spasms of communal violence Israel has seen in years.

The mayor of the mixed town of Lod, which saw the worst of the violence Tuesday, compared it to a civil war or a Palestinian uprising. Arab experts and activists say the violence was fueled by unrest in Jerusalem that has brought Israel to the brink of another Gaza war, but is rooted in deeper grievances that go back to the founding of the state.

Violence flared again Wednesday night with a wave of apparent revenge attacks. In Bat Yam, a Tel Aviv suburb, a large crowd of ultranationalist Israelis pulled a man from a car who they thought was Arab and beat him until he lay on the ground motionless and bloodied. A hospital said he's in serious condition without identifying him.

Earlier, a group of black-clad Israelis smashed the windows of an Arab-owned ice cream shop in Bat Yam and ultranationalists could be seen chanting, "Death to Arabs!" on live television during a stand-off with Border Police. In the northern city of Tiberias, video uploaded to social media appeared to show flag-waving Israelis attacking a car.

Israel's Channel 13 quoted a senior police officer as saying Arabs are suspected of attacking and seriously wounding a Jewish man in the coastal city of Acre amid new clashes there. In a late night television interview, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, whose figurehead office is meant to serve as the nation's moral compass, said the country was gripped by civil war and urged citizens to "stop this madness."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called on both Jews and Arabs to cease attacks on each other: "It doesn't matter to me that your blood is boiling. You can't take the law in your hands," he said.

Final resting place of Sir Ganga Ram in Pakistan to be reopened for public after 10 years: Official

PTI ■ LAHORE

The final resting place of the prominent Hindu philanthropist and top architect Sir Ganga Ram in Lahore will be reopened for the public later this month after authorities took back the land illegally occupied by some people for 10 years, a senior official said on Thursday.

The Samadhi of Sir Ganga Ram is located close to the Taxali Gate of the old city of Lahore in Punjab province.

It was closed for visitors for the past one decade since it was illegally occupied by a group of people.

"We have taken back the possession of the occupied land from the group of people and launched restoration of Sir

Ganga Ram's Samadhi. It will be opened for the public later this month after completion of restoration work," said Fraz Abbas, the Deputy Director of Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB).

He said an art gallery will also be opened showcasing the work of the great architect.

"Local Hindus would be invited to its inauguration ceremony after completion of the restoration work," he said.

Born in 1851 in Mangtanwala near Nankana Sahib, some 65 kilometers from Lahore, Rai Bahadur Ganga Ram was a civil engineer and an architect by profession.

He made extensive contributions to the urban fabric of Lahore, capital of Pakistan's

Punjab province.

Sir Ganga Ram joined the Government College Lahore in 1869 before Thompson Engineering College at Roorkee, in 1871 to complete his engineering.

Sir Ganga Ram designed the building of the Lahore High Court, Aitchison College, Hailey College of Commerce, Lahore Museum, Mayo School of Arts which is now known as the National College of Arts (NCA), the General Post Office building and the Albert Victor Wing of the Lahore Mayo Hospital.

Sir Ganga Ram had donated land for the construction of a hospital in Lahore. Sir Ganga Ram Hospital was established in 1921 in Mozang area of Lahore. He died in 1927 in London at the age of 76.

Putin: School shooting in Kazan 'has shaken all of us'

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday said that the deadly school shooting in Kazan "has shaken" the country and ordered the government to revise school security protocols and tighten control over civilian gun ownership.

"The tragedy has definitely shaken all of us," Putin said, speaking at a meeting with government officials via video link Thursday.

"All of Russia... Stands with Tatarstan, with Kazan residents, in the difficult days."

A gunman on Tuesday morning attacked a school in Kazan, a city 430 miles (700 kilometers) east of Moscow, sending students hiding under their desks or running out of the building. Nine people — seven students and two school employees — were killed, and

more than 20 others were hospitalized with injuries.

Three wounded children remain in grave condition, Health Minister Mikhail Murashko told Putin at the government meeting Thursday.

The authorities gave no motive as to why Ilnaz Galyaviev, 19, who was arrested in the shooting, carried out the attack at the school he reportedly used to attend.

He appeared in court Wednesday, charged with murder, and was ordered to pre-trial detention for two months. Officials said he legally owned a firearm. Putin said Thursday that in order to prevent attacks like the one in Kazan, the authorities need to "seriously raise the requirements for civilian gun owners and tighten control over civilian gun circulation." AP

GLOBE TROTTING

2 HELD IN B'DESH FOR PLOTTING ATTACK ON PARL
Dhaka: The counter-terrorism police in Bangladesh have arrested two people for plotting an attack on Parliament and instigating others to join them, according to a media report.

COURT ORDER ISSUED TO BORIS OVER UNPAID DEBT
London: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's office said Wednesday it was investigating a report claiming that there is an outstanding court order against Johnson over an allegedly unpaid debt. Private Eye magazine uncovered an October 2020 county court judgment against Johnson for 535 pounds (\$755).

EX-MALDIVES PREZ FLIES TO GERMANY FOR TREATMENT
Male: Former Maldives President Mohamed Nasheed, who was critically wounded in an explosion, was released from the hospital on Thursday and flown to Germany for further treatment, his family said.

CM YOGI TAKES STOCK OF COVID TREATMENT IN ALIGARH,

maintain the declining trend of positive cases in the state. UP is one of the few states in the country that is conducting tests on a war-footing, even in the remotest rural areas of the state. According to the weekly report on the campaign, the Covid test teams have visited over three crore houses in different blocks of districts within a week, between May 5 and 12.

"The teams conducted a total of 2,57,845 tests in remote blocks of the districts and distributed medicine kits," a senior government official said.

He said the government firmly believes that tracing, testing and treating are the only effective ways to contain and fight coronavirus and is leaving no stone unturned to achieve this.

COVISHIELD 2ND DOSE GAP RAISED

The extension between the two doses has come as a blessing in disguise to the Centre as well as the Covishield manufacturer, which are in acute pressure to meet the vaccination targets but are not able to do so due to supply shortage. The extended gap will ease the pressure on the SII. In fact, Poonawalla while moving to London had recently alleged that he was facing "pressure" from "some VIP" to meet the targets.

The panel also said pregnant women can choose their vaccine and lactating women will be eligible after delivery. Currently, neither is eligible to get the shots. The panel also stated that those having laboratory test proven SARS-CoV-2 illness should defer Covid-19 vaccination for six months after recovery.

According to the Union Health Ministry's current protocol, the vaccine is to be taken four to eight weeks after recovery from Covid-19 infection and pregnant and lactating women are not to be administered the shots.

"Based on the available real-life evidence particularly from the UK, the Covid-19 working group agreed for increasing the dosing interval to 12-16 weeks between two doses of Covishield vaccine. No change in interval of Covaxin

vaccine doses was recommended," the Ministry said in a statement.

STATES' JAB TENDER NOT EASY AS GLOBAL SUPPLY RUNS DRY

Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Uttarakhand Haryana and Delhi are among States that have decided to go global to procure vaccines as the supply of vaccines in the country is not adequate compared with the population.

In fact, many States have postponed the vaccination drive for those 18 plus to 44 years old, due to shortage which they plan to meet through import.

For its part, the Central Government said the vaccine availability situation is likely to be improved only after July when 216 crore doses of vaccines will be manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bharat Biotech which are providing Covishield and Covaxin respectively.

Dr VK Paul, Niti Aayog member (Health) at a Press conference on Thursday here said those jabs approved by FDA and World Health Organisation (WHO) can come to India. "Import license will be granted within 1-2 days," he said, in the wake of the States decision to import the jabs.

BENGAL POISED TO FISH OUT BODIES FLOATING IN GANGA

"There are chances of dead bodies washing up on the banks of the Ganga. We gave directions to the nearby blocks of Ganges Manikchak and Kaliachak 2 and 3 block to monitor round-the-clock for the dead bodies," officials said adding fishermen also have been alerted.

Adequate boats have been pressed on service for the purpose and the BDOs of Manikchak and Kaliachak 2 blocks have been asked to maintain high vigil.

The Ganga enters Bengal at Manikchak area in Malda district from where Farakka Barrage is just 22 km, the official said. "We have asked the Farakka Barrage authorities too asking them to keep an eye on the floating bodies because there is a feeder canal that feeds the

Hooghly River downstream ... we do not want the Hooghly River to be contaminated," the official said adding the "Government has asked the district officials to arrange for the funeral of the floating bodies with due honour."

ALL-OUT BID TO SET UP O2 PLANTS, 1,594 IN PIPELINE

The Brihanmumbai municipal corporation also plans to set up 16 oxygen generation plants in 12 Mumbai hospitals to ensure the city becomes partially self-reliant for its oxygen needs.

The Haryana Government has planned to set up 66 oxygen plants at hospitals across the States. Presently, of the six pressure swing adsorption (PSA) oxygen generation plants, two are already operational and rest of the four will start working by the end of this week.

The Delhi Government has also planned to set up 48 oxygen plants, of which 21 are being imported from France and the rest are manufactured in India.

Two oxygen plants have been set up at AIIMS Trauma Centre, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital (RML), Safdarjung Hospital and Lady Hardinge Medical College.

The Nitish Kumar Government has also decided to set up oxygen plants in 15 districts which include Patna, Begusarai, Darbhanga, Bhagalpur, Bhojpur, Gaya, Gopalganj, Katihar, Madhubani, Muzaffarpur, Nalanda, West Champaran, Purnea, Saharsa, and Vaishali. The plants will be set up from PM Cares Funds.

Battling with rising oxygen demand due to the devastating second wave of Covid-19 pandemic, Punjab is making efforts to revive and re-energise about a dozen small and medium oxygen plants to augment the supply of life-saving gas in the State.

Odisha has proposed the Centre for installation of 40 oxygen plants in all medical college and hospitals, district headquarters hospitals (DHHs), Capital Hospital, Rourkela Government Hospital and Acharya Harihar Post Graduate Institute of Cancer (AHPGIC) at Cuttack.

Madhya Pradesh has also planned to set up plants in Bhopal, Rewa, Indore, Gwalior and Shahdol for Rs 1.60 crore. But plants it promised earlier in Babai, Mohasa

- at a cost of Rs 125 crore for producing 210 tonnes - has not fructified in seven months.

The Gujarat Government is planning to set up 36 PSA (Pressure Swing Adsorption) oxygen generation plant in 22 state-run hospitals to tide over the shortage of oxygen.

The oxygen demand in Gujarat has risen to 1,190 metric tonne (MT), of which almost 1,190 MT is being provided by the Centre.

With hospitals struggling to handle the deluge of Covid patients who developed breathlessness, the Karnataka has decided to set up 22 oxygen-generation plants in 18 medical institutes across the state.

The total production of Liquid Medical Oxygen in the country has risen to almost 9500 MT/day, showing the capacity utilisation of about 130 per cent of the installed capacity. Steel plants are contributing nearly half on the national production of LMO.

According to the Government sources, in March 2020, the capacity of tankers was 12,480 MT and their number was 1,040.

Now, the capacity of tankers has gone up to 23,056 MT and their number has increased to 1,681, which includes 408 converted converted tankers and 101 imported tankers. 248 oxygen tankers are being imported, with 101 tankers imported so far and another 58 tankers to be imported in next 10 days; In addition, 100 tankers are being manufactured domestically.

CORONAVIRUS SURVIVOR TO CORONA WARRIOR: A JOURNEY OF SHEER GRIT

An 82-year-old woman from Gorakhpur bravely battled against Covid. She apprised that her oxygen levels improved with the Proning technique.

A Mumbai-based 75 years old woman was detected with Covid. She also suffered from diabetes, which puts her more at risk. Doctors informed that she had only 24 hours to live but the woman recovered 13 days later.

New Born wins the battle against Covid-19: Sukhdeep Singh was just 20 days old when he was detected with Covid. Doctors informed that Sukhdeep was admitted with high fever and seizures and his case was very challenging. The most challenging part was to counsel his

parents. But understanding the gravity of the case, Sukhdeep's parents fully cooperated with the hospital staff. The selfless service and expertise of the doctor and nursing staff carefully nursed Sukhdeep out of the deadly virus within a period of 10 days. Smiles were all around when infant Sukhdeep Singh was discharged from Punjab Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), Jalandhar.

His father, Gurdeep Singh said that their happiness of having a baby was short-lived and they were shocked to hear that their 20 days old was detected with Covid, while Sukdeep's grandmother Kulwinder Kaur expressed her happiness by thanking the almighty and appreciating the efforts put in by doctors to save the life of her grandson.

Powerful stories of kindness: Rakhi Jain, a nurse at AIIMS Delhi, skipped her grandmother's funeral for Covid duty.

Two college students Gowatham and Gayatri from Erode have started "Food on Wheels", a food delivery service for patients in home isolation. Javed Khan is an auto driver from Bhopal. He has turned his auto into an ambulance to provide free service amidst the COVID surge.

A Covid Hero, Santosh Kumar Panda from Jharkhand delivers ration and medicines to COVID patients at their doorsteps on a bike, without taking any extra charges.

38-year-old Devender Sharma travelled for 1400 kilometres from Bokaro to Noida, carrying an oxygen cylinder to save his friend's life.

Sneha and Shloka are class 10th students. They raised over Rs 2 lakh in 24 hours to donate 300 pulse oximeters for underprivileged people. The girls designed posters and created a fundraiser. They also managed to reach out to various oximeter makers. (Curtesy : Prasara Bharti)

NAXALS TURN TO MAINSTREAM, THANKS TO CORONA SCOURGE

According to a letter from a Naxal commander who is referred to as "Didi" by the cadres, her conversation with another commander J Dada revealed that a number of the cadres are struggling with the coronavirus infection in South Bastar, Darrbha and West Bastar divisions.

The letter suggests Rupri of South

Bastar, commander of Chetna Natya Mandali of Darrbha division Hunga besides Devey, Ganga, , Sudru, Munni and Reena met sudden death.

Divisional Naxal commander Rajesh Dada, Suresh and Manoj are critically ill and are being treated in their respective locations with whatever medicines available with them, her letter suggests, giving a broad description of Covid-19 as a disease that spreads quickly and afflicts the seniors more.

Another letter from a comrade VS highlights that a large number of Naxals have fled in different parts of Chhattisgarh and beyond.

According to J Dada's conversation with Didi, section commanders Budhram and Vimla have also deserted. Two persons attached to the self-styled Central Regional Command (CRC) Company have also deserted the Naxal ranks. All the cadres of Gangalur area have been hit by Covid-19 and Ritesh and Joga of the local formation have fled. From Darrbha Division, Nagesh, Sumitra and Anita have left the Party.

SERIOUS ERRORS IN NRC DRAFT, SAYS ASSAM COORDINATOR

Only 107 were found eligible under "Original Inhabitant" category, Sharma pointed out seeking detailed re-verification. "Pass appropriate directions for a complete, comprehensive, time bound re-verification of draft NRC as well as supplementary list of NRC," said the affidavit.

The re-verification should be done under the supervision of a monitoring committee in the respective districts and the committee must preferably have the concerned District Judge, District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police, he added.

The affidavit also pointed out that 3.93 lakh persons excluded from NRC (out of a total of 40 lakh) who did not file any claims and objections against the same. The application said after some sample checks and analysis, 50,695 persons out of the 3.93 lakh were found to be eligible for inclusion in NRC under "Original inhabitants" category or "Persons from other States" category.

The affidavit also pointed out that many persons not included in the list have not yet approached the Foreign Tribunal.



A STREETCAR NAMED NOSTALGIA

SAIMI SATTAR dons rose-tinted glasses to embark on a trip down memory lane on Eid

The silver *kiran* which bordered what masqueraded as a *dupatta* (or a *dupatiya*, as my grandmother would call it since it was a miniscule version of what the older people wore) fascinated me. There was still more than a fortnight to go for Eid and I was barely seven... and excited as only one who has not reached double digits would be about a festival. Sauntering around in my frocks, every day, I would peek a glance at the pale blue *salwar* suit with its matching *dupatta*, silver hair clips, a finger ring and *jootis*, only to be admonished by my mother about my trip in excessive vanity. The excitement, as they say, was palpable days in advance. The festival and the first step into donning a garment which, till that time, was the preserve of the older women in the family was exhilarating, to say the least.

While I was caught up in my daydreams of dressing up, my mother had already embarked on a mission to clean up the already immaculate house. Her penchant for finding dirt in the corner, even now at 70 plus, is nothing short of an urban legend in the family.

But this was just the build-up. On the 29th day of Ramzan, my mother ensured that my father, rather than the retainer whose job it was on other ordinary days, would set out in the morning, armed with a long list of the ingredients for an array of dishes all of which were slow-cooked. *Shami kebabs*, *biryani*, *pasande*, *qorma*, *kofte*, besides the vegetarian fare for those who did not eat meat, at least two types of *sewaiyan*... as well as snacks including *dahi bade*, *namkeen*, dry fruits, sweets, the list just went on. All these were to be eaten with *sheermal*, the slightly sweet, soft *roti* that is typical of the Lucknow-Kanpur belt and poles



apart from the Delhi version. But make no mistake, the denizens of both cities will take serious offense if you pronounce the version from the other to be tastier. The *Kanpuriyas* will deride the Lucknow version as bland and bereft of sweetness that they believe offers just the right balance for the spicy food. The Lucknow *walas* gentle sensibilities — steeped in the *Awadhi tehzeeb* — on the other hand, get assailed by the overt sweetness of the one from their industrial neighbour. But then, I am meandering because as a true-blue *Kanpuriya* (never mind that for more than half my life I've lived in Delhi), I don't have to elaborate

upon which one I hold in disdain and which I can write paens about. Interestingly, chicken, which has become a staple nowadays, did not figure high on the list and was cooked occasionally, if at all. There was also a lineup of beverages to go with the food or the snacks. *Nimbu pani* made with the choicest, plump lemons which were freshly-squeezed, orange squash, courtesy the distribution network that we ran or even coffee that was beaten into stiff peaks (yes, darling new age millennials, dalgona, it is).

I was more than happy to ride pillion on my fathers scooter during the day on his expeditions to the different markets to pick the



ingredients. The first stop, the vegetable *mandi*, followed by the dry fruits shop, and then the final one at the *khoya mandi* to pick the essential which gave the *sewaiyan* its rich flavour and creamy texture. I did not have the stomach to visit a butchers shop, which was in another direction, so my father conveniently dropped me back home before heading out.

By the time I reached home, a transformation was well underway. The cotton, slightly-old curtains had been changed and replaced by satin ones that our *dhobi* had ensured were in pristine condition. Occasional-use China was being taken out, washed and laid on the large *takht* in the kitchen to dry. So, it was time for the alarm to sound out for a seven-year-old to scoot off and not bound about for even a minor accident would have disastrous consequences (first for the crockery, followed by the person).

Certainly not in keeping with the happy occasion. So, it was best to stay clear and head over to the other section where the remaining extended family lived (and still does) in the house that was built by my grandfather and added upon by his sons as and when required. And

being the youngest among all cousins helped in diverting oodles of pampering in the right direction (that, being mine, of course).

Before we knew it, it was evening and as the muezzin called out to the faithful to indulge in iftar, the youngsters in the family bounded to the top of the terrace to spot the elusive sliver in the sky which would announce Eid. As many of us know, Eid-ul-Fitr or *meethi* Eid, as many people call it, falls at the end of the month of Ramzan, the length of which is either 29 or 30 days depending on the moon sighting. Everyone competed to spot it and often floating bits of cloud could be mistaken for the satellite, inviting hilarity and ridicule directed towards the one who did. Even after searching for some time, if you hadn't seen it, a confirmation would come by way of two short, sharp bursts of cracker. But the exhilaration in being the first one... priceless.

Moonsighting also meant that the speed at which dishes were being prepped up received a renewed impetus. Onions were to be evenly and finely chopped before being fried in copious quantities of oil to ensure it was perfectly caramelised golden brown for the gravy to turn out just right. Almonds and pistachios were soaked overnight to be peeled and slivered in the morning. *Sewaiyans*, which were probably 1/10th thick-ness of the commercially packaged and branded vermicelli that we get now, were fried in *desi ghee* on a slow fire to ensure the raw smell did not make its way to the dessert nor did it give off an acrid whiff of having been cooked on a high flame.

But I had more important matters to attend to than the kitchen which, in any case, was in the completely reliable hands of my mother as the maid was cast only in an assistants role. However, since the food was still in the prep stage, I, with the selfishness that only the young can muster, pestered my older cousins to take me out so that I could have some intricate *mehandi* patterns made on my palms. Though never a part of the celebration, this is a ritual that has become

an unwritten essential for women of the subcontinent.

At the marketplace, which has existed since British times, the verandahs were (and still are) lined with men sitting on low plastic stools in garish colours. While nowadays, they show you patterns on their smartphones, earlier there were scraggly drawings on paper that were practically falling apart, which were replaced by faded photographs as I grew older. One other thing that has changed is the length of the serpentine queues of women awaiting their turn. After a long wait, I finally did have something on my tiny hands. Though it was far from satisfactory, I returned elated. By this time I was too exhausted and promptly dropped off to sleep but not before noticing that my clothes, shoes and accessories had been laid out in preparation for the next day. Pro hint: No internet, 24x7 cable TV, Netflix or social media to keep us, the 80s kids, up till midnight or even 10 pm.

The sense of elation that you woke up with on the day of the festival when you are young is something that can never be replicated as an adult. Once you are a grown-up, you might just have to satisfy yourself with the poor and really, really distant cousin of that feeling. All the men in the extended family, dressed in crisp white *chikan* kurtas and wearing *itr*, trooped off to the *Eidgah* for the ceremonial prayers. On their way back, they would visit relatives. My father would make sure to come back with fresh flowers to be placed all over the house.

In the meantime, we showered and dressed while a table, practically creaking under the weight of the food, was set up. And it was time for two of my favourite things — sampling the fare in all three households of the extended family and accumulating *Eidi*. That is a gift, usually money, that people gave to those who are younger than them. Happy with the princely sum of ₹2 or ₹5 from each, at the end of the day there was always a competition of sorts to count who had the largest haul (Yes, I am judg-

ing you, iPhone and iPad demanding GenZers). Of course, the system was skewed in favour of the youngest, who received *Eidi* from the maximum number of people, but the calculations could go a little awry if you knew that people gave a larger sum to their immediate kin as well as to those who were recently married or in a somewhat older age bracket.

Soon the guests would start arriving and this needed an intricate balancing act. Some of them had *sewaiyan*, others were partial to snacks, still others dug into just non-vegetarian fare while others partook just vegetarian. My mother knew the preference of each of the never-ending stream of visitors and ensured that everything went off without a hitch. Of course, for children, more visitors translated into a rising graph for *Eidi* and thus, were eagerly awaited, never mind the endless running to and fro from the kitchen to the dining area to replenish snacks (never food, which we could drop, mind you).

At dinner, the married daughters of the house along with their brood usually trooped in. And so, yes, more moolah found its way into our pockets.

Fast forward to 2021, my six-year-old niece is probably looking forward to Eid as much as I did in our ancestral home. But the world has changed and how. The festivities would be low-key. Her *baba* would not be heading out for the congregational prayers, nor would she be riding with him to the market to pick stuff. *Eidi* is bound to witness a severe dip, a second time around, as visitors are not coming in for sure. Yes, one of her aunts would certainly indulge her and decorate her hands with *henna* and she will wear new clothes. The fire-wall that my sister-in-law creates has ensured some protection for the young one from the pall of gloom that has descended all around us but Eid would certainly not be the same. As someone pointed out, "When more shrouds are being sold than new clothes in the city, do you think we can celebrate Eid?"



Anurag lauds Sanya Malhotra

Actor Sanya Malhotra has left everyone amazed with her quirky personality and her versatile performances over the years. Sanya, who gained fame portraying Babita Kumari Phogat alongside Aamir Khan in *Dangal*, was last seen in *Pagglait* which released on Netflix in March this year.

The latest to publicly join her list of admirers is Anurag Basu, who praised the actor and her skills in a recent interview. Basu, who worked with Sanya in the multi-narrative Netflix hit *Ludo*, said, "You meet many actors, but individuality is missing. She has a personality that stays with you. Sanya's nervous energy is an asset because she channels it in a constructive manner. She is not insecure about her craft and believes in waiting for better scripts."

The actor will soon be seen in, *Love Hostel*, crime-thriller, alongside Vikrant Massey, Bobby Deol and Meenakshi Sundereshwar opposite Abhimanyu Dassani.

Lively time to be an actor: Jordan

Over the past decade, Michael B Jordan has gained a massive fanbase with his performances in films like *Fruitvale Station*, *Creed* and the comicbook supervillain Erik Killmonger in *Black Panther*. With inclusivity and diversity taking centre-stage in Hollywood, he feels it is a "lively time" to be an actor right now.

"I think it is always the right time to be an actor. Artists use their platforms to express themselves. For me, I use my platform in a multitude of ways. I think it is a lively time to be an actor right now," Jordan said.

Over the decades, several Indians have forayed the West, especially Hollywood, including Om Puri, Naseeruddin Shah, Amrish Puri, Shashi Kapoor, Aishwarya Rai-Bachchan, Irrfan Khan, Kabir Bedi and Persis Khambatta. In recent times, too, the likes of Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Deepika Padukone, Anil Kapoor and Amitabh Bachchan, among many others, have featured in Hollywood projects.

In reverse, Hollywood films dubbed in regional Indian languages have been consistently doing good business in this country.

Tell Jordan language and culture are no longer barriers, and he agrees.

"Cinema is a universal language. It is one of those things that everybody can come and participate and share and experience, from all walks of life and from all over the world. Through the use of streaming, internet and social media every-



body is connected to everything that is going on. Everybody has access to the stories you want to tell," Jordan said.

He added, "So, somebody from one side of the globe, who never thought that somebody from the other side of the world would ever see their project or get a chance to hear their story, its possible to happen."

Jordan's latest release is *Without Remorse*, which takes him into the world of bestselling author Tom Clancys espionage and military ops. Directed by Stefano Sollima, the film revolves around Clancys 1993 novel of the same name and casts him as John Clark.

The film also stars Guy Pearce, Jamie Bell, Jodie Turner-Smith, Luke Mitchell, Brett Gelman, Colman Domingo, Lauren London and Jacob Scipio in pivotal roles. It was released on Amazon Prime Video in April. —JANS

TREND TOOL



Here's how to choose a workout that fits your needs

The process of staying healthy starts with choosing workout that backs your other healthier habits. It is essential that your chosen workout doesn't just help to make you fit, but also keeps energy levels up and provides an overall energy boost.

There are questions that need to be answered when you pick a suitable workout from the fitness basket. Essentially, the answers need to be very honest to avoid any lasting damages later on. The following pointers can be followed.

Understand the goal of your workout. Unless that's not set, chances of picking the wrong workout are possible. The end result gets reflected in an unhealthy and possible damaged body. A

Sweat now, shine later

thorough research of exercise forms, benefits and advantages to be gained needs to be researched in a comprehensive manner. It will be conducive in the picking process. Following fads is all okay. But the workout needs to suit ones needs and not get influenced by fads.

Now that the basics have been drummed in the minds, the next step would be to choose the suitable workout from the few options out there.

CARDIO

An ideal cardio session allows for burning substantial calories. Running or walking is two good ways to do cardio. If weight loss is the chosen end result, then cardio helps start things and warm up for more intense

workouts.

YOGA

This ancient Indian exercise method is perfect for ab overall strong and fit body through a mixture of postures.

PILATES

For stronger cores, mat pilates is the proper choice. Along with toning the core and abdominal muscles, lower back, hips and buttocks, this workout is all about focussing on body strengthening and flexibility and lean muscles building. A flexible and controlled body will be quite possible. In fact, machine pilates combines the benefits of both weight training and yoga.

HIIT

The workout technique

alternates between small episodes of high intensity exercise and less intense rest. The varied exercises depend on the targeted body part for improvement.

WEIGHT TRAINING

This is perfect to build strength with weight training. Weights in workout routine can result in sturdy muscles and bones along with lesser injury threat. But weight training is not body building or creating a bulky body, it's about toning the body and building muscle. Muscle building comes from premeditated practice and requires hardwork complete with weight-gain diet and supplements intake.

Choose the right workout for a healthy body. —JANS

TRENDBLAZER



SHEKHAR WARNS NETIZENS

SHEKHAR SUMAN warned netizens against relying on random forwarded messages on WhatsApp.

"Let's not play Doctor-Doctor at home. Follow only your physician or any reputed doctor. Don't just follow anything floating on WhatsApp. Sieve through it, confirm, reconfirm. There are all kinds of rumours being floated by pharma companies for their own vested interest," Suman tweeted.

fairtalk

MRUNAL THAKUR



"I think the most important thing is patience. As an artiste, you are always curious to perform but the big question is content. You have to choose the right script. I feel pressured (and think) should I choose this script? I feel internally that I can do better but then I feel if I let this script go, will I get more films? This thought keeps bothering me."

dailytalk

RAIMA SEN



"In all these years in the industry, I have never done a screen test. When I learnt that (director) Amit (Kumar) wanted to do a screen test for my character in *Calcutta*, I first avoided it as I have always had a phobia of auditions. Later, I gathered my strength and somehow decided to do it. I thought I was never going to get the part but I did."

MEDITATION HELPED ME: ALICIA

Singer **ALICIA KEYS** said that meditation helped her a lot after she became a mom.

"I have to be honest. The first time I tried the meditation, I was so tired that I fell asleep. But the second time, I felt a little spark. I started to notice a richer connection with myself, an ability to go deeper. After years of silence I could hear myself, trust my instincts, know what I wanted, know what I needed and not feel so insecure," she said.





BEAT THE HEAT

In order to survive the summer and its adverse effect on health, here is a seven-day calendar that can help you cool off with a nourishing diet

When you spend considerable time in the scorching heat, it can cause detrimental effects on your health. As the body temperature increases, it leads to profuse sweating, signs of dehydration, sticky skin, tiredness, headache, dizziness, nausea, cramps, and a quick, weak pulse.

With majority of us currently staying at home during this summer amid the COVID-19 pandemic, staying on top of our health is a priority more so than usual. In order to survive the summer and its adverse effect on our health, we need to keep ourselves cool and healthy with a cooling and nourishing diet.

An adequate intake of water and avoiding food that is dry, salty and fried is essential. Additionally this seven-day calendar can help you to take care of your body during the peak of summer.

ASH GOURD JUICE

Ash gourd is a great detoxifying agent, and is best when consumed early morning on an empty stomach. It is an excellent summer cooler and helps to hydrate your body. The juice can absorb all the toxins, germs and contamination that may



have accumulated through the course of a day. It also has the potential to flush waste out of our body. Ash gourd juice can also be combined with lime and turmeric for added benefits.

WATERMELON, MUSKMELON

Watermelon has high water content along with a good amount of lycopene, vitamin C, vitamin A, potassium, amino acid, antioxidants and is low in sodium and calories. It helps to lower inflammation and reduce oxidative stress. Remember, as watermelon is slightly acidic in

nature, eating it on an empty stomach and late-night should be avoided. Serving size for an adult is two cups a day.

Muskmelon contains potassium which makes it beneficial for your blood pressure numbers. High fibre and water content of muskmelon also contributes to cooling down body systems and to manage blood pressure.

CUCUMBER

Cucumber is inexpensive, packed with water and helps to detoxify your body overall body. It is an excellent coolant. This cool and crisp energizing

green will stave off problems of constipation; enhance your immunity and tame inflammation while also calming sunburn. Along with cleansing your body, the presence of silicon and sulphur in cucumber is excellent to support hair growth and volume. The best way to consume cucumber is adding it in salads or drinking cucumber juice.

YOGURT AND BUTTERMILK

Loaded with the goodness of healthy bacteria like Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium, yogurt and other fermented food helps in brain development and is great to relieve anxiety. It also offers gut-friendly microorganisms that aid in the process of digestion during summers. Eating yoghurt helps in reducing chronic inflammation which is responsible for anxiety, stress, and depression. You can consume curd in the form of smoothies, buttermilk, sweet lassis and raita. Drinking buttermilk helps to cool down your body and improve metabolism. It is also loaded with vitamins, and minerals which help to restore your body's natural energy if you are feeling drained by the heat.

COCONUT WATER

Coconut water benefits by maintaining electrolyte stability in your body. It's an exceptional summer drink to combat hot weather by keeping you hydrated, and also facilitates in boosting your digestive ability. Additionally, it helps to foster cell growth, regulates blood pressure and above all performs the function of a natural diuretic.

HERBAL TEAS

Herbs and spices are great to manage excess body heat. This includes Hibiscus tea, Chamomile teas, Mint juices, Amla juices; Orange juice, lime juice etc are very healthy during this season.

AAM PANNA

It is a vegan drink made from unripe green mangoes. Aam panna has a tangy, sweet taste, which can be flavoured with cardamom or mint etc. It is also rich in various acids, which help regulate the liver and fight diseases like jaundice. The black salt and jeera powder defines the digestive properties of aam panna, and mint helps in keeping the body cool, which makes it perfect for the summer season.

—IANS



may not be the right choice for typical Indian e high temperature cooking.

Olive pomace oil is, however, the right olive oil for Indian cooking because of its extraction process. It is stable at high temperatures and contains higher Tocopherol and Squalene than even extra virgin olive oil. Tocopherol and Squalene are forms of Vitamin E which have anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant properties for the body and is great for skin. Other properties such as its fatty acid profile (eg. mono-unsaturated fatty acid) are the same as that jar of extra virgin olive oil that graces the aisle at the supermarket. In fact, it has the same composition as extra virgin olive oil. What's more, it is completely neutral in taste, therefore, making olive pomace oil liquid gold for healthy Indian cooking.

FOR TASTE

Olive pomace oil is the perfect companion for *desi* food. It is a light oil with a neutral taste and flavour. Indian food encompasses a wide variety of regional and traditional cuisines and they all vary significantly from each other. Olive pomace oil can be used for all Indian cooking and the taste is quite incredible.

FOR HEALTH

While we face the second wave of the pandemic, it's prudent to stay fit, eat right and follow a healthy lifestyle. The choice of cooking oil plays a major part in this. Choosing an oil that has necessary fats and zero cholesterol that are helpful for weight loss and main-

taining a low-calorie diet is what one needs today. Olive pomace oil is 80 per cent monosaturated that can lower the cholesterol level. Monosaturated fats are healthy fats with fatty acid profile (high MUFA) like other olive oils found in olive oil, avocados and certain nuts. Olive pomace oil also brings the additional benefit of Vitamin E for better immunity and tissue repair with Vitamin K for better bone density and health.

FOR COOKING

It is a light, neutral in taste and healthier option than other edible oils, and is stable at high temperatures. This helps beat the myth that olive oil is not good for Indian cooking. What's more, the great thing about olive pomace oil is that since it is absorbed less by food, it is great for healthy cooking and affordable at the same time, as it will be consumed less.

FOR BEAUTY

Apart from uses in kitchen, it can be used to treat skin problems and hair problems by using a little bit of it on the damaged scalp to treat dryness. Similarly, one can also use it in the bath to rejuvenate dry skin. Olive pomace oil is cost effective in comparison to the other grades of olive oil but when compared to the cost of regular soya bean, sunflower or the peanut oil, it is priced at premium.

So, the next time you go for grocery shopping, take a leap of faith and grab that can of olive pomace oil. It's a health decision that's much overdue!

—IANS

R E C I P E S

DAHI AUR ANJEER KE KABAB

WHAT YOU NEED

- Hung curd: 100 gm
- Cottage cheese (grated): 50 gm
- Fresh basil (cut into strips): 1 tbs
- Black peppercorn (crushed): ½ tsp
- Salt to taste
- Refined oil

For stuffing:

- Fig (chopped): 10 gm
- Ginger (chopped): ½ tsp
- Black salt

METHOD

- Take hung curd in a mixing bowl; add all the above mentioned ingredients (except salt) and mix them with gentle hands.
- Add salt and keep it aside to cool for half an hour.
- Take small quantity of the hung



curd mix on your palm and flatten it.

- For the filling, mix chopped fig, chopped ginger and black salt.
- Place the stuffing onto the flattened patty and make into a sphere. Flatten it again in to a patty shape.
- Shallow fry to perfection.
- Then serve with a dip of your choice.

Courtesy: Jr sous chef Rubal Pupneja at The Samrat Hotel.



CREEPY COFFEE

WHAT YOU NEED

- Smirnoff Espresso vodka: 60 ml
- Lime juice: 10 ml
- Coke: 150 ml
- Orange and lime wedge (to garnish)

METHOD

- Fill a tall glass with ice cubes.
- Add Smirnoff espresso vodka to the glass and stir.
- Top up with cola and garnish.

Courtesy: Diageo India.

SHAAMI KEBAB

WHAT YOU NEED

- Goat mince: 500 gm
- Chana dal: 100 gm
- Ghee: 100 ml
- Ginger paste: 20 gm
- Garlic paste: 20 gm
- Cinnamon: 10 gm
- Mace: 5 gm
- Clove: 2 gm
- Bay leaf: 5
- Green cardamom: 2 gm
- Black pepper: 10 gm
- Salt: 25 gm
- Red chilly: 30 gm
- Finely chopped green chilli: 5 gm
- Lemon juice: 10 ml
- Chopped coriander leaves: 10 gm



METHOD

- Soak the *chana* dal in water for half an hour.
- In a pan, heat ghee. Add the whole spices and sauté till aromatic.
- Add goat mince, ginger and garlic pastes, chilli powder, salt and sauté well.

- Now add the soaked *chana* dal and combine well. Add water to the mixture, cover and allow it to cook till tender and dry.
- Cool the mince mixture and grind to a paste.
- Add finely chopped onions, green chillies,

coriander and mix well.

- Divide the mixture into equal-sized balls and create small gallettes by hand.
- Heat ghee in a pan, shallow fry till golden brown.
- Serve hot with mint chutney.

Courtesy: Executive chef Rajesh Wadhwa at Taj Palace.

NALLI NIHAU

WHAT YOU NEED

- Goat shank: 1 kg
- Mutton stock: 1.5-2 litre
- Mustard oil: 150 ml
- Cloves: 3 gm
- Green cardamom: 3 gm
- Bay leaf: 2
- Cinnamon: 5 gm
- Sliced onion: 150 gm
- Ginger paste: 40 gm
- Garlic paste: 40 gm
- Red chilli powder: 10 gm
- Yellow chilli powder: 20 gm
- Turmeric powder: 20 gm
- Coriander powder: 50 gm
- Yogurt: 150 gm
- Roasted gram flour: 50 gm
- Garam masala powder:



- 20 gm
- Salt to taste
- Saffron a few strands
- Fresh coriander leaves and ginger juliennes to garnish

METHOD

- In a heavy-bottomed

pan, heat mustard oil. Add the whole spices and allow them to crackle.

- Add the sliced onions and cook until golden brown. Add the ginger and garlic pastes. Sauté well.
- Add the goat shanks, along with red and yellow

chilli powder, turmeric, coriander powder, beaten yogurt and sauté well.

- Now add mutton stock and simmer on slow heat till the shanks are tender.
- In a separate pan, heat ghee, add roasted gram flour and sauté till the mix is aromatic and lightly golden.
- Add this mixture to the prepared shanks and adjust the consistency of the gravy till nice and creamy. Adjust seasoning.
- Finish with *garam* masala and saffron.
- Garnish with fresh coriander leaves and ginger juliennes. Serve hot.

Courtesy: Executive chef Rajesh Wadhwa at Taj Palace.

CARROT CORN PANCAKE

WHAT YOU NEED

- Carrot (peeled and grated): 1 cup
- Corn (blanched): ¾ cup
- Whole wheat flour: 1 cup
- Onions (finely chopped): 1/3 cup
- Sandwich spread: 5 tbsp
- Coriander (finely chopped): ¼ cup
- Yogurt (whisked): 1/3 cup
- Eggs: 3
- Baking powder: 1 tbsp
- Baking soda: ¼ tbsp
- Green chillies (finely chopped): ½ tbsp
- Butter as required
- Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

- In a large bowl, add eggs, yogurt and sandwich spread. Mix well. Add carrots, onions, chillies, corn and



season with salt and pepper. Mix it well again.

- In another bowl, add flour, baking soda and baking powder. Blend it.
- Then put the dry flour mixture to the veggie-spread mixture. Mix to form a thick pancake batter. The batter should be of thick creamy consistency. Add coriander leaves and mix well.
- Heat flat griddle or pan. Grease it with little butter.
- Pour a ladle full of pan cake batter and cook for a couple of minutes.
- Gently flip to cook on the other side for another two to three minutes. Take the pancake off the heat. Repeat the same for the rest of the batter.
- Serve hot with Del Monte mint mayonnaise along the side.

Courtesy: Del Monte.

Powar returns as India women coach

Ramesh replaces WV Raman, coming back after his last stint ended in bitter fallout with Mithali

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former spinner Ramesh Powar on Thursday replaced W V Raman as the Indian women's cricket team's head coach, regaining the position more than two years after he was sacked owing to a bitter fallout with ODI captain Mithali Raj.

The 42-year-old was recommended by the Madan Lal-led Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) after interviewing eight candidates, including Raman.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announces the appointment of Mr Ramesh Powar as the Head Coach of Team India (Senior Women). The BCCI had advertised for the post and received over 35 applications," a BCCI statement read.

The others in fray were former India wicketkeeper Ajay Ratna and four female candidates including former chief selector Hemlata Kala.

"Looking forward to take India women's cricket ahead. Thanks a lot CAC & bcci for this opportunity," Powar tweeted after his appointment.

The CAC chose Powar for his clear vision for the team, said Lal.

"He has been coaching for a while. His vision for the team impressed us the most. He has a clear cut plan for the team, what he wants to do with it to take it to the next level. He also has full clarity on all aspects of the game. Now he needs to deliver on that," Lal said.

It remains to be seen how



Powar works alongside Mithali, who had accused him of bias after the Harmanpreet Kaur-led T20 team dropped the veteran batter for the all-important World Cup semi-final against England.

Mithali, in a letter to the BCCI after the event, had alleged that Powar "was out to destroy and humiliate" her. Powar had hit back asserting that Mithali "threw a lot of tantrums and created chaos in the team".

After being removed from his

position in the women's team, Powar proved himself as a coach and earlier this year, led Mumbai to the Vijay Hazare Trophy after the domestic giants failed miserably in the T20 competition. He has also worked at the National Cricket Academy as a bowling coach.

Asked whether his acrimonious exit from the team and relationship with Mithali was discussed during Powar's interview, Lal said: "We did ask him about it and he said he wasn't at fault. He

is okay working with all the players".

"I was also very impressed with the views of the four female candidates. It showed they are very much in touch and involved with the game. Future is bright for all of them," Lal added.

Powar played two Tests and 31 ODIs for India. In his first stint with the women's team, Powar was at the helm from July to November 2018.

It was under his tutelage that

Shafali, Radha set to make WBBL debuts

New Delhi: Indian batting sensation Shafali Verma is set to make her Women's Big Bash League debut with two-time champions Sydney Sixers later this year.

The 17-year-old is expected to be joined by left-arm spinner Radha Yadav, who is currently in talks with the Sydney Sixers franchise.

"Shafali's deal is done, it will be announced when the Women's Big Bash schedule is released," a BCCI source said.

"Radha is also in talks with the Sydney Sixers," the source added.

The teenager's father was also required to sign a consent form as Shafali is still a minor.

Shafali joins the trio of T20 skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (Sydney Thunder), opener Smriti Mandhana (Brisbane Heat) and all-rounder Veda Krishnamurthy (Hobart Hurricanes), which has featured in the WBBL.

The world number one batter in ICC women's T20I rankings will also be turning up for Birmingham Phoenix in the inaugural edition of The Hundred later this year.

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India qualified for the semi-final of the T20 World Cup that year and also won 14 T20 matches in a row.

Raman, who had replaced Powar in December 2018, now finds himself in a similar situation.

The former India batsman had coached India to the T20 World Cup final last year but it seems the ODI and T20 series loss to the visiting South African team in March cost him the job.

A few selection calls during the series, like the dropping of teenage big-hitter Shafali Verma and senior pacer Shikha Pandey, had raised eyebrows.

"All the best @imrameshpowar with the @BCCIWomen in this spell.. Look forward to seeing the girls soar under your guidance..." Raman tweeted.

Powar's major challenge will be to prepare the team for the ODI World Cup in New Zealand next year.

His first assignment will be a full-fledged tour of the UK starting with India's first Test in seven years from June 16 against hosts England.

The team is also scheduled to tour Australia before the World Cup.

► short passes

INDIA RETAIN TOP SPOT IN TESTS

DUBAI: India remained the No 1 Test side after the annual update of the ICC team rankings. India head the table after gaining one rating point for an aggregate of 121.

HERTHA BOOST SURVIVAL HOPES

BERLIN: Hertha Berlin took a big step towards Bundesliga survival with a 2-1 win at bottom side Schalke on Wednesday.

PSG EDGE OUT MONTEPELLIER

MONTEPELLIER: PSG squeaked past Montpellier 6-5 on penalties in French Cup semi-final to keep alive their hopes of ending the season with silverware.

CHELSEA SLIP UP IN TOP-4 RACE

LONDON: Arsenal dented Chelsea's bid to finish in the Premier League's top four as Emile Smith Rowe punished Jorginho's blunder to seal a 1-0 win at Stamford Bridge.

FANS TO ATTEND LA LIGA GAMES

MADRID: Fans will be allowed to return to some stadiums in the top two divisions of Spanish football this weekend, the country's Government confirmed on Wednesday.

ARCHER RETURNS AFTER INJURY

LONDON: England pacer Jofra Archer returns to competitive cricket on Thursday in a County match for Sussex after being out of action for more than one-and-a-half months.

SERENA TO PLAY IN PARMA

ROME: Serena Williams has been given a wild card to play in next week's WTA tourney in Parma after her exit from the Italian Open.

IRFAN, 4 OTHERS TEST +VE

NEW DELHI: Olympic-bound race walker K T Irfan is among five elite track-and-field athletes who have tested positive for Covid-19 at the SAI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru.

RISHABH GETS FIRST DOSE

NEW DELHI: Star India wicket-keeper batsman Rishabh Pant on Thursday received his first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. Agencies

Paine hints at giving up captaincy

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australian Test captain Tim Paine has hinted at stepping down from the position if his team manages to defeat England in the Ashes series this year and backed former skipper Steve Smith to succeed him.

Smith was Australia's captain before being forced to step down in 2018 owing to his role in the ball-tampering scandal.

"Obviously I don't make that decision but the time I played with Steve as captain he was excellent. Certainly tactically he is as good as you get," Paine said. "He's probably a bit like me. He was thrown into a very big role at a very, very young age and he probably wasn't quite ready for it. But by the time I came in he was growing into that role and getting better and better. Then obviously (in) South Africa events happened and

he's not doing it anymore. But yeah I would support him getting that job again," he added.

Paine also hinted that he might step down from captaincy if Australia can beat England in the Ashes later this year.

"At least another six Tests," he said referring to the one-off Test against Afghanistan and the five-Test Ashes at home.

"If I feel like the time is right and we've beaten the Poms 5-0, what a way to go out. But it might be a tight series and we might be chasing 300 on the last day and I'm 100 not out and hit the winning runs — and then I might go again."

'India distracted us during Test series'

Melbourne: Australia captain Tim Paine says his team was distracted by the Indian team's "niggling" during the epoch-making Test series early this year which the visitors rallied to win despite being ravaged by injuries.

"...They're very good at niggling you and trying to distract you with stuff that doesn't really matter and there were times in that series where we fell for that," Paine told *news.com.au*.

"The classic example was when they said they weren't going to

the Gabba so we didn't know where we were going. They're very good at creating these sideshows and we took our eye off the ball," he added.

He was referring to unverified reports which claimed that the visiting side did not want to play the Brisbane Test, if the players had to follow a hard quarantine.

The media reports had relied on source-based information to make the assertion.

India, however, went to Gabba and scripted a record chase of 388 on the final day for a thrilling three-wicket win, which also sealed the series.

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Aus IPL players may return home on Sunday

Male: A group of Australian cricketers, coaches and players-turned-commentators, currently stranded in Maldives, may return home in a chartered flight on Sunday, though they are still waiting confirmation from their Government.

"Under plans currently being thrashed out..., the group of 38 would be able to take a charter flight out of the Maldives via Malaysia to Sydney on May 16, where they would then serve their mandatory 14-day quarantine period," a report in *ESPNCricinfo* said.

It, however, said that Cricket Australia and the BCCI are still awaiting confirmation from the Australian Government if the group in Maldives will be allowed to return home after May 15.

PTI

Captaincy was great learning experience for Sanju: Buttler

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Leading Rajasthan Royals in the now suspended IPL was a great learning experience for skipper Sanju Samson, according to star opener Jos Buttler, who feels the youngster grew into the role as the tournament progressed.

Samson, who had finished as the side's highest run-getter in the 2020 season, had replaced Australian Steve Smith as skipper of Rajasthan Royals in January.

Scheduling IPL real challenge: RR owner

New Delhi: Rajasthan Royals owner Manoj Badale says scheduling the suspended IPL will be a "real challenge" and there is only a small possibility of hosting the League on either side of the T20 World Cup later this year.

"I think the challenge is just finding space and calendar. The players are already playing too much cricket," Badale said. "The calendars are incredibly packed, and particularly this year after Covid, Boards from around the world and trying to get as many competitions and as many Test matches in as possible," he added.

Badale said there is a possibility the league could move to either the United Kingdom or the Middle East.

"I think it's going to be a real challenge. I think it's a small possibility of something in September in the UK or possibly something in the Middle East, either side of the T20 World Cup, but I think it's going to be a real challenge."

PTI

"It was a great learning experience for him. And I think, as the tournament was going along, at the halfway stage, he was really growing into the role, looking to put together some better, more consistent performances towards the end of the season as a side," Buttler said in a virtual session arranged by the Royals.

Under Samson, the former champions won three of their seven fixtures before the league was suspended mid-season due to multiple cases of Covid-19 in its bio-bubble.

"I've really enjoyed playing under Sanju's captaincy. I don't think it changed him at all as a person. He's quite a free spirited, very relaxed kind of guy and he tried to get that across to the team and that's how he wanted us to play as a side."

"It is really important as a leader to be authentic, and I think Sanju is very much that," Buttler added.

Royals' director of cricket Kumar Sangakkara was effusive in his praise for all-rounder Riyan Parag, who he sees as a future Indian team prospect.

"For us, Riyan Parag is a very, very special player. I think he's got a huge amount to contribute to not just Royals, but also to Indian cricket in future very special talent that needs care, nurturing and development."

The Sri Lankan legend said he was also impressed by the trio of pacers Chetan Sakaria, wicketkeeper-batsman Anuj Rawat and opener Yashasvi Jaiswal.

"Chetan Sakaria was a revelation, his attitude, his ability to deal with pressure, and of course, his skill. "We had Anuj and Yash — the two youngsters who have been with the franchise for a very, very long time. And I was thoroughly impressed by all three of them."

Milan put 7 past Torino

AFP ■ TURIN

Ante Rebic scored a hat-trick and Theo Hernandez a double as AC Milan thrashed Torino 7-0 on Wednesday to keep their push for a return to the Champions League for the first time since 2014 on track.

The battle for elite European football remains tight with just three points separating second-placed Atalanta and Juventus in fifth.

Atalanta moved back second ahead of Napoli with a 2-0 win over relegation candidates Benevento.

The Bergamo side are equal on points with Milan, with Napoli a further two points adrift in fourth.

"Until you cross the finish line, you can't give up on anything," said Milan coach Stefano Pioli whose final two games are home against Cagliari and away to Atalanta.

"We've done so much, we have to hold on for a week. The team

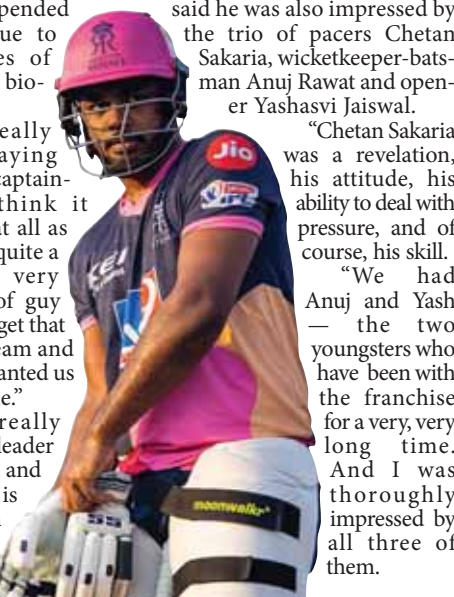
deserves it and the club deserves it."

Juve are a further point adrift after getting back to winning ways after last weekend's 3-0 defeat at home to Milan.

Cristiano Ronaldo and Paulo Dybala both scored their 100th goals for the club in all competitions to keep the dethroned Turin giants hopes of Champions League football alive with a 3-1 win over Sassuolo.

Juventus dropped out of the top-four after their defeat to AC Milan and play Inter Milan and Bologna in their last two matches.

Antonio Conte's Inter extended their unbeaten league run to 20 games, and claimed a 15th consecutive home win, 3-1 over Roma. Romelu Lukaku scored just before the whistle to bring his tally to 22 goals this campaign, six less than Ronaldo, who has scored with Marcelo Brozovic and Matias also on target.



Djoker sweeps into Italian quarters

AFP ■ ROME

World number one Novak Djokovic swept into the Italian Open quarter-finals on Thursday with a straight sets wins over Alejandro Davidovich Fokina in front of spectators who were allowed to watch in the Foro Italico.

The five-time Rome champion won through 6-2, 6-1 in 70 minutes against the 48th-ranked Spaniard with the venue filled to 25 per cent of capacity for the first time amid the easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

"It was not good, it was great. I missed the crowd," said the 33-year-old, who next plays Stefanos Tsitsipas in a rematch of last year's French Open semi-final which the Serb won.

Fifth seed Tsitsipas ended the run of home hope Matteo

Berrettini 7-6 (7/3), 6-2 in 1hr 36min.

"It always feels like home coming back to Rome," said Djokovic, who has never failed to reach the quarter-finals in his 15 appearances in the clay-court event.

After losing his opening service game, Djokovic powered back with five breaks of serve, outclassing his rival, despite a late fightback, to seal the win on his sixth match point.

American Reilly Opelka also advanced to his second Masters 1000 quarter-final with a 7-6 (8/6), 6-4 victory against in-form Russian Aslan Karatsev in 1hr 36min.

GAUFF VS BARTY IN QF

In the women's section, world No 1 Ashleigh Barty



eased into the quarter-finals with a straight sets win over Russian Veronika Kudermetova.

The top-seeded Australian won through 6-3, 6-3 to set up a clash with US teenager Coco

Gauff who earlier ousted Madrid winner Aryna Sabalenka.

Barty, 25, lost to Sabalenka in last weekend's Madrid final and is warming-up for the French Open which she won in

CL final shifted to Porto

AFP ■ LONDON

UEFA announced on Thursday that the Champions League final between Manchester City and Chelsea had been moved from Istanbul to Porto.

The match on May 29 has been switched to the Estadio do Dragao to allow English spectators to attend as travel between the UK and Turkey is suspended because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Earlier, European football's governing body announced up to 6,000 supporters from each club will be able to attend.

"We accept that the decision of the British Government to place Turkey on the red list for



travel was taken in good faith and in the best interests of protecting its citizens from the spread of the virus but it also presented us with a major challenge in staging a final featuring two English teams," UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said in a statement.

"After the year that fans have endured, it is not right that they don't have the chance to watch their teams in the biggest game of the season," he added.

Last season's final as well as a 'Final 8' tournament was also held in Portugal, but in the capital Lisbon.

Atleti move 4 points clear

AFP ■ MADRID

Atletico Madrid held their nerve to beat Real Sociedad 2-1 on Wednesday and move within touching distance of winning La Liga.

Yannick Carrasco and Angel Correa made a dominant first half count for Atletico, who retreated in the second and were left hanging on after Igor Zubeldia blasted in for La Real with seven minutes left.

When the final whistle blew, Diego Simeone jogged up the tunnel at the Wanda Metropolitano, punching the air as he went, fully aware how important this result could prove.

"We were excellent in the



first half but the suffering was unnecessary when we had so many chances," Simeone said.

Outside, Atleti fans had gathered to cheer and sing throughout a nervy contest

and when victory was confirmed, fireworks filled the sky.

Victory puts Atletico four points clear of Barcelona in the table and five ahead of Real Madrid, with Zinedine Zidane's side playing their game in hand away at Granada.

It also raises the possibility of Atletico winning the title in the penultimate round on Sunday when they play at home to Osasuna.

Another victory this weekend would knock Barca out of the race regardless of what the Catalans do against Celta Vigo while Real Madrid would also concede if they had not taken six points from Granada and Sunday's trip to Athletic Bilbao.